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OHIO LAKE ERIE COMMISSION AWARDS NEARLY \$50,000 IN GRANTS

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission has awarded a total of \$49,980 to five research projects that will benefit Lake Erie and its environmental and economic resources.

Cleveland State University will receive \$10,000 to investigate nutrient structure of the Cuyahoga River by collecting soils, sediment and surface water samples, analyzing phosphorus, nitrogen and chloride content.

The National Center for Water Quality Research will receive \$10,000 for a project to test soil phosphorus levels in the Rock Creek Watershed in Seneca County. Testing will be completed after summer wheat harvest or fall soybean harvest. Tillage and manure application history of fields will be documented. The project will study phosphorus levels at various depths in the soil profile. **The center will receive another \$9,982** to collect data on oxygen-depleted hypoxic water moving from offshore to nearshore areas around Lorain and Avon Point. The data will be compared with meteorological conditions recorded at nearby buoys and land-based weather stations in order to better predict when and why these movements will occur.

Case Western Reserve University will receive \$9,999 for a pilot study of the prevalence of a lethal fish virus (VHS) in Lake Erie yellow perch. Data will determine at what time in the year and in what water conditions perch are most susceptible to the virus. The study will be conducted in conjunction with a similar project of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

The Cuyahoga County Soil & Water Conservation District will receive \$9,999 to establish riparian buffer strips on residential property in the Rocky River Watershed, in accordance with the watershed's action plan. The program will supply homeowners along any surface water in the watershed with tree and shrub seedlings, as well as planning and planting advice.

These quarterly grants were traditionally limited to \$10,000 or less each and were generally awarded for one year unless the specific nature of the project warranted a longer time period. However, the award ceiling was recently raised to \$15,000. Small grants may be used as seed money to test the feasibility of larger research projects or to support other small projects. Small grant proposals are reviewed and selected at each quarterly meeting of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. New applications are due by July 25.

The commission was created to preserve Lake Erie's natural resources, enhance its water quality and promote economic development in the region. The director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources serves as the commission's chairman. Additional members include the directors of the departments of transportation, development, health, agriculture and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency. The commission oversees the Ohio Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is the source of grant funding. This fund is supported by Ohioans each

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time they purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse as designed by Ohio artist Ben Richmond.

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