

**News Release**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **OLEC to Fund Studies of Lake Erie Algal Blooms and Fisheries**

**TOLEDO, OH** - The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) will provide grants for four studies that will investigate the causes and impacts of Lake Erie algal blooms, as well as physical habitat distribution within the Lake Erie fishery.

On March 25, Commission members approved the latest round of Lake Erie Protection Fund small grants and targeted priority grants. The grants fund a variety of projects that provide direct benefit to Lake Erie and its tributary watersheds in Ohio.

**The University of Toledo, Department of Civil Engineering** will receive \$15,000 for a project to determine the potential sediment contribution to Microcystis (a blue-green algae) bloom formation in the western Lake Erie Basin. Included in the research work, the project will address phosphorus in lake sediment as a potential trigger for algal blooms through resuspension.

**The Ohio State University, Aquatic Research Laboratory** will receive \$14,750 to use remotely sensed data - satellite imagery - to help better understand physical habitat distribution in western Lake Erie and its influence on habitat use and recruitment of walleye and yellow perch. Also included is a test of the hypothesis that Maumee River discharge regulates yellow perch recruitment through nursery habitat creation. The research will create a database that will be made available to the research community and public.

**The Ohio State University Department of Evolution, Ecology and Organismal Biology** will receive \$167,040 for a study about phosphorus load, transport and biological use. Lake Erie appears to be undergoing a period of increasing eutrophication (excess nutrients) and it is unknown if this is due to increased biologically available phosphorus, a change in species ability to use phosphorus or some other related factor. The project will help to determine how dissolved reactive phosphorus and increased Microcystis and Lyngbya (algae) blooms are related and where the blooms initiate.

**The Ohio State University, Ohio Ag Research & Development Center** will receive \$74,955 for a two part project. First, an evaluation of soil testing laboratories will be completed using a series of 600 soil tests sent to the twelve laboratories that primarily serve Ohio. The evaluation will focus on the analysis of the submitted samples and the recommendations provided to farmers based on sample results. Second, a data mining will be completed to review testing results for phosphorus and other soil characteristics from the labs.

The Lake Erie Protection Fund was established to help finance research and implementation of projects aimed at protecting and preserving Lake Erie and its watershed. This fund is supported by Ohioans each time they purchase a Lake Erie license plate displaying the Marblehead Lighthouse or renew the Toledo Harbor Lighthouse plate as designed by noted Lake Erie artist Ben Richmond. During the past 16 years, the commission has raised more than \$9 million and funded more than 275 projects.

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission was established for the purpose of preserving Lake Erie's natural resources, protecting the quality of its waters and ecosystem and promoting 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 state departments of Transportation, Health, Development, Agriculture and the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

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