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TWO NORTHERN UNIVERSITIES BENEFIT FROM LAKE ERIE LICENSE PLATE FUNDING

Heidelberg and Cleveland State Universities Receive Grant Awards to Improve Water Quality

TOLEDO, OH – Yesterday, the Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) approved three new Lake Erie Protection Fund grant awards, which will help improve water quality and provide a direct benefit to Lake Erie and its tributary watersheds in Ohio.

Heidelberg University's National Center for Water Quality Research was awarded two grants designed to provide critical data to improve our understanding of nutrient delivery to Lake Erie, which impacts the growth of harmful algal blooms.

A \$120,000 grant will fund four monitoring stations in the Lake Erie Basin during 2011. The four stations include the Sandusky River station at Fremont and the Cuyahoga River station at Independence. The Maumee River station at Waterville and the Tiffin River station at Stryker are also partially funded. Funding support will provide complete monitoring of sediment and nutrients in 2011. Data should help to develop solutions to the sediment and harmful algal bloom problems experienced in Lake Erie. The university will receive a second grant for \$15,000 to organize an advisory group for the Heidelberg Tributary Loading Program, which will establish stable, long-term funding for monitoring, currently threatened by a lack of stable funding. The proposed project will focus on a strategy to achieve long-term support for the monitoring program, develop a plan to scale the level of monitoring effort to available resources, identify and prioritize the essential components of the monitoring program, and develop a plan to adjust the program annually. In addition the plan will evaluate costs for each component to determine how to achieve cost savings, determine funding needs based on the objectives identified above, and identify funding opportunities to meet the funding needs.

Cleveland State University was awarded \$34,983 to continue assistance with the Best Local Land Use Practices portion of the Balanced Growth Program. This project will continue developing recommended land use practices to assure water quality benefits and provide training. The project also provides support for local governments that wish to assure quality development practices to reduce stormwater runoff, provide efficient water, sewer and roads while protecting the landscape that is essential to maintaining and improving water quality. Both private sector and governmental advisors are participating in this project.

"Ohioans have donated more than \$9.3 million to the Lake Erie Protection Fund by purchasing or renewing a Lake Erie license plate each year," said Ed Hammett, executive director of the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. "Lake Erie license plates displayed on vehicles give Ohio's citizens an opportunity to personally help preserve and protect Lake Erie."

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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. The fund is supported by Ohioans through the purchase of the "Erie...Our Great Lake" license plates, which display either the Marblehead Lighthouse or the Toledo Harbor Lighthouse plate, as designed by noted Lake Erie artist Ben Richmond. Fifteen dollars from the sale or renewal of each plate is invested in the Lake Erie Protection Fund grant program.

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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