

Ted Strickland, Governor
Ed Hammett, Executive Director

One Maritime Plaza, Fourth Floor
Toledo, Ohio 43604
(419) 245-2514 lakeerie.ohio.gov

Contacts: Ed Hammett, Executive Director at (419) 245-2514

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LAKE ERIE LICENSE PLATES FUND RESEARCH PROJECTS ALONG LAKE ERIE COAST

TOLEDO, OH – The Ohio Lake Erie Commission (OLEC) administers Ohio's Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is supported by the sale of Lake Erie (Marblehead and Toledo Harbor Lighthouse) license plates. The Commission awards small grants for a variety of projects which directly benefit Lake Erie and its tributary watersheds in Ohio.

On June 23, Commission members awarded four small grants for regional projects:

- The city of Sandusky was awarded \$15,000 for shoreline restoration activities at Sandusky Lions Park. This project will remove concrete debris while re-shaping the upper park to the water's edge at this 13-acre park. Improving public access, including adding an ADA accessible walk, is one goal of this project.
- The Cleveland Botanical Gardens was awarded \$15,000 to establish low maintenance lawns on vacant urban land. Funds will be used to establish run-off plots in the test area to measure quality and quantity of water run-off from stabilized lots in various conditions. Projects like this in PA have increased neighboring property values.
- The Lake Erie Islands Chapter of the Black Swamp Conservancy was awarded \$13,875 for habitat restoration in the Middle Bass East Point Preserve. The site contains exceptional habitat for the Lake Erie watersnake and the project supports the Lake Erie Watersnake Recovery Plan. Funding will be used to assist in site restoration including the demolition and debris removal of dilapidated residential buildings, providing reuse of this site for Lake Erie watershed habitat and native vegetation.
- The National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg College will receive \$14,995 to assist in research to more accurately model dissolved reactive phosphorus in streams. The project will utilize National Center data collected on Rock Creek, Honey Creek, and the Sandusky and Maumee rivers.

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 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, Ohioans have contributed more than \$9 million to the fund, which has supported more than 300 projects.

The Lake Erie Commission is an Equal Opportunity Employer

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pg. 2

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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