



Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Natural Resources

News Release

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Six Ohio Communities To Receive Funding To Develop Balanced Growth Watershed Plans

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission and the Ohio Water Resources Council awarded six Balanced Growth Strategy grants to local watershed projects across the state including two located in the Lake Erie watershed.

These grants will help communities facing development challenges in their local watersheds. Priority consideration was given to local watershed planning partnership groups comprised of local governments in each watershed, as well as planning agencies, councils of governments, non-profit organizations and other locally chosen stakeholders.

Each project is being funded for up to \$100,000 over a two-year period. Funding is provided by the Ohio Water Development Authority and the Lake Erie Protection Fund.

“These grants support Lake Erie and Ohio basin watershed planning, and improve local economic development and conservation, through the application of Balanced Growth practices,” stated ODNR Director and Ohio Lake Erie Commission Chairman Sean Logan.

Ohio EPA Director Chris Korleski added, “The benefits of balanced growth are enormous. The grants will help communities coordinate water, wastewater, transportation and other infrastructure planning while protecting and restoring Ohio’s watersheds.” Korleski also chairs the Ohio Water Resources Council.

Successful grant proposals include:

- **Clermont County Soil and Water Conservation District – East Fork, Little Miami River (\$98,250)**

The Middle East Fork sub-watershed is 56 square miles in total area and is located entirely within Clermont County. Forest cover remains the predominant land use, however, Clermont County is one of the fastest growing counties in Ohio.

Eleven local jurisdictions will be involved under the direction of the Clermont County Soil and Water Conservation District.

- **Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization - Furnace Run Watershed (\$57,400)**

Furnace Run originates in Summit and southern Cuyahoga counties in northeast Ohio. It drains about 20 square miles of predominately suburban land in the Lake Erie watershed in seven local communities. Local organizations involved include the Summit County Engineer, Soil and Water Conservation District, Board of Health, Cuyahoga Valley National Park and the Western Reserve Lake Conservancy.

- **Lake County Planning Commission- Eastern Lake County Coastal Tributaries (\$100,000)**

Several streams, including McKinley, Red Mill and Church creeks, drain a 30-square-mile area in northeast Lake County. Approximately 51 percent of the watershed is developed and the rest of the land is either agricultural or currently unused. Lake County agencies, including the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District and Stormwater Department, will work with six local communities.

- **Medina County Soil and Water Conservation District – Upper Chippewa Watershed (\$77,120)**

The Upper Chippewa Creek drains to the Ohio River via the Tuscarawas and Muskingum rivers. The project area includes two sub-basins of Chippewa Creek and drains approximately 28,000 acres or 44 square miles in nine communities. Other Medina County agencies joining the planning team include the Highway Engineer, Park District, Farm Bureau and Sanitary Engineer, and the Medina County Homebuilders Association.

- **Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission – Olentangy River Watershed (\$100,000)**

Encompassing about 372 square miles, the Olentangy River Watershed is representative of all central Ohio landscapes ranging from rural to urban. Challenges facing the region include urban sprawl, limited transportation options, impaired water quality and outdated land use plans. The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission will be coordinating efforts involving nearly 30 local jurisdictions in the watershed.

- **Trumbull County Planning Commission – Lower Mosquito Creek Watershed (\$100,000)**

Located within the boundary of Trumbull County, the Lower Mosquito Creek Watershed drains 26,163 acres. Primary land uses include business, commercial, residential, agriculture and open space. Major threats facing the watershed include pollution from increasing development, sediment, erosion and failing home septic systems. Project members include the Trumbull County Soil and Water Conservation District, Trumbull County Metroparks, Eastgate Regional Council of Governments, and eight local communities.

Ohio's Balanced Growth Program is a voluntary, incentive-driven means for the state to encourage locally led efforts to support sustainable growth and manage land use change. It was developed by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission in 2004 and was expanded to a statewide program this year. More information about the program may be found at www.balancedgrowth.ohio.gov or by calling (419) 245-2514.

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The Ohio Lake Erie Commission is comprised of the directors of the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio departments of Natural Resources, Transportation, Development, Health and Agriculture. The commission was created to preserve the lake's natural resources and protect the quality of its waters and ecosystems.

The Ohio Water Resources Council, established in state law in 2001, is a forum for policy development, collaboration and coordination among state agencies, and strategic direction with respect to state water resource programs. Membership includes the heads of nine state agencies: the Ohio departments of Agriculture, Development, Health, Natural Resources and Transportation; the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency; Ohio Public Works Commission; Ohio Water Development Authority; Public Utilities Commission of Ohio; and the Office of the Governor.