

**Ohio Environmental Education Fund
New Mini Grant Awards, September 2014**

For the fall, 2014 grant cycle, Ohio EPA is awarding a total of \$36,589 to support the following nine projects.

Medina County Park District, “Demonstration and Interpretation of a Vegetated Stormwater Buffer Strip,” #F-15M-005, \$2,500, Medina County, Audience: General Public, James C. Spetz, jspetz@medinaco.org, 330-722-9375.

The project site is a newly-developed park located directly on the divide that separates the headwaters of the Rocky River watershed (Lake Erie Basin) and Wolf Creek watershed (Ohio River Basin). A strip of native vegetation will be planted in a high-visibility area to intercept stormwater running off a slope before it enters a recreational fishing area. The project will involve a series of interpretive signs along approximately 425 feet of trail that will cover topics of watershed function and stormwater management, native vs. nonnative species, the importance of pollinators and host plants, and the role of vegetation in stabilizing soils and absorbing nutrients.

Graham Local Schools, “Graham Local Schools Trout in the Classroom (TIC),” #F-15M-006, \$2,500, Champaign County, Audience: Pre-School – University (Elementary and Middle School), Contact: Emily Kay Shreve, shreeve@grahamlocalschools.org, 937-663-4449.

Expands the successful Trout in the Classroom program previously funded by the OEEF to more grades, to include more than 400 students in grades 2-12. Students will focus on the relationship between water quality of the Mad River and the conditions required by trout. Students will be responsible for daily chemical testing and observations of the trout to ensure they are in a suitable environment until they are large enough to release to the Onion Creek tributary of the Mad River. Students will present their monitoring data through a community event and presentations to the school board and local organizations. Elementary students will use Nexus Tablets and iPads to photograph the stages of the project and create YouTube videos. The Madmen Chapter of Trout Unlimited is collaborating.

Williams Soil and Water Conservation District, “Rivers Around Us,” #F-15M-007, \$3,367, Williams County, Audience: General Public, Contact: Loretta Hayek, lhayek@williamsswcd.org, 419-636-2349.

Provides equipment and supplies to train a network of up to 15 citizen volunteers and local school classes to regularly monitor water quality in the Tiffin River. Workshops will introduce teachers to the Project WET and Healthy Water, Healthy People curricula and testing methodologies, and how to post their students' data to an online database for comparison over time. Teachers and

citizen volunteer monitors will have the opportunity to receive certification as Level One Credible Data Collectors. The Ohio State University Extension Office in Williams County is collaborating.

Carroll-Columbiana-Harrison (CCH) Environmental Group/Solid Waste District, “Environmental Teachers Academy,” #F-15M-009, \$5,000, Carroll, Columbiana and Harrison Counties, Audience: Pre-School – University (Elementary School), Contact: Eric Matthews, mathesonman@gmail.com, 330-627-7311.

Provides three educator workshops and supplies to expand a previously funded Environmental Teachers Academy for middle school to include 20 teachers of grades K-3. Workshops will feature two national curricula (Project Wild-Aquatic, Wonders of Wetlands) to teach watersheds and water quality, and weather and climate change education resources being developed by NASA. Participating teachers will receive Earth Grow Boxes for their students to investigate soil types, decomposition rates, nutrient content, percolation and filtration, leaching of fertilizers and pollutants, and plant productivity. Topics include the use of rain barrels and rain gardens to conserve water and reduce runoff, and the use of remote sensing technology to monitor algal blooms.

City of Canton Parks Department, “Conservation Area Signage,” #F-15M-010, \$5,000, Stark County, Audience: General Public, Contact: Theresa Gang, Theresa.gang@cantonohio.gov, 330-438-4691.

The City of Canton Parks Department plans to cease mowing to improve water quality and restore habitat in areas of seven parks and the Nimishillen Creek Watershed. The mini grant will support interpretive signs to help park visitors understand the water quality, cost saving, and ecological benefits of the no-mow areas. Benefits include: natural infiltration; slowing down and cleaning storm water runoff before it enters a creek; reducing stream bank erosion and sediment; less use of fertilizer, water and weed killer; increasing biodiversity by providing food and habitat for native animals and plants; and providing shade and cooler temperatures for fish and aquatic insects.

Village of Lowellville, “The Mahoning River on Display,” #F-15M-011, \$5,000, Mahoning County, Audience: General Public, Contact: Joann Esenwein, Lowellville.dam@yahoo.com, 330-717-5441.

Funding will provide an interpretive sign and informational flyers about the environmental benefits of the Mahoning River Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) dam removal project in the Village of Lowellville. Benefits include removal of sediment, restoration of natural stream flow and improvement of water quality and warm water aquatic habitat. The sign will include the dam site history, and flyers will be distributed by the Village, local businesses and schools. The Eastgate Regional Council of Governments and Lowellville Board of Education are collaborating.

JB Green Team/Jefferson Belmont Regional Solid Waste Authority, “Enviroscape Waste Water Treatment Model for Land Labs and Education,” #F-15M-014, \$3,280, Belmont and Jefferson Counties, Audience: Pre-School – University (Middle and High School), Contact: Tammy Ann Shepherd, tshepherd@jbgreenteam.org 740-296-5376.

Provides two EnviroScape© Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment Models with carrying cases and curriculum to be used for classroom presentations, library programs, after-school, 4-H and scouting club presentations and outdoor events in Belmont and Jefferson Counties. These models will be used in conjunction with EnviroScape© Landfill and Recycling Models to emphasize the importance of recycling, litter prevention and proper disposal of waste to protect drinking water supplies. Collaborators include the Epworth Center, High Meadows 4-H Club, Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District, Ohio River Valley Council Boy Scouts of America, and St. Clairsville Public Library.

The Wilderness Center, “Sugar Creek Watershed Environmental Education Project,” #F-15M-015, \$4,982, Holmes, Stark and Wayne Counties, Audience: Pre-School – University (Middle and High School), Contact: Lynda Marie Price, lynda@wildernesscenter.org, 330-359-5235.

The purpose of this project is to implement site-specific watershed science lessons targeted to 7th-12th grade groups. The project involves reestablishment of an educational outdoor space with accessible headwater streams in an area recently subjected to storm damage. This space offers a prime demonstration of the impact of natural and human disturbance on watershed ecosystems. Multiple lesson plans will be tailored to give students effective environmental problem solving experiences including hands-on learning activities, evidence-based decision making, and multidisciplinary approaches. Provides macroinvertebrate sampling supplies and supports the cost of transportation and substitute teachers to enable 200 students to identify how natural disturbance, local land use and community decisions affect the quality of the environment. The mini grant will also replace storm-damaged trail markers utilized with a Wilderness Walk podcast used by thousands of hikers. Collaborators include the Ohio State University School of Environment and Natural Resources and the Dalton Local, East Holmes Local, Green Local and Orrville City School Districts.

Cuyahoga River Community Planning, “Woods for Waters: A Guide to Planting Riparian Buffers for Stream Health,” #F-15M-019, \$4,960, Cuyahoga and Summit Counties, Audience: General Public, Contact: Jane Goodman, goodmani@crcpo.org, 216-241-2414.

Provides funding for the printing and distribution of 4,000 copies of the "Woods for Waters" guide to planting riparian buffers, a step-by-step manual for homeowners and other property owners. The guide was created to help people with streams on their properties to a.) understand how vegetated buffers create

habitat, prevent polluted runoff and soil erosion, and increase biological diversity, and b.) design, lay out, choose appropriate trees and plants, and plant and maintain their riparian buffer. Collaborators include Cleveland Metroparks, Cuyahoga County Board of Health and Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry.

For more information, contact:



Office of Environmental Education

oeef@epa.ohio.gov

www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef

(614) 644-2873