



## NEWS

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**Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. Willoughby, Ohio**

For IMMEDIATE RELEASE (April 20, 2017)

### **CHAGRIN RIVER WATERSHED PARTNERS RECEIVES NATIONAL GRANT FOR PROTECTION OF LAKE ERIE**

Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. has received a national grant from the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities to support a regional collaboration to protect Lake Erie through the Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program. This project is a partnership with the Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative, West Creek Conservancy and Western Reserve Land Conservancy.

The grant awarded to Chagrin River Watershed Partners was one of sixteen projects funded out of 74 proposals submitted nationwide and one of four projects targeting watershed protection in the Great Lakes region. The \$200,000 award, matched with \$200,000 of local in-kind contributions, will enable the Partners to work with watershed organizations and land trusts to protect and steward healthy stream corridors that flow into Lake Erie from Sandusky Bay in Erie County to Conneaut Creek at the Ohio-Pennsylvania border. Project partners will use this 3-year grant to leverage \$11 million for the protection of up to 425 miles of streams and 30,000 acres of land within Ohio's Central Lake Erie watershed. The project will undertake a regional approach to protecting healthy watersheds through land preservation, stream corridor enhancements, and local and regional planning. "Chagrin River Watershed Partners is proud to receive this grant and looks forward to working with our partners to sustain Lake Erie for people and wildlife," said Executive Director Heather Elmer.

The Central Lake Erie Basin Collaborative is a network of organizations and volunteer-based initiatives that work cooperatively to empower communities to preserve and restore Lake Erie's watersheds in northern Ohio. Organizations and volunteer groups currently participating in this network include The Nature Conservancy, Firelands Coastal Tributaries Watershed Program, Friends of Old Woman Creek, Friends of Huron River, Friends of Vermilion River, Black River Area of Concern, Plum Creek, Rocky River Watershed Council, West Creek Conservancy, Mill Creek Watershed Partnership, Big Creek Connects, Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners, Friends of Yellow Creek, Friends of the Crooked River, Chippewa Creek, Brandywine Creek, Middle Cuyahoga, Breakneck Creek, Cuyahoga River Restoration, Doan Brook Watershed Partnership, Bluestone Heights, Friends of Euclid Creek, Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Mentor Marsh, Arcola Creek, McKinley Creek and the Grand Ashtabula Conneaut Partnership. Watershed program staff from Erie, Cuyahoga and Lake County Soil and Water Conservation Districts also participate in the Collaborative.

This project will integrate the efforts of watershed organizations and land trusts to accelerate progress towards protection of Lake Erie and the region's watersheds. Healthy Watersheds Consortium funding will support a model for effective, regional collaboration that can be replicated across Ohio and the nation. The grant-funded project received support from Congressman Dave Joyce of Ohio's 14<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, who stated "This is about where we swim, where we fish, and most importantly, where we get our drinking water. Lake Erie provides drinking water for over 11 million people and jobs for 119,000

Ohioans. So regardless if you live right on the lake or inland, the funding of the Healthy Watersheds Consortium will contribute to the vital protection of Lake Erie. That is a direct benefit to everyone's quality of life in Northeast Ohio." This project will benefit Ohio's 4th, 7th, 9th, 11th, 13th, 14th and 16th Congressional Districts.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners is a nonprofit organization that uses a regional watershed approach to enhance quality of life by preserving rivers, planning for better development and solving natural resource management problems. Sixteen communities, counties and park districts formed the Watershed Partners in 1996 to address rising infrastructure costs because of flooding, erosion and water pollution. Today, the Partners' 34 members represent 91% of the land area in the watershed. For more information about Chagrin River Watershed Partners, visit <http://www.crwp.org>

The Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program's second year of awards expands the pace of proactive watershed protection in the U.S. through conservation and improved stewardship of hundreds of thousands of acres of lands that provide drinking water, flood risk reduction, and an array of economic and environmental benefits. In 2017, the Program awarded a total of \$2.75 million that will benefit organizations and partnerships in 18 states. The Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program is co-funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities, which manages the partnership. Other Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program awards in the Great Lakes Region include a project led by the Huron River Watershed Council to advance land protection within Michigan's Huron River watershed, which will also benefit the health of Lake Erie.

For more information about the Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program, visit <http://www.usendowment.org/healthywatersheds.html>

For the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities national press release announcing these grant awards, visit: [http://www.usendowment.org/images/Press\\_Release\\_HWC\\_2017\\_Grantees\\_Announced.pdf](http://www.usendowment.org/images/Press_Release_HWC_2017_Grantees_Announced.pdf)

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