



## **Outstanding Projects for the General Public Audience Selected December, 2011**

**Five Rivers MetroParks, *Get Them Outside*, \$ 2,032, Montgomery County, Grant #10M-054**

Project helped the parks engage 250 families, offering children the opportunity to explore creeks, build forts, and explore nature without much adult intervention, to document the benefits of unstructured play in nature. Parents observed their children while staff explained the benefits of unstructured nature play, how to encourage their children to turn off the TV and video games, and how to make their own backyard more inviting for their children and nature. After their experience, parents filled out a survey, and children were given an Outdoor Nature Play Kit, which served as tools and a prompt for getting kids outside exploring. Two months later, parents were contacted for a phone survey, ascertaining the behavior change resulting from the program.

**The Breathing Association, *CLEAR the Air*, \$49,982, Franklin County, Grant #08G-009**

Provided a DVD, educational displays, games, and brochures in English, Spanish and Somali to educate low-income residents about smog and the health and economic benefits of taking steps to improve air quality through personal action. A tool kit for parents, educators, physicians, clinics, and non-profit agencies serving the target population was also created and is available on the agency website. Collaborators include Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, Ohio Hispanic Coalition, United Somali Refugee Women at Columbus State, Columbus Public Health, HEAP Services for The Breathing Association, OhioHealth, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and the Central Ohio Diabetes Association.

**Cuyahoga River Community Planning Organization, *Watershed Stewardship & Management Training for Cuyahoga River Tributaries*, \$49,954, Cuyahoga County, Grant #07G-051**

A series of Building Better Watersheds workshops trained community leaders, watershed stewardship groups and the public in four Cuyahoga River tributary watersheds experiencing rapid urbanization and loss of natural infrastructure. Participants from Brandywine Creek, Furnace Run, Mud Brook and Sagamore Creek communities received "The Watershed Book," a comprehensive watershed-owner's manual developed for the project, as well as detailed maps of their watersheds' critical natural features and a packet of tools and resources to

support better decision making. They used the materials to identify specific locations for conservation and restoration in each community. In follow up workshops, participants reviewed their local storm water and green infrastructure ordinances, identifying gaps and setting goals for further action. The project created collaborations among watershed communities that resulted in the creation of Watershed Planning Partnerships which, in turn, led to the development of two state-endorsed Balanced Growth Watershed Plans

**Butler Soil and Water Conservation District**, *The Greatest Show in Earth*, \$50,000, Butler, Hamilton, Montgomery, Preble, and Warren Counties, Grant #07G-048

Provided a three-dimensional, mole's-eye-view of the world that lets visitors feel as if they are underground. A trailer housing a soil tunnel and lab carried a museum-quality interactive exhibit to schools, fairs and other events in several southwest Ohio counties. Topics covered included soil formation and composition; the role of soil in food production, water purification and habitat; and the importance of soil and water conservation. Collaborators included the Butler County Storm Water District, Cincinnati Museum Center, Hamilton-to-New-Baltimore Groundwater Consortium, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Niederman Family Farm.

**Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands Chapter**, *Vermilion River Watershed Educational Book*, \$49,825, Ashland, Erie, Huron and Lorain Counties, Grant #07G-007

*Living in the Vermilion River Watershed* was created as a collaborative project between the Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Firelands Chapter, and Oberlin College to educate citizens of a small but special watershed drained by one of the cleanest rivers in the state of Ohio. Designed to increase the public's knowledge of the watershed, the book's 23 articles and over 300 full color photographs are intended to encourage local pride in the river, as well as a commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of its surrounding natural habitats.

The chapters of the *Living in the Vermilion River Watershed* incorporate a wide range of subjects, including local wildflowers, the river's geologic history, farming practices in the watershed, birds, fish, mammals, and the river's current water quality, as well as suggestions for what residents can do to be good stewards of the land and water. Authors and photographers for the book were recruited from a variety of colleges and universities, government agencies, conservation organizations, and local communities. The eighteen organizational supporters of the book include the local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Cleveland State University, Ohio State University, the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, Lorain County Metro Parks, and the National Center for Water Quality Research at Heidelberg College. Ten thousand copies of the book have been distributed free of charge to residents of the watershed via libraries, local government offices, and schools, and the book has been incorporated into the curricula of several school systems on the watershed.

**Columbus Downtown Development Corporation**, *RiverSouth Exhibits*, \$41,000, Franklin County, Grant #06G-012

Provided exhibits on the storm water management, energy conservation, and other “green building” features of the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)-gold certified renovation of the Lazarus Department Store building in Columbus, Ohio, as part of the redevelopment of the “RiverSouth” district downtown. Visitors to the building see a series of signs along the Town Street façade and in the first floor galleria explaining the history and green components of the building. (These were paid with in-kind match funds). Groups who come for guided tours of the green roof first view a slideshow developed by Ohio EPA about green roof benefits in the Ohio EPA sixth floor lobby area, then pass a series of three exhibit panels in the rooftop reception area before stepping out onto the green roof itself, where small rock-like markers identify the types of vegetation on the green roof. (This type of marker was chosen to withstand the very high winds at times on the roof.) The grant funds paid for the projector, exhibit panels, plant identification markers, and Website development. The video from the website is intended to eventually replace the slide presentation in the sixth floor lobby area for groups touring the roof, when some technical problems with the projector can be fixed. For prospective tenants and the architecture and construction industry audience, the CDDC also developed a “Tenant Design and Construction Guidelines” booklet with more technical specifications about the green features and materials used in the renovation. Several thousand visitors tour the green roof each year. The CDDC’s property manager conducts 30-40 minute tours the first Tuesday of each month from May through September in cooperation with the Ohio State University Urban Arts Space, which is also housed in the Lazarus building, and many tours by request for school groups, garden clubs, architects, and other visitors. The website URL is <http://downtowncolumbus.com/home/moving-forward/lazarus-building/green-roof> . Go to this site to view the video, which has also been placed on YouTube.

**Mid Ohio Regional Planning Commission**, *Lessons in Land Use*, \$39,280, Ashland, Crawford, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Jefferson, Morgan, Morrow, Noble, Tuscarawas, Washington, and Wyandot Counties, Grant #10G-017

This two-pronged project conducted a series of Planning for Agriculture workshops, especially in counties that have not embraced planning and zoning, and produced a booklet that demystifies density and shows, with photos from Ohio towns large and small, that density can be desirable, attractive and cost-efficient, and can preserve rural farmland and open space. Collaborators included the Friends of the Lower Muskingum River, Morrow County Regional Planning Commission, Ohio Department of Agriculture, Ohio Valley Resource Conservation and Development Council, and Tuscarawas County Regional Planning Commission.

**Ohio Interfaith Power and Light, *Energy Education and Audits for Ohio Congregations*, \$49,838, Statewide, Grant #09G-024**

Provided educational outreach and technical assistance to at least 50 congregations and 250 households in Ohio to conduct energy audits and implement energy conservation and efficiency measures. Components included educational workshops, print and web-based materials, webinar training and set-up for energy tracking software, expert energy audit of institutional facilities, training and resources for household audits, congregational and household web-based carbon footprint calculators, support for energy saving measures, tracking of energy savings, and recognition of participants' energy and emissions savings achievements. The Byrd Polar Research Center at OSU collaborated.

**Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil and Water Resources, *Project SWEETER/Source Water Environmental Education Teams Enhanced Resources*, \$47,540, Statewide, Grant #09G-020**

Forty-seven Source Water Environmental Education Teams (SWEETs) participated in Project SWEETER. Teams were provided with EnviroScape® Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment models and/or Envision 3000® ground water flow models, depending on their need, along with two separate regional workshops to train team members on educating the public about protecting drinking water sources (both surface and ground water) and managing storm water and wastewater. Over 300 outreach events were held during the grant period, reaching more than 31,000 citizens with their conservation message. The teams were led by Soil and Water Conservation District educators who partnered with at least two other agencies or organizations in their county. The Ohio EPA Division of Drinking and Ground Waters collaborated.

**Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, *Central Ohio Rain Gardens*, \$49,742, Franklin County, Grant #09G-017**

Provided a series of educational workshops, brochures, a website, guides, and installed 16 residential rain gardens in the Brook Run subdivision in Westerville to show how rain gardens can collect storm water runoff from downspouts, driveways, and sidewalks to reduce flooding and prevent storm water pollution in waterways. Neighborhood storm water runoff volume was monitored before and after installation of the rain gardens. Educational materials and results of the project and monitoring data have been distributed and recognized locally, statewide, and nationally. Collaborators include the Cities of Westerville and Columbus, Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, Friends of Alum Creek and Tributaries, Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, and Watershed Organic Lawn Care.

**General Public Education Projects selected for Honorable Mention:**

**Sunday Creek Associates**, *Little Cities as a Classroom: Place Based Environmental Education and Sustainable Development*, Athens, Hocking, and Perry Counties, Grant #08G-013

**Ohio Lake Management Society**, *Citizen Lake Awareness and Monitoring (CLAM) Program as a Credible Data Collection and Education*, Statewide, Grant #08G-014

**University of Cincinnati**, *Making the Connection: Energy Usage and Environmental Impact in Ohio*, Hamilton County, Grant #08G-018

**Rural Action**, *Engaging Federal Valley Landowners in Forest and Watershed Stewardship*, Athens, Morgan, and Washington Counties, Grant #08G-022

**Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW)**, *MONITOR: Monitoring, Observing, and Naming Impacted Tributaries of the Olentangy River*, Delaware County, Grant #09G-006

**Franklin County Board of Health**, *Safe Bed Bug Control*, Franklin County, Grant #09M-045

**Clermont County Water and Sewer District**, *A Pharmaceutical Disposal Education Program for Public Water Supply Customers*, Clermont County, Grant #09M-046

**Hilliard City School District, Hilliard Bradley High School**, *Hilliard Bradley High School Storm Water Management Signage*, Franklin County, Grant #09M-056

**Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts**, *Educators Development Program*, Statewide, Grant #10M-014

**City of Dayton**, *Water Ways*, Butker, Champaign, Clark, Drake, Greene, Miami, Preble, and Warren Counties, Grant #11M-049

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