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Ohio EPA Provides Assistance for the Restoration of West Creek

Ohio EPA has awarded a \$394,000 grant to the West Creek Preservation Committee to help restore the 10-acre confluence of West Creek, a tributary of the Cuyahoga River watershed in Cuyahoga County. The grant is one of seven federal Section 319 Clean Water Act grants awarded by Ohio EPA this year. The grants total nearly \$2.9 million.

The project site has been purchased through a partnership comprised of the West Creek Preservation Committee, The city of Independence, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District and the Trust for Public Land. The partnership will provide \$750,000 in matching funds. The project site plans are consistent with the Lower Cuyahoga River remedial action plan for water quality improvement and will contribute to efforts to remove the watershed from Ohio's list of impaired waterways.

Activities to be completed through the project include the restoration of eight acres of riparian wetlands, 1,100 linear feet of West Creek, two acres of vernal pools and the establishment of a functional flood plain and a sustainable shoreline habitat. Stream work will employ several natural channel design methods and will be completed by restoring forested areas, planting 7,000 to 10,000 native hardwood trees and shrubs.

This project will be accompanied by on-site educational activities for local residents, as well as project news releases, brochures and newsletters to keep the public informed about the benefits and progress of the project. The project is expected to reduce nitrogen pollution by 391 pounds per year, phosphorus pollution by 195 pounds per year and sediment by 195 tons per year.

In 1987, Section 319 of the federal Clean Water Act amendments created a national program to control nonpoint source pollution. Nonpoint source pollution can take many forms, including runoff from fields and urban areas as well as acidic drainage from abandoned coal mines. It also includes habitat alteration resulting from ditching streams and other sources. Nonpoint pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in the United States.

Ohio EPA administers the grant program for U.S. EPA, distributing more than \$2 million each year to projects proposed by local governments and community organizations such as watershed groups. To be eligible, grant recipients must contribute at least 40 percent local matching funds. The local match may consist of cash or in-kind contributions or services. Grants are awarded for three-year periods for up to \$500,000.

Typical projects include stream restoration, removal of lowhead dams, acid mine drainage abatement, riparian area and wetland protection and various best management practices.

More information is available online at www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/nps/319Program.aspx.

