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**Ohio EPA Awards Two Environmental Education Grants Totaling \$57,271
To Delaware and Franklin County Organizations**

Ohio EPA has awarded a \$15,623 environmental education grant to the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District to replicate a “worm’s-eye view” of soil conservation, and \$41,648 to a traveling science exhibit on plant and animal life cycles to the Center of Science and Industry (COSI). Ten grants were awarded statewide for almost \$340,000.

The Delaware Soil and Water Conservation District plans to present “An Underground Worm’s-Eye View of Soil Conservation” throughout the state. The project replicates a three-dimensional, room-sized, inflatable soil tunnel exhibit to educate people about soil conservation. Guests enter beneath a giant tree’s roots with oversized earthworms, grubs, and other soil critters, continuing through a tunnel where they enter an underground world of soil and complete an educational scavenger hunt challenge. Educational panels adhered to the unit’s interior reveal information about soil conservation and its effects on nature and the environment, while generating curiosity about the world below our feet. The exterior is designed in soil layers, showing soil profiles and functions. The exhibit can be transported for use throughout the state. Collaborators include the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Preservation Parks.

The COSI on Wheels program targets elementary level students. The grant will equip a COSI on Wheels traveling program for schools throughout Ohio, providing hands-on student activities on plant and animal life cycles, the interconnection of natural system, and plant and animal adaptations to their habitats. Students will use their powers of observation to classify, compare and contrast and will employ critical thinking skills to draw conclusions about animals, their adaptations and environments. Ohio State University Extension and the OSU College of Education and Human Ecology are collaborating.

The Ohio Environmental Education Fund is administered by Ohio EPA. Grants up to \$50,000 are funded from one-half of the civil penalties collected by the Agency for air and water pollution control violations. Eligible grant recipients include environmental groups, public and private schools, colleges and universities, trade or professional organizations, businesses and state and local governments. Approximately \$1 million is given each year.

The next OEEF application deadline is Jan. 17, 2012. An electronic letter of intent to apply is due on Jan. 10. For additional information, contact the Ohio Environmental Education Fund at (614) 644-2873 or visit www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef/.

