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MEDIA CONTACT: Mike Settles, (614) 644-2160
CITIZEN CONTACT: Kristopher Weiss, (614) 644-2160

Ohio EPA Awards Grant to Restore Medina County Wetlands and Streams

Wetland and stream restoration efforts in the [Chippewa Lake watershed](#) will receive a big boost thanks to a \$169,000 grant awarded by Ohio EPA. The grant to the Medina County Park District is one of 10 grants Ohio EPA issued statewide totaling \$2.8 million to help communities restore waterways impaired by nonpoint source pollution.

With the grant and a local match of \$50,382, the park district will initiate phase two of the Chippewa Lake upper watershed restoration project. It includes eliminating 800 feet of channelized farm ditch and replacing it with 3,400 feet of tributary stream and 2,000 feet of functional floodplain. In addition, the park district will restore wetlands by removing 20 acres of invasive plants and replacing them with native wetland species. The restoration effort is expected to improve overall watershed health by significantly reducing the amount of nitrogen, phosphorous and sediment entering a tributary that flows into Chippewa Lake.

Nonpoint source pollution is the leading cause of water quality impairment in Ohio's streams and lakes. It is caused by rain or snowmelt moving over and through the ground, picking up natural and human-made pollutants and depositing them in lakes, rivers, wetlands and other waterways. Other forms of nonpoint source pollution include modifications to natural stream flow, habitat alteration and nutrients. Polluted runoff can have harmful effects on drinking water supplies, recreation, fisheries and wildlife.

In 1987, [Section 319](#) of the federal Clean Water Act created a national program to control nonpoint source pollution. Ohio EPA administers the program for U.S. EPA and distributes millions of federal dollars to projects proposed by local governments and community organizations such as watershed groups. To be eligible, grant recipients must contribute at least a 20 percent match consisting of cash or in-kind contributions or services. Grants of up to \$350,000 are awarded for three-year periods. More information on Section 319 grants is available [online](#).

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