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## **Ohio EPA Awards MORPC More Than \$26,000 Environmental Education Grant**

Ohio EPA has awarded an environmental education general grant worth \$26,608 to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission (MORPC) for a project called "Balancing Growth and Conservation." Ten grants were awarded statewide for \$330,540.

MORPC's project will use Fairfield County's agricultural economic development plan as a model for leaders in nine Central Ohio counties and six other counties around the state including Belmont, Butler, Delaware, Fayette, Licking, Madison, Mahoning, Marion, Miami, Morrow, Pickaway, Ross, Union, Washington and Wood. Education components of Fairfield County's agricultural plan have been recognized as an Ohio Environmental Education Fund Outstanding Project, educating Central Ohio residents, farmers and local officials about combining farmland preservation with smart growth.

MORPC will offer a series of 15 workshops for local elected officials and stakeholders to illustrate effective balanced growth planning with the goals of strengthening agricultural economic development while preserving agricultural land and open space. This project will concentrate on preserving farmland through the economic viability of farms, especially in the production, processing and distribution of food for local consumption. A printed and online tool kit also will be provided.

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 July 16, 2012. An electronic letter of intent to apply is due on July 9. For additional information, contact the Ohio Environmental Education Fund at (614) 644-2873 or visit its website at [www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef/](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/oeef/).

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