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## **Ohio EPA Awards Environmental Education Mini Grant Worth Nearly \$4,200 to Columbus Middle School**

Ohio EPA has awarded a \$4,183 environmental education mini grant to a Columbus City Schools' Hilltonia Middle School, to help pay for a science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) pilot project. Thirteen projects throughout the state were funded for \$50,000.

Forty 6<sup>th</sup>- 8<sup>th</sup> grade students have been selected to participate in an intervention three-year pilot club called "STEMtastic Adventures in Nature." These students are field testing backpacks and standards-aligned learning activities on environmental issues, water quality monitoring, Ohio soils and identification of native Ohio plants and animals for eventual incorporation into the school curriculum.

Ohio EPA's grant will help provide supplies and test kits for the backpacks, an outdoor learning center, student service projects, a nature art exhibit with the school's three feeder elementary schools and field trips to The Wilds, Spruce Run and a local farm. Project collaborators include John Burroughs, Lindbergh and West Mound Elementary Schools; DiPietro Farms; and The Ohio State University Project Aspire and Biochemistry Programs.

The Ohio Environmental Education Fund gives out approximately \$1 million each year for environmental education projects targeting kindergarten through university students, the general public, and the regulated community. General grants are given for projects lasting up to 30 months and costing up to \$50,000.

Mini grants are available for projects lasting up to 12 months and costing between \$500 and \$5,000. Proposals for classroom projects, conference speakers, and other activities that are eligible under the general grant program are eligible under the mini-grant program, but the application process is streamlined. Ohio EPA's Office of Environmental Education reserves up to \$50,000 each grant round to fund projects submitted under this program. Just like the general grant program, there are two mini-grant rounds each year, with the next application deadline on July 16, 2012. An electronic letter of intent to apply is due on July 9.

For more information, contact Ohio EPA's Office of Environmental Education at (614) 644-2873. Staff is available to assist potential grant applicants who contact the office before the submission deadline. Information also is available [online](#).

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