

**Ohio Environmental Education Fund  
New General Grant Awards, March 2021**

*Ohio EPA awarded the following seven new general grants for a total of \$202,399.*

**Kids That Compost**, “Kids That Compost,” S20G-026, \$50,000, Franklin County, Audience: PreKindergarten - University (Grades K-3), Contact: Michael Watkins, [michael@kidsthatcompost.org](mailto:michael@kidsthatcompost.org), (614) 214-7240

Kids That Compost is a project that increases public awareness and knowledge about environmental issues and provides the skills to make informed decisions and take responsible actions. KTC empowers kids to take ownership of their environmental education, provided by KTC. In turn they will be agents of change to educate their families, neighbors, peers, communities, teachers, administrators and municipalities on the importance of intentional and sustainable environmental food waste diversion. KTC provides project-based learning opportunities so that kids will lead as stewards of the environment and are inspired to carry out the practices into their adulthood. KTC and the Ohio EPA's missions are aligned and are committed to addressing the \*nearly 500 pounds of food waste that is thrown away each year by each typical household in Franklin County. \*Sourced from [https://epa.ohio.gov/dmwm/Home/food\\_scrap](https://epa.ohio.gov/dmwm/Home/food_scrap).

**Chagrin River Watershed Partners**, “Northeast Ohio Master Rain Gardener Program,” S20G-027, \$18,392, Ashtabula, Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Lorain, Medina, Portage, and Summit Counties, Audience: General Public (Property Owners), Contact: Laura Bonnell, [lbonnell@crwp.org](mailto:lbonnell@crwp.org), (440) 975-3870

The Northeast Ohio Master Rain Gardener program will equip residents and landscapers with the knowledge and skills they need to design, install, and maintain residential scale rain gardens. Our 2021-2022 project goal is to deliver and expand the program to reach more residents and professionals across Northeast Ohio by offering two in-person courses and two online courses. This program is designed to yield more rain gardens than a typical rain garden demonstration project, as we teach and inspire others to design and install their own gardens and become rain garden advocates to neighbors, friends, and family.

**Great Parks of Hamilton County**, “Learning and Exploration at Great Parks Nature Center at The Summit,” S20G-031, \$41,600, Hamilton County, Audience: PreKindergarten – University (Grades 3-5), Contact: Amy Roell, [aroell@greatparks.org](mailto:aroell@greatparks.org), (513) 245-7447

Great Parks Nature Center at The Summit provides opportunities to connect with nature through hands-on crafts, nature-themed activities and

live animal experiences. At the Nature Center, Great Parks provides environmental education programming for youth and adults during the school year and the summer, including weekend programming for families. Additionally, we provide family park adventures, including transportation, through field trips to one of our county parks. The goal of this initiative is to engage underserved populations within the City of Cincinnati in environmental education and recreational experiences and develop more conservation stewards for the future.

**Cincinnati Nature Center**, “Schoolyard Native Plant Program,” S20G-032, \$14,933, Clermont and Hamilton Counties, Audience: Pre-Kindergarten – University (Grades 3-5), Contact: Melissa Sabo, [msabo@cincynature.org](mailto:msabo@cincynature.org), (513) 831-1711

The Schoolyard Native Plant Program is a unique collaboration with local elementary schools that blends conservation with inquiry-based schoolyard learning. Building on the success of an existing elementary school partnership (Mulberry Elementary, Milford Exempted School District), we are seeking funding to expand the program to include two schools. The Schoolyard Native Plant Program will focus on the utilization of schoolyard garden spaces for learning and will emphasize the importance of native biodiversity on an ecosystem. Key activities include: intensive teacher training both before and after the planting project; project planning and goal identification with key teaching staff and principals; installation of native plant gardens; student programming for at least 2-3 grade levels at each school; creation of annual maintenance plan; and opportunities for community volunteers. Program activities will take place during the 2021-2022 academic year.

**The Toledo Zoo and Aquarium**, “Teaching Conservation Through Applied Technology,” S20G-036, \$26,262, Lucas County, Audience: PreKindergarten - University (Grades 9-12), Contact: Matthew David Cross, [matt.cross@toledozoo.org](mailto:matt.cross@toledozoo.org), (419) 385-5721

Toledo Zoo and Aquarium seeks to educate students and teachers on the applications of open-source DIY technology in solving environmental and conservation problems by providing training through workshops. In addition to working with high schools, we will host two open to the public workshops at the Toledo Zoo to engage the general public. Each workshop will consist of the following components: brief introduction, soldering exercise, guided GPS logger assembly, use of code to operate the loggers, data download and visualization in GIS, casing, and customization options. Attendees will leave the workshop with their creations and, with hope, a strong desire to continue

exploring innovative projects. Follow-up sessions include on-site visits (can switch to virtual), leave-behind activities, distance learning, and formation of a Google Group.

**Camp Oty'Okwa, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio, Inc.**, "Natures Classroom at Camp OtyOkwa," S20G-037, \$27,000, Hocking County, Audience: PreKindergarten - University (Grades K-8), Contact: Rick Perkins, [rperkins@bbbscentralohio.org](mailto:rperkins@bbbscentralohio.org), (740) 703-2717

Camp Oty'Okwa is designing a series of programs collectively known as "Nature's Classroom" that will enhance our existing environmental education programs already offered to more than 4,500 children in the residential camp experience. The series of programs will encompass geology, stream ecology, forest ecology, wildlife ecology, climate change, and arthropods. The programs reinforce outdoor activities where the forest, fields, and streams serve as a living laboratory to foster appreciation, deepen understanding, and encourage environmental stewardship.

**Nature Center at Shaker Lakes**, "Student Restoration of Doan Brook Floodplain Habitat," S20G-039, \$24,212, Cuyahoga County, Audience: PreKindergarten - University (Grades 4-8), Contact: Julia Mitchell, [mitchell@shakerlakes.org](mailto:mitchell@shakerlakes.org), (216) 321-5935

The Nature Center at Shaker Lakes is seeking to educate students about the importance of restoring functioning floodplain habitat within the Lake Erie watershed by involving 100 students between 4th and 12th grade in the restoration of 3.5 acres of floodplain forest and wetland habitat along Doan Brook, a direct tributary to Lake Erie and an Audubon Important Bird Area. As part of the project, the Nature Center will develop new service-learning curriculum based on Project WET and Project WILD to meet Ohio's New Learning Standards and make the restoration a valuable learning experience for participating students. Permanent, interactive signage will be installed in the restoration areas and time-lapse videos created to educate the Nature Center's 140,000 annual visitors about the restoration that was undertaken and its benefits to water quality, stream function and biodiversity.

For more information, contact:

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