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## **Ohio EPA Awards Environmental Education Mini Grant Worth Nearly \$5,000 to Soil and Water Conservation District in Meigs and Athens Counties**

Ohio EPA has awarded a \$4,931 environmental education mini grant to the Meigs Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) to increase citizen stewardship of the Leading Creek watershed in Meigs and Athens Counties. Nine projects throughout the state were funded for \$50,000.

The Meigs SWCD project aims to build support for watershed enhancement projects. Historically, Leading Creek and its tributaries have been impaired by acid mine drainage. The grant will be used to educate, train and equip volunteers to monitor the watershed and provide them hands-on activities ranging from litter cleanups to chemical water sampling. The volunteer monitors also will have the opportunity to learn about environmental careers by becoming certified through the Ohio EPA Volunteer Monitoring Qualified Data Collection Program. This program will teach volunteers how to visually assess the watershed and conduct water quality sampling.

Volunteers can use the data and information gathered through this outreach program to educate other residents in the area about Leading Creek. The Meigs SWCD hopes the project will strengthen the local community by creating opportunities for citizens to interact and work together to prevent future watershed degradation.

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 15, 2010. An electronic letter of intent to apply is due on July 8.

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 on Ohio EPA's Web page at [www.epa.ohio.gov/oeel](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/oeel).