

December 2021

\$5 Million in Erosion Emergency Assistance Grants Awarded



Nine Ohio communities will soon have more resilient shorelines thanks to [Erosion Emergency Assistance Grants](#) awarded by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). The funds are to assist with projects that are necessary for the immediate preservation of the health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the local subdivision requesting assistance.

The most recent Ohio Capital Bill, enacted through Senate Bill 310, provides \$5 million for Erosion Emergency Assistance Grants to be awarded to local subdivisions. Recipients included Put-in-Bay Township, City of Lorain, Cuyahoga County, City of Euclid, City of Willoughby, City of Eastlake, Village of Lakeline, City of Mentor, and Village of Geneva-on-the-Lake. Click [here](#) for a full list of projects funded through this program.

Migrant Students Connect with Estuary Monitoring



Inspired by a National Estuarine Research Reserve (NERR) System diversity, equity, inclusion and justice initiative, the [Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve](#) recently partnered with the Willard Ohio Migrant Education Program to engage 25 students in hands-on monitoring and stewardship. Children from migrant farming families often change schools throughout the year. They also face more barriers to education and have higher drop-out rates than their peers. Some may call Ohio home for only a short season.

“I was not part of a migrant family, but I am of Latino descent, and I wanted to provide these kids with the opportunity to see someone who looks like them and speaks their language in the environmental field,” said Sebastian Mejia, Stewardship Coordinator at the Reserve. “There are real opportunities for them in monitoring and stewardship, and the Reserve is well-resourced to share that.” Through the program, the students and teachers received handheld weather meters and rain gauges to install a new Community Collaborative Rain, Hail & Snow Network station (CoCoRaHS). The Reserve engages students in a two-part lesson on weather and watersheds.

Students Learn About Ecosystems and Water Quality



Students from a number of schools in the region visited Old Woman Creek NERR this autumn to learn about water quality, coastal ecosystems, wetlands, invasive species, and more. Recent classes came from Norwalk Intermediate School, Huron Intermediate School, Edison Intermediate School, Marysville High School, Champion High School, BGSU Firelands College, Cleveland State University, and Oberlin College as well as groups of homeschool students.

Pictured here are fifth graders using microscopes to look at plankton they collected during their canoe experience.

National Estuaries Day Celebrated



National Estuaries Day was celebrated at Old Woman Creek NERR on September 25. Among the public activities offered were guided canoe tours, guided hikes, a beach clean-up, and overview of water quality research activities, nature crafts, and more. National Estuaries Day gives visitors the chance to see and explore some areas of the Reserve that are not usually open to the public. Pictured here are visitors using laboratory microscopes to look at plankton collected from the estuary while Research Coordinator, Steve McMurray, provides information about the plankton and why it is important to study them.

Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program Moves Toward Approval



The [Ohio Coastal Nonpoint Pollution Control Program](#), a partnership-based program to improve Lake Erie water quality through reductions in polluted runoff, is moving through the federal approval process. As part of this process, a public comment period was posted in the Federal Register on November 3, 2021. Federal approval for the Coastal Nonpoint Program is a joint process through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Training Opportunities Available



The [Ohio Coastal Training Program](#), within Old Woman Creek, is offering a number of technical training opportunities in coming months. A series of virtual workshops focused on mobilizing science engagement runs through March 2022. More information on this training initiative, offered in conjunction with Lake Superior NERR, can be found [here](#).

Additional upcoming training opportunities are listed below. Contact [Emily Kuzmick](#), Coastal Training Program Coordinator, for more information on any of the events.

- Clean Water Contractor Expo: February 24 at the Huron County Fairgrounds: This year's Expo will be split into two half-day events: one morning (7am-11am) & one afternoon session (12pm-4pm).
- Nature-Based Shorelines Certification: March 2-3 in Huron and Sandusky. This certification will equip shoreline practitioners with classroom and hands-on training tailored to Ohio's Lake Erie shore.
- Sustainability in Restaurants Needs Assessment: Local restaurants can participate by taking [this survey](#).
- Volunteers for monitoring at Old Woman Creek are always welcome. Contact Emily for more information.

Headquartered in Sandusky, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Office of Coastal Management is primarily responsible for the administration of two state-federal partnership programs focused on improving Ohio's Lake Erie coastal resources. Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve, based in Huron, and the Ohio Coastal Management Program, based in Sandusky, are both partnership programs between ODNR and NOAA.

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