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## Local soil and water group gets \$50,000

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The Lake County-based Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development Council has collected a \$50,000 state environmental grant.

With the money, the Council will have the resources to continue producing, promoting and airing the "Conservation Crusader" video and live segments on WKYC-TV.

"Conservation Crusader" are short, live as well as video presentations on various conservation topics being promoted by Northeast Ohio's nine soil and water conservation districts," said John Niedzialek, the Western Reserve Council's coordinator.

"What makes this program so exciting is that we not only reach a new audience with the message of water quality but also a much larger audience."

Topics such as the need for healthy quality protection, watershed needs, and composting/taking care of yard waste are all fuel for the Crusader program, said Niedzialek.

"We've been trying to get this program started for five years and last year we were able to kick it off with grants from the Kent Smith Foundation and the James C. Storer Foundation," Niedzialek said. "This is an excellent way to get additional grant funding to build on what these two groups started, for which we are very grateful."

Niedzialek said the money will come from the Ohio Environmental Education Fund, administered by the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency.

The Western Reserve Council is one of nine Ohio communities and organizations to receive a total of \$350,000 to support environmental education programs throughout the state, said Ohio EPA spokesman Mike Settles.

"Our Environmental Education Fund is a great program that can do better things for the community," Settles said.

"Each grant recipient must apply a 10-percent match, too."

Settles also says the program is funded through civil penalties collected from air and water pollution violators.

"Typically, we award grants twice a year, and given that we regulate thousands of facilities throughout the state, some of whom violate the law must pay civil penalties," Settles said. "This way we can put those monies to better use, making something good happen out of something that was bad."

Western Reserve Resource Conservation and Development Council emphasizes environmental education through regional projects, such as the highly regarded 2008 Entrepreneurial Farming and Environmental Sustainability in Northeast Ohio project, also funded through the Ohio Environmental Education Fund.

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