

# NEWS RELEASE

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Contact: Mary Pat McCarthy: mccarthy@tmacog.org

419.241.9155 ext 106

## **“Shocking” Results from the Portage River**

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is doing a comprehensive study of the Portage River. As part of their collection of data, a team demonstrated a “fish shocking” technique that helps the EPA determine the health of aquatic life in the river.

On the afternoon of July 17, the three-person team from the EPA demonstrated their technique for a crowd of 40 people in Elmore. They roll a wagon of sorts into the river. Three barrels float and support a frame that holds a generator and live wells. A charged rod in the water first attracts fish, and then temporarily stuns them allowing the team to net fish. After about 15 minutes of netting, the generator is turned off and the team inspects their catch. Holly Tucker, environmental specialist for the EPA, explained that they inspect the fish for health, looking for skin lesions or other signs of bad health. They note what type of fish are found and in what quantity. The fish are then released unharmed and swim away.

At the SR 51 bridge in Elmore, where the Portage is shallow and rocky, Holly Tucker and her team found nine varieties of fish in good health. They identified gold red horse and red horse suckers, small mouth bass, rock bass, green darters, spot fin shiners, stone roller minnows, another variety of shiner, and a large channel catfish. The stone roller minnows are herbivores, ingesting algae. Large numbers of stone roller minnows are one indication that the water contains too much fertilizer, which stimulates excess algal growth. Preliminary tests show that water quality in the Portage is good. The EPA will be working for the next 18 months or more to complete their study and inventory of the Portage River.



*Holly Tucker, environmental specialist for the Ohio EPA, shows a sample of fish found in the Portage River in Elmore and explains the significance of her findings*



*The EPA fish shocking team works beneath the old railroad bridge in Elmore.*