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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STUDENTS EXPLORE LAKE ECOLOGY FROM CANOES AT DOE RUN

On Wednesday, October 14th, a small group of 10th graders from Community Christian Academy in Independence paddled canoes around Doe Run Lake to observe turtles and great blue herons, and to monitor water quality conditions as part of a Lake Ecology 101 field trip, organized by the Foundation for Ohio River Education (FORE).

The students were assisted by FORE education staff and by a water quality expert from the Kentucky Division of Water. Canoes and safety support, as well as background information on the lake, were provided by Thaxton's Canoe Rentals and Kenton County Parks and Recreation.

After collecting their samples from canoes, students tested nutrient and *E. coli* levels in an outdoor lab that included microscopes for identifying algae and small aquatic invertebrates. Results showed healthy lake conditions, with an abundance of copepods, which are microscopic crustaceans.

"Our Lake Ecology program provided a wonderful opportunity for students to safely explore a beautiful waterway in their own backyard, while doing real-world science," said Heather Mayfield, FORE's Director. FORE is a non-profit organization affiliated with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), an interstate pollution control agency for the Ohio River.

FORE reaches over 6,000 residents in the Ohio River Basin each year through programs that get people on the water and engaged in protecting the cultural, ecological and economic value of waterways. Since 2011, FORE has conducted the River REACH program, a floating classroom for the Ohio River in partnership with Queen City Riverboats. While COVID-19 has temporarily sidelined the River REACH program, FORE has found new ways to safely engage students in studying area waterways.

In addition to the Lake Ecology 101 program, FORE has also conducted virtual creek and pond field trips, and has provided training and supplies for teachers, home school groups and parents to conduct creek sampling activities during the pandemic. For more information, contact Heather Mayfield at hmayfield@orsanco.org.

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