

# River Waves

December 2019

CELEBRATING 19 YEARS

Volume 16

Protecting Water Quality, Restoring Habitat, and Educating and Training  
the Next Generation of Conservation Stewards.



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# From the Executive Director

This year was an exciting and challenging one for ORF and the conservation community. On the one hand, ORF saw increased interest in the Mussels in the Classroom (MIC) program (see below). However, that was tempered by a regulatory climate that saw one agency move to make Ohio River water quality standards voluntary and continued roll back of federal environmental regulations.

ORF and its partners are looking at different strategies to prevent further regulatory rollbacks that threaten environmental achievements of the last several decades.

Our education programs (p. 3) continue to expand and grow. The MIC program in particular is gaining new fans.

For 2020, we're excited to receive funding to lead further development of the ORV Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) (p. 4).

We also took major steps to increase our general public connections and visibility. Those included providing volunteer opportunities through our community partnerships and hosting our third Cincinnati Coffee Festival (p. 5).

For next year, we are looking to dramatically increase our public visibility and gain new friends, members, and donors.

Please follow us on Facebook and [www.ohioriverfdn.org](http://www.ohioriverfdn.org) for up-to-date news.

From the watershed,  
Rich

RiverWaves is published by the Ohio River Foundation. Founded in 2000, Ohio River Foundation is dedicated to protecting and improving the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River and all waters in its 11-state watershed.

ORF works towards these goals through environmental education and conservation activities that serve to inspire environmental stewardship for the benefit and enjoyment of all current and future citizens.

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## River Explorer and Mussels in the Classroom



Analyzing water quality using a turbidity tube



Feeding the mussels

ORF's River Explorer and Mussels in the Classroom (MIC) programs give children throughout the region hands-on science learning experiences. River Explorer lets students visit local waterways and be scientists for the day as they learn about water quality and ecology. MIC lets students care for and study freshwater mussels without leaving their classrooms.

In 2019, the two programs engaged more than 5,500 students from 43 schools. Since 2005, ORF has educated more than 45,000 students.

**Thank you to our major funders for helping support our education programs: Charles Dater Foundation, Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, Ashland, Inc., Toyota, Inc., Duke Energy Foundation, International Paper, The Sutphin Family Foundation, PNC-Schroth Charitable Trust, and Valvoline, Inc.**

To support River Explorer or Mussels in the Classroom programs, please contact us at [orf@ohioriverfdn.org](mailto:orf@ohioriverfdn.org).

# Ohio River Valley Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area

## *Ohio River Foundation receives funding to begin strategy implementation*

ORF has received a grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to remove and control invasive species in Greater Cincinnati and implement the Ohio River Valley Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) strategic plan. The Ohio River Valley CISMA focuses on coordinating the actions of multiple parties to control the spread of invasive plant species and educate the public regarding their participation in controlling and reducing these invasive plant populations.

An invasive species is one that is not native to a specific location and has a tendency to spread and cause damage to the environment, economy, and/or human health. A non-native species is one that is introduced, but not necessarily invasive. Once a species is introduced, it may become invasive if it no longer has natural predators and out-competes native plants in use of resources such as space, sunlight, water, and nutrients.

Non-native invasive plants often provide poor habitat for the local fauna, such as birds and butterflies. Some of the most prevalent invasives in the Greater Cincinnati area include Amur Honeysuckle, Callery Pear, and Lesser Celandine.



With the increasing awareness of the invasive species issue, several hundred CISMAs have been created across the country, but there are few in the 200,000-square-mile Ohio River watershed. These CISMAs facilitate collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries for more effective invasive plant management.

### *ORV CISMA Steering Committee members:*

Ohio River Foundation  
Great Parks Hamilton County  
Cincinnati Parks  
Clermont County Park District  
Ohio Dept. Agriculture  
Ohio Invasive Plant Council  
Oxbow, Inc.

Little Miami Conservancy  
Boone National Forest  
Natorp's Nursery  
Boone County Conservation District  
Cincinnati Nature Center  
KY Nature Preserves Commission

# Third Annual Cincinnati Coffee Festival



Ohio River Foundation brought the Cincinnati Coffee Festival to the Duke Energy Convention Center in downtown Cincinnati October 11-13. The event included a “trade day” on Friday for coffee shop owners, baristas and people interested in getting into the coffee business; The Art of Coffee, a showcase of coffee-themed art; Latte in Action, where attendees watched a barista creating latte art; the Latte Art Throwdown; and a cupping station, where guests had the opportunity to sample coffee like a coffee roaster from several Central American countries.

Not only is the event a great fundraiser, but it also helps us educate the public to connect public health and a healthy environment. After all, as our event tagline says, “Without Great Water, You Can’t Have Great Coffee.”

We’d like to thank our event sponsors: Seven Hills Coffee Roasters, Deeper Roots Coffee, La Terza Coffee, Carabello Coffee, Park National Bank, Seven Hills Consulting, Allegra 360 Printing, REI, Snowville Creamery, and Alpine Valley Pure Service. We also appreciate our staff and volunteers who helped make this event a success.



Latte Art Throwdown judges and winners



Latte Art in Action booth



Bru Bothers - People's Choice winners



Enough said!

# Wild & Scenic Film Festival



The persistence of a regular citizen helps expose the Flint water crisis and sparks government action. Tiny bats swoop across the Sea of Cortez, catching fish that elude researchers with high-tech gear. A 97-year-old man races up the northeastern U.S.'s tallest peak, the memory of his late wife pushing him forward.

These are just three of the 12 engaging short films that were part of this year's "Wild & Scenic Film Festival on Tour." Ohio River Foundation (ORF) brought this national showcase of environmental and adventure films back to Cincinnati on Saturday, June 8. The third annual event was at Great Parks of Hamilton County's Winton Centre.

This event sought to inspire environmental activism and leave attendees feeling like they can make a difference.

Thank you to our event sponsors: Busam Subaru, Lykins Energy Solutions, ITA Audio Visual Solutions, Great Parks of Hamilton County, Rhinegeist Brewery, ICON Solar, Benchmark Outdoor Outfitters, Solgen Power, Buckeye Fly Fishers, and Rivers Unlimited.



Attendees at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival

# Restoration

## Cincinnati Parks Partnership

We had a wonderful year working on several properties with our Cincinnati Parks partner and volunteers. We removed hundreds of invasive plants in Alms Park, Little Duck Creek, and Avon Woods Nature Preserve. Ohio River Foundation is teaming up with Cincinnati Parks in an effort to help restore the city's parks and properties to their natural state.

Drawing on our long history of volunteer-fueled habitat restoration work, ORF is helping recruit and supervise volunteers for Cincinnati Parks projects. ORF has received a grant from Aveda to support this work.



ORF Restoration Program Specialist Jessica Tegge holds a removed invasive species plant

## Blue Ash Summit Park

As a part of our contract with The City of Blue Ash to help control invasive plant species in Summit Park, we attacked the hundreds of cattails that were populating the restored creek and wetlands this year. We will revisit the area again in 2020 to see if any cattails survived. We also plan to focus on other invasive species in the park.

## Ohio River Foundation Welcomes New Board Member



We are happy to announce that Bill Hayes has been elected to the ORF board of trustees. Bill is an environmental attorney in Cincinnati with the law firm of Frost Brown Todd. He has been practicing for 30 years and is a graduate of Vermont Law School and Capital University Law School, and Dennison University. He lives in Terrace Park, Ohio.

“I bring enthusiasm to causes I believe in, and ORF’s mission matches my passion.”

Bill also has a family connection to ORF. His son participated in the 2014 Youth Conservation program. “This was literally a life-changing experience for him that shaped his future academic and career paths. Seeing the direct on-the-ground work that ORF accomplishes and its impact is impressive, but being able to see how that same effort impacts future generations is an uncommon privilege.”

We are excited to have Bill on our team as we look to expand our reach, activities, and impact in 2020.

**Celebrating another great year for Ohio River Foundation!**

