



2022

ANNUAL REPORT

OhioRiverFdn.org



From the Board Chair & Executive Director

After 22 years, Ohio River Foundation (ORF) has seen an inflection point in its growth. In comparison to other parts of the country, the Ohio River Watershed has historically been the poor stepsister of conservation funding. Now, after years of building our network of private funders and establishing the building blocks of a growing restoration program, we are seeing the fruits of our work: more funders, more full-time staff, greater program reach, and — most importantly — greater impact!

Fueled by increases in grant funding, event revenue, service and contract revenue, and individual and corporate contributions, the future looks very bright for ORF to continue to be the leader of conservation efforts in the Ohio River Watershed.

What also has us extremely excited is the new staff we're continuing to add and the tremendous impact they're already having. Our education programs had continued success last year and are poised for growth this year led by Melinda Voss, our new Education Programs Manager. Our Restoration Program had another solid year, and we have added additional projects for 2023, including planting thousands of trees and removing two barriers on Kentucky rivers. We also strengthened our connections with our regional and federal partners to continue to focus on dangers and risks to water quality posed by "forever" (aka bioaccumulative) and other toxic chemicals, nutrient pollution, microplastics, and other pollution threats in the Ohio River watershed.

The impact of our work has been tremendous over the past 20+ years, but we're just getting started and looking forward to an outstanding 2023.

From all of us at Ohio River Foundation, thank you for your support.



Bill Hayes

William Hayes
Board Chairman
Ohio River Foundation



Rich Cogen

Rich Cogen
Executive Director
Ohio River Foundation



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Staff

- **Rich Cogen** - Executive Director
- **Evan Banzhaf** – Lead Educator, Education Programs Coordinator
- **Ray Bowers** – River Explorer Educator
- **Sara Brandts** – Membership Coordinator, Lead Educator
- **Mary Henkener** - River Explorer Educator
- **Bernie Moller** – Restoration Program – Projects Specialist, Senior Educator/Chief Scientist
- **Bethany Miller** – Development & Communication Manager
- **Julie Rizzo** – Senior River Explorer Educator
- **Kathryn Stonesmyth** - River Explorer Educator & Restoration Program Specialist
- **Jessica Tegge** – Restoration Program Manager
- **Melinda Voss** - Education Programs Manager

Welcome to ORF!



New Board Members

We are excited to welcome Chief Sustainability Officer at Fifth Third Bank Michael Faillo and former Regional President - Huntington National Bank Kevin Jones as new board members. We look forward to their leadership and support over the coming years!



Michael Faillo



Kevin Jones

New Staff

ORF is pleased to welcome Melinda Voss as our new Education Programs Manager. She'll be leading the growth of ORF's environmental education programs including River Explorer, Mussels in the Classroom, and the summer Student Conservation Leaders program. The team is also excited to welcome Kathryn Stonesmyth as a new River Explorer Educator and Restoration Program Specialist.



Melinda Voss



Kathryn Stonesmyth

Ohio River Foundation



Our Mission

For more than 20 years, Ohio River Foundation (ORF) has worked diligently to protect and improve the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River and its watershed. Our efforts have been instrumental in providing and restoring climate change resilient habitats.

About Us

Ohio River Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 2000 by a group of citizens who were concerned about the Ohio River and saw the need for increased response to the degradation of this valuable natural resource. ORF is dedicated to protecting and improving the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River and all waters in its 14-state watershed.

What We Do

ORF works towards these goals through environmental education and conservation activities that serve to inspire environmental stewardship and bolster climate change resiliency for native species, habitats, and communities.

ORF has grown to offer programs in education and stewardship that reach thousands of schoolchildren each year and touch the lives of thousands more citizens by protecting water quality and improving quality of life.

Why We Do It

The Ohio River Watershed is a source of drinking water to millions of people and home to a wonderful species-diverse ecosystem.

The health of the river and its tributaries affects the quality of life for everyone in the watershed. That means Ohio River Foundation's constituency is all 30 million people living in the Ohio River Watershed (approximately 10% of the U.S. population).

Since 2000, ORF has:



Educated more than
58,000 students



Removed
5 dangerous
dams



Removed
475,600 invasive
plants



Planted 15,710
trees



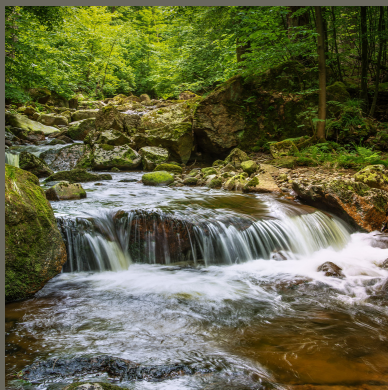
Programs

ORF works to protect and restore the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River Watershed through advocacy, habitat restoration, and school education and youth programs.



Restoration

Ohio River Foundation's restoration work bolsters climate change resiliency for native species, habitats, and communities. Our work includes invasive species removal, native plantings, and barrier removals.



Advocacy

Ohio River Foundation is a strong voice for protecting and restoring the Ohio River and all waters in its watershed. We work at local, state, and federal levels for effective laws and regulations that will reduce pollution, restore vital natural systems like forests and wetlands, and encourage smart growth in our communities.



Education

Through our education programs, we're not just helping improve STEM academic skills, we're also educating the next generation of environmental stewards, voters and government leaders. Thousands of students in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky participate each year.



Restoration

The ORF restoration team continued its hard work in 2022 removing everything from Callery Pear and Amur Honeysuckle to Common Teasel and Poison Hemlock. Across 30 acres, they cleared areas of invasive plant species, planted new native plants, and preserved existing restoration work at five sites across Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky. Nearly 150 volunteers logged more than 400 hours over the course of 14 volunteer events.

By the Numbers

75,600

Invasives Removed

30

Acres Cleared

110

Trees Planted



Sites worked in 2022 included: Kingswood Park (Deerfield Township), Summit Park (Blue Ash), Alms Park (Cincinnati), Blue Ash Golf Course, Sleepy Hollow Conservation area (Maysville)

ORV CISMA (Ohio River Valley Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)



We received expanded funds to support our ORV CISMA efforts in 2022 thanks to a generous grant from the L&L Nippert Charitable Foundation. ORV CISMA also hosted two webinars and launched a new website tracking tool to allow public and private property owners to log the quantity and type of invasive plant species they have removed. Visit orcisma.org to learn more!


THANK YOU
to our volunteers
& supporters!




150
Volunteers



14
Events



400
Hours

Ohio River Foundation would like to thank all of our generous restoration supporters including Accenture, Aveda, L.L. Nippert Foundation, and The Duke Energy Foundation.



Restoration (Project Specific)

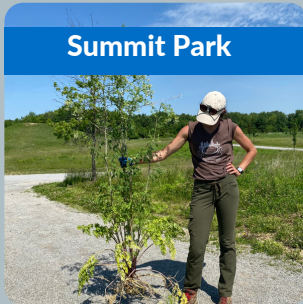
ORF-Led Projects

Kingswood Park



- 12.5 acres protected
 - 34,000 invasive plants and trees removed
 - 110 native trees, grasses, shrubs, and wildflowers protected
 - 7 community volunteer events
 - 37 volunteers
 - 140 hours volunteer participation
-

Summit Park



- 15 acres protected
 - 40,000 invasive plants and trees removed
 - 4 community volunteer events
 - 31 volunteers
 - 98 hours volunteer participation
-

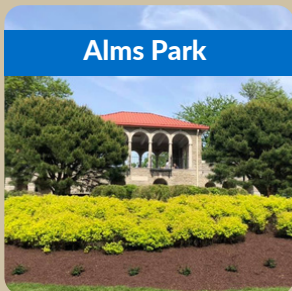
Blue Ash Golf Course



NEW in 2022

- Implemented Blue Ash Golf Course prairie management
- Removed all non-native invasive and aggressive species in Prairie 1 and maintained progress in Prairie 2
- Goals: Pollinator habitat and ecological hub for Blue Ash

Alms Park



Additional Partnerships

- Continued partnership with Alms Park Allies and Cincinnati Parks (ORF participates in, supports, and helps promote a number of volunteer events throughout the year)
- 69 volunteers*
- Approximately 207 hours volunteer participation*

**Not reflected in the total hours/volunteer numbers on previous page. This is in addition to ORF-led restoration projects.*



Education



Through our education programs, we're not just providing hands-on STEM experiences; we're also educating the next generation of environmental stewards, voters, and government leaders.

We provide programs that are affordable and meet a critical need for quality environmental science education. Plus they are fun, inspiring, and memorable!

Since 2005, ORF has educated more than 58,000 students through our Mussels in the Classroom and River Explorer programs. In 2022, more than 5,000 students across 47 schools participated in our programs. Classes participating in the program saw an average of 30-40% improvement in their knowledge of watershed conservation topics after attending our education programs.

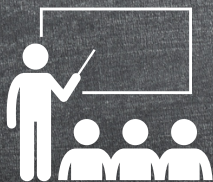
Mussels in the Classroom

Through ORF's Mussels in the Classroom program (MIC), students participate in an informative education program and then are tasked to care for and observe freshwater mussels in their classroom for 2 weeks. ORF launched MIC, the only program of its kind, in 2017.

River Explorer

River Explorer is an outdoor learning lab that invites students to wade into local rivers and streams where they experience hands-on STEM education about the Ohio River and its watershed. Thousands of students participate each year in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky.

2022 - BY THE NUMBERS



5,135
Students



47
Schools

Thank you to our major funders for helping to support our education programs: Charles Dater Foundation, Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, Toyota Motor Manufacturing - Kentucky, Honda Manufacturing, International Paper, The Gardner Family Foundation, PNC Charitable Trusts - Josephine Schell Russell Trust, The Marge & Charles Schott Foundation, Valvoline, Inc., Harrison Family Foundation, Andrew Jergens Foundation, and Sullivan Family Foundation.



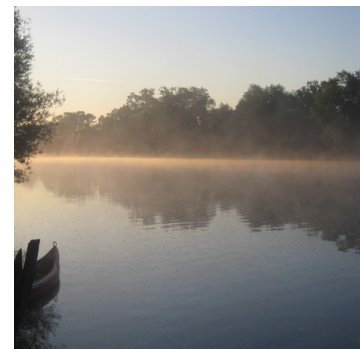
Advocacy

In 2022, we continued to be a voice for protecting and restoring the Ohio River and all waters in its watershed. Unfortunately, 2022 saw reports about toxic "forever" chemicals, microplastics, and other risks to environmental and public health.

Along with other environmental organizations, ORF signed onto several letters and petitions pertaining to water quality issues, including one urging Congress to pass the STREAM Act to advance the Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines to help clean up acid mine drainage pollution in waterways in coal mining regions.

This year marked the 50th anniversary of the Clean Water Act. ORF and other Ohio River regional watershed groups including Three Rivers Waterkeeper, West Virginia River Coalition, and Kentucky Waterways Alliance worked together to highlight some of the biggest challenges facing water quality in the Ohio River Watershed, and the best ways to protect this integral natural resource going forward through events, awareness campaigns, and public relations. Topics included "forever" chemical pollution, the proposed petrochemical buildout in the Ohio River corridor, microplastics pollution, nutrient pollution, the regulatory fixation on "the solution to pollution is dilution," and the associated failure of the pollution permitting regulatory system.

In 2023, we will continue to support the local, regional, and national groups that work together to fight petrochemical buildout, hold producers of PFAS and other harmful chemicals accountable, and push for regulations that safeguard our environment and water.



Key Issues



Nutrient Pollution



Petrochemical Buildout



"Forever" Chemicals
(PFOA and PFAS)



CWA: 50th Anniversary



Cincinnati Coffee Festival



Without Great Water, You Can't Have Great Coffee

Ohio River Foundation presented the fifth annual Cincinnati Coffee Festival at the iconic Cincinnati Music Hall this past October. The event, which has grown to be the premier coffee festival in the Midwest, was a fantastic success raising more than **\$100,000** to support our work!

More than 4,000 guests joined nearly 50 vendors including world-class roasters, coffee shops, purveyors of fine food, and professional baristas to enjoy hundreds of free tastings of the finest coffees, teas, pastries, chocolates, and savory foods. The weekend festival included live music, latte art demos, and demonstrations by industry experts.

The festival featured the always popular Latte Art Throwdown, featuring celebrity judge Local 12 news anchor Bob Herzog.



Since 2017, Cincinnati Coffee Festival has been taking steps to drastically reduce its landfill-bound waste. In 2022, Cincinnati Coffee Festival's composting efforts collected 2,538 lbs. (640 gallons) of compostable materials and food waste. That converts to removing 30,000 miles of driving emissions from the atmosphere!

Thank you to our 2022 event sponsors! Ernst & Young, Miir, Raymond James, Racket Media, Everything Cincy, Green River Distilling Company, Word Centric, Viva Coffee Roasters, Busam Subaru, Truepoint Wealth Counsel, Horan Wealth Management, Allegra, William Hayes - Frost Brown Todd, Seven Hills Coffee Roaster, La Terza, Deeper Roots Coffee, Carabello Coffee, Snowville Creamery, Rhino Beverage Service.

SAVE THE DATE: The 2023 Cincinnati Coffee Festival will be October 21-22 at Cincinnati Music Hall.



Wild & Scenic Film Festival

The 2022 Wild & Scenic Film Festival (WSFF) was our most successful film festival yet raising more than \$14,000!

In June, Ohio River Foundation presented the Wild & Scenic Film Festival as a hybrid event. Nearly 100 guests enjoyed a series of short films from talented environmental filmmakers from all over the world, lite bites, a cash bar, and a raffle at the Woodward Theater with an additional audience enjoying the films online through our virtual ticket option.



ORF is honored to be able to bring this program to the Cincinnati region to promote environmental activism and a love for nature through film. These films feature breathtaking locations, precious ecosystems, and inspiring people who are making a difference and stepping up for the environment every day—it's an opportunity for people to appreciate the nature all around them.

This Festival allows our team to raise important funds for our program work and bring community awareness to the connection we share with the planet and our role as stewards to keep it healthy for future generations.

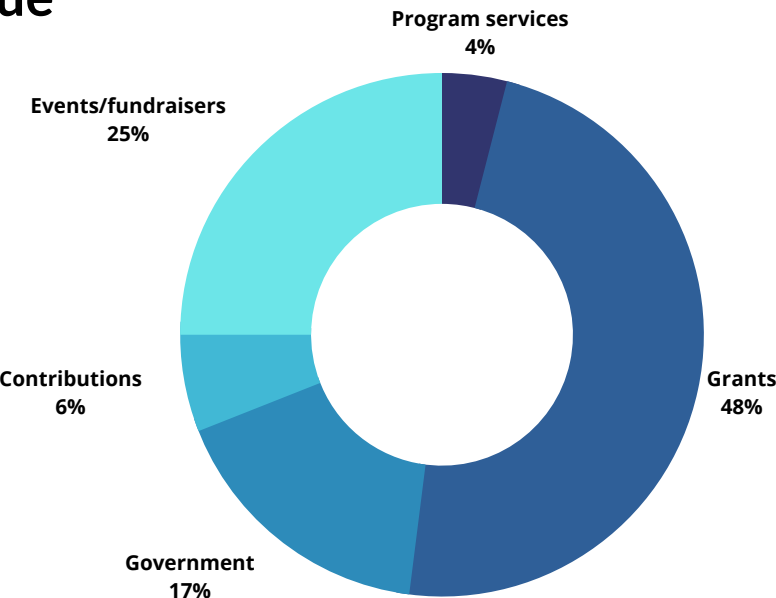


Thank you to our 2022 event sponsors! Towne Properties, TAS Foundation, Steven Early with Sibcy Cline, Michaelson Homes, Accenture, Benchmark Outdoor Outfitters, March First Brands, United Dairy Farmers, Ohio Environmental Council, Campbell Conservancy, Bill & Roseann Hayes, J.H. Warkany, the Hillside Trust, Buckeye United Fly Fishers, Rivers Unlimited, Bill & Suzanne Kite, Elaine & Rick Greiwe.



Financials

Revenue



Total = \$521,300



\$26,897

Total Contributions



197

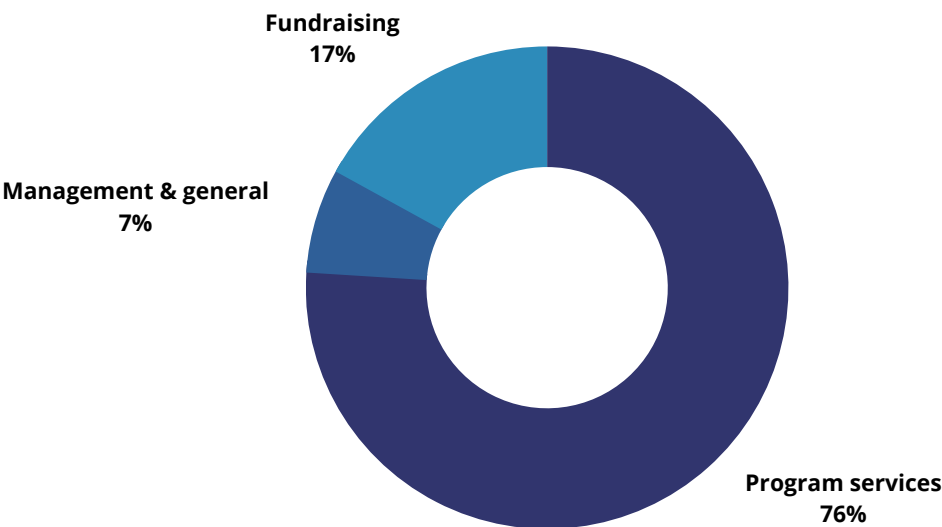
Supporter Donations



\$95

Average Donation

Expenses



Total = \$397,025



Thank You to our Donors & Sponsors!



The James J. and Joan A. Gardner
Family Foundation



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THE LOUISE TAFT
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Michael Kellum



Thank You, ORF Donors!

With donors like you, we are able to expand on our education, restoration, and advocacy programs, fulfilling our mission of protecting and restoring the Ohio River Watershed. All of this is possible because of people like you!



"ORF has been a vital voice for water quality issues for the Ohio River basin for many years. However, their greatest impact may be in the area of STEM education and youth programs, where they introduce the wonders of aquatic ecosystems to new generations of sub-/urban youth who are increasingly being isolated from these ribbons of life. "

-- Michael Elovitz , ORF Member since 2004

"I believe that education is the equalizer for helping all of us to understand the importance of issues that impact every one of us. The Ohio River Foundation works to educate all ages about the importance of water conservation and how all of us can take steps that will help in meaningful ways to improve not only the waterways but our planet. Supporting ORF is another way to contribute to the solution of not only preserving the rivers and streams but to reverse the damage of previous decades of neglect and misuse of our water resources. Working together we can assure abundance for today and for all of those who will come behind us."

-- Kimberly Luse, ORF member since 2021



Ohio River Foundation
P.O. Box 42460
Cincinnati, OH 45242



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