



# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION



2024 ANNUAL MEETING



—

# Agenda

2024 Annual  
Meeting

- **INTRO & OVERVIEW**
- **PROGRAM UPDATES**
- **FINANCE & OPERATIONS**
- **EVENTS**
- **LOOKING AHEAD**

A group of people, including children and adults, are wading in a shallow river. They are engaged in a cleanup activity, with many individuals bending over to pick up debris from the water and the rocky riverbed. The river is surrounded by lush green vegetation and trees. In the background, a black pickup truck is parked on a grassy area near a road. The scene is bright and sunny, suggesting a clear day.

# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION

For more than 20 years, Ohio River Foundation has worked diligently to protect and improve the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River and its watershed.

## Our Mission

# Ohio River Foundation

Ohio River Foundation (ORF) is dedicated to protecting and improving the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River and all waters in its 14-state watershed. 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.



*To protect the river is to protect the land, the water, and the air – the entire watershed.*



# Ohio River Foundation

## Accomplishments



**63,000**  
Students  
educated



**5**  
Barriers  
removed



**551,200**  
Invasive plants  
removed



**31,167**  
Trees planted

# Ohio River Foundation

## Our Team

### Full-Time Staff

- Rich Cogen, Executive Director
- Sara Brandts – Donor Relations & Volunteer Manager, Lead Educator
- Bethany Miller, Development & Communications Manager
- Jessica Rice, Restoration Program Manager
- Melinda Voss, Education Programs Manager

### Part-Time/Seasonal Staff

- Evan Banzhaf – Lead Educator, Educator Programs Manager
- Kathryn Stonesmyth - River Explorer Educator & Restoration Program Specialist
- Bernie Moller – Restoration Program – Projects Specialist, Senior Educator/Chief Scientist
- Mary Henkener - River Explorer Educator
- Ray Bowers – River Explorer Educator
- Julia Hessler – River Explorer Educator
- Amanda Losekamp – River Explorer Educator
- Candace Caudill – River Explorer Educator
- Christy Hardwick– River Explorer Educator

# Ohio River Foundation

## Our Board

- Bill Hayes (Board President), Attorney, Frost Brown Todd, LLC
- Michael Faillo (Treasurer), Chief Sustainability Officer, Fifth Third Bank
- Gary Allen, Vice President – Environmental, Health and Safety, Valvoline, Inc.
- John Bloch, Director of Product Development, Graeter's Ice Cream
- Kevin Jones, Independent Consultant & Former Regional President -  
Huntington Bank
- Sarah Malloy, Digital Education Development Manager, Dentsply Sirona
- Tom Sperber, CFP, Wealth Management Advisor, Northwestern Mutual
- Nicole Voss, Director, Sustainability at Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.



# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION

# PROGRAMS





Programs

# EDUCATION

**Education**

# River Explorer

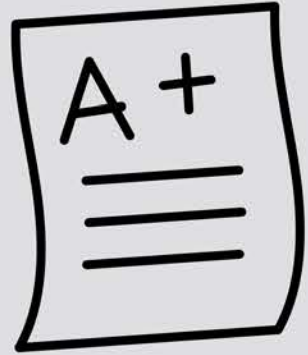
River Explorer is an outdoor learning lab that provides experiential, activity-based environmental-focused STEM education about the Ohio River and its watershed, in Ohio, Indiana and Kentucky. Thousands of students participate each year.



## River Explorer



**2,608** students participated from 34 schools.



**46%** average improvement in watershed knowledge



Greater Cincinnati Region

**2023  
HIGHLIGHTS**



Education

# Mussels in the Classroom

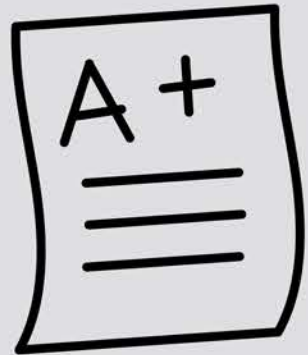
Through ORF's Mussels in the Classroom program (MIC), students get the chance to play host to and learn about freshwater mussels and their importance to river ecosystems. ORF launched MIC, the only program of its kind, in 2017.



## Mussels in the Classroom



**2,424** students participated from  
**22** schools.



**50%** average improvement  
in watershed knowledge



Greater Cincinnati, Columbus,  
and Lexington

**2023**  
**HIGHLIGHTS**



**Education**

# **Student Conservation Leadership Course**

Under the guidance of ORF staff, students gained hands-on science experience immersed in our local watershed and explored careers in conservation.

Students learned what it takes to be an environmental steward and lead their school and community toward conservation solutions.





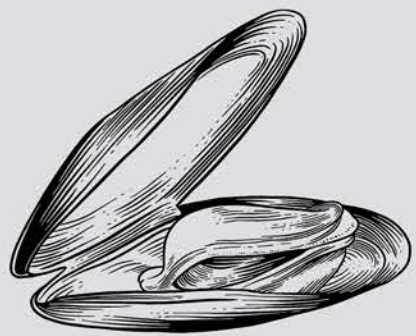
# Student Conservation Leadership Course



**13** high school students participated



**Two**, intensive week-long courses



Students completed bio-assessments, chemical analysis, invasive plant species removal, electrofishing, tagged freshwater mussels and so much more!

**2023  
HIGHLIGHTS**



Programs

# HABITAT RESTORATION



**INVASIVE  
SPECIES  
REMOVAL**

**PROJECT  
MANAGEMENT  
AND BARRIER  
REMOVALS**

**NATIVE  
PLANTINGS**



# Projects

# Highlights

- Protected over **44** acres of pollinator habitat and native woodland management
- **Thousands** of invasive plants and trees were removed by ORF and volunteers
- **15,457** native trees planted on areas previously cleared of invasive plants
- **10** community & corporate volunteer events, attended by **94** volunteers logging **295** hours of volunteer participation





**Kingswood Park**



**Blue Ash Golf Course**



**Summit Park**



**Alms Park**



## Twin Creek Live Staking



# Highlights

- **\$50,000 grant** from Cargill via the Global Water Challenge (GWC) program.
- **15,425 live stakes** along nearly **6 miles** of the creek in Lewisburg and Germantown, Ohio.
- **Multi-year project (\$125,000 committed)** - phases 2 and 3 to be completed in 2024 and 2025.



## ORV CISMA



# Highlights

- ORV CISMA is a coalition of nonprofits, agencies, and businesses working to share information and resources to control and remove invasive species in a 22-county area in the Ohio River Valley.
- Hosted Tree of Heaven and Spotted Lantern Fly webinar



**Hogg Ridge Road Dam**



**Beaver Creek Dam Removal**

# Barrier Removal

Barrier removal restores a waterway's natural flow which helps native species, eliminates algal blooms, and creates safer conditions for recreation.





Programs

# ADVOCACY

## WATER QUALITY



ORF signed on to several letters and petitions with regional and national partners pertaining to water quality issues including more stringent regulation of forever chemicals.

## SACKETT V. EPA



The court's decision will exclude tens of millions of acres of wetlands from the Clean Water Act's oversight. ORF will continue to advocate on behalf of wetlands, and the communities that depend on them.

## OHIO RIVER WATERSHED ADVOCACY COALITION



ORF is working with partners to create an advocacy coalition to collaborate on water quality issues and the development of an Ohio River watershed ecosystem restoration program, with enforceable goals.

**2023  
HIGHLIGHTS**



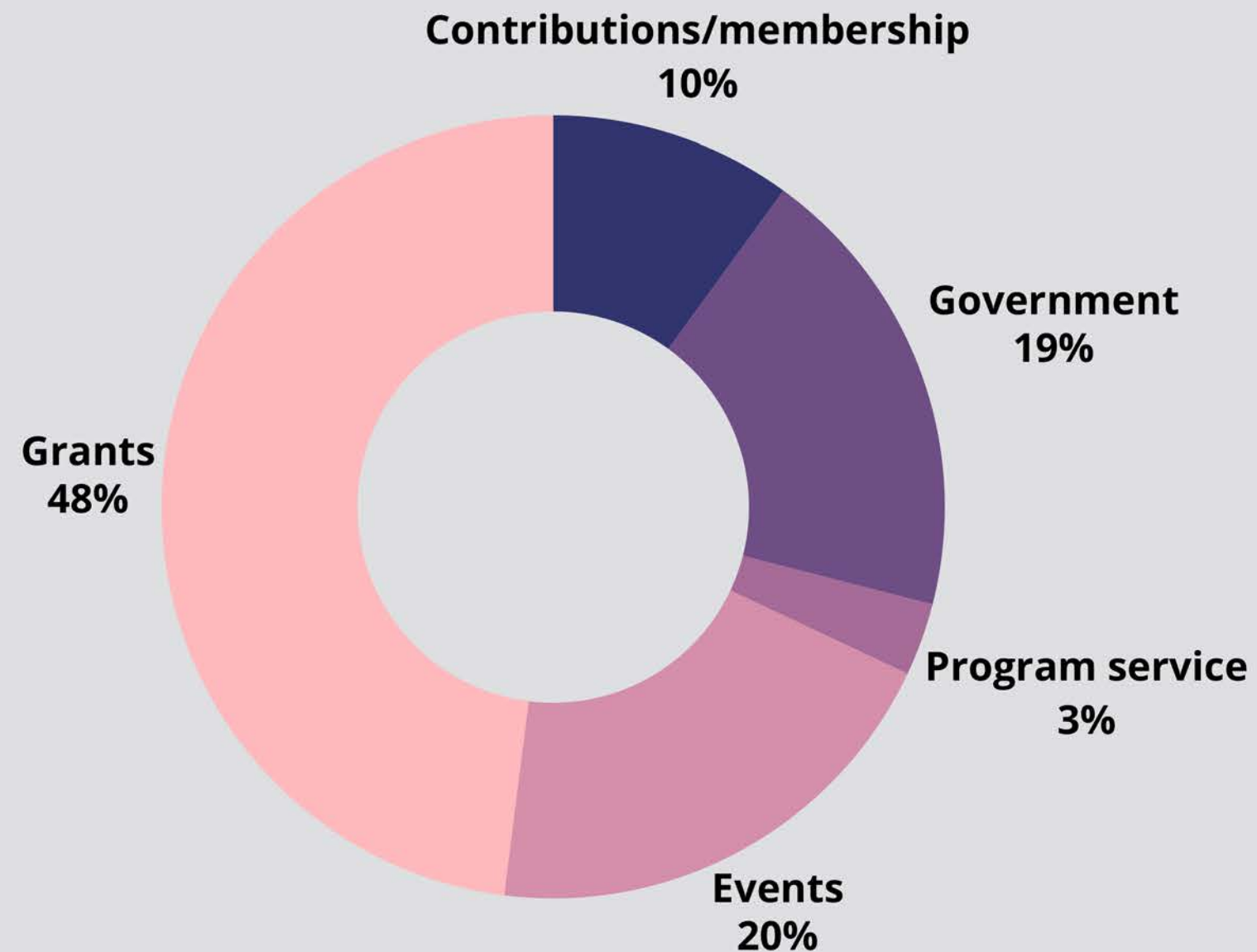
# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION

## FINANCE & OPERATIONS

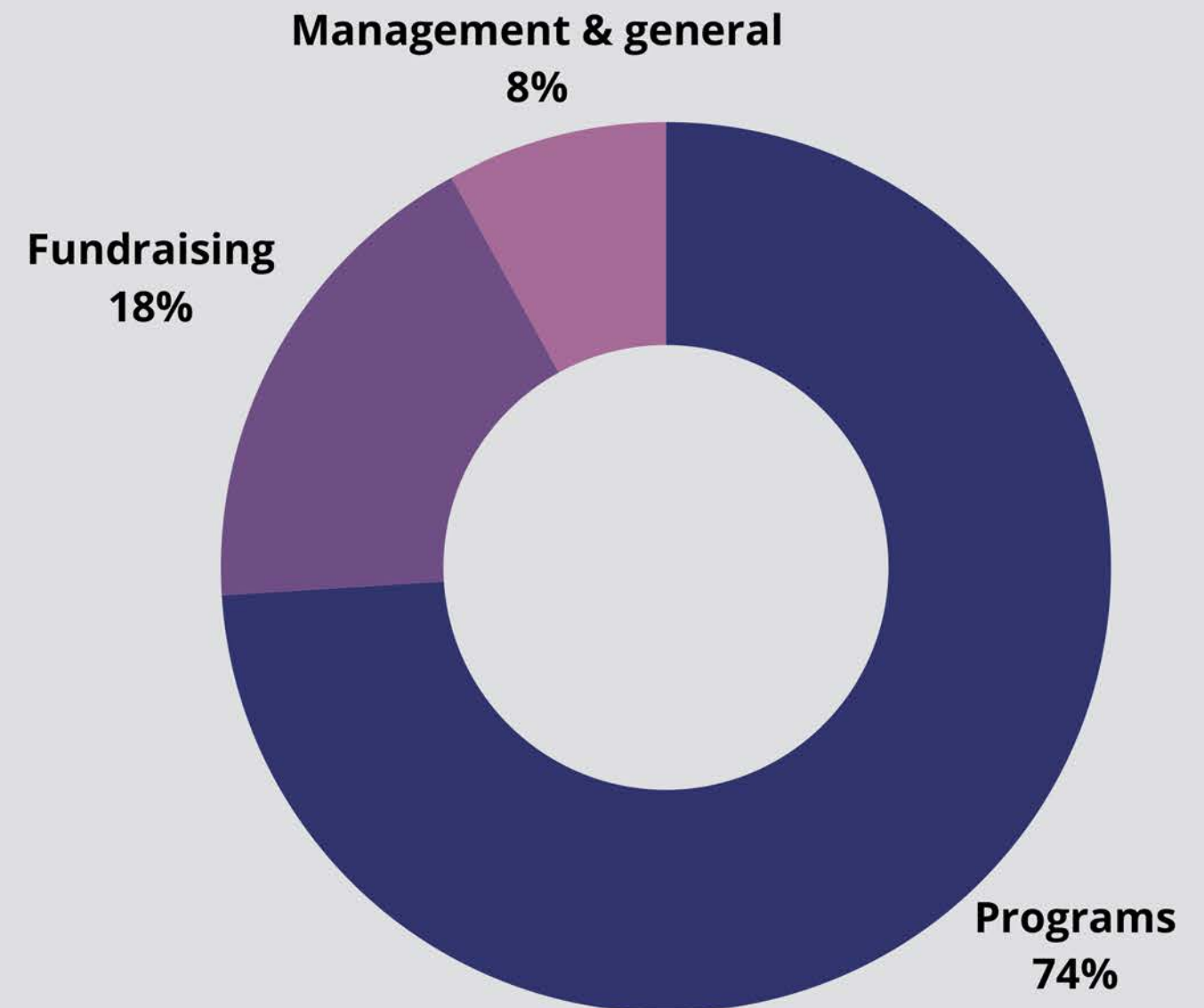
# Ohio River Foundation

## FINANCIALS

### Revenue (Total: \$774,836)



### Expenses (Total: \$575,168)



# Ohio River Foundation MAJOR FUNDERS



Carol Ann and  
Ralph V. Haile, Jr.  
FOUNDATION



The James J. and Joan A.  
Gardner Family Foundation



PNC Charitable Trusts -  
John A. Schroth Family Foundation



The Andrew Jergens  
FOUNDATION



Fifth Third Bank Trustee,  
The Jack J. Smith Jr. Charitable Trust

Nellie Leaman  
Taft Foundation



# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION

# EVENTS

# Cincinnati Coffee Festival



*Credit: Julia May Photography*



**\$100K Raised**



**50 Vendors**



**4,000 +  
Attendees**



**2,538 lbs  
Composted**

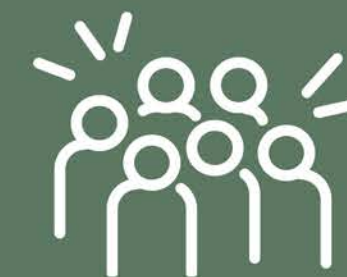
# Wild & Scenic Film Festival



\$17K Raised



11 Short Films



100 + Attendees





# OHIO RIVER FOUNDATION

## 2024 PLANS & ACTIVITIES



*2024 PLANS*

**RESTORATION  
EDUCATION  
ADVOCACY  
EVENTS**



## RESTORATION DATES

- **Corporate Volunteering:** Contact Sara Brandts-  
sarabrandts@ohioriverfdn.org
- **Community Volunteer Dates**
  - Sunday, April 7 (9 am-12 pm) @ Summit Park
  - Sunday, June 16 (9 am-12 pm) @ Kingswood Park
  - Sunday, September 15 (9 am-12 pm) @ Summit Park
  - Sunday, September 29 (9 am-12 pm) @ Kingswood Park
- **Restoration Work**
  - Twin Creek phase 2 and Whitewater live staking begins in March. Greasy Creek road/bridge work in 1Q2024.

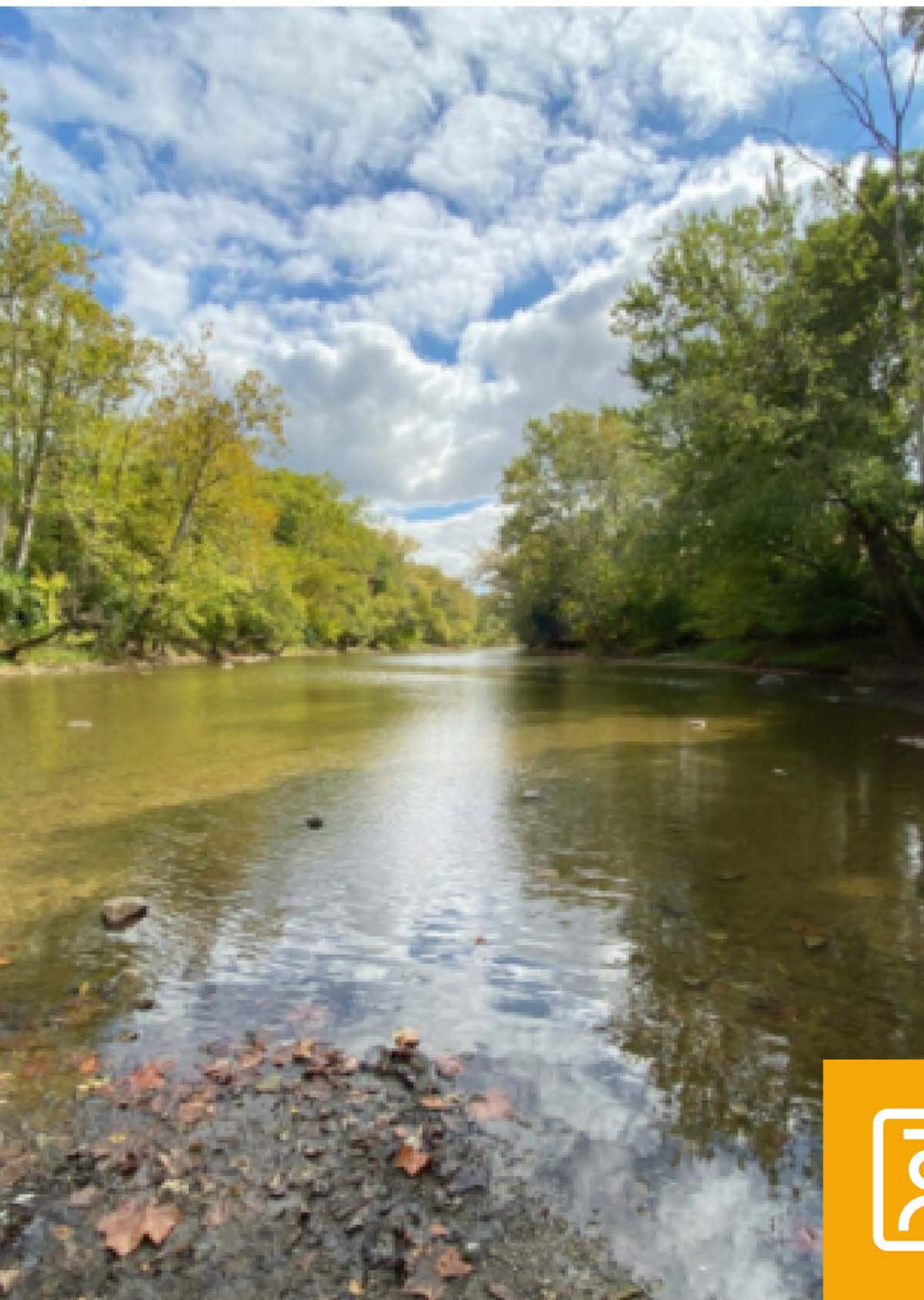
## EDUCATION PROGRAM DATES

- **Ohio River Conservation Course:** Sign-up by Friday, March 15
- **World Water Day Event:** Friday, March 22
- **Spring River Explorer Field Trips:** April Start
- **Ohio River Conservation Course:** June 24-28

## FUNDRAISING EVENTS

- **Wild & Scenic Film Festival:** Friday, April 19 @ The Woodward Theater
- **Cincinnati Coffee Festival poster contest submissions:** Friday, March 15
- **Cincinnati Coffee Festival:** October 26-27 @ Cincinnati Music Hall

2024  
ACTIVITIES



Contact **Ohio River Foundation**

# CONNECT WITH US!



[www.ohioriverfdn.org](http://www.ohioriverfdn.org)



[orf@ohioriverfdn.org](mailto:orf@ohioriverfdn.org)



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THANK YOU!



QUESTIONS?