



**2025**  
**IMPACT REPORT**

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[OhioRiverFdn.org](http://OhioRiverFdn.org)



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## From the Board Chair & Executive Director

In 2025, we continued to build on the successes of 2024, working on behalf of the millions of people who call the Ohio River Watershed home. We accomplished a lot despite a challenging year where Clean Water Act protections were under assault and federal funding cuts impacted many of our partners' operations.

We are very proud of our education team who responded to high interest in our programs resulting in another strong participation year exceeding 9,000 students. In 2026, we will introduce a financial assistance fund for underserved schools. We will also expand our capacity to increase our live mussel collection to enable us to exponentially increase participation in our Mussels in the Classroom program and hopefully increase wild populations!

Our Restoration Program continued to garner interest from new partners to remove invasive species and plant trees. In addition, we removed our 7th dam and are eyeing the next one(s), as we search for funding to support this investigative phase. And, with much excitement, in 2026, we'll be launching a multiyear project at several partner properties to establish more than 1,000 acres of pollinator habitat to support diminished populations of monarch butterflies, bumblebees, and other pollinators.

Our Advocacy Program was busy on many fronts with coalition building, Restoration Act legislation, responding to massive USEPA cuts and layoffs, and legislative and regulatory proposed rollbacks by the Ohio and Kentucky legislatures and the Trump administration. In 2026, we will continue to work with our regional and national partners to defend crucial environmental laws and regulations that safeguard public and ecological health.

Finally, we developed and adopted a comprehensive five-year strategic plan to guide our continued growth. By aligning resources, partnerships, and programs with long-term priorities, the strategic plan will ensure that we remain firmly rooted in our mission while scaling our efforts to protect and improve the water quality and ecology of the Ohio River watershed. Thank you for your continued support of Ohio River Foundation.



Rich Cogen  
Executive Director



John Bloch  
President



# Ohio River Foundation

## Our Mission

For more than 25 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 80,000 students



Removed 7 dangerous dams



Removed 800,000+ invasive plants



Planted 40,000+ 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 that serve to inspire environmental stewardship for the benefit and enjoyment of current and future citizens. The results of this work also creates climate change-resilient habitats.



## **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.



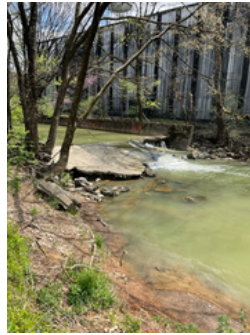
## **Education**

Through our education programs, we're improving STEM academic skills and educating the next generation of environmental stewards, voters, and government leaders. Thousands of students in Ohio, Indiana, and Kentucky participate each year.



## Restoration

Our 7<sup>th</sup> dam removal, a 3-year project completed in October, was the Chapeze Lane dam on Long Lick Run (Creek) south of Louisville, KY. Removal of the dam reconnected the lower section to the upper of Long Lick Run and the 150 miles of the Salt River, restoring the creek's natural flow.



Before



After



In 2025, the ORF restoration team planted thousands of native trees and made significant progress in controlling invasive species.

Major 2025 sites included Kingswood Park (Deerfield Township, OH), Summit Park (Blue Ash, OH), Blue Ash Golf Course, and Twin Creek. We also added two new sites: East Loveland Nature Preserve (Loveland, OH) and Miami Grove Nature Preserve (Terrace Park, OH).

### By the Numbers

6

Miles of Streambank Protected

50

Acres Protected

12,030

Live Stakes Planted



## Thank you to our supporters!

Support for ORF's leadership in invasive species control is provided by the **L.&L. Nippert Foundation**, Duke Energy, and partners: Accenture, MadTree Brewing, Ameritas, Sonder Brewing, and Protiviti.

**Is your company interested in having a corporate volunteer day? Contact us at [orf@ohioriverfdn.org](mailto:orf@ohioriverfdn.org).**

## Large-scale Habitat Restoration on 9 Miles of Twin Creek



Thanks to more than \$200,000 in support from Cargill and TC Energy, ORF completed a 3-year 9-mile major riparian restoration project along Twin Creek. In 2025, ORF planted 12,000 live stakes along riverbanks. Combined with 6,000 native trees planted in 2024 and 15,000 trees planted in 2023, improve streambank stability and overall water quality in the Twin Creek watershed.

**Support our restoration work!**





# Education

In 2025, over 9,000 students from 65 schools experienced STEM education in River Explorer and Mussels in the Classroom (MIC).

Fundraising began in 2025 for a new Rivers to Classrooms Education Access Fund to make our programs even more accessible to economically underserved students. Because of the accessibility and excellent content of these programs, ORF serves a growing audience of teachers and students. Nearly half of program participants are from Title 1 schools. The fund will begin providing assistance to schools in 2026!

Also in 2025, ORF, in partnership with the Foundation for Ohio River Education, Sanitation District No. 1, and Thomas More University Biological Field Station hosted a week-long, summer Ohio River Conservation Course for high school students. Students participated in hands-on opportunities designed to help them explore science careers in ecology, research, and water quality monitoring.



## 2025 Participating Schools

- |                                       |                               |  |                                      |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| All Saints Elementary                 | Indian Hill High School       | Monroe Elementary                      | St. James School                     |
| Bethany School                        | International Academy         | Nagel Middle School                    | St. Mark's Lutheran School           |
| Boone County Schools                  | Gamble Montessori High School | Oak Hills High School                  | St. Vincent Ferrer School            |
| Boyd E Smith Elementary               | John Paul II Catholic School  | Ockerman Middle School                 | Summit Country Day Middle School     |
| Butler Tech School of the Arts        | Kilgour Elementary            | Pleasant Ridge Montessori              | Sycamore Junior High School          |
| Central Elementary                    | Kings Junior High School      | Princeton Community Middle School      | Taft High School                     |
| Cheviot Elementary                    | Lloyd Memorial High School    | Roselawn Condon Elementary             | Taylor Middle School                 |
| Cincinnati Waldorf School             | Loveland High School          | Ross Middle School                     | Trinity Christian Academy            |
| Clark Montessori High School          | Loveland Middle School        | Rothenberg Preparatory Academy         | West Clermont Middle School          |
| Classical Conversations Home School   | Mason Elementary              | Royalmont Academy                      | Western Hills University High School |
| Clifton Area Neighborhood School      | Miami Whitewater Elementary   | Saint Antoninus                        | Wickliffe Elementary School          |
| Cline Elementary                      | Milan Intermediate School     | Saint Brendan School (CBUS)            | Williamsburg High School             |
| Deer Park Junior & Senior High School | Milford Middle School         | Saint Ursula Academy                   | Williamsburg Middle School           |
| Donovan Elementary                    | Model Laboratory School       | Sands Montessori                       | Williamstown Elementary              |
| Fairview German Language School       | Moeller High School           | School of Creative and Performing Arts | Woodlawn Elementary                  |
| Highlands High School                 | Monroe Elementary             | Seton High School                      | Wyoming High School                  |
|                                       |                               | Spaulding Elementary                   |                                      |

**Thank you to our major funders for helping to support our education programs:** Charles Dater Foundation, The Pfau Family Foundation, The Greater Cincinnati Foundation, The Robert & Adele Schiff Family Foundation, Elsa Heisel Sule Foundation, The Gardner Family Foundation, The Haile Foundation, PNC Charitable Trusts - John A. Schroth Family Foundation, The Edelweiss Foundation, Valvoline, Inc., Harrison Family Foundation, August Rendigs, Jr. and Helen Rendigs Foundation, Lila L. Gallimore Trust, Robert Gould Foundation, and The Stella Buerger Charitable Trust.



## Advocacy

In 2025, we continued to be a voice for protecting and restoring the Ohio River and all waters in its watershed. Along with other environmental organizations, ORF signed onto several letters and petitions to Congressional committees and the U.S.E.P.A. pertaining to water quality issues, including more stringent regulation of forever chemicals (PFOA, PFAS, etc.).

Late last year, The U.S.E.P.A and Army Corps of Engineers used the 2023 Supreme Court Sackett ruling to justify a new proposed rule to govern what is a protected federal water. Unfortunately, despite the clarity of the ruling, the proposed rule goes further to restrict protections and further narrow the scope of the Clean Water Act – undoing protections that have safeguarded our waters for more than 50 years.

As during the first Trump administration, we are seeing again a strong move by U.S.E.P.A and other agencies to roll back environmental regulations. In the first Trump administration, the New York Times recorded more than 100 actions that rolled back and weakened environmental protections.

**What is alarming is that Ohio and Kentucky legislatures are proposing and passing laws that will further restrict state agency enforcement and promulgation of regulations that would otherwise protect state environments in the absence of federal protections.**

We will continue to work with our partners to defeat these shortsighted federal and state actions.

The development of a comprehensive Ohio River watershed ecosystem restoration program, with enforceable goals, continues to be a focus of ORF and our partners. Legislation to establish such a program has been introduced in Congress. ORF also worked with partners to create an advocacy coalition, The Healthy Waters Coalition, to collaborate on water quality issues and the development of an Ohio River watershed ecosystem restoration program with enforceable goals.



Your donation will help us advocate for healthy sources of drinking water. Help support this work!





## Cincinnati Coffee Festival

Ohio River Foundation presented the eighth annual Cincinnati Coffee Festival at Cincinnati Music Hall in October. We had a fantastic crowd, wonderful vendors, great live musicians, and of course, all the coffee and tea you could drink.

More than 4,000 people joined over 60 vendors 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 and we were able to raise more than \$100,000 for ORF!



## 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration - A Watershed Moment



In 2025 we celebrated ORF's 25<sup>th</sup> year of impact! More than 150 guests joined in the festivities, including a lively paddle raise auction. Many tables were adorned with aquaria as we shared the evening with some of our hard-working live freshwater mussel (MIC program) educators. Long-time regional river conservation advocate Mike Fremont and long-time volunteer and one of ORF's first educators Mike Miller were honorees.

More than \$20,000 was raised for several of our unique and high impact programs.

## Wild & Scenic Film Festival



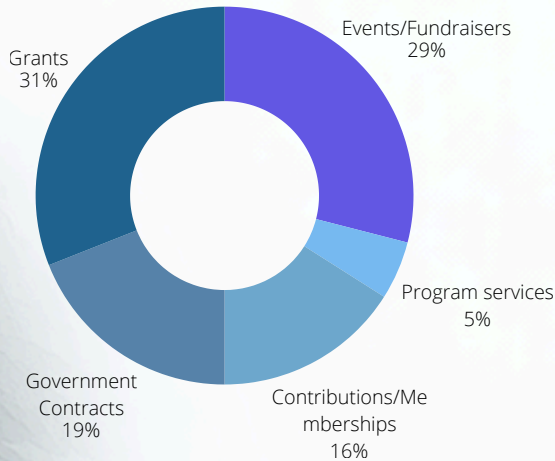
The 2025, our Wild & Scenic Film Festival (WSFF) raised more than \$23,000! 150 guests enjoyed a series of 9 short films from talented environmental filmmakers from all over the world at the Memorial Hall theater in Cincinnati.

The Film Festival also enables our team to bring new and current supporters up to date about our current local, regional, and national program activities.

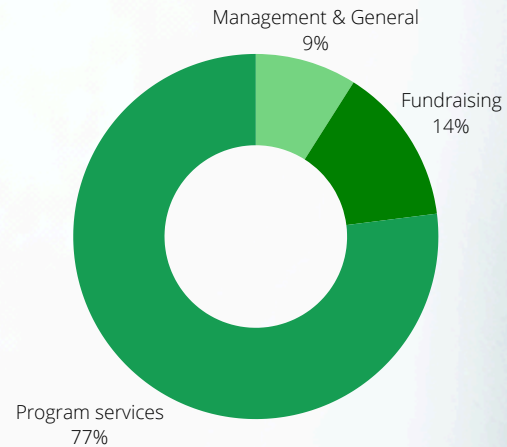


# Financials

## Revenue



## Expenses



**YE Net Assets = \$296,752**



## What will be your legacy?

**At Ohio River Foundation, this question motivates us every day. We're driven by the desire to leave our planet a better place.**

**Your major and transformational donation will support our groundbreaking and high impact work and can be an important part of your legacy.**

**Contact us to discuss a transformational donation now or as a part of your planned giving and estate plans.**

**Rich Cogen, Executive Director**  
**rcogen@Ohioriverfdn.org**  
**513-460-3365**



# Thank You to our Major Donors & Sponsors!



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**Thank you also to our other donors and the thousands of guests who participate in our events!**



Ohio River Foundation  
P.O. Box 42460  
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*Celebrating Another Great Year at*  
**Ohio River Foundation!**

