

River Waves

From the Executive Director

This past year was an outstanding one for Ohio River Foundation (ORF). We saw increased interest in our restoration and education programs, and a great fundraising response from new and current supporters.

Our education programs (p. 4) continue to perform above expectations. The MIC program in particular is gaining momentum.

For 2023, we're excited to receive funding to lead further development of the ORV Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) (p. 3).

The year was not without its challenges for the conservation community (p. 7). For 2023, we will continue to look at different strategies to increase pollution prevention, strengthen existing laws and regulations, and prevent regulatory rollbacks.

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

Next year is shaping up to be another exciting one filled with dam removal news and other impactful projects. For up-to-date news, please follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and www.ohioriverfdn.org.

From the watershed,



Rich Cogen
Executive Director
Ohio River Foundation



DECEMBER 2022

Volume 18

*Celebrating
22 years*

*Protecting water
quality, restoring
habitat and
educating and
training the next
generation of
environmental
stewards.*



Trustees

- **Bill Hayes (Board President)** - Frost Brown Todd, LLC
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- **Nicole Voss** - Advanced Drainage Systems, Inc.
- **Michael Faillo (Treasurer)** - Fifth Third Bank
- **Kevin Jones** - Independent Consultant

Staff

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

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 next few years!



Michael Faillo



Kevin Jones

New Staff

ORF is pleased to welcome Kathryn Stonesmyth as a new River Explorer Educator and Restoration Program Specialist! She is a passionate advocate of environmental and social care and loves sharing this passion and knowledge with others- especially if it's on the water.



Kathryn Stonesmyth



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! They cleared areas of invasive plant species, planted new native plants, and preserved existing restoration work at five sites across the tri-state, maintaining more than 30 acres. Nearly 150 volunteers logged more than 400 hours over the course of 14 volunteer events.

By the Numbers

75,600
Invasives Removed

34
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



ORV CISMA

We received expanded funds to support our 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!




 **150**
Volunteers

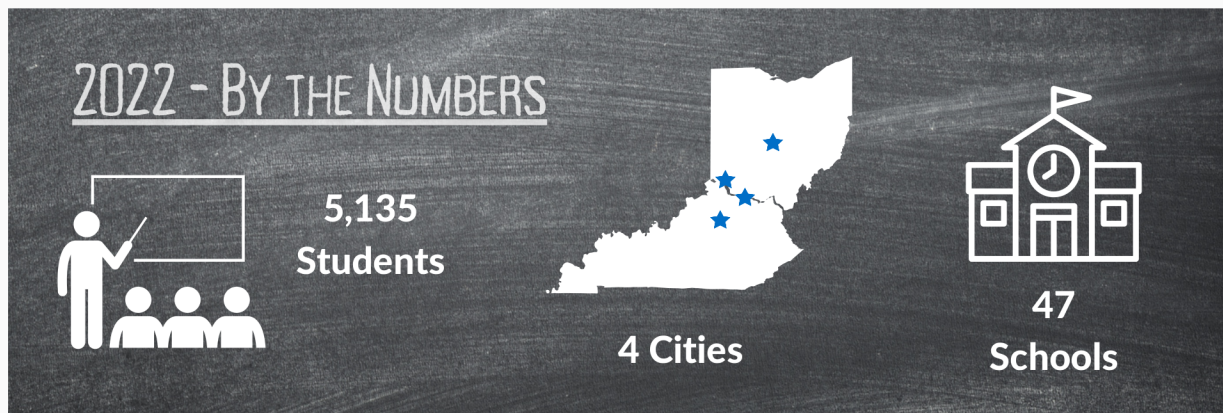
 **14**
Events

 **400**
Hours



Education

Since 2005, ORF has educated more than 58,000 students through our **Mussels in the Classroom** and **River Explorer** programs. Through ORF's Mussels in the Classroom program (MIC), students get the chance to host and learn about freshwater mussels and their importance to river ecosystems. River Explorer is an outdoor learning lab that provides hands-on education about the Ohio River and its watershed. In 2022 more than 5,000 students across 40 schools participated in our programs!





Cincinnati Coffee Festival



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, this year featuring celebrity judge Local 12 news anchor Bob Herzog.



Since 2019, 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 attendees, volunteers, vendors, and everyone who contributed to this event for making it such a success.

SAVE THE DATE: The 2023 Cincinnati Coffee Festival will be October 21-22 at Cincinnati Music Hall. Event and sponsorship information at www.ohioriverfdn.org.



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 the inspiring real 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.



The Wild & Scenic Film Festival was started by the watershed advocacy group, the South Yuba River Citizens League (SYRCL) in 2003. Their festival's Wild & Scenic on Tour program works with environmental groups across the US to host local film festivals to reach into their communities, inspire activism, increase awareness for grassroots environmental causes, and generate critical funds.

SAVE THE DATE: *The 2023 Wild & Scenic Film Festival will be on Friday, April 21 at the Woodward Theater. More event and sponsorship information at www.ohioriverfdn.org.*



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.



THANK YOU to our supporters!

Since our founding, ORF has restored thousands of acres of habitat, educated thousands of schoolchildren, and used our platform to advocate to protect and preserve our streams and rivers. But we can't do these projects alone. ORF is only as strong as the commitment of its supporters to the organization's success.

If you haven't already, please consider showing your support through a donation. You can donate via the QR code or enclosed envelope. If you want to discuss a donation of securities, or a legacy gift, please contact Rich Cogen, Executive Director at 513-460-3365. With your generous gift, you can help us continue and build on these projects into 2023 and beyond!

**Donate
Today!**





Ohio River Foundation
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Celebrating Another Great Year at
Ohio River Foundation!

