

Dear Members:

Before I finished working and living in Cambodia eight years ago, I decided to get a tattoo behind my left ear. It is a feather with the Khmer word for hope embedded in it. It was (and is) my permanent reminder that every day, hope is a choice we make, even in the most difficult circumstances. Below is the poem that inspired my tattoo; perhaps you know it.

"Hope" is the thing with feathers -That perches in the soul -And sings the tune without the words -And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -And sore must be the storm -That could abash the little Bird That kept so many warm -

I've heard it in the chillest land And on the strangest Sea Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Emily Dickingon

It's a beautiful poem, but I have a minor critique. Its last line suggests that hope requires nothing of us. In fact, hope requires a great deal. It asks us to make a muscular, daily commitment, a choice to believe in a better future, even against the odds. It is what propels us out of the paralysis of despair and into action. When I decided to get that tattoo, it was because I had spent years learning the discipline of hope. I didn't want to forget it.

Being hopeful in difficult times requires inner toughness. But when practiced, it becomes contagious. Together, we anchor in our fight for a better world. We begin to see all the beautiful, good things happening around us.

What a privilege it is to build the muscles of hope alongside you. Below are highlights from the past year that inspire hope and progress for which I am truly grateful.

Democracy: Perseverance and Long-Term Planning. After the 2024 redistricting reform effort fell short, OEC persisted—working with Ohioans to limit harm in the 2025 map redraw. Though the process remained flawed, bipartisan agreement delivered the best possible outcome under current conditions. True fairness demands a citizen-led process, and we remain steadfast in educating and empowering Ohioans toward a future where every vote truly counts.

Energy: Responsible Growth, Fair Costs. This past year, we advocated for more energy on the grid—energy that is clean, reliable, and affordable for all Ohioans. We supported the approval of the Frasier and Eastern Cottontail Solar projects which will bring over 300 MW of clean energy online. We informed the public about rising energy costs, grid inequities, and advocated for greater regulatory accountability.

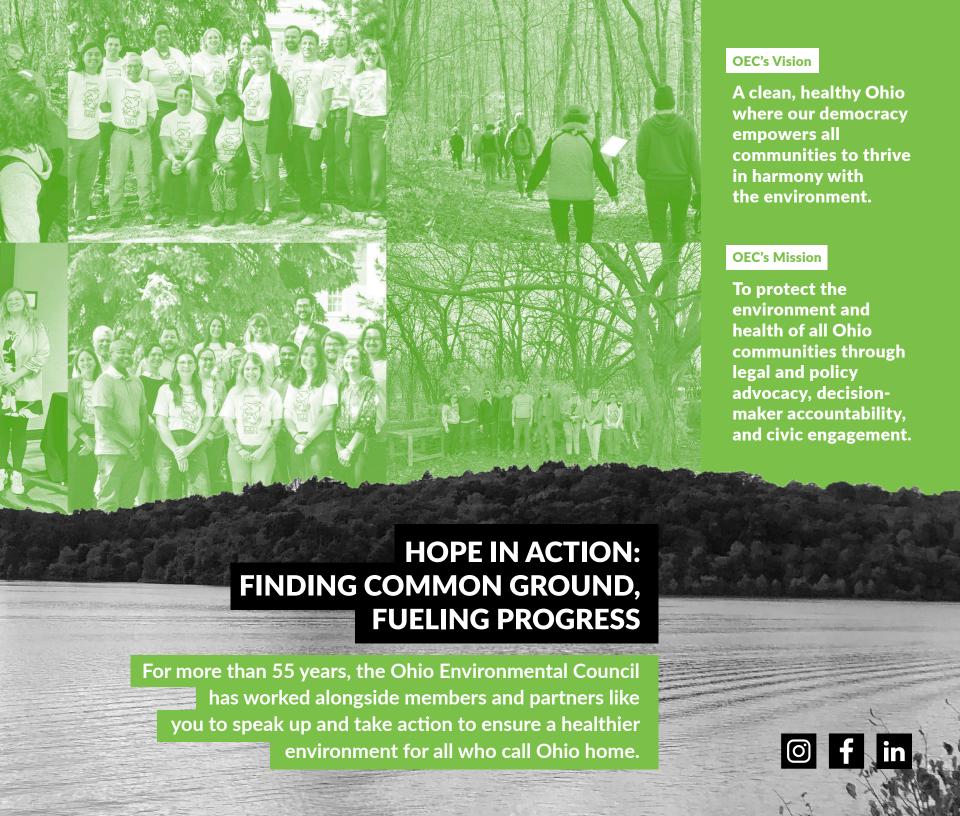
Water: Protecting Our Life Force. The OEC defended H2Ohio and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding. We partnered with Junction Coalition and Metroparks Toledo for a tour of Howard Marsh with state and federal representatives, showcasing restoration and federal-state cooperation. We continued advocacy for the Lead Line Replacement Act to protect every Ohioan's right to clean water.

Lands: Protecting Spaces & Communities. We advocated to protect Ohioans' health and our environment from methane exposure, chemical leaks, and orphan well explosions. And we went all in on protecting the Big and Little Darby watershed on Central Ohio's western border, pressing local leaders to make good on promises to conserve 25,000 acres along this biodiverse jewel of our region.

Progress that lasts is progress built together. We've witnessed what's possible when hope is put into action as a strategy. When we practice it together, Ohio's future shines brighter.

Warmly, Carol Kauffman OEC CEO









The Big Darby Creek is a nationally significant biodiversity hotspot. But, with urban sprawl on the march, these living waters are at a tipping point. This year, the OEC fought for a stronger Big Darby Accord—a longstanding agreement among local central Ohio governments to protect the Darby watershed. The main goals of the Accord are to protect the watershed's biodiversity and to create a 30,000-acre network of parkland in Western Franklin County. The realization of this bold vision would give central Ohio a conservation network on the scale of Cuyahoga Valley National Park and would help protect the watershed's fragile aquatic biodiversity.

In partnership with The Nature Conservancy and the Darby Creek Association, we held numerous educational briefings with decision-makers and key influencers to champion this vision. We developed and submitted robust technical comments emphasizing the need to follow the science and limit development to sustainable levels. And we helped convene and drive strong public participation in a series of summer workshops focused on potential amendments to the Accord. Together, we help give the living waters of the Darby a voice.



Meanwhile, "clean water" remained front of mind, as our partnership with Junction Coalition and Metroparks Toledo brought decision-makers to northwest Ohio to see the high-impact results of the H2Ohio/Great Lakes Restoration Initiative investments at sites like Howard Marsh and Secor Metropark-turning federal and state dollars into visible ecosystem gains.

On the programmatic side, H2Ohio entered a pivotal year:

- Enrollment crossed more than 3,200 producers and nearly 2.2 million cropland acres
- Nearly 20,000 acres of new wetlands and associated habitat were restored across 458 projects
- Roughly 27,200 acres of watersheds were improved via conservation-ditch work (420,000 pounds of phosphorus load removed)

Despite these milestones, emerging budget threats loom large: the two-year state budget slashed H2Ohio funding by nearly 40% and threatens to imperil momentum in the cleanup of western Lake Erie.

OEC is working with key stakeholders across the political spectrum, actively pursuing multiple paths that will help ensure the long-term viability of the H2Ohio program.

We solidified major advocacy wins on lead service line removal, advanced our wetland and nutrient-reduction portfolios, and set the stage for deeper policy wins—while keeping a sharp eye on protecting the gains we've achieved.



SUPPORTED BY THE OEC LAW CENTER

BUILDING BIPARTISAN MOMENTUM FOR SAFE, **LEAD-FREE WATER**

The OEC delivered key policy and advocacy wins, anchored by the reintroduction of the bipartisan Lead Line Replacement Act (via HB307), which reached the House Development Committee with sponsor and proponent testimony—and strong crossparty support.

Our team provided proponent testimony. The legislation aligns with our earlier costbenefit analysis, which showed that full replacement of Ohio's estimated 745.000 lead service lines could generate \$145-185 billion in economic and health benefits over 15 years.



YOUR IMPACT **BY THE NUMBERS**

3,200+ **Producers enrolled**

2.2 M **Cropland acres** enrolled

20,000 New wetland acres restored

27,200 Acres of watershed improvements





SUPPORTED BY THE OEC LAW CENTER

ADVANCING RESPONSIBLE AND EQUITABLE UTILITY-SCALE SOLAR IN OHIO

The Energy Team made significant strides in advancing responsible, community-driven utility-scale solar across Ohio. Through strategic advocacy and public engagement, OEC helped move multiple solar projects through the Ohio Power Siting Board approval process—most notably the 120-MW Frasier Solar project in Knox County, which faced opposition from the fossil fuel industry.

These wins inject clean energy investment, jobs, and local tax revenue into rural counties. But every solar project is unique. We are reinforcing transparency and accountability through the launch of OEC's Ohio Utility-Scale Solar Trends Report and an online tracking platform. Meanwhile, regular member updates and alerts kept supporters engaged and informed as Ohio's solar landscape evolves.



PASSAGE AND EQUITABLE IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSE BILL 15

The OEC played a key role in supporting the passage of HB 15, landmark legislation modernizing Ohio's energy and grid investment strategy. The bill promotes grid optimization technologies, improves utility transparency and reliability, creates a framework to identify and prioritize brownfields and former coal sites for renewable energy development, and establishes a fund for solar and energy efficiency upgrades for schools. Importantly, the legislation delivers on a longstanding OEC goal of ending Ohio's ratepayer bailouts for two outdated, polluting coal plants. Following passage, OEC has shifted focus to equitable implementation, ensuring these provisions deliver community-level benefits, particularly in historically underserved areas, and that new programs align with Ohio's clean-energy transition goals.

ENERGY CHAMPIONS OHIO SERIES LAUNCH DESCRIPTION

In partnership with our coalition allies, OEC co-launched the Energy Champions Ohio series, a statewide initiative designed to educate and empower Ohioans to understand how our energy system works, how policy decisions affect communities, and how residents can advocate for affordable, equitable, and sustainable energy solutions. The next workshops in the series focus on understanding energy justice and the role we can play in advocating for a fairer, just energy system.

Modernizing Ohio's Energy Future

House Bill 15 Impact

- Ends coal bailouts that cost Ohioans \$90 million annually
- Improves electric grid technology and reliability
- Increases utility accountability
- Expands solar at schools, brownfields, and former coal sites
- OEC is committed to equitable implementation of the bill, prioritizing underserved areas







The Trump Administration unlawfully approved large-scale oil and gas leasing in the Wayne National Forest, and the OEC is fighting back in court. Earlier this year, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) resurrected its failed fracking proposal to lease 40,000 acres of the forest—an area equivalent to roughly 30,303 football fields—to the fracking industry. The OEC and our partner organizations secured a court-ordered injunction on this same unlawful fracking project in 2021. The government's NEPA environmental assessment remains fatally flawed and raises serious concerns about air pollution, impacts to sensitive streams, and ecosystem degradation.

On the issue of climate change alone, this fracking project threatens to cancel out all of the Wayne's carbon sequestration services for the next 30 years or more. The fact that the Wayne is by far the largest public forest in Ohio makes it the state's largest terrestrial carbon sponge. It is blessed with many rare, threatened, and endangered species. It provides countless people with clean air and healthy outdoor adventures. When unlawful government action threatens significant impacts to Ohio's only National Forest, the OEC is there to fight back.



Throughout the year, OEC amplified Wayne National Forest issues across the state and beyond as a defining public lands and environmental justice battle for Ohio's future. Through coordinated media outreach, public education, and coalition advocacy, OEC raised awareness of the threat's magnitude while mobilizing communities, conservation partners. and policymakers to demand transparency and accountability from federal agencies. The organization's testimony, press releases, and digital storytelling emphasized that Ohio's public lands are vital resources, integral to climate mitigation, the provision of clean water, and the support of local economies, rather than mere commodities to be discarded.

This effort highlighted OEC's longstanding commitment to ensuring that public resources serve the public good—not corporate interests—and reinforced the connection between healthy forests, thriving wildlife, and resilient communities. Looking ahead, OEC remains steadfast in monitoring agency actions, challenging procedural violations, and championing science-based protections for Ohio's only National Forest and all of Ohio's shared natural heritage. The OEC is leading the legal challenge to this renewed fracking project. Along with our partners, we filed an administrative appeal and a motion in federal district court to enforce the injunction we secured in 2021. Our litigation will continue into 2026.

Court Victory

- OEC secured a court-ordered injunction halting the unlawful project
- The government's NEPA review is still fatally flawed

Climate Impact

- Proposed fracking would wipe out 30+ years of the forest's carbon storage
- Wayne is Ohio's largest terrestrial carbon sponge

What's at Stake

- Rare + threatened species
- Clean air & water for surrounding communities
- Ohio's only National Forest
- Recreation for thousands of Ohioans

Why OEC Is Fighting

- To stop unlawful leasing
- To protect streams, ecosystems, and air quality
- To defend Ohio's most important public forest





FROM ENGAGEMENT TO ACTION:

THE REYNOLDSBURG **CLIMATE & DEMOCRACY PLEDGE**

In partnership with the city of Reynoldsburg, the Climate & Democracy Pledge Project completed its outreach to residents, gathered their input, and delivered a Climate Action Platform to City Council—while also mobilizing constituents to engage in the follow-on process of policy implementation and accountability.



OHIO REDISTRICTING EDUCATION: FAIR MAPS, FAIR FUTURES

OEC continued its statewide democracy education initiatives to help Ohioans navigate the 2025 redistricting process and understand its link to fair representation and environmental equity. The team also launched voter-education resources explaining new voter ID requirements and registration deadlines ahead of the 2025 elections—ensuring communities had the information and tools needed to make their voices count.

Fair Maps. Fair Futures.

OEC's statewide education efforts are helping Ohioans navigate the 2025 redistricting process to secure fair representation and environmental equity.

A COMMUNITY CONVERSATION WITH CONGRESSWOMAN SHONTEL BROWN

The Democracy Roundtable with Shontel Brown brought together federal and state-level officials, advocates, and community members to discuss the growing threats to our democratic systems and to equip constituents with concrete tools to ensure their votes are heard and counted.



ACROSS THE STATE

SOUTHEAST OHIO

ROOTED IN RENEWAL & GROWING A COMMUNITY FOREST

In partnership with Rising Appalachia under the leadership of our Southeast Ohio Regional Director, Molly Jo Stanley, the vision of creating Ohio's first Community Forest took major steps forward. This initiative—to acquire 900 acres from Sugar Creek Mining Company and connect the Bailey's portion of Wayne National Forest through Strouds Run State Park and Solid Ground Farm—now seeks to link approximately 74,000 acres of biodiversity and recreation lands in Athens County. Substantial funding has already been secured (including funding from the U.S. Forest Service Community Forest Program). The project integrates ecological restoration, workforce development, and a replicable regenerativeeconomy model on a former coal mine.

FOOTHILLS JUSTICE: CULTIVATING CONNECTION AND CONSERVATION

The OEC's third-vear collaboration with the Ohio University Honors College-titled "Foothills Justice"engaged students in hands-on learning across the region's heritage and recovery ecosystems: from the Bailey's and Buckeye Trails to True Pigments, the Village of Shawnee, and Solid Ground Farm. Students explored how art, storytelling, regenerative agriculture, and place-based restoration can combine to bolster ecological health, cultural vitality, and social wellbeing in Appalachian Ohio. Together, these strands reflect a holistic approach: rural land-based revitalization, education, community voice, and the shift from extractive legacies to regenerative futures.



This year, we formally launched our first-ever Central Ohio field advocacy program, empowering neighborhood leaders, advocates, and policy partners across the region to shape a cleaner. healthier, more equitable future. At the same time, we published a landmark report—Large-Scale Development Trends in Central Ohio and Their Environmental Implications—which highlighted how rapid growth is stressing green space, air, land, and water. Accompanying that report, we released a practical Playbook for Communities Facing Large-Scale Development in Ohio (June 2025) that guides advocates and local policymakers to reconcile growth with preservation.

GROWING TOGETHER TO EMPOWER **CENTRAL OHIO'S RISING VOICES**

Meanwhile, our Emerging Leaders program deepened its impact: we hosted three dynamic events (an Advocacy 101 training, an Earth Day clean-up, and a foraging event with chef Lorenzo Cooks), rallied a wave of new participants into our network, and significantly expanded engagement among young environmental champions across Central Ohio.

SOUTHWEST OHIO



In February 2025, Regional Director Kylie Johnson was promoted to Managing Director of Field Advocacy, reflecting the organization's growing emphasis on placebased policy, public outreach, and local leadership. In parallel, she was elected Chair of the City of Cincinnati Environmental Advisory Board, where she is shaping sustainability, climate adaptation, and resilience initiatives—positioning Cincinnati as a national leader in urban climate action.

This year, the Southwest region also made major strides in civic engagement and partnership-driven programming: we expanded our "Advocacy 102" training in Greater Cincinnati (in collaboration with Green Umbrella and Groundwork Ohio River Valley), enabled local Climate Action Fellows and Climate Advisory Group members to deepen their government-engagement skills, and cohosted a panel for the Cincinnati Nature Center's "Getting Things Done: Civics for Conservation" course alongside the Cincinnati Chamber of Commerce and Portman Center. Additional highlights include the OEC's major planning role in the 2025 Midwest Regional Sustainability Summit in Cincinnati-bringing together more than 650 changemakers—and our participation in the autumn "Green Cincinnati Forward" event, marking the midpoint of implementation for the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan (where Kylie, as Chair of the Community Activation Subcommittee, represented OEC and the Environmental Advisory Board).

CLEVELAND METRO



The Cleveland team focused on uniting partners and amplifying community voices to ensure environmental priorities shaped the city's climate agenda. Through the Cleveland Environmental Advocacy Coalition, OEC helped convene organizations from across the city to update and release the 2025 Cleveland Environmental Policy Platform—a community-driven roadmap that complements the City of Cleveland's Climate Action Plan. The platform outlines actionable strategies across key focus areas, including water justice & affordability, green infrastructure, energy equity, environmental and infrastructure justice, workforce inclusion, innovation, and sustainable transportation.

This collaborative work sparked meaningful dialogue between community leaders and public officials, including a pivotal conversation with Alliance for the Great Lakes President Joel Brammeier and County Executive Chris Ronayne about strengthening Cleveland's freshwater identity and aligning infrastructure investments with long-term sustainability goals. The year also featured the State of the Environment event, bringing together coalition members, Mayor Justin Bibb, and local advocates like Ebony Hood of SYATT and Jacob VanSickle of Bike Cleveland to discuss collaboration and accountability in advancing the city's climate commitments. Looking ahead, the coalition is developing a new public website to house the platform, track progress, and connect residents with opportunities to help shape Cleveland's environmental future.

NORTHEAST OHIO



TRANSFORMATION AND COMMUNITY ACTION ACROSS THE MAHONING VALLEY

Across the region, local action continues to drive change. In Youngstown, board member Lola Lewis and the Mahoning Valley Tree Corps, supported by the Youngstown Neighborhood Development Corporation, are transforming vacant lots into vibrant green spaces. OEC staff joined local partners to witness this work firsthand—a living example of how environmental policy translates into healthier, more resilient neighborhoods for Ohioans.

Across every region, we see hope in action, momentum in motion, and progress taking root. This is realized through every partnership formed, every policy advanced, and every community strengthened. With you by our side, our work will continue to move Ohio toward lasting change. Together, we shape a future built on care, connection, and common ground.

1,410

Actions taken (sign-ups, donations, petitions)

4,058

Email marketing & messaging reach

11

Program & campaign events

30%

Growth across email & social media

961,913

Emails delivered

350,000+

Impressions Across Social Media Platforms

FINANCIALS

THE OEC IS A CAREFUL STEWARD OF YOUR INVESTMENT IN A CLEANER, HEALTHIER OHIO

FY 2025: JULY 1, 2024 TO JUNE 30, 2025**

PROGRAMMATIC EFFICIENCY

TOTAL: \$3,454,641



Program \$2,663,314



Administrative \$536,060



Fundraising \$255.267

REVENUE BY SOURCE

TOTAL: \$3,875,405



Grants* \$2.724.206



Individual Donations \$1.020.108



Other \$131,091

ASSETS & LIQUIDITY

TOTAL: \$3,322,876



Investments \$2,750,121



Cash \$411.218



Receivables \$161.537

ASSETS/ LIABILITIES TOTAL: \$4,190,937



NET ASSETS TOTAL: \$3,508,313



YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

3,626

Individual donations

119

Monthly sustaining donors

65

Legacy Club Members

With planned gifts that protect Ohio's environment for generations to come

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*An asterisk denotes a Legacy Club member who has passed away. We are especially grateful to these generous donors who have included the OEC in their wills.

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Learn more about the Legacy Club at THEOEC.ORG/BEQUESTS

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We value each and every contribution that is made in support of our collective mission to secure healthy air, land, and water for all who call Ohio home. Each contribution is important to building a broad, equitable base of support to protect our environment.

This list represents only a fraction of the generous Ohioans who make our work possible. Thank you to all our donors, group members, community supporters, and volunteers. Below, we've listed the grantors, organizations, and individual donors who gave \$1,000 or more between July 1, 2024 and June 30, 2025. We thank these donors—and everyone who made gifts of less than \$1,000.

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