



Dear Friend,

February is already proving that momentum doesn't hibernate. Across Southwest Ohio, communities are pushing sustainability forward, the second half of the [2023 Green Cincinnati Plan](#) is picking up speed, and the region now has a [Comprehensive Climate Action Plan](#) with strategies to lower greenhouse gas emissions across 16 counties. Read on for more updates and ways you can keep the momentum going.

Yours in the fight,

**Kylie Johnson**

*Managing Director of Field Advocacy*

## Regional Events

**March 5:** [Energize Your Partnerships and Networks](#) | 9:30 AM - 4:30 PM | Aullwood Farm (9101 Frederick Pk, Dayton, OH, 45414)

**March 12:** [Thriving Futures: Tools for Nonprofits, Businesses, and Communities](#) | 10 AM - 1 PM | Fitz Center for Leadership in Community (1401 S. Main St., Dayton, OH 45479)

**March 16:** [No Man's Land Film Festival in Cincinnati](#) | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM | The Esquire Theatre (320 Ludlow Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45220)

**March 18:** [Neighbors in the Know: A Series of Online Talks for a Strong Clermont](#) | 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM | Clermont Chamber of Commerce, hosted by Cincinnati Nature Center (Online)

**March 19:** [Sustainable Urban Landscapes Symposium](#) | 8:50 AM – 5:00 PM | Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden (3400 Vine St., Cincinnati, OH 45220)

**March 10–April 18:** [Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Course](#) | Tuesdays & Thursdays (online), 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM; March 28 and April 18 (in-person), 9:00 AM–5:00 PM | Cincinnati Nature Center Rowe Woods (4949 Tealtown Road, Milford, Ohio 45150)

**April 10:** [Derick Lugo, "A Fabulous Thru-Hike"](#) | 5:30 PM - 8:30 PM | The Mercantile Library (414 Walnut St #1100, Cincinnati, OH 45202)

**April 19:** [Greater Cincinnati Earth Day](#) | 12:00 PM –5:00 PM | Washington Park (1230 Elm St., Cincinnati, OH, 45202)

**April 22–May 20:** [The Ripple Effect: Conservation Action Course](#) | 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM | Cincinnati Nature Center (4949 Tealtown Road, Milford, Ohio 45150)

## Regional & Partner Updates

### Green Umbrella: Honoring Progress and Welcoming a New Chapter



Earlier this month, OEC staff joined sustainability leaders and community partners at Green Umbrella's Annual Impact Celebration. The event highlighted the region's environmental progress, collective impact of partners, and priorities shaping the year ahead. This year's celebration also served as a heartfelt send-off for Ryan Mooney-Bullock, honoring her 8.5 years of dedicated leadership as Executive Director. Ryan will soon step into a new role as Executive Director at Gorman Heritage Farm, while Van Sullivan will serve as Interim Executive Director at Green Umbrella. You can read more about Green Umbrella's accomplishments under Ryan's leadership [here](#). The OEC is deeply grateful for Ryan's partnership and vision over the years. We wish her every success in her next chapter and look forward to continuing our work alongside Green Umbrella under Van's leadership.

## Neighbors in the Know: A Series of Online Talks for a Strong Clermont



This series will help residents of Clermont County's fourteen townships become more powerful advocates for their communities. Together, we'll explore how decisions are made that impact the quality and character of our communities. These live online talks can be enjoyed from the comfort of your home. This online series is facilitated by The Clermont Chamber of Commerce and hosted by Cincinnati Nature Center. Series runs on select dates from 6:00 PM – 7:30 PM, February 18–November 18, 2026

Learn more and register [here](#).

### Cincinnati Climate Week (June 8-14)



Green Umbrella is launching the first [Cincinnati Climate Week](#) this June—a dynamic, region-wide celebration of climate action across Greater Cincinnati—in partnership with Climate Week Network. The decentralized week invites organizations throughout the region to host in-person and virtual events that spotlight local solutions, share expertise, and inspire a more resilient future. The week’s cornerstone events will include Green Umbrella’s flagship [Midwest Sustainability Summit](#) on June 12 and the [Green & Healthy Schools Symposium](#) on June 13.

### **2026 Midwest Sustainability Summit**



June 12,  
2026

## Keynote Speaker: Rebecca Carter



Accepting artist and poster session  
submissions through March 31<sup>st</sup>



The OEC is a proud planning partner of the 13th annual Midwest Sustainability Summit, which will take place on June 12 at the Sharonville Convention Center. This year's theme, "Adapt Today, Thrive Tomorrow," calls on us to explore how individuals, organizations, and communities can strengthen resilience, accelerate innovation, and thrive through change. Featuring a keynote by Dr. Rebecca Carter and nearly 100 speakers, an art show, and live performances. Artist and poster submissions are open through 3/31. [Register now](#) through 3/15 to save with early bird rates.

### Ohio River Foundation Receives \$1.4 Million Wetland Grant



Ohio River Foundation (ORF) has been awarded a \$1.4 million grant from the H2Ohio Program of the State of Ohio to manage the creation of a 30-acre complex of wetlands along the Scioto River in Pickaway County, Ohio. This constructed wetland is a step in the right direction for the Ohio River and its watershed. Furthermore, because this wetland will not be isolated from the river but have a continuous open channel connecting it to the Scioto River, it will be protected under state and federal law despite protection rollbacks from the U.S. Supreme Court and a proposed regulation from the U.S.E.P.A. For more information, visit the [website](#).

### Ohio River Way Challenge (May 10–June 1, 2026)



Applications are now open for the [Ohio River Way Challenge](#)—the biggest expedition yet: 23 days, 480 miles, broken into three week-long legs. Join Ohio River Way for a week, two weeks, or the full route, and interns can hop aboard the floating RESTORE Lab for a hands-on river-learning experience.

## Camp Piomingo Leaders-In-Training (LIT) & Ohio River Way Canoe Trip



Ohio River Way is proud to lead the on-water portion of Camp Piomingo’s Leaders-In-Training (LIT) Program, a two-week summer experience for youth ages 15–16. As part of the program, LITs will spend five days canoeing on the Ohio River Way—starting upstream of Louisville and paddling back to Camp Piomingo in Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area. Along the way, they’ll learn leadership, teamwork, and communication skills while connecting with nature and their peers. If you know a teen who’s ready for an unforgettable adventure, encourage them to [register here](#).

## Zoo Sustainability & Community Impact Updates



Talbert House has opened a new 49-unit supportive housing community for veterans, powered in part by 79 solar panels donated by the Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden. The panels, part of the Zoo's Community Solar Resiliency Program, support a 45 kW rooftop system that cuts emissions and lowers long-term utility costs for the LEED Gold facility. Read more [here](#).

The Cincinnati Zoo & Botanical Garden begins the year with new leadership following the retirement of long time CEO Thane Maynard. Dave Jenike has been promoted to CEO after nearly two decades as Chief Operating Officer, bringing deep experience in conservation, education, and coexistence work. Mark Fisher, the architect of the Zoo's sustainability program, now steps into the Chief Operating Officer role after leading major on site and community solar initiatives that helped establish the Zoo as the Greenest Zoo in America.

## Dayton Spotlight

### Local Power, Local Benefits: The Gem City Solar Project



**Photo:** Chris Welter, WYSO

Dayton is taking a major step toward a cleaner, more resilient energy future. City Commission has approved a renewable energy purchase agreement with AEP Energy Partners for the Gem City Solar Project—a 49.9-megawatt solar development that will be built on 250 acres in northwest Dayton near Little Richmond Road and State Route 49. Once operational, Gem City Solar will generate enough electricity to power up to 14,665 homes, producing an estimated 104,811 megawatt-hours of clean energy in its first year alone. More than just an energy project, it represents one of the largest community choice solar projects located entirely within city limits in the United States. For more information about this and other energy investments in Dayton, please visit the Office of Sustainability Page at <https://www.daytonohio.gov/860/Sustainability-Office>.

### Energize Your Partnerships and Networks Training

**Energize Your Partnerships and Networks**

Join this in-person, one-day training to learn how to lead and participate in partnerships and networks with greater clarity and impact using a proven network mindset framework.

**Provided By:**  **Institute for Conservation LEADERSHIP**

**Hosted By:**  **GREATER DAYTON PARTNERS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT**

 Tuesday, March 5, 2026  
9:30am - 4:30pm

 Aullwood Farm, 9101 Frederick Pk, Dayton

**FREE for Members | \$35 for Non-Members | Register Today!**

Join this live, in-person, one-day training on March 5 provided by the [Institute for Conservation Leadership](#) and hosted by Greater Dayton Partners for the Environment. Designed to help practitioners strengthen collaborative efforts using a network mindset, the training draws on experience facilitating hundreds of collaborations to help participants clarify direction, strengthen relationships, and increase shared accountability—regardless of their role within a group. Register [here](#).

## City of Cincinnati Updates

### Environmental Advisory Board Expands Membership

One of the first pieces of legislation passed by Cincinnati City Council in 2026 expanded the City's Environmental Advisory Board. Sponsored by Councilwoman Meeka Owens, the ordinance increased the board's membership from 14 to 19 in response to growing public interest. That interest followed a City of Cincinnati celebration marking the halfway point of the 2023 Green Cincinnati Plan and highlighting its early achievements.

"This board is instrumental in ensuring we are addressing the climate crisis thoughtfully and effectively," said Councilmember Owens. "It's critical that we have the right people at the table as we move forward, and I'm proud that we were able to create more opportunities for residents to serve." Meetings are held once a month, and the public is welcome to attend. To learn more and view the meeting schedule, visit the [website](#).

## Ohio Environmental Council Updates

### Education & Advocacy

#### 2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding Repealed

The Trump Administration repealed the [2009 Greenhouse Gas Endangerment Finding](#). This critical finding affirmed that carbon dioxide and other air pollutants endanger public health, and was a strong scientific basis for legal action. This repeal abandons science in favor of polluters, and its consequences will be felt in Ohio, across the nation, and globally. It will worsen the climate impacts Ohioans are already experiencing. We know the truth, we know our task, and we are on your side committed to fight for our shared values. Our work at the

state level is critical to make real change in this moment. **Can you support our efforts with a special gift today?**

[Donate](#)

## Law Center Analysis: Carbon Capture & Storage in HB 170

In March 2025, two Ohio representatives introduced House Bill 170 ([HB 170](#)), legislation designed to regulate carbon storage activities as a “matter of general statewide interest that requires uniform statewide regulation.” A laudable mission statement. But would the program, as currently designed, be protective of human health and the environment? The OEC Law Center Analysis provides our thoughts on HB 170, especially the policies in the bill we view may miss the mark for protecting the health and environment of Ohioans. Before lawmakers pass any legislation regulating carbon storage, these issues must, at minimum, be addressed. [Read the analysis.](#)

## Upcoming Events

We have a variety of exciting events happening all the time, so we encourage you to keep up to date with our [events page](#).

**March 18** | [Action Briefings](#) | 12 PM-1 PM | Virtual

**May 9** | [2026 Green Gala](#) | Columbus Zoo Africa Events Center | Tickets Coming Soon!



{{Disclaimer}}

Ohio Environmental Council  
556 E Town St,  
Columbus, OH 43215

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