



# Ohio River Basin Alliance

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

## ABOUT THE ALLIANCE

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The Ohio River Basin Alliance (ORBA) is made up of more than 200 representatives from over 80 state, local and federal agencies, industry, academia, and not-for-profit organizations.

### VISION

Our vision is to support and implement integrated management of the Basin's resources to achieve sustainable economic growth, ecological integrity and public safety.

### MISSION

Our mission is to form a successful collaboration that will recommend strategies and coordinate actions to address complex water resource challenges and priorities with a unified voice.

### GOALS

The main goals the ORBA would like to achieve are:

- (1) determine the Basin's priorities,
- (2) get the stakeholders to discuss and collaborate on issues,
- (3) inform the newly-formed Ohio River Basin Congressional Caucus on critical issues, and
- (4) develop and deliver projects safely.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our Guiding principles are:

- (1) include everyone,
- (2) leverage existing authorities, resources and capabilities to accomplish our goals,
- (3) capitalize on existing collaborations, and
- (4) do not impede or infringe on the mission of any other organization.

### STRUCTURE

The Alliance is voluntarily led by a Steering Committee and has four Working Groups that address specific basin issues. The four specific working groups and their link to the overall mission and vision are described below.

#### 1. Enterprise & Infrastructure Work Group

Chaired by Kari Mackenbach of URS Corporation

**Link to Alliance Mission and Vision:** Much of the infrastructure in the Ohio River Basin has exceeded its design life, while the need for green infrastructure is more relevant than ever before. For every dollar spent on flood risk management projects, approximately six dollars in potential damages have been saved. More commerce is moved on the Ohio River than through the Great Lakes, and equals that transported through the Panama Canal.

**Objectives:** (1) Apply green solutions to necessary improvement to our existing infrastructure, and (2) work to capitalize on opportunities for new jobs in a growing global industry.

## **2. Restoration & Protection Work Group**

Chaired by John Stark, Ohio Office of The Nature Conservancy

**Link to Alliance Mission and Vision:** Population growth is driving the continued development of green areas in our watersheds while urban exodus and economic downturn has freed up much of urban areas for reuse. Nearly half of the freshwater fishes and over a third of all mussel species in the U.S. are within the Ohio River Basin. This treasure is at increasing risk from invasive species which cause losses of almost \$120 billion annually.

**Objectives:** (1) Show economic and environmental benefits of the Sustainable Rivers Program, and (2) work together to address the challenges of invasive species.

## **3. Sustainable Growth & Competitiveness Work Group**

Chaired by Dr. Harry Stone of Battelle

**Link to Alliance Mission and Vision:** The regional economy will undergo major transitions as traditional industries decline and new, more sustainable industries emerge.

**Objectives:** (1) Develop a better understanding of the value of water resources, and (2) help influence policy toward more holistic approaches for water resources management.

## **4. Water Management & Availability Work Group**

Chaired by John Hoopingarner, Executive Director, Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District

**Link to Alliance Mission and Vision:** Water quality is often impacted by water quantity and both have far-reaching impacts on health and human safety.

**Objectives:** (1) Address vulnerabilities such as possible diversion of water out of the Basin, and (2) minimize nitrogen and phosphorous runoff into the Ohio River that is contributing to hypoxia in the Gulf of Mexico.

## **ORBA ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- December 2011 – TNC and USACE Great Lakes and Ohio River Division sign Agreement to share information on biological resources in the basin.
- January 2012 – ORBA members support the Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership on the aquatic habitat assessment report.
- March 2012 – USGS/USACE/MWCD working together to install new stream gage on Ohio River at Marietta.
- April 2012 – ORBA receives \$200k from Institute of Water Resources to conduct pilot study on how climate change will impact the Ohio River Basin.