

# Natural Ohio

Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

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## Innovative Ohio EPA Program Protects Conneaut Creek Wild & Scenic River

Throughout the history of the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program, the division has worked with landowners, local governments and watershed partners to protect the high quality of all Ohio's designated rivers. The program's mission has been clear—protecting riparian forest buffers, floodplains, wetlands, steep slopes and headwater tributaries is essential for stable river channels, good water quality and high aquatic diversity.

The term riparian refers to the areas adjacent to the water, such as the land that lies along a river and its tributaries. Recent efforts in Ohio's northeastern scenic river district have focused on working with landowners to permanently protect their river-side property. Working with local partners, staff have been successful in preserving significant areas through a combination of land acquisitions and conservation easements. Some properties were sold at fair market value, others were donated or sold at bargain sale prices. All sales were determined by the landowner.

In recent years, the division has been turning to outside sources and grant

*(continued on page 2)*

### IN THIS ISSUE

from the chief.....	2
notes from the field .....	3
maumee river .....	4
roche de boeuf .....	5
healthy rivers .....	6
40th anniversary .....	7

## Forty Years of Protecting Ohio's Best Waterways

EARLIER THIS YEAR, OHIO CELEBRATED ITS LEADERSHIP IN THE PRESERVATION OF ITS HIGHEST QUALITY STREAMS WITH THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OHIO SCENIC RIVERS ACT. WHEN IT PASSED IN FEBRUARY 1968 IT WAS THE FIRST LEGISLATION OF ITS KIND IN THE COUNTRY, PRE-DATING THE NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS ACT BY SEVEN MONTHS.

The movement to preserve Ohio's best rivers was spearheaded by the late Glen Thompson, publisher of the Dayton Journal Herald and founding member of Little Miami, Inc. Thompson's tireless efforts as a spokesman for this southwest Ohio river preservation group ultimately led to the passage of the Ohio Scenic River Act.

Shortly after the scenic river legislation became law, the Little Miami became Ohio's first designated scenic river in 1969. Other Little Miami stream segments were designated in 1970 and 197X. In 1974, the Little Miami gained distinction as Ohio's first nationally designated river.

The new legislation created a program to identify and preserve Ohio's vanishing wild, scenic and historically significant

streams by establishing a state scenic river system. Art Waldorf, of the Ohio Water Commission, provided early staffing and administrative support for the program in the 1960s. In the early 1970s, the program was transferred to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Office of Program and Planning. Richard Moseley, Jr. became the first program administrator and he hired full-time staff Stuart Lewis and John Kopec. They were assisted by Steve Goodwin, a college intern.

In 1972, the act was amended to include wild, scenic and recreational river designations. The purpose of the different designations was to differentiate between the degrees of the natural qualities that various streams possessed as well as the level of protection the streams would be given.

"We used the Ohio Scenic River law as our guide in developing criteria, but much of what we finally settled on for the designation criteria came from personal observations as we studied the various streams and rivers of the state," recalls Goodwin.

Goodwin and Lewis spent the summer of 1972 canoeing and studying the Big Darby Creek, Olentangy, Upper

*(continued on page 3)*

## FROM THE CHIEF



Each of our newsletters is a special edition. Each speaks to unique aspects of our natural Ohio. This issue of *Natural Ohio* is mostly devoted to the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program. This year marks the 40th anniversary of the nation's and Ohio's scenic river legislation. Ohioans can take special pride that the federal program is our junior—if only by a few months. The leadership and foresight exercised by interested citizens, legislators and ODNR leaders in the late 1960s made Ohio a national leader in river protection. The dedication of many since has kept us so.

With each scenic river designation since the Little Miami in 1969, the question 'why' is always asked. Answering it is just as important now as it was then. We, as a people, are

inextricably bound, historically, culturally, commercially, industrially and environmentally, to our rivers. They were our first highways. They moved our ancestors, carried their commerce, powered our industries, quenched our thirst and soothed our souls. Our rivers have been faithful friends. They deserve our respect and attention.

Scenic river designation is a badge of honor for the communities and landowners in each watershed. It shows that people care about their old friend and in doing so ensure the health of a companion that will nurture generations to come

Three more streams are under study, the Vermillion, the Mad and the Ashtabula. The Ashtabula became

Ohio's 14th scenic river in late October, and perhaps the last while the program is administered by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. By the end of the year, in an effort to meet budget challenges, the program may be transferred to ODNR's Division of Watercraft. The program's location at ODNR is secondary. Continuing the legacy of its mission is primary. Motivating communities and landowners to recognize and protect the friend in their midst will continue. **Happy Anniversary!** 

*Steve Maurer*

**Steve Maurer**, Chief  
Division of Natural Areas and Preserves

*(Ohio EPA, continued from page 1)*

funding to purchase land along the state's 13 scenic rivers. A critical funding source has been the Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program. Offered through the Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance and the Ohio Water Development Authority, the program provides low-interest loans to local entities for infrastructure improvements (i.e. water treatment plants) and makes a percentage of the loan available for local conservation efforts.

One of the most successful land protection projects was completed along the Conneaut Creek Wild and Scenic River in Ashtabula County. Using \$1 million in WRRSP funding, a total of 17 properties along the banks of Conneaut Creek have been protected. Partnering with the city of Conneaut, the project began in 2004. By last year, more than 30,000 linear feet or 5.5 miles of stream bank were protected through this project.

In addition to protecting significant forest buffer, the six fee Conneaut Creek



purchases of 105 acres and the 11 conservation easements of 270 acres, protect a variety of important habitats including floodplain wetlands, vernal pools, hemlock ravines and shale bluffs. Three parcels are located at bridge crossings and offer potential for future canoe and kayak access sites and six owned by the division are open for hiking and fishing access.

The effectiveness of the Conneaut Creek WRRSP project increased when it was used in 2006 as the local match for a Clean Ohio grant obtained by Ashtabula Metroparks. That partnership resulted

in an additional \$601,644 to protect another 280 acres along the creek and its tributaries. The park district plans to develop new recreational opportunities, such as nature trails and a canoe access site, along the riverine areas.

Both the WRRSP and Clean Ohio programs have provided crucial funding sources for the continued protection of Ohio's high-quality streams. For more information on land acquisition along Ohio's northeastern designated streams, contact **(330) 527-4184**. 

**Steve Roloson**  
Northeast Ohio Scenic Rivers Manager

1968... it was a tumultuous and pivotal year for our country. Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated; the Tet offensive and My Lai massacre occurred in Vietnam; rioters disrupted the Democratic National Convention in Chicago; the Civil Rights movement continued to grow... the list goes on and so do the memories. Yet, with the terrifying events of the day, there were Ohioans who had the foresight and vision to protect our rivers.

Ohio's Scenic River Act was in place prior to the Cuyahoga River catching fire, the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency and the first Earth Day—thanks to those involved in creating the country's premier river preservation program right here at home.

Over the years, I have fostered partnerships and friendships, which like the

events of 1968, are too numerous to mention. However, a few individuals have inspired me. I consider Stu Lewis, former scenic river administrator and DNAP chief, to be the “father” of the Ohio Scenic River Program and he is why I transferred to the program. Anne Coburn-Griffis, my stream quality monitoring coordinator, whose creativity and “can do” attitude has created a number of successful projects which reflected well on the division, such as the *Guide to Stream Quality Monitoring* and the macroinvertebrate display at the Toledo Zoo Aquarium. Lastly, the time spent with Dr. Ken Krieger of Heidelberg College conducting research along the Sandusky was not only fun, but it was rewarding.

As I look back on my nine-year tenure as a scenic river manager, I believe I

have left my mark for the future generations who will enjoy our scenic rivers. The removal of the St John's Dam from the Sandusky River freed more than 8 miles of impaired water and left behind a freely flowing body of water. Developing new access sites and renovating existing sites, such as Abbotts Bridge on the Sandusky and The Bend Bridge on the Maumee, have created new opportunities for scenic river use. Land acquisition along both rivers will benefit them for generations to come.

I am very grateful for my career as a scenic river manager. Remember, water is life—the quality of water determines the quality of life. 

**Bob Vargo**

*NW Scenic River Manager*

*(Waterways, continued from page 1)*

Cuyahoga and Stillwater river systems. The work they did for those early river studies became the foundation of the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program.

Program staffing doubled from four to eight in 1974. During that time, new staff including Edwin Hammett, Bobbi Tousey and Larry Sweda joined the program.

The Little Beaver Creek, located in Columbiana County, became Ohio's first wild river in 1974. A year later it was named Ohio's second national scenic river. Additional state river designations soon followed—the Grand, the Upper Cuyahoga and the Maumee.

Staff soon discovered that purchasing land along all designated streams was not realistic, so emphasis shifted to developing comprehensive protection plans which incorporated local river corridor zoning as a protection tool. Although land acquisitions are integral to preserving stream buffer, the program also uses the purchase of conservation easements to protect

riparian corridor while keeping the land privately owned.

An important component of the Ohio Scenic River legislation is the creation of advisory councils for each designated river. Members are appointed by the director of ODNR to guide in planning and implementing protective measures for each river. Advisory councils are comprised of 10 local officials, landowners and grassroots conservation groups. Council members are important partners, providing insightful advice and maintaining local support for maintaining the quality of designated streams.

In 1975, ODNR Director Robert Teater created the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves to manage the state's system of nature preserves and scenic rivers. Moseley was appointed chief and in 1977 Lewis assumed management responsibilities for the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program. Thirty-one years later, the program is administered by Bob Gable and includes six full-time and four part-time staff. The work begun 40 years ago continues.

Scenic River staff work closely with advisory councils, local officials and county agencies, such as soil and water conservation districts, to stay current with local challenges facing designated rivers. Staff spend many hours attending public meetings, as well as coordinating their district's stream quality monitoring program.

Today, 26 stream segments totaling nearly 800 river miles comprise the Ohio scenic river system including the Big and Little Darby creeks, Chagrin, Conneaut Creek, Grand, Kokosing, Little Beaver Creek, Little Miami, Maumee, Mohican, Olentangy, Sandusky, Stillwater and Greenville and Upper Cuyahoga. The Ashtabula became Ohio's 14th state scenic river on October 30.

*(Editor's Note—our appreciation to Steve Goodwin who authored the majority of our look back at the beginnings of the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program. Goodwin retired in 2001 and works part-time for the Appalachian Ohio Alliance, a southeast Ohio land trust.)* 

# Maumee State Scenic and Recreational River



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The Maumee River watershed is the largest in the entire Great Lakes system. It covers portions of Ohio (6,586 square miles), Indiana (1,260 square miles) and Michigan (470 square miles) totally more than 8,300 square miles. The natural, historical and cultural significance of this river made in worthy of state designation early in the Ohio Scenic River Program's history. It was the **XXth** river to join the system.

Designated in July 1974, the Maumee State Scenic and Recreational River, leads the scenic river system in number of designated river miles. The scenic portion begins at the Indiana state line and extends 41 miles to the U.S. 24 bridge in Defiance. The recreational section starts at the U.S. 24 bridge and extends 52 river miles to the Maumee-Perrysburg bridge.

The Maumee if formed by the St. Joseph and St. Marys rivers in Fort Wayne, Indiana, and flows in a north-easterly directly. In Ohio, the Maumee flows through Paulding, Defiance, Henry, Wood and Lucas counties before emptying into the Maumee Bay and Lake Erie.

The 41-mile scenic designated stream is characterized by a broad, meandering floodplain. River walls rise sharply in comparison to the surrounding terrain. The river banks support a healthy, forested riparian corridor. The 52-mile recreational section greatly changes in character. The floodplains widen and its channel doubles in size, due to the addition of the Auglaize and Tiffin rivers flowing into it. The topographic relief is much less pronounced.

The river's gradient is 1.3 feet per mile, resulting in a lazily flowing river. There are three public water supply dams on the river—Independence Dam in Defiance County, Grand Rapids Dam in Wood County and Providence Dam in Lucas County. The Grand Rapids and Providence dams are connected together by Howard Island.

There are many islands located throughout the Maumee. Some are publicly owned, such as Girty's Island which is managed by the division and located adjacent to Flatrock Scenic River Area in Henry County. Additionally, there are many river access sites for the public to recreate along the river. The division owns the Bend Bridge Scenic River Area in Defiance County.

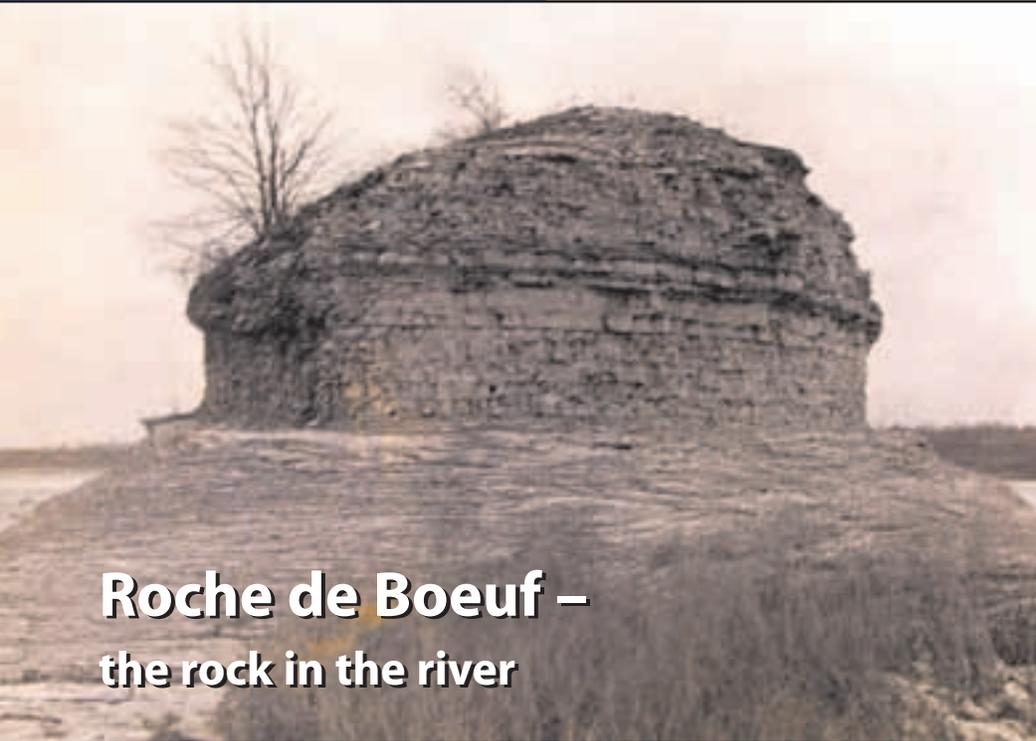
This northwestern Ohio river played a significant role in the country's early settlement history. During the late 17th and 18th , there was a southward

and westward movement of Native Americans into the Maumee River valley. Because of tribal warfare and the pressures of European settlements, the Miami Indians settled at the headwaters of the river they named the Maumee.

The river valley was the location of numerous battles during the French and Indian War. The most decisive battle being the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794 when George Washington ordered General Anthony Wayne to win control of the "Ohio Country" for the United States of America. Wayne succeeded in gaining control of the Maumee Valley, one of the last strongholds of the Native Americans in Ohio. Later during the War of 1812, successful battle campaigns opened the door to the Northwest Territory for settlement. Several forts could be found along the river, such as Fort Meigs in Perrysburg.

The Maumee River, once a part of the vast Great Black Swamp, was extensively drained to yield fertile agricultural lands, some of which can still be found in the watershed. Today, the river remains an important ecological, historical and recreational resource for all Ohioans. 

**Bob Vargo**  
Northwest Scenic Rivers Manager



## Roche de Boeuf – the rock in the river

IN THE MAUMEE RIVER, A BOULDER WHOSE NAME IS DERIVED FROM ITS RESEMBLANCE TO A BUFFALO CHARGING UPSTREAM STANDS AS MUTE WITNESS TO THE HISTORY AND LEGEND OF NORTHWEST OHIO. ROCHE DE BOEUF (ROCK OF BEEF) AND ROCHE DE BOUT (ROCK OF THE RIVER) WERE THE NAMES USED TO DESCRIBE THIS GREAT LIMESTONE FOUNDATION BY THE FRENCHMEN WHO FIRST VISITED THE RIVER VALLEY. THE LANDMARK IS RECOGNIZED BY BOTH NAMES TODAY, ALTHOUGH THE FORMER IS USED MOST OFTEN.

The area surrounding the rock is rich, both geologically and historically. The Bowling Green fault line, a major structural feature, crosses the Maumee River just upstream of Roche de Boeuf. Chief Pontiac's Ottawa village once sat on a high bluff on the western shore of the river rapids.

In 1794, chiefs Little Turtle, Blue Jacket and Tarhe the Crane met here to plan their strategies against General Anthony Wayne and his army of soldiers. On August 17, 1794, Wayne's army crossed the river at the same spot as they moved down stream to force a

Native American retreat at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. The army left behind supplies in the shelter of the great rock—earning it another name—Fort Deposit.

Roche de Boeuf is said to be the last resting place of nearly 200 Native Americans who were killed, not in battle with other tribes or Wayne's legions, but in the heat of passionate revenge after a distraught father murdered his wife over the accidental death of their child. According to legend, the incident resulted in the loss of two-thirds of the tribe's members.

In 1907, the National Railroad Company constructed a bridge to carry interurban electric trolleys across the river. Despite public outcry, a third of the rock was destroyed to make room for a bridge pier. By 1922 only the railroad was using the bridge.

Today, the bridge's concrete shell is crumbling, trees sprout from it and barriers block passage to vehicle and pedestrian traffic. But the remains of Roche de Boeuf stands as tribute to the past as it sits in the swirling rapids of the Maumee.



**Anne Coburn-Griffis**  
NW Stream Quality Coordinator

## Volunteers making a difference

### Ohio Stream Quality Monitoring Project

More than 5,000 Ohioans ranging from middle school students to retirees have gotten their feet wet this year to help Ohio's scenic rivers. Most will agree that spending time outdoors, learning more about their local streams and collecting small river critters is an easy and fun way to volunteer.

Biological monitoring is a reliable indicator of water quality in Ohio's streams. Volunteers are taught how to identify macroinvertebrates



which are effective barometers of a river's health. Small aquatic animals, such as aquatic insects, clams, snails and crayfish, have varying tolerances for pollution. By monitoring the quantity and diversity of macroinvertebrates, the division is able to observe firsthand any changes occurring in a river.

Considering becoming a SQM volunteer—the 2009 free training schedule will be on the division's website in early spring. To learn more, visit [www.ohiodnr.com/dnap](http://www.ohiodnr.com/dnap).

# Healthy Rivers Depend on Healthy Riparian Corridors

CENTRAL OHIO HARBORS A NUMBER OF OUTSTANDING STATE SCENIC RIVERS. THE MOHICAN RIVER, BETWEEN COLUMBUS AND CLEVELAND, IS KNOWN FOR ITS HIGH-QUALITY NATURAL CORRIDOR, REMARKABLE SCENERY AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES. THE KOKOSING RIVER, IN KNOX COUNTY, IS ONE OF OHIO'S CLEANEST STREAMS WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF RARE AQUATIC WILDLIFE AND RURAL CHARACTER. THE OLENTANGY RIVER IN DELAWARE COUNTY IMPRESSES WITH ITS SCENIC BLUFFS, BEDROCK OUTCROPPINGS AND NATIVE AMERICAN HISTORY. THE BIG AND LITTLE DARBY CREEKS ARE NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, EXTRAORDINARY RICHNESS OF FRESHWATER MUSSEL SPECIES, AND EXCELLENT WATER QUALITY—ALL WITHIN A 15 MINUTE DRIVE TO DOWNTOWN COLUMBUS.

Among all these high-quality streams, the Little Darby Creek presents a compelling argument for the need to protect and maintain the integrity of central Ohio's unique aquatic ecosystems as well as a working blueprint on how to accomplish just critical tasks.

The largest tributary in the Big Darby Creek watershed, the Little Darby originates just south of Mechanicsburg, and flows across the mostly rural lands of Champaign, Madison, Union and Franklin counties as it meanders toward its confluence with Big Darby Creek. Thirty-five species of freshwater mussels and 64 species of fish make the Little Darby ecosystem one of the most biologically significant streams of its size in the Midwest.

Among the many unique species, Ohio's only known reproducing population of the federally listed endangered clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) is found in the waters of the Little Darby. Other endangered species include Northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma quadrula*), snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*), elephant-ear (*Elliptio crassidens crassidens*) and rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrical cylindrical*) are all present in this exceptional warm water stream.

The Little Darby also supports an impressive terrestrial community of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, neotropical bird and waterfowl species. The Ohio-listed American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), the federally listed Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalist*) and bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) have all been verified

to inhabit the Little Darby's lush riparian corridor.

Protecting this exceptional riverine ecosystem for the enjoyment of future generations and to conserve its unique biological attributes can be challenging. Balancing the special needs of this very sensitive aquatic ecosystem with human progress in the watershed is critical to the long-term viability of both the river and the landscape. As is often the case, land use and stream health are interconnected.

The Ohio Scenic River Program's Central Region is successfully demonstrating how essential stream ecosystem functions and permanent riparian corridor can occur in even the most urbanized areas. Protecting the Little Darby's riparian corridor remains a priority.

In the 1990s, major land acquisitions, funded in part by a \$1 million Ohio Department of Transportation mitigation project, offset the negative impacts to the Big Darby headwaters during the State Route 33 improvement project in Logan. More than 170 acres of Little Darby corridor land and 75 acres of Little Darby conservation easements were acquired as a result. An additional 214 acres of land and 154 acres of conservation easements were permanently

protected in the Big Darby watershed as well.

“Diverse partnerships, such as those found through the WRRSP projects, have successfully protected Ohio’s high quality streams, riparian corridors and endangered species for our future,” said Bob Gable, administrator of the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program.

In 2007, the division purchased 215 acres in concert with the village of Plain City using Water Resource Restoration Sponsor Program (WRRSP) funding. The program enabled the village to improve their wastewater treatment plant by securing low-interest lands which made \$968,000 available for conservation land acquisition.

Similarly, the division has obtained support from the city of Pickerington to commit about \$2 million through a WRRSP project to purchase more than 400 acres of prime riparian habitat from willing landowners along the Little Darby. This conservation project would add to the recently acquired 100 acres of Little Darby floodplain from Sovereign Homes and Hidden Creek Homes, east of the village of West Jefferson.

Working in tandem with local governments, private developers and state and federal agencies, private non-profit organizations, concerned citizens, park districts and others, the Ohio Scenic Rivers Program has made significant progress toward protecting stream health and local quality of life. 

**Hector Santiago**

*Central Ohio Scenic River Manager*

*(Editor’s note- Hector has recently taken on the role of Midwestern national scenic river coordinator for the National Park Service. Natalie Johnson is the new Central Ohio Scenic River Manager. To learn more about the Central Ohio district, please contact her at (614) 265-6XXX.)*

## ODNR and National Parks Services Celebrate 40th Anniversary

Ohio led the nation in 1968 when it passed the first Scenic River Act of its kind. The federal Wild and Scenic Rivers Act was then signed by President Lyndon Johnson on October 2, 1968. The Little Miami River was the first river to join Ohio’s system of scenic rivers; so it was fitting that the Ohio Department of Natural Resources hold its 40th anniversary celebration along the Little Miami State and National Scenic River.

Co-sponsored by Little Miami, Inc., the celebration was held on a beautiful day in early October. The half-day event began with a stream quality monitoring demonstration by Ohio Scenic River Program staff along the banks of the Little Miami. After participants learned to identify a few common macroinvertebrates, they embarked upon a two-hour canoe float, courtesy of the Loveland Canoe and Livery.

Following the float, a reception featured guest speakers ODNR Director Sean Logan and Midwest Region Director Ernest Quintana from the National Park Service.



“Through the celebrated Scenic Rivers Program, Ohio has worked with local citizens and organizations to ensure the designated streams possess the best water quality, highest ecological diversity and most natural stream corridors in the state, and in some instances the Midwest,” said Director Logan.

The event drew a diverse crowd including local- and state-elected officials, representatives from a number of conservation organizations, scenic river volunteers and Little Miami advisory council members. 

**Steve Roloson**

*Northeast Ohio Scenic Rivers Manager*



# Support Your Local Scenic River!



DID YOU KNOW THAT OHIO HAS 14 SCENIC RIVERS? ALL BECAUSE CITIZENS LIKE YOU ASKED US TO HELP IDENTIFY AND PROTECT THE BEST OF THEIR LOCAL NATURAL RESOURCES.

Protecting the integrity of Ohio's scenic rivers is an ongoing challenge. Funds raised by the two Scenic River conservation license plates is a critical element in river protection.

When you purchase or renew a scenic river license plate, \$15 of each purchase is used to fund river protection measures, such as scenic river land acquisition, restoration projects, stream monitoring and public education.

The next time your license plate renewal rolls around, please consider supporting Ohio's high quality streams. Visit **oplate.com** to purchase your new Scenic River license plate today!



## Preserving Nature Today for the Needs of Tomorrow

### **Mission Statement:**

*Administer a system of nature preserves and scenic rivers by identifying and protecting Ohio's significant natural features.*

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