



Ohio Environmental Council

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

# GROUNDSWELL

BUILDING A HEALTHIER ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL

## A LETTER FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, HEATHER TAYLOR-MIESLE

Because of your support, we have seen a groundswell of action at the local, state, and national level over the past year to help achieve hard-fought victories for our air, land, water, and democracy.

Let's start at the national level. President Biden and Vice President Harris took office in January 2021 with a decisive mandate to act with great strength on climate change, clean energy, and environmental justice. From day one, we've supported federal efforts to reinstate important environmental regulations to protect our air and our water. And we've worked with partners to rally around the President's Build Back Better proposals to advance historic climate legislation.

At the state level, we continue to navigate extremely challenging dynamics in the Ohio Statehouse. Over the past year, we kept up the fight for Ohio's clean energy future by calling for a full repeal of House Bill 6. After H2Ohio was renewed for more than \$170 million, we continued to play a key role in supporting the growth of the Ohio Agricultural Conservation Initiative to address toxic algae in our water bodies. We advocated for critical investments in our parks and public lands. Throughout 2021, we've worked in coalition to demand fair state legislative and congressional maps—supporting dozens of community mapmaking workshops and educating hundreds of Ohioans about our new redistricting processes.

At the local level, our field advocacy and policy teams continue to work in close collaboration with community partners and city leaders to address environmental challenges. In Cleveland and Cincinnati, we elevated environmental justice and climate action policy discussions ahead of important local elections. In Toledo, we're creating policies to help ensure safe, affordable, and accessible water for all. With the addition of new staff members, our regional team has grown this year, and we're excited to continue this collaborative work across the state.

But that's not all. We firmly believe that the way to address climate change and fight for a healthier environment for all is to collaborate with the communities most impacted—and that starts with listening to and working with advocates on the frontlines both internally and externally.

After pausing on staff additions during the pandemic, we entered a season of hiring with intentionality to recruit more diverse voices from different backgrounds. We continue to embed our values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into every aspect of the organization from our internal staff trainings to how we show up in coalition. We have grown our Emerging Leaders and internship programs for young professionals. And we're living into our council role by working with partners to offer more operational assistance and technical expertise. We're grateful for your steadfast support as we work to expand and build a more inclusive movement.

Securing a healthier environment for all Ohioans is complex and challenging work that takes all of us, using every tool in our toolbox and making the most of opportunities at every level of government. We're grateful you are by our side in this fight. From the whole OEC team, thank you for your support!

Stay safe, be well, and thank you for all you do.

Yours in the fight,



Heather Taylor-Miesle  
Executive Director





# Our collective actions are **MAKING A DIFFERENCE.**

Our members have always shown us that we are stronger, smarter, and more effective when we work collaboratively. Over the past year, we've taken action together—in our communities, at the Statehouse, and on Capitol Hill—to ensure a healthier environment for all who call Ohio home. This groundswell of collective support has helped the OEC achieve hard-fought victories for our air, land, water, and democracy.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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 /OHIOENVIRONMENTALCOUNCIL

 @OHIOENVIRO



## REPEALING HOUSE BILL 6—ONE BIT AT A TIME

With the help of supporters like you, we continue the fight against House Bill 6—known widely as the worst energy bill of the 21st century. Since news broke that this bad legislation was passed as part of “likely the largest bribery, money laundering scheme ever perpetrated against the people of the state of Ohio,” we demanded its full and immediate repeal. We have seen some success, but there is still more work to do.

In March 2021, Ohio lawmakers repealed the portion of HB 6 that provided subsidies for FirstEnergy nuclear plants, as well as two other components of HB 6 that provided a windfall for FirstEnergy. While this is a positive step in the right direction for Ohio energy consumers, it leaves components of HB 6 on the books that will harm Ohio’s air quality and our environment. That is why we continue to fight for the repeal of the bailout of two dirty coal plants and for the reinstatement of Ohio’s clean energy standards—both a result of HB 6. But the fight doesn’t stop there. The last two years have unveiled deep corruption within our utility regulatory structure and statehouse at a level previously unseen in the state of Ohio. We continue to press for firm accountability for the bad actors involved in this complex corruption scheme. And we continue to press for strong reforms at the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio that put the needs of Ohio energy consumers and communities ahead of the interests of utilities. This work is not easy, but it is critical for Ohio’s energy future.



## DEVELOPING EQUITABLE ENERGY POLICY

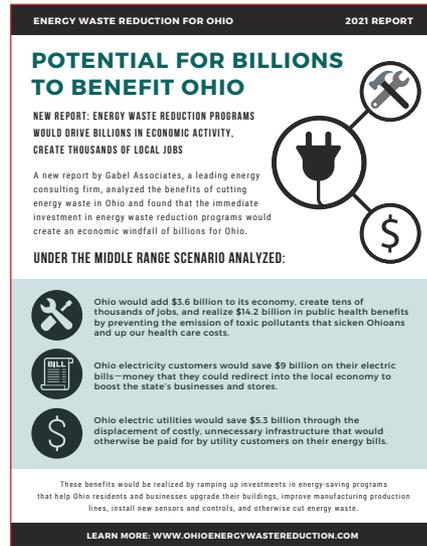
It is clear that after decades of energy policy that largely favors utilities and fossil fuels, Ohio needs forward-looking, equitable solutions that are good for our economy, our communities, and our health. In September 2021, we proudly joined partners on the shores of Lake Erie for the introduction of the Energy Jobs and Justice Act by bill co-sponsors Rep. Stephanie Howse (D-Cleveland) and Rep. Casey Weinstein (D-Hudson).

The Energy Jobs & Justice Act is an intentionally-designed, comprehensive clean energy policy rooted in equity, economic development, and accountability. This bill is the product of over a year of work with many partners working toward a new, equitable clean energy vision for Ohio. The legislation aims to move Ohio toward a more equitable clean energy future by encouraging clean energy growth, energy waste reduction, and curbing utility influence over policymaking and regulatory actions. It will do so by launching the state’s largest economic development initiative in recent history, prioritizing investments in clean energy jobs and environmental justice programs. Importantly, the legislation centers on equitable policy design to make sure those most historically and disproportionately harmed by Ohio’s regressive energy policies benefit most from this clean energy transition. All with the goal to ensure 100% carbon-free electricity generation and use by 2050! Together, we can advance bold climate action like the Energy Jobs and Justice Act to secure a healthier future for all Ohioans.

## REDUCING ENERGY WASTE

The cleanest kilowatt hour is the one you never use—which is why the OEC has championed measures to reduce energy waste through energy efficiency programs for more than a decade.

This year, the OEC family of organizations took a multifaceted approach to reinstate Ohio's energy efficiency standards, stripped away by the passage of House Bill 6 in 2019. With your support, the OEC and our partners launched a new major study, *Estimating the Benefits of Energy Waste Reduction in Ohio*. The report found that greater investment in energy waste reduction could save Ohioans approximately \$9 billion on electric bills over the next ten years, support nearly 130,000 new energy efficiency jobs, and prevent air pollution that sickens Ohioans and ups our health care costs. At the Statehouse, we continued to advocate for comprehensive energy waste programs, providing testimony on several key bills that would reinstate strong standards for the health of our communities, our economy, and our environment.



## POWERING A CLEAN FUTURE: ONE COMMUNITY AT A TIME

Ohio communities are leading the way on climate action across the Buckeye State. Over the past two years, OEC has supported these efforts through our work with Power a Clean Future Ohio (PCFO), a bipartisan organization dedicated to working with local officials to develop equitable climate change solutions, from Toledo to Portsmouth and Cincinnati to Youngstown, more than 20 cities and counties have officially joined the campaign by making climate action commitments.



As one of many PCFO partners, the OEC provides technical and advocacy support to the effort, including this year's inaugural Ohio Clean Energy Summit. The week-long event was hosted from the City of Cincinnati with support from the OEC, Ohio Conservative Energy Forum, and Ohio Mayors Alliance. Throughout the summit, Ohio mayors, environmental justice leaders, and clean energy business leaders shared their insights on the environmental and economic opportunities to reduce carbon emissions to fight climate change. The marquee event highlighted PCFO founding communities, challenged communities to commit to reducing their carbon footprint by 30% by 2030, and elevated the diverse voices of clean energy advocates across the state. Together, we are building momentum for a clean, prosperous, and healthy future for all Ohioans.

## YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

### 1 WHITE HOUSE SHOUTOUT

#### OF OEC'S SUPPORT FOR THE BUILD BACK BETTER PLAN

OEC Executive Director Heather Taylor-Miesle penned an op-ed that appeared in the Columbus Dispatch about the importance of President Biden's Build Back Better framework. The White House distributed the article to its press pool across the nation.

### 10+ YEARS

#### CHAMPIONING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

In 2021, we were honored to receive the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's Leadership Award for our work to defend and advance energy efficiency policy in Ohio for more than a decade.

### 3,675+ MESSAGES

#### SENT TO LAWMAKERS TO SUPPORT OHIO'S CLEAN ENERGY FUTURE

Over the past year, thousands of individuals have taken action, calling on their legislators to fully repeal House Bill 6 and to vote no on Senate Bill 52 (which, as passed, allows local county commissioners to veto the development of these clean energy sources).

### 323 LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS & PARTNERS

#### ATTENDED THE INAUGURAL OHIO CLEAN ENERGY SUMMIT IN MAY 2021

To spark important climate conversation and move the needle on Ohio clean energy efforts at the local level, the OEC partnered with Power a Clean Future Ohio and its coalition to organize the first virtual Ohio Clean Energy summit. Attendees heard from 25 speakers and moderators over four days of programming.



## IMPROVING WATER QUALITY THROUGH H2OHIO

This year, the OEC and our members strongly advocated for continued investment in the H2Ohio program, one of the most comprehensive, science-based plans for clean water in state history. Throughout the state's biannual budgeting process in early 2021, OEC staff delivered powerful testimony and OEC members sent hundreds of letters calling on lawmakers to increase investment in H2Ohio. Together, we were successful in maintaining funding for this critical program in the state budget bill. As a result, state agencies responsible for implementing the H2Ohio program have announced plans for continued investments in Ohio's water quality.

The Ohio Department of Agriculture, responsible for reducing agricultural phosphorus runoff through conservation partnerships with farmers, has now expanded its H2Ohio program to ten more counties encompassing the entirety of the Ohio portion of the Western Lake Erie Basin. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has shared its plans to expand its H2Ohio program successful wetland restoration program from the Maumee River watershed to the Ohio River watershed. The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency has announced a series of projects to continue improving Ohio's wastewater and drinking water infrastructure. These include replacing lead service lines in the Cleveland area as well as repairing aging water and wastewater infrastructure in several rural counties.

Because of our strong advocacy efforts, these three agencies are now equipped with more resources to continue building on the foundation they laid for this holistic water quality improvement program. The OEC will continue to work with the administration to help this program grow and evolve to solve Ohio's water quality challenges.



## GETTING THE LEAD OUT OF OHIO'S DRINKING WATER SYSTEMS

Lead-contaminated drinking water is a nationwide problem, affecting every state. Ohio is second in the nation for the number of lead service lines, with an estimated 650,000 lines that threaten the safety of Ohioans' drinking water. To eliminate this threat, full replacement of entire lead service lines—including portions on both public and private property—is essential.

With your support, the OEC continues to advocate at every level of government for policies to do just that. This year, we developed two in-depth educational tools showcasing the need to eliminate lead service lines in Ohio's drinking water systems, including a comprehensive policy guide for local lawmakers. We also produced a short film featuring advocate stories from across the Buckeye State to draw attention to this pervasive issue. We continue to monitor the progress of the state's Lead Advisory Committee and actively share our water policy expertise with the Ohio Lead Free Kids Coalition. We pushed for additional funding at the state level (through H2Ohio and allocation of the state's American Rescue Plan Act dollars) and at the federal level (through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act) to eliminate lead service lines in Ohio communities.

## FIGHTING “FOREVER CHEMICALS”

For years, the OEC has been advocating at the state and national level for strict regulation of PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances), a family of nearly 5,000 chemicals used to make many common-place products, from food packaging to firefighting foams. PFAS are often dubbed “forever chemicals” for their ability to linger in the environment, harm our drinking water resources, and cause severe health problems.

This year, the OEC celebrated important milestones in the fight against forever chemicals at the state and federal levels. In early 2021, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency and the Ohio Department of Health completed a comprehensive sampling initiative, as directed by the Ohio PFAS Action Plan, to better understand the extent of the state's PFAS problem in drinking water systems and determine the next steps for the protection of Ohio's water resources.

At the federal level, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the bipartisan PFAS Action Act of 2021 and the U.S. EPA announced an aggressive regulation schedule to reduce PFAS pollution by 2023. The OEC is committed to using every tool we have, at all levels of government, to fight forever chemicals and protect our drinking water resources.



## ENSURING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE WATER IN TOLEDO

Safe and affordable water is a right of all Ohioans. In Toledo, the OEC's Northwest Ohio Regional Director has been supporting our grassroots and community partners, including the Junction Coalition and Water Equity Toledo, by advocating for equitable policy changes to improve drinking water affordability. We were a contributing member of the Affordability and Consumer Protection Task Force, which advises Toledo City Council. The Task Force has successfully assisted the city in developing new programs and city ordinances designed to ensure that low-income residents in Toledo avoid shut offs and remain with water service. In 2021, the Task Force worked with leaders on City Council to author and pass a package of ordinances that limit a landlord's ability to tack on additional costs or shut off water for tenants. The city of Toledo also launched a new customer assistance program that eliminates outstanding debt for struggling water customers after a period of consistent payments. We hope to help more cities around Ohio follow Toledo's lead in creating policies to help ensure safe, affordable, and accessible water for all.



## YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

### \$55 BILLION

#### SECURED FOR WATER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAMS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL

The bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provides critical funding to expand the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and to help communities remove lead service lines.

### \$170 MILLION

#### INVESTED IN H2OHIO STATEWIDE PROGRAMS

Thanks to our advocacy efforts, and more than 450 letters submitted by OEC members, the General Assembly invested big in solutions to help ensure safe and clean water for all Ohioans through the H2Ohio program.

### 75+ MEETINGS

#### WITH CONGRESSIONAL AND STATE LEGISLATORS

Our policy experts talked to lawmakers on both sides of the aisle about issues that matter to Ohioans. For the Congressional meetings, we partnered with 20 external partners and community leaders to make the case for why Ohio needs strong watershed protections, water infrastructure funding, as well as access to clean, safe, and affordable water.

### 4,890 MESSAGES

#### SENT TO STATE LAWMAKERS TO PROTECT OHIO'S SMALL STREAMS

Hundreds of OEC supporters sent thousands of messages to state lawmakers to stop HB 175 which would remove regulatory protections for over 36,000 miles of ephemeral, rain-dependent streams opening them up to pollution and degradation. At time of publication, the Ohio Statehouse was still considering HB 175.



## CULTIVATING COMMUNITY SUPPORT FOR WAYNE NATIONAL FOREST DESIGNATIONS

The OEC's campaign to protect approximately 30,000 acres of the Wayne National Forest—and 100 miles of hiking trail—continues. This campaign has gained support from more than 100 businesses, community organizations, and local governments across Southeast Ohio. Over the last year, the number of community organizations supporting proactive protection of the Wayne has nearly tripled. Securing a federal designation—like a Backcountry or National Recreation Area—would protect the public forest from logging, fracking, mining, and road construction. But the benefits of a named Backcountry Area are not just for the forest. The area—roughly the size of Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Northeast Ohio—could be a destination for activities like hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, and camping. Declaring a Backcountry Area will help make the Wayne a nationally recognized tourism destination where visitors will support small businesses and help revitalize local economies.

Supporters like you are helping make this vision a reality. Together we can secure this critical designation.



## SECURING BIG BUDGET WINS FOR OHIO'S PUBLIC LANDS

Thanks to determined local advocates, the OEC, and you, a key piece of Ohio's history and ecology was protected this year. Tucked in the state's budget bill was approval for the Ohio Department of Natural Resources to designate 120 contiguous acres of mature hardwood forest as the "Doris Duke Woods Nature Preserve" at Malabar Farm State Park near Mansfield. The property was part of the homestead and farm of Louis Bromfield, a native Ohioan and one of the most famous authors in the world during the early 1900s. Bromfield's Malabar Farm was a showcase for regenerative agriculture practices and a gathering place for celebrities—Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were married at Malabar in 1945. When Bromfield died of cancer in 1956, his close friend—the environmentalist and philanthropist Doris Duke—stepped in to purchase and save the woods at Malabar from auction to private parties. Today, the property is filled with impressive beech trees that tower above gorgeous, delicate wildflowers. The OEC is honored to have partnered closely with property stewards, fierce forest advocates, and State Senator Mark Romanchuk to secure this big win for such a special place.

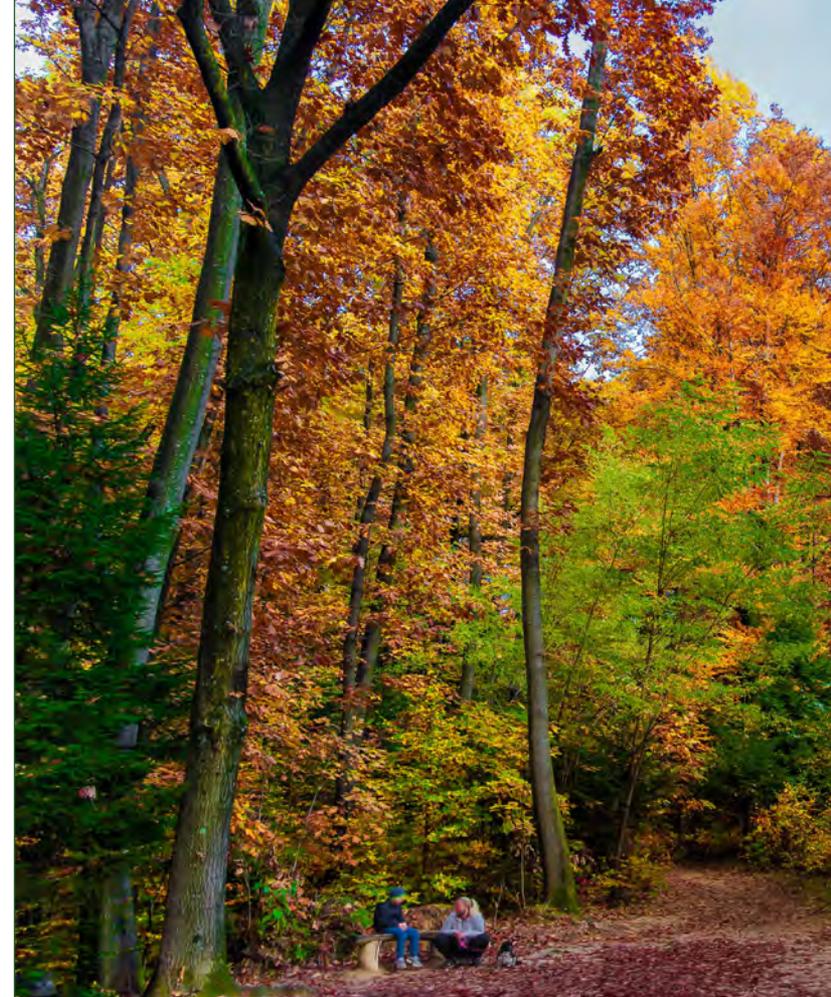
Additional public lands funding in the budget bill included the allocation of \$28 million to purchase the remainder of the AEP ReCreation Land in Southeastern Ohio and the allocation of \$500 million for brownfield revitalization to clean up contaminated sites throughout the state.



## PREVENTING FRACKING ON FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS

This year, the OEC and our partners—Center for Biological Diversity, the Sierra Club, and Heartwood—celebrated a major legal victory to help keep the Wayne National Forest’s air and water clean and its views intact. In May 2017, we sued the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service over plans to permit fracking in the Wayne, saying federal officials had relied on an outdated plan and ignored significant environmental threats before approving the fracking. In early 2021, the federal court in the case issued a ruling blocking new oil and gas leases in Ohio's only National Forest and effectively prohibiting action for already-approved drilling. Thank you for helping us secure this major victory for public health, for outdoor recreation, and for our climate!

And thank you for continuing the fight. This year, the OEC and our supporters submitted a petition to the Biden Administration requesting a permanent ban on new oil and gas leasing on federal public lands. Ending fossil fuel extraction on the nation’s federal public lands will be a major stride in the effort to tackle the climate crisis.



## YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

### 100+ LOCAL ENTITIES

#### SUPPORTING OEC'S WAYNE BACKCOUNTRY CAMPAIGN

Throughout Southeast Ohio, more than 100 businesses, community organizations, and local government bodies have signed on to endorse a 30,000-acre protected area in the Wayne National Forest that will stimulate the region's economy, provide new opportunities for recreation, and enhance the Wayne's status as a destination for outdoor adventure.

### 457 PETITION SIGNATURES

#### DELIVERED CALLING FOR THE PRESERVATION OF ROCK RUN

Rock Run is one of the most intact forested watersheds in Southwest Ohio and a haven for rare and imperiled plants and animals. When we heard that Rock Run could be subject to logging, we submitted a petition from OEC and our supporters to the Ohio Division of Forestry.

### 1000+ MESSAGES

#### CALLING ON LAWMAKERS TO STOP OIL & GAS LEASING ON PUBLIC LANDS

More than 575 supporters signed on to a petition calling for a permanent ban on oil and gas leasing in our federal public lands. An additional 535 supporters sent letters to Ohio lawmakers in opposition to a provision in the budget bill aggressively promoting fracking in state parks and other state public lands.

### 2,485 ACRES

#### SEEKING PROTECTION IN LITIGATION FILED BY THE OEC

In September 2021, the OEC filed a lawsuit in federal district court, [Ohio Environmental Council v. U.S. Forest Service](#), to stop the implementation of the Sunny Oaks clearcut logging project. The project proposes to clearcut 2,485 acres of oak forests in the Wayne National Forest. Our lawsuit advances groundbreaking legal claims involving oak ecosystem science and mycorrhizal networks, also known as the “Wood Wide Web.”

## FIGHTING FOR FAIR MAPS

Over the past year, OEC's Democracy Team has focused squarely on redistricting efforts because we can't secure a healthy environment without a healthy democracy. For too long, politicians have rigged Ohio's electoral maps to preserve political power and silence the voices of our communities. Because of these maps, our legislators often fail to respond to Ohio voters' views on pressing issues like climate change. In 2015 and 2018, Ohio voters decisively rejected partisan gerrymandering by voting for two redistricting reform measures. This year, those reforms were put to the test.

We were proud to join partners within the Equal Districts Coalition and the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission to engage Ohioans in redistricting efforts across the Buckeye State. With your support and the support of these partners, the OEC educated hundreds of Ohioans about our new redistricting processes and supported dozens of community mapmaking workshops. We helped hundreds of concerned citizens prepare and deliver testimony at Commission and General Assembly committee hearings. On top of that, OEC staff delivered expert testimony at hearings in Cleveland, in Dayton, and several times at the Ohio Statehouse.

Unfortunately, the Ohio Redistricting Commission and General Assembly attempted to stifle Ohioans' participation in this process time and time again. They failed to release maps on time, blatantly ignoring Constitutional deadlines, and scheduled last minute hearings hoping Ohioans wouldn't show up. In September, the Ohio Redistricting Commission passed a gerrymandered state legislative map. In November, the Ohio General Assembly passed a gerrymandered congressional map.

By passing extreme and unconstitutional gerrymandered maps, our elected leaders are refusing Ohioans the representation they deserve. They are denying a voice to Ohioans facing environmental injustice and the growing impacts of climate change. But we won't let this unconstitutional power grab go unchallenged.

We have already taken the fight to the courts. The OEC joined Ohio Organizing Collaborative, The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-Ohio), and six impacted Ohioans in a lawsuit appealing the unfair state legislative map in September. Represented by the nationally-acclaimed Brennan Center for Justice, we argued that the maps violate the prohibition against partisan gerrymandering and voters' equal protection and associational rights under the Ohio constitution.

If all else fails, we'll work with partners to lay the groundwork for a new redistricting process. This is a once-in-a-decade moment to create fair, competitive, and representative district maps while also setting the stage for a decade of pragmatic environmental policy. Thank you for having our backs.

## YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

### 2 MEMBERS

#### OF THE OHIO CITIZENS' REDISTRICTING COMMISSION AFFILIATED WITH THE OEC

An OEC staff member and an OEC Emerging Leaders Council member were among 15 diverse volunteer leaders nominated and selected to serve on the Ohio Citizens' Redistricting Commission (OCRC).

The independent, nonpartisan commission modeled a thorough and robust engagement process—holding public hearings in a wide range of communities to develop unity maps. The OCRC presented the maps to the Ohio Redistricting Commission and General Assembly for consideration.

### 30+ EQUAL DISTRICTS PARTNERS

#### WORKING TOGETHER FOR A FAIR REDISTRICTING PROCESS

The OEC was proud to join the Equal Districts Coalition, a unified group of more than 30 prominent Ohio advocacy organizations engaged in the 2021 redistricting fight.



# LAW CENTER

## GROUNDBREAKING LITIGATION FILED TO PROTECT OHIO'S ONLY NATIONAL FOREST

With your support, the OEC filed an important lawsuit to protect the health of our forests, from towering trees to microscopic mycorrhizal fungal networks. In September 2021, the OEC sued in federal district court to stop the implementation of the U.S. Forest Service Sunny Oaks clearcut logging project. The Sunny Oaks Project would authorize the clearcut logging of 2,485 acres of oak forests, several miles of road construction, and hundreds of miles of bulldozer line development in the Wayne National Forest's Ironton Unit located in Southeast Ohio. Natural forests are communities of trees, plants, and fungi that communicate with one another, nurture one another, and protect one another. Emerging science has dubbed this phenomenon the "Wood Wide Web." Clearcutting our forests can permanently damage the entire network.

To our knowledge, our case—Ohio Environmental Council v. United States Forest Service—is the first to include the "Wood Wide Web" of mycorrhizal networks as a major point of litigation. This case could set groundbreaking precedent that requires the U.S. Forest Service to analyze adverse impacts to fungal networks when managing projects. The OEC believes that healthy, awe-inspiring public forests are worth fighting for, and we intend to stop the proposed Sunny Oaks Project from moving forward.

## SUPPORTING OHIO'S RENEWABLE ENERGY FUTURE

For years, the OEC Law Center has tracked, studied, and supported Icebreaker Wind, an innovative six wind turbine project to be built in Lake Erie just off the shore of Cleveland. As North America's first freshwater offshore wind power project, Icebreaker could change the energy game for the state of Ohio. Icebreaker will reduce carbon emissions and bring the economic benefits of the clean energy economy to our northern shore. This project has been thoroughly vetted every step of the way to ensure it has minimal impact on the environment and wildlife. It will continue to be monitored by state and federal agencies as it progresses through the construction and operational phases. Unfortunately, opposition to Project Icebreaker has been funded by fossil fuel interests, notably Murray Energy, a coal company. Following last year's approval of this exciting project by the Ohio Power Siting Board, opposed parties appealed the project to the Ohio Supreme Court. The OEC Law Center continued our long history of support for the project by filing an amicus brief stating that it is important Ohioans know that fossil fuel interests are standing in the way of a cleaner, renewable energy future we all deserve.

## HONORING TRENT DOUGHERTY

This year, the OEC bid farewell to one of the giants in our organization, General Counsel Trent Dougherty. Trent started his more than 16-year tenure with the organization as a young law student intern. He quickly became a staff attorney handling the organization's litigation to protect water, hold mining companies and utilities accountable, and provide safeguards for many of Ohio's vibrant public greenspaces. As the leader of OEC's Law Center, Trent worked tirelessly with attorneys across the state to not only provide the legal backbone for the organization's great policy work, but to also educate tomorrow's environmental lawyers. During his tenure, the OEC Law Center provided over a hundred law students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience in environmental law and real world education in conservation advocacy. We are forever grateful for Trent's dedication and hard work to make Ohio's environment and democracy better for future generations. We look forward to continuing to work with him in his new role in the movement.



YOUR IMPACT  
BY THE NUMBERS

**265+**  
**SUPPORTERS**

**ATTENDED THREE EXCITING  
OEC LAW CENTER EDUCATION  
OPPORTUNITIES**

The OEC Law Center was proud to host three continuing legal education sessions throughout the year, including sessions on the redistricting process and Appalachian legal service access in addition to our annual Law Conference.

**4 CASES**

**IN FEDERAL AND  
STATE COURTS**

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS

## PREPARING ADVOCATES

As a council, we strive to provide Ohio's environmental community with the tools and resources it needs to build a more equitable and more sustainable state. This year, the OEC team came together to develop an Advocacy Toolkit and corresponding training series for our members. Drawing on the expertise of our policy leaders, regional directors, and communications team, the toolkit provides useful tips for reaching out to lawmakers, delivering testimony, and engaging the media. Our interactive training sessions featured state representatives, city council leaders, and OEC staff experts.

It doesn't matter what color your skin is, how much money you make, whether you live in a big city or small town: you can get involved in advocating for the changes you want to see. We hope you'll utilize the toolkit to build support for your cause and use your voice to make a difference. Learn more by visiting [www.theoec.org/advocacy-toolkit](http://www.theoec.org/advocacy-toolkit)

## PARTNERING FOR LOCAL PROGRESS

The OEC has built and deepened regional capacity through staff and partnerships over the past five years. We've learned a lot over this period by testing new community engagement strategies and honing our principles of engagement with partners. As a result, we've seen success advancing water affordability legislation in Toledo and just transition work in Appalachia.

Over the past year, we've worked in deep collaboration with diverse partners in Cleveland and Cincinnati to advance a broad range of environmental justice policy priorities. In Cleveland for example, we collectively developed the Cleveland Comprehensive Environmental Policy Platform ahead of election season. The platform details actionable objectives and locally-designed policy recommendations for the newly elected mayor and city council to tackle issues related to water, land and green space, infrastructure and transportation, as well as energy and air quality. Over the summer, following the release of the platform, the OEC worked with more than 30 community partner organizations to host the Cleveland Mayoral Candidate Forum. All seven Cleveland mayoral candidates participated in the virtual forum, and more than 450 people—representing every zip code in the city of Cleveland—registered to attend the event online or at a community watch party. Together, we elevated environmental issues to the forefront of civic dialogue in Cleveland and Cincinnati. With your support we hope to continue this collaborative work in cities across the state.

# ENGAGEMENT STATISTICS

JULY 1, 2020 - JUNE 30, 2021

## SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS



**17,850**

Facebook



**9,275**

Twitter



**2,900**

Instagram

## TARGETED ACTIONS

**17,850**

Including petition signatures, regulatory comments, and letters to lawmakers

## PARTNERS ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED

**75 LOCAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

## EMAIL MESSAGING

**15,600 EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS**

## EVENT REGISTRATIONS

**1,485+ OEC EVENT REGISTRATIONS**

# EXPANDING AN EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE MOVEMENT

## BUILDING A MORE JUST, EQUITABLE, DIVERSE, AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION

We are committed to advocating for policies that fight environmental injustice and support frontline leaders in their environmental justice work—this commitment and support starts within our organization. We continue to take actionable steps to build a more equitable and inclusive work culture.

Like many other organizations, the OEC paused on hiring during the uncertain early months of the pandemic. At the beginning of 2021, we were pleased to pick up our hiring efforts once again, with an emphasis placed on recruiting folks with a broader set of backgrounds and experiences. We have embedded our values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion into every aspect of the organization—from hosting internal staff trainings and formalizing a paid internship program to setting ground rules for how we show up in coalition. We continue to review our policies and procedures with an equity lens and alter them accordingly. We acknowledge we have much more work to do and are committed to getting it right.

## INVESTING IN THE NEXT GENERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL CHAMPIONS

Thanks to supporters like you, we are able to invest in tomorrow's environmental movement through our paid internship program and our Emerging Leaders Council. Both of these programs ensure there is a diverse, knowledgeable, skilled bench of environmental champions ready to step into leadership for years to come.

Our internship program not only trains young leaders on how to engage in the environmental movement, but it also shows them how to embody our values of pragmatism, transparency, and justice. Providing paid internships helps ensure a diverse pool of candidates has opportunities to participate in this high quality internship program regardless of financial status. This year, we were successful in hosting seven paid internships through the spring and summer of 2021.

The Emerging Leaders program equips participants with the skills and training to create a better environment and a stronger community. The program connects young professionals (ages 18-40) from diverse backgrounds to environmental issues at home and across the globe. Volunteer members of the Emerging Leaders Council further engage through hands-on learning experiences while helping develop and guide the program's content. By engaging and educating members from all experience levels, we empower each other to take action and become the next generation of environmental champions through education, advocacy, and networking.

### YOUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

**1<sup>ST</sup> HUMAN  
RESOURCES  
DIRECTOR  
HIRED**

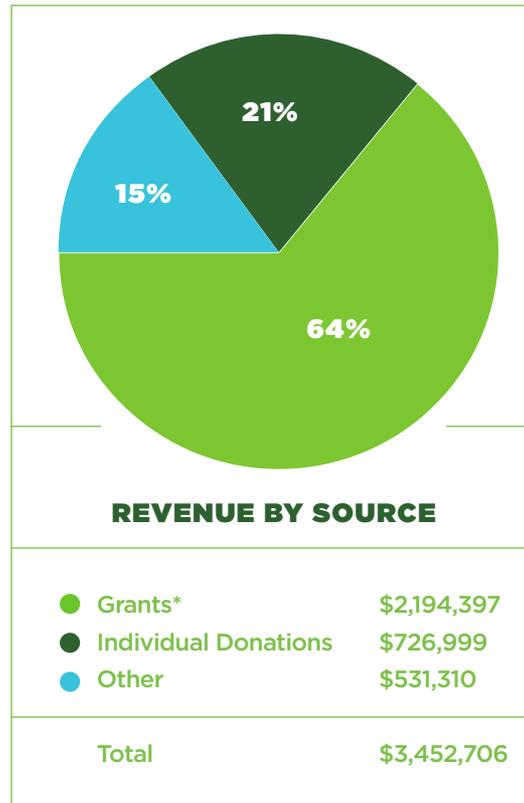
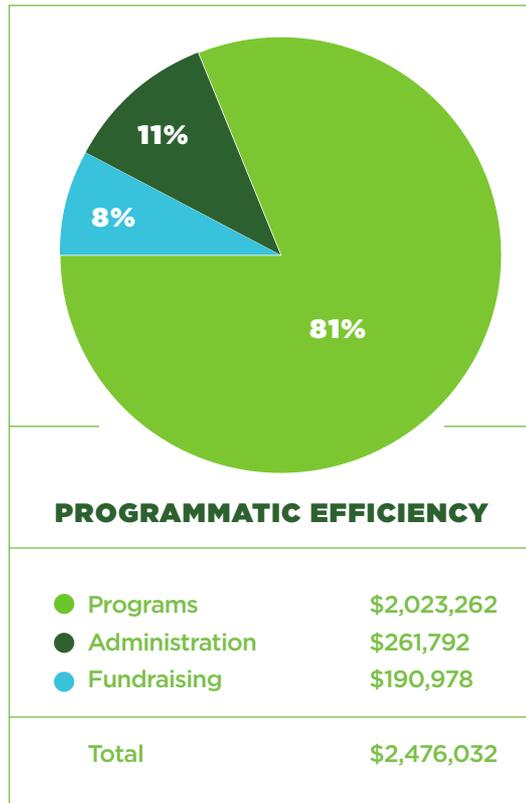
**7 PAID  
INTERNS  
HOSTED  
IN 2021**

**455 EMERGING  
LEADERS PROGRAM  
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# THE OEC IS A CAREFUL STEWARD OF YOUR INVESTMENT IN A HEALTHIER, MORE BEAUTIFUL OHIO.

FY 2021 - JULY 1, 2020 TO JUNE 30, 2021\*\*



\*The grant revenue reported includes a revenue hold-over for future fiscal years as a result of GAAP accounting guidance related to grant revenue recognition. What remains represents the amount of grant revenue attributable to FY21 expenses.

\*\*These numbers include in-kind contributions and corresponding expenses, plus restricted contributions.

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TO SUPPORT OEC'S MISSION

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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  
[WWW.THEOEC.ORG/BEQUESTS](http://WWW.THEOEC.ORG/BEQUESTS)

## DONOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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, 2020 and June 30, 2021. We thank these donors—and everyone who made gifts of less than \$1,000.

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