

**ANNUAL  
2022  
NEWSLETTER**

# *Natural Areas* **& PRESERVES**



*It's in our Nature.*

# Chief's Message



The past year has been another whirlwind of progress and activity, and there are many people to acknowledge and thank for our successes. In my more than 28 years working with the Department of Natural Resources, I cannot recall a more dedicated staff, committed group of supporters or an administration that has been more supportive of our mission. Capital funds have been provided to address longstanding needs and funding for additional staff has allowed us to make substantial progress on invasive species control across our Nature Preserves and Scenic Rivers. New trails, bridges and staircases have been built to better accommodate visitors, new river access has been constructed, and interpretive signage is being installed to highlight the significance of some of Ohio's rarest ecological and geological sites around the state.

For many nature lovers and outdoor enthusiasts, the most exciting aspect of our work is the renewed emphasis on finding and acquiring additional land to be incorporated into the

“ **A deep gratitude is owed to those individuals we may never see or meet...** ”

State Nature Preserve and Scenic River systems. We have acquired critical habitats along the Little Darby and Little Beaver Creek Scenic Rivers, added lands to further protect existing preserves, and established entirely new preserves as well. Behind these land protection projects are rewarding partnerships that have grown or been forged with donors of land, local and regional conservation agencies and non-profit organizations — collaborations that have been critical in nearly every parcel we have added.

A deep gratitude is owed to those individuals we may never see or meet — supporters of our mission who make direct donations, purchase nature preserve or scenic river license plates, or share their tax returns through the Ohio Tax Checkoff program — these are the unsung heroes of the division. Donated funds often serve as the sole source of funding for the purchase of critical habitats or are used as match to secure larger grants whenever possible. Even when a landowner wishes to give their land to the division, donations are used to obtain needed land surveys and appraisals.

There are countless individuals and organizations to which our division owes its appreciation — those among you that freely and often repeatedly give time and money to help protect Ohio's outstanding natural resources — you are a constant source of inspiration. Thank you one and all for supporting our mission!



## Favorite MOMENTS



Installing new interpretive signs at Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve.



Learning about macroinvertebrates at the Scenic Rivers Program table at the State Fair.

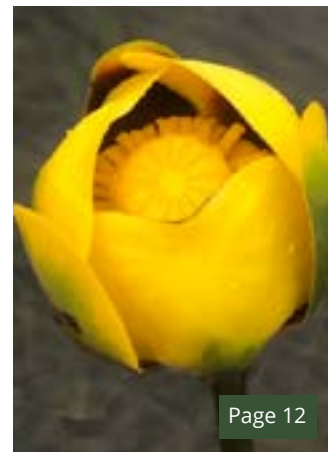


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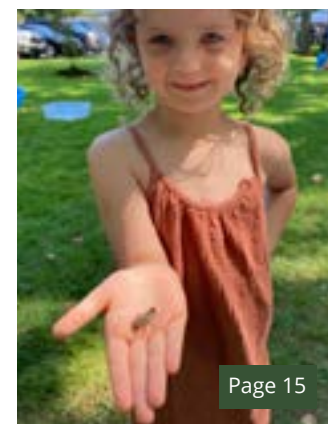
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# Funding & Support

## Capital Budget MUCH-NEEDED FUNDS

The State of Ohio's biennial Capital Budget appropriates funding for the repair, reconstruction, and construction of capital assets. For the 2023-2024 funding cycle, the Division is pleased to announce it will receive over \$6 million in capital budget appropriations. These much-needed funds will be used for critical repairs and key improvements at Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve in Licking County and Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve in Jackson County.

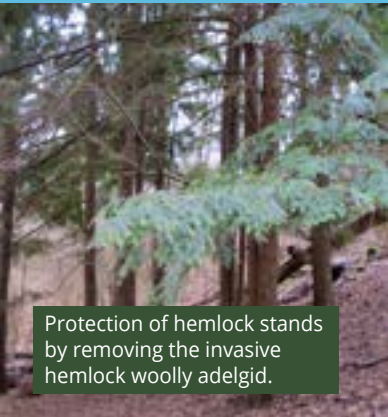
Blackhand Gorge is one of the Division's most highly visited sites due to its scenic hike/bike trail along the Licking River, as well as the river's growing popularity for paddling sports. A large portion of the capital funds will be used to stabilize a stretch of the Licking River that flows through the preserve; a multi-year effort that will correct existing problems and prevent future issues with erosion and trail closures.



Damaged section of multi-use trail along the Licking River at Blackhand Gorge.

*Your generous donations directly fund:*

- land protection
- trail and facility improvements
- educational materials
- research and monitoring
- ecological management



Protection of hemlock stands by removing the invasive hemlock woolly adelgid.



New overlook deck at Blackhand Gorge State Nature Preserve.



Land acquisitions at Eagle Creek, Blackhand Gorge, Boch Hollow and Whipple State Nature Preserves.

## Your Tax Check Off DONATIONS AT WORK

Ohio's Tax Check Off program remains a critical resource for the Division's important work. For the 2021 tax year, Ohioans generously donated \$423,450 of their tax refunds to the Division.

**By checking Nature Preserves/Scenic Rivers on the 1040 Individual Income Tax return, Ohioans helped fund:**



Wetland restoration at McCracken Fen State Nature Preserve.



# H2Ohio Progress

## THE HUDDLE PROJECT

Launched by Governor Mike DeWine, H2Ohio continues to transform Ohio's wetlands, streams, and ultimately — water quality — through the science-driven approaches it funds and effective collaborations it fosters. The Huddle property in northwest Ohio is another exciting project to benefit from this important statewide initiative.

The 57-acre Huddle property lies adjacent to the Maumee River and sits within its 100-year floodplain. Black Swamp Conservancy (BSC) purchased the property, which was previously used in grain production, with funding from the Ohio Water Department Authority. In collaboration with BSC, the Division's Scenic Rivers Program (SRP) staff has been working closely with ODNR's H2Ohio team to implement funds that will restore 35 acres of land into oxbow wetlands and riparian forest. The restoration design includes the creation of multiple pools that will range in size, depth and their interconnectedness. Microtopography (small elevation changes) constructed in between the pools will create greater habitat diversity.

A critical piece of the restoration depends on flood events and the benefits they provide. As floodwaters flow onto land, they enrich a river's floodplain by adding nutrients and filling pools. This process creates wildlife habitat and provides opportunities for fish to find suitable breeding habitat.

The Pirate Perch (*Aphredoderus sayanus*) is a state endangered fish that needs this type of habitat, and until recently, it was thought to be extirpated from Ohio. SRP staff has been working with Brian Zimmerman from The Ohio State University's Stream and River Ecology (STRIVE) Lab to find some of the last known remaining populations of these fish and relocate them to sites with suitable habitat, including the Huddle property. They will be introduced to the site in 2024, once restoration activities are complete and the land has had time to settle and naturalize.

All restoration activities are scheduled to be completed by June 2023. The Division will remain involved in the project in the future, participating in invasive species removal and management.

### Huddle Floodplain Restoration



Floodplain prior to restoration.



As part of the restoration process, excavators created a number of small pools that will improve fish and wildlife habitat.

# Habitat Protection

This was another stellar year of important land acquisitions for the Division, and it would not have been possible without public

funding and private donations for land conservation. An additional 267 acres were purchased using generous donations made directly to the Division and through Ohio's Tax Check Off program, as well as grants from Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program (WRRSP) and H2Ohio. Five State Nature Preserves grew in size and more critical land was protected along the Little Darby Creek State and National Scenic River.

## Important Additions to PRESERVES AND SCENIC RIVERS

Of this newly protected land, nearly 90 acres was added to the Robert H. Whipple State Nature Preserve in Adams County,

Ohio. The preserve is named after Mr. Whipple, who generously bequeathed his 248-acre parcel near the Ohio River to the Division. Since this donation, and another by The Nature Conservancy in 2004, the Division has nearly doubled the size of the preserve to an impressive 473 acres. Plans are underway to create public access on the eastern side of the preserve, including the installation of a new parking lot and loop trail that will take visitors through some of the special natural features of this scenic preserve.



New acquisition at Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve



Skunk Cabbage



False Aloe



Whipple State Nature Preserve

Whipple protects a variety of habitats including mature mixed mesophytic forest, oak-hickory forest, dolomite cliffs, dry prairies, springs and stream corridors. The preserve contains a number of impressive geologic features, including miles of dolomite cliffs, several sinkholes, an arch and waterfalls. With unusual and rare habitats, there will be rare species too — Whipple has 40 rare species, including the only known site in Ohio for Allen’s fern moss (*Thuidium allenii*).

Whipple was just one of the preserves to grow in size. The Division received a generous donation of land from the Brown family, which added 43 acres to Boch Hollow State Nature Preserve and purchased additional lands at Blackhand Gorge (8 acres), Goll Woods (15 acres) and Eagle Creek (39 acres) State Nature Preserves.

In June, the Division celebrated the acquisition of two additional parcels on Little Darby Creek, totaling 72 acres. The purchase protected 1.3 miles of wooded river corridor, 14 acres of high-quality wetlands, and 58 acres of floodplain close to habitat for the federally endangered clubshell mussel. The land was purchased through a \$548,000 WRRSP grant, which included an additional \$150,000 to conduct invasive species management and tree planting.



Whipple State Nature Preserve

<b>Additional 586 Acres</b>	
PROTECTED IN 2022	
Nature Preserves:	32,014
Scenic Rivers:	6,790
<b>Total to Date:</b>	<b>38,804</b>

*It's in our Nature.*



The 186-acre Gladys Riley Golden-star Lily Preserve was dedicated, becoming Ohio's 141st State Nature Preserve.



Stiff Gentian

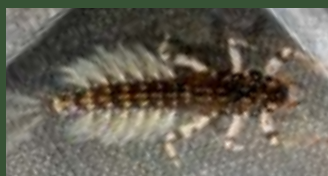
# Science & Restoration

## Stream Monitoring TAKING IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

How are our rivers doing? This question is commonly asked of Ohio Scenic Rivers Program (SRP) staff, and as a science-driven program, the only way to properly answer that question is through data analysis. With approximately 60,000 miles of rivers and streams in Ohio, collecting this amount of data can be challenging, so SRP has been working with Ohio EPA (OEPA) to develop another data collection method — one with more flexibility in when, where and how data is collected — to help answer important questions about water quality.



Staff holding hellgrammite.



Hacklegilled Mayfly



Common Stonefly

The focus of these surveys is macroinvertebrates: animals without backbones like insect larvae, shrimp, and snails. Because they are food sources for fish, birds, and mammals, the decline of macroinvertebrates affects the entire food chain.

The OEPA has developed three levels of data collection to accommodate the different types of groups that engage in water quality monitoring. Level 1 is designed with educators in mind; SRP's volunteer-based Stream Quality Monitoring (SQM) citizen science program is based on this level. Level 2 is designed for watershed groups and Level 3 is designed to be carried by OEPA personnel and inform regulation. Though Level 3 offers the most comprehensive data, its rigorous methods are expensive, time sensitive and require expertise for precise species identification under a microscope.

Though a Level 2 method has existed previously, it was not applicable for statewide use. Recognizing this limitation and opportunity, SRP met with the Ohio EPA and water professionals around the state and proposed a new approach to Level 2 data collection: it allows just a few staff members to assess multiple sites regularly, while providing accurate data to help communities make informed decisions about their streams.

Launching this new approach in 2022, SRP staff took samples at 29 sites among 18 streams. The data will be shared with OEPA to complement their data collection planning and provide a template for watershed groups across the state. With continuing stresses on Ohio's rivers, streams and water quality, SRP's focus on data collection remains as vital as ever.







Yellow-breasted Chat



Worm-eating Warbler

## Dan Rice and Allison Cusick RESEARCH GRANT

Some of our earliest publications show pictures of Division botanists smiling at a new, rare plant find or people gathered on a guided hike through one of our newly designated State Nature Preserves. Science and education have long been at the core of DNAP's mission, focus and work, as is true for many other conservation agencies and organizations around the state. To support our partners and increase our collective scientific knowledge, the Division created the Daniel Rice and Allison Cusick Research Grant in 2021. The Research Grant funds projects that provide scientific results to better manage green space and conserve Ohio native

species — information that benefits the Division, conservation agencies and organizations across Ohio. The grant also funds science projects for grade schools to provide educational opportunities in science and natural resources.

In its inaugural year, over 60 applications were

State and National Wild and Scenic River. No systematic study of these two groups has been done on this biologically significant area located in far eastern Columbiana County near the Pennsylvania state line. The steep, rocky, forested hillsides of the Little Beaver

Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Yellow-breasted Chat and Kentucky Warbler to name a few. Among the Odonates studied, 33 dragonfly and 16 damselfly species were recorded, including the state threatened ocellated darner, and state species of concern, tiger spike-tail.

**“ In the grant's inaugural year, over 60 applications were received.**

received and reviewed, and four projects were selected for funding. Among the 2022 grant recipients was Nature Spark, Inc., for their proposal to conduct a breeding bird and Odonate (dragonfly/damselfly) study of Little Beaver Creek

Creek corridor provide a striking backdrop to this important project.

Nature Spark recorded breeding pairs of several rare and uncommon neo-tropical birds (birds that migrate from Central and South America to nest in North America) including Cerulean

Other projects funded by the Daniel Rice and Allison Cusick Research Grant will be featured as their studies are completed. The next round will open on November 21, 2022, with selections to be made and awards to be granted in early 2023.

Please visit [ohiodnr.gov/naturalareas/researchgrant](https://ohiodnr.gov/naturalareas/researchgrant) for more information on this grant opportunity.

# Rare Species

From left to right: Levi Miller, Kyla Maunz, Meghan Michael, Katie Dunlap, Mike Pettegrew (Rick Gardner not in photo)



## Best Rare Plant Finds TWO NEW SPECIES 2022

It is always thrilling when rare species are found and 2022 proved to be another exciting year for Ohio. Reporting on the year's Best Finds has been a long tradition of the Division, and it is encouraging to note that there were more discoveries this year than can be highlighted in a single article. Among them were two new species for Ohio and four presumed extirpated species, as well as numerous state endangered and threatened species. Knowing where these kinds of rarities occur is critical, because it helps guide protection efforts for the Division, as well as other conservation organizations. It also means new populations are put into a survey schedule, ensuring the health of populations can be regularly monitored and managed.

To learn more about Ohio's native and rare species, as well as new discoveries, follow us on Facebook and/or Instagram.



**VASEY'S PONDWEED**  
(*Potamogeton vaseyi*)

Endangered. Found in Trumbull County by Greg Snowden.

## 2022 NUMBERS

RARE PLANT  
POPULATIONS  
MONITORED:

**550**

RECORDS ENTERED  
INTO THE OHIO  
NATURAL HERITAGE  
DATABASE:

**905**

**GAY-WINGS**

(*Polygaloides paucifolia*)

Endangered.

Found in Lucas County by Denise Gehring. This was a new population and only the third population known in Ohio.





**CURTISS' MILKWORT**  
(*Polygala curtissii*)

Staff from the Division and Ohio Department of Transportation discovered Ohio's second population of Curtiss' milkwort (group photo on opposite page.) This species is common in the southeastern United States and reaches its northern limit in south central Ohio.



**FRAGILE CURVED MOSS** (*Tortella fragilis*)

Found by Tomás Curtis in a dry, limestone opening in Sandusky County. This is a new moss for Ohio.



**HANDSOME SEDGE**  
(*Carex formosa*)

Endangered. Found by Tomás Curtis at the same site fragile curved moss was discovered in Sandusky County. This is the third location in Ohio.



**NORTHERN FIR MOSS** (*Huperzia selago*)

Presumed extirpated. Re-discovered by Josh Copen in Scioto County.

**NARROW-LEAVED CRABAPPLE**  
(*Malus angustifolia*)

Found by Brian Riley. It is new to Ohio. Though this species had been reported in Ohio before, it was previously misidentified and consequently not a valid record, until now.



**VELVET PANIC GRASS**  
(*Dichanthelium scoparium*)

Endangered. Found by Division botanist Shaun Pogacnik in Lawrence County. Second location in Ohio for this state endangered grass.



## RARE FINDS - *Animal Edition!*



**NORTHERN BROOK LAMPREY** (*Ichthyomyzon fossor*)

The Northern Brook Lamprey is a small, freshwater fish with an eel-like body. One of seven native lamprey species in Ohio, it is listed as state endangered. In April, for the first time in 20 years, one was discovered in the Big Darby Creek State

and National Scenic River by staff from The Ohio State University, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the Division's Scenic Rivers Program. The find highlights the importance of protecting the river to keep water quality high.

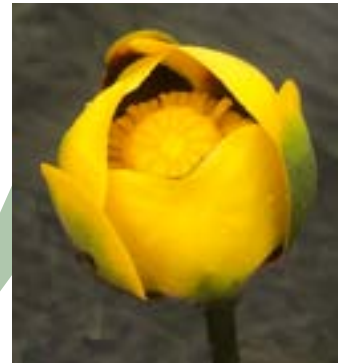
# Rare Plant Finds BY COUNTY



## BULLHEAD-LILY

(*Nuphar variagata*)

Endangered. Found in Ashtabula County by Mark Warman, Hannah Trommer and Autumn Bragg.



## SMALL PURPLE-FRINGED ORCHID

(*Platanthera psycodes*)

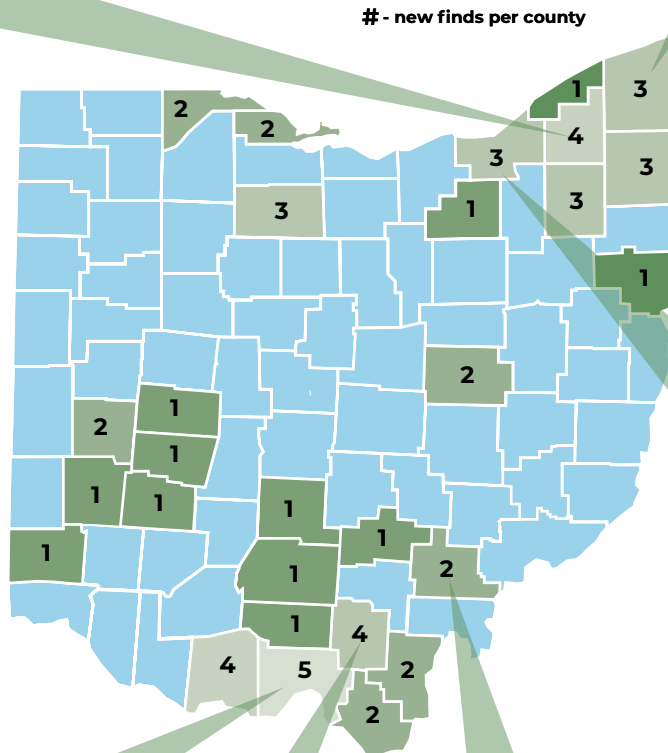
Threatened. Found in Geauga County by Mike Toth.



## ORANGE-FRINGED ORCHID

(*Platanthera ciliaris*)

Threatened. Found in Scioto County by John Howard.



## JESUP'S HAWTHORN

(*Crataegus jesupii*)

Presumed extirpated. Found in Cuyahoga County by John Reinier.



## SCREWSTEM

(*Bartonia paniculata*)

Threatened. Found in Jackson County by Josh Copen, Shaun Pogacnik and Brian Gara.



## HAZEL DODDER

(*Cuscuta coryli*)

Presumed extirpated. Found in Athens County by Chris Pohling.

# Education & Outreach

## Ohio Rivers Symposium A RESOUNDING SUCCESS



With more than 60,000 miles of rivers and streams in Ohio, it is no surprise that there is a strong community of river advocates and enthusiasts — or that the second Ohio Rivers Symposium was a resounding success. Hosted by the Division’s Scenic Rivers Program, in conjunction with the Watershed Management Association of Ohio (WMAO) and the Ohio Scenic Rivers Association (OSRA), approximately 265 people participated in-person in Columbus and virtually for this biennial symposium.

Among those in the hybrid crowd were watershed professionals, academics, naturalists, community members and river advocates — all those who share an interest in Ohio’s rivers and streams. The keynote speaker was Dr. Richard Moore, an emeritus professor at The Ohio State University and a Senior Fellow for the Global Council for Science and the Environment. As an anthropologist who combines social and natural science to promote stream ecology, Dr. Moore spoke about the importance of social science in river conservation. Other speakers and topics included:

**Eugene Braig IV, *Aquatic Invasive Species***  
**Brian Ball, *Kokosing River Bank Restoration***  
**Kelly Capuzzi, *Headwater Stream Ecosystems***  
**Dr. Mažeika Sullivan, *Land & Water Ecosystem Linkages***  
**Rick Gardner, *River Bluff Prairies***  
**Ryan McEwan, *Honeysuckle and Waterways***

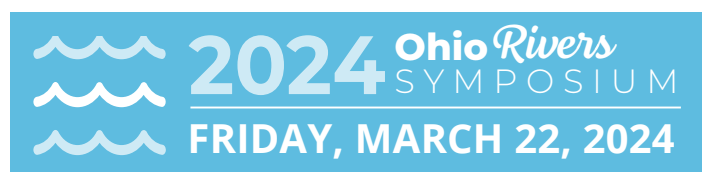
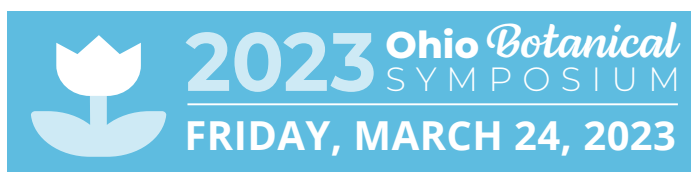
We would like to thank our partners WMAO and OSRA for their invaluable help coordinating the symposium, and our wonderful speakers and participants for making the symposium such an informative and productive gathering.

The Division hosts one biennial symposium each year, alternating between the Ohio Botanical Symposium and Ohio Rivers Symposium every other year. Mark your calendars for our upcoming symposia!



Guest speakers and hosts at the Ohio Rivers Symposium.

*Save the Date:*





# Summer Wildflower Resources FOR KIDS AND ADULTS

## SUMMER WILDFLOWER CHECKLIST

For anyone who likes wildflowers or keeping records of things seen in nature, the Division's new Ohio Native Summer Wildflower Checklist is for you! With more than 1,800 species of native plants in Ohio, including hundreds of summer wildflowers that bloom from June to August each year, summer wildflowers now have their own statewide checklist. A seasonal companion to the Ohio Native Spring Wildflower Checklist, the summer checklist highlights many of our common prairie and grassland wildflowers and some rare species too. To help with identification, plants are grouped by flower color.

A key indicates whether the plant is found in forest, wetland and/or open grassland habitats and whether it is rare.

Keep the checklist handy as you explore Ohio's natural areas during the summer and have fun! To learn more about Ohio's wildflowers and to download the Summer Wildflower Checklist, visit [ohiodnr.gov](http://ohiodnr.gov) and search Summer Wildflower Checklist. The spring checklist is also available by searching Spring Wildflower Checklist. A fall wildflower checklist will be coming out in 2023!

## SUMMER WILDFLOWER ACTIVITY BOOK

For youngsters or anyone young at heart, the Division has created a Summer Wildflower Activity Book featuring 10 of Ohio's most unique and beloved summer wildflowers. The activity book includes beautiful, hand-drawn, color-by-number wildflowers, as well as interesting flower facts and a word search.

From the golf ball-like flower of the aquatic plant, spatterdock, to the showy flower of swamp rose-mallow, Ohio's native hibiscus, this is a one-of-a-kind coloring activity! Print one page or the entire booklet. Visit [ohiodnr.gov](http://ohiodnr.gov) and search Summer Wildflower Activity Book for your downloadable copy.





## The Mohican River CRAWDAD HUNT

Among the many benefits Ohio's Scenic Rivers provide, they serve as both dynamic classroom and beautiful backdrop to events hosted by the Division's Scenic Rivers Program (SRP). On a sunny Saturday in August, the SRP and Mohican State Park co-hosted the Mohican Crawdad Hunt, a family-friendly event on the Clear Fork Mohican State Scenic River. More than 100 people attended the event, but its success was most obvious in the

number of smiling faces and crawdad-catching experts that were born that day.

Crawdads, also known as crayfish, often make people nostalgic about their childhoods — lazy summer days spent crawdad hunting in nearby creeks. They have become the SRP's unofficial ambassador, helping teach people about other aquatic animals caught while hunting crawdad and what they tell us about the health of our rivers.





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# Donate

## TO OHIO'S STATE NATURE PRESERVES & SCENIC RIVERS

### ✓ Remember us at Tax Time

Make a donation to "Nature Preserves/Scenic Rivers" on the 1040 Individual Income Tax Return. These tax-deductible donations are a major source of funding for the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves and provide a convenient way to support natural areas conservation and your favorite Nature Preserves and Scenic Rivers.



### 💰 Purchase a Nature Preserves or Scenic Rivers License Plate

Funding from this program provides education and interpretive programming, signage and materials for those visiting and interested in Nature Preserves and Scenic Rivers. Visit [ohiodnr.gov/licenseplates](http://ohiodnr.gov/licenseplates).



### ✉ Donate by Mail

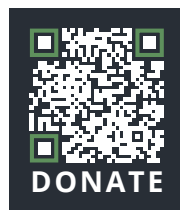
Send check to "ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves" to:

ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves  
 2045 Morse Road, Bldg. H-3  
 Columbus, OH 43229



### 📱 Donate Online

Scan QR code below or visit [ohiodnr.gov/donate/naturalareas](http://ohiodnr.gov/donate/naturalareas) to donate by credit or debit card.



*Thank You!*