



2024 Ohio Rivers SYMPOSIUM

March 22, 2024

PRESENTED BY:

Water Management Association of Ohio
Ohio Watershed Professionals Association
Ohio Scenic Rivers Association

ODNR Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, Scenic Rivers Program

WELCOME

Welcome to the Ohio Rivers Symposium dedicated to bringing together natural and water resource professionals, biologists, ecologists, community leaders, public officials, and river enthusiasts who share an interest in river and stream conservation. Groundwater resources is an important topic and this year's symposium theme.

On behalf of our partners and sponsors, we thank you for joining us.



AGENDA

- 8 AM REGISTRATION BEGINS**
- 9:15 AM WELCOME**
Mary Mertz, Director, Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- 9:30 AM KEYNOTE ADDRESS: Aquifers of Ohio: An Overview**
Craig Nelson, Groundwater Program Supervisor,
Ohio Geological Survey
- 10:15 AM BREAK**
- 10:30 AM Groundwater Resources in the Western U.S.**
Dr. Rachel Gabor, Ph.D., The Ohio State University
- 11:15 AM Importance of Groundwater and Surface Water Interactions in the Great Miami Watershed**
Mike Ekberg, Water Monitoring Manager,
Miami Conservancy District
- 12 PM LUNCH**
- 1 PM It's Cool to be Cold! Water quality and ecological requirements of a coldwater stream, current threats and protective measures**
Greg Orr, Environmental Scientist (retired),
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
- 1:30 PM Coldwater Streams: Restoration Strategies and Native Brook Trout Conservation**
Paul Pira, Biologist, Geauga County Park District
- 2 PM Fascinating Fish Finds: Updates on Rare Ohio Fish**
Brian Zimmerman, Research Associate and Non-game Fish Biologist, The Ohio State University

2:45 PM BREAK

**3 PM Watershed Planning: Past, Present, and Future-
What is most effective?**

Sarah Hippensteel Hall, Ph.D., Manager of Communications, Outreach, and Stewardship, Miami Conservancy District

3:30 PM New H2Ohio Rivers Initiative

Mark Johnson, Chief, Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water
Jon Horn, H2Ohio Program Manager, ODNR

4:15 PM State of Ohio Scenic Rivers

Bob Gable, Scenic Rivers Program Manager, ODNR, Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, Ohio Scenic Rivers Program

HOUSE RULES

Please be courteous to those around you. Turn cell phones off and only take calls outside the banquet room. During the programs, please keep talking to a minimum in the exhibit/display area. Thank you.

LUNCH MENU

Today's lunch buffet features salad, rolls, meat lasagna, chicken piccata, a vegetarian pasta, and roast vegetable medley. Soft drinks and cookies will be offered during our afternoon break; coffee, tea, and ice water will be available all day long.



MEET OUR SPEAKERS



Craig Nelson holds a M.S. and Graduate Certificate in Water Policy and Hydrology from the University of Arizona, a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a Database Specialist Certificate from Columbus State Community College. As a hydrogeologist and supervisor of the Ohio Geological Survey's Groundwater Program, Craig performs groundwater mapping, groundwater modeling, and develops tools for hydrologic data processing and visualization. He has previously worked at the Water Resources Research Center in Tucson, AZ, the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, and the Center for Urban Environmental Research and Education in Baltimore, MD. He is a Returned Peace Corps Volunteer (Guinea, 2013-2014; Panama, 2008-2012), whose work overseas involved developing water and sanitation projects and constructing public and agricultural wells and aqueducts.

Dr. Rachel Gabor, Ph.D., is an assistant professor with The Ohio State University's School of Environment and Natural Resources. Prior to joining OSU, she was a post-doctoral research fellow with the University of Utah and the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Dr. Gabor holds both a Ph.D. in Environmental Studies and an M.S. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Colorado, Boulder. She earned her B.S. in Chemistry from the Harvey Mudd College in California. Recent honors include the Undergraduate Research Mentoring Award from OSU.



Mike Ekberg has been with The Miami Conservancy District (MCD) for more than 20 years and is currently the manager of its Water Monitoring Program. Their hydrologic data collection networks include precipitation observers, tipping bucket rain gages, stream-gaging stations, observation wells, monitoring wells, and automated river sampling stations. Mike is also responsible for managing various research projects addressing water quantity and quality in the Great Miami River Watershed. He holds a B.S. in Geology from Lehigh University and an M.S. in Geology from the University of Cincinnati.

Greg Orr is an environmental scientist who spent 34 years with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA); many of those years, Greg worked as an aquatic ecologist in the agency's Division of Surface Water. Greg works as a consultant for the Ohio EPA and Spring from the Source, LLC. He also serves as an adjunct professor at Kent State University. Greg focuses on the ecology of primary headwater streams and his interests include thermodynamics of headwater streams and determining predictive habitat indices to predict the biological communities in rheocrene streams. Greg is also an Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist for three park districts and Holden Arboretum.



Paul Pira serves as the Geauga Park District's Biologist and Supervisor of Natural Resource Management and has been with the park district for 20 years. He received an M.S. in Biological Sciences from John Carroll University where his research focused on Lake Erie ecology. Paul is an Ohio-certified prescribed fire manager, commercial pesticide applicator, and manages natural resources for more than 10,000 acres and 28 parks. Professionally, he has developed and implemented ecological restoration and pursued funding to research imperiled native plants and animals such as the Ohio brook trout. Paul currently serves as the chairman of the Native Ohio Brook Trout Advisory Committee and represents Ohio to the North Central Division of the American Fisheries Society's Salmonid Technical Committee.



Brian Zimmerman has been captivated by native North American freshwater fish since he received a copy of Milton B. Trautman's *Fishes of Ohio* as a teen from his grandmother. He received a B.S. in Water Resources and Environmental Biology from Heidelberg College and a M.S. in Aquatic Ecology from Bowling Green State University. Brian was able to pursue his interest in surveying Ohio's fish when he began the Fishes of Ohio Inventory through The Ohio State University in 2011, which led to the 2019 publication of, *A Naturalist's Guide to the Fishes of Ohio*. Brian continues to work for The Ohio State University, studying and reintroducing Ohio's rare and endangered fish species.



MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Sarah Hippensteel Hall serves as the manager of Outreach, Education, and Stewardship for the Miami Conservancy District, a 109-year-old regional watershed agency. She believes that water is critical for community health and prosperity, and communities that enjoy their rivers are more likely to protect their water. Sarah has raised more than \$20 million to protect, restore, and preserve rivers, streams, and aquifers, and promote river recreation. She earned a B.S. from OSU's School of Food, Agriculture, and Environmental Sciences; a M.A. from Antioch University, Seattle, and a Ph.D. in Leadership and Change from Antioch University. Sarah was presented with a Distinguished Service Award by the Water Management Association of Ohio.



Mark Johnson has served as the chief of Ohio EPA's Division of Surface Water since 2023. He joined Ohio EPA in 2012 and has worked in the agency's Division of Surface Water, Division of Drinking and Ground Waters, and Division of Environmental Response and Revitalization. Mark has years of experience in environmental regulations, environmental enforcement, environmental remediation, brownfield redevelopment, and ecological restoration. He has also served as deputy director of Business and Regulatory Affairs where he was the primary contact for regulated entities to help coordinate permitting activities within the Ohio EPA. Mark graduated from Kent State University with a B.S. in Conservation Biology.



Jon Horn joined ODNR in 2023 as the program manager for the agency's new H2Ohio Rivers Initiative. He is a freshwater ecologist, biology educator, fly-fishing instructor, and general outdoorsman with a passion for Ohio's waterways and the life they support. Jon dates his passion for stream exploration to when he found a northern red salamander on his family's farm as a 6-year-old. In his new professional role, Jon is an advocate for Ohio's rivers and streams. His favorite river is the Cuyahoga and his favorite stream to paddle is the Rocky Fork of Paint Creek in southern Ohio.



EXHIBITORS

ODNR Natural Areas and Preserves, Ohio Scenic Rivers
Water Management Association of Ohio
ODNR H2Ohio Program
Ohio Department of Agriculture
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency

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**Department of
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