



# Fall Report

Bobby Chromik, Creative Commons

## Standing up for Hocking Hills

### Parks funding preserved, but new threat looms

What makes Hocking Hills so special? Is it the overhangs and waterfalls in places like Old Man’s Cave? Morning fog over Lake Hope? Or just the feeling, coming off the Ohio central plain and down into the wooded hills, that you’ve reached someplace *different*—unique, even secret—but still wholly *Ohio*?

#### Parks funding survives for now...

For so many reasons, our state parks are treasures too vital to risk. So when parks like those at Hocking Hills came under attack at the Statehouse this year, we knew we had to stand up. We fought against budget cuts to an already under-funded park system and won: Funds were preserved to keep Ohio’s parks open and free to the public. Still, more needs to be done to secure future funding for our parks—and quickly, a new crisis arose.

#### ...but new law opens parks to drilling

Legislators decided to use the budget mess as an excuse to open our parks to oil and gas drilling.

Together with our allies, we generated thousands of public comments, testified in committee, and compiled a photo book to complement our case for protecting the Hills. In the end though, both houses of the Ohio Assembly sided with Big Oil and Gas and voted to open Ohio’s parks to drilling. Gov. John Kasich signed the misguided bill into law.



Jay Cagle, Creative Commons

▲ Old Man’s Cave, Hocking Hills.

#### A plan to protect Hocking Hills

Drills haven’t been put into the ground yet, but with a history of drilling in the region, and a new shale gas boom on the horizon, it may only be a matter of time. That’s why our citizen outreach team took to the streets this summer, knocking on hundreds of thousands of doors, gathering the petitions and supporters we’ll need to stand up to Big Oil and Gas.

We’ll be pushing for tough rules to protect our forests and streams from drilling, and special protections for the most ecologically sensitive and widely used areas. That’s going to take a lot of work—and the continued support and action of members like you.



#### more online

##### 2011 Hocking Hills Photo Book

*“This is a photo of me and my golden retriever Lola having fun in the water after hiking the trails all day around Old Man’s Cave. We drive about an hour at least once a week to get out and experience the beauty of the Hocking Hills region.”*

— Dylan Mertz, Swanton, OH

More online at [www.EnvironmentOhio.org](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org)

## To our members

Over the past several months, we have seen unprecedented attacks on clean water and air in Columbus and Washington, D.C.

Efforts by our national federation and its active members succeeded in blocking efforts to weaken the Clean Water and Clean Air acts. However, polluters and their allies in Congress have declared war on the Environmental Protection Agency, and the attacks will keep coming.

It's your support that makes sure we can hold the line in times like these, and continue protecting our lakes, air and open space for future generations.

Sincerely,



Julian Boggs  
Program Associate

## Recent action

### Beach testing: the good and the bad

Unfortunately, not all of Ohio's beaches are safe to enjoy—and the problem seemed to get worse in 2010. In fact, the number of beach closings or advisories across the state jumped 24 percent last year, totaling 1,259. In its 21st annual Testing the Waters report, the Natural Resources Defense Council analyzed government data on beachwater testing results at more than 3,000 locations nationwide. The report cites pollution from stormwater runoff and sewage overflows as the major contributor, and recommends better practices for reducing runoff pollution.

Judging by the number of water samples with bacteria levels above acceptable limits, the dirtiest beaches in 2010 included Edson Creek in Erie County (64 percent of samples) and Euclid and Noble beaches in Cuyahoga County. In all, 30 of Ohio's beaches exceeded maximum safe bacteria levels in more than 20 percent of samples.

### Mercury rules delayed again

This spring, the Environmental Protection Agency took major steps to cut toxic air pollution from power plants, despite intense opposition from industrial polluters and their allies in Congress. The EPA proposed the first-ever nationwide limits on mercury pollution from power plants—limits that would cut mercury pollution by 91 percent, a huge victory given mercury's effects on how kids think, learn and behave.

Unfortunately, polluters and their allies in the Senate have fought back, even introducing a bill in August that would delay the EPA's ability to impose such limits for over three years. The bill would allow more toxic mercury into Ohio's air and water, put tens of thousands of lives nationwide at risk, and set the stage for continued delays of protections that are already years overdue. We joined our national federation in calling on the U.S. Senate to oppose the dangerous proposal, instead of giving polluters a free pass to spew toxic air pollution.

Photo: Robert Byrd, Shutterstock.com

## How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Ohio.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email [PlannedGiving@EnvironmentOhio.org](mailto:PlannedGiving@EnvironmentOhio.org).



Main: Mark Smith, Shutterstock; Top: Shannaleigh, Creative Commons; Bottom: MirJora, Creative Commons

▲ The EPA wants to cut mercury emissions by 91 percent—an important step to protect pregnant women and children.

# Ohio's waterways under attack

## Congress tries to block EPA from enforcing the Clean Water Act

Water quality in Ohio has improved dramatically in the 39 years since the Clean Water Act became law. But as anyone who has tried to visit Lake Erie and found the beach closed knows, we need to be doing more to clean up Ohio's waters, not less.

Yet remarkably, while Ohioans fished in the Scioto and went boating on Grand Lake St. Marys this summer, some members of Congress spent their summer trying to dismantle the Clean Water Act.

Legal loopholes in this landmark legislation are now allowing developers to pave over wetlands and polluters to dump toxic waste into the streams that feed our rivers and lakes and provide drinking water for millions of people in Ohio.

## EPA moves to close loopholes

For the past several years, Environment Ohio and our national coalition have been working to restore the Clean Water Act's ability to protect our waters. In April, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson announced a plan to close the loopholes that are allowing polluters to pave and dump into the streams and wetlands that feed the Ohio, the Scioto, Grand Lake St. Marys and other vital waterways. The agency is also gearing up to cut sewage pollution—a major threat to Lake Erie—by setting national standards.

## "Legal warfare"

When the EPA announced its intention to stand up for Ohio's waters, polluting industries sprang into action. Mining companies, developers and corporate agribusiness urged their friends in Congress to stop the EPA from closing the clean water loophole—ExxonMobil lobbyists even threatened the president with "legal warfare" if the EPA moved forward. By mid-July, the House of Representa-

tives had passed three separate measures attacking the EPA's authority to protect our water.

## Thousands speak out for clean water

We saw this coming and had already begun building a campaign to defend the EPA's clean water initiatives. All over the country, field organizers in our national network talked face to face with tens of thousands of Americans about the attacks on clean water. More than 10,000 people sent comments to the EPA urging Administrator Jackson to stand strong for clean water.

Memories of summer fun on the water may start to fade as we head deeper into fall, but our resolve to protect our waterways is as strong as ever. With your help, we're reminding officials in Washington, D.C., that Ohioans care deeply about all of our waters and want to see them protected.



## take action

### Clean water

Federal Clean Water Advocate Piper Crowell releases a report on threats facing our waters.

Go online to take action for our water.  
[www.EnvironmentOhio.org/action](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org/action)

## Tips to save energy

*Efficiency is the cheapest and cleanest way to cut our fossil fuel use and pollution. It seems intuitive enough: Use less energy. Save fuel, and save money.*

*But with the numerous federal, state and local organizations and agencies ready to help you retrofit your home or business, offering rebates, discounts, financing and other kinds of incentives, it can be tough to figure out where to start.*

*Environment Ohio Research & Policy Center designed our "Plug Into Clean Energy" guide to help you cut through the clutter and pick what works for you, so you can get on the path toward a more efficient home or business, one step at a time.*

*Here are five low- to no-cost things you can do right now to cut your energy use:*



- 1 **Replace incandescent light bulbs with CFLs to cut your lighting costs by up to 75 percent.**
- 2 **Wash your laundry using cold water only.**
- 3 **Plug appliances into power strips, and turn them off when not in use.**
- 4 **Put aluminum foil behind radiators to reflect heat back into the room.**
- 5 **Scrape—rather than rinsing—dishes, and only run the dishwasher when you have a full load.**

For the full list, visit  
[www.EnvironmentOhio.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy](http://www.EnvironmentOhio.org/center/plug-into-clean-energy)

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## Environment Ohio

### Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Ohio. We focus exclusively on protecting Ohio's air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

## Going the distance for 60-mpg cars

In July, an ExxonMobil pipeline spilled more than 42,000 gallons of oil into Montana's pristine Yellowstone River. Now, according to one nearby resident, "You go down to where the oil is, and you don't hear anything anymore. No birds, no toads, no crickets, nothing."

In the wake of the latest spill, Environment Ohio stepped up our work in a national effort to get America off of oil—by making our cars more fuel-efficient, building strong public transportation systems, and investing in electric vehicles. We mobilized more than 10,000 people across the country to push for a 60-mpg fuel standard that will ensure our cars go farther on a tank of gas, and we've made big progress. In August, the Obama administration announced the single biggest policy ever enacted to get our nation off oil: A standard that requires a fleetwide gas mileage average of 54.5 miles per gallon. If we'd had that standard this summer, the average Ohioan would have saved \$477 on gasoline.



whitehouse.gov

◀ Our federal global warming director, Nathan Willcox (center), thanks President Obama for the new 54.5-mpg fuel standard.

Our research showed that if that standard had been in place this summer, the average Ohioan would have saved \$477 on gas.