



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EXPANSION OF ORCA SERVICE AREA

Regional Collaboration to Support Southeast Ohio's Outdoor Recreation Economy

ATHENS, OHIO, July, 2023- The Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) is excited to announce Washington, Monroe, Noble, Jackson, Ross, and Vinton Counties and the City of Jackson have resolved to join ORCA as Partners.

Although originally composed of jurisdictional members in Athens County, ORCA's intent has always been to collaborate beyond just one county. This summer the ORCA Board invited elected officials representing Adams, Gallia, Highland, Hocking, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Scioto, Vinton, Washington County communities to consider joining ORCA as a Partner.

"I have been watching the progression of ORCA over the past few years, and we are honored and excited in Ross County to be part of an effort that grows outdoor recreation in our Appalachian region," said Ty McBee, Board President of Chillicothe Trails, a non-profit dedicated to high quality trail development in Ross County and the surrounding area. He continued, "We are blessed with exceptional natural resources, and are now positioned to utilize them in a way that is sustainable and not extractive."

Partner benefits include: inclusion in a multi-county outdoor recreation asset assessment and development plan, collaborative marketing and branding support, inclusion in planning for the 2024 Ohio Outdoor Recreation Economy Conference, and the opportunity to appoint three ORCA Advisory Committee Members per county. Services offered at no-cost to new ORCA Partners are valued at roughly \$13,000 per county. Additionally, Partner Counties will become the service area for a multi-state ARC ARISE Planning Grant Application in partnership with the Pennsylvania Wilds with August 18th as the targeted application submission deadline.

ORCA Executive Director, Jessie Powers, stated, "This multi-county collaboration is well timed as there's an unprecedented amount of federal and state grant investments available, which we need to bring to Southeast Ohio to sustainably move the dial forward for everyone in the region."

ORCA was created in 2019 to utilize Appalachian Ohio's plentiful outdoor recreation assets to sustainably diversify rural economies. ORCA staff operate a dedicated nonprofit partner, [Athens-Wayne Outdoor Asset Development Corporation \(AWOADC\)](#), and partner with a [multi-sector skilled advisory board](#) and the [Wayne National Forest](#) to plan and implement the Baileys Trail System project. The Baileys Trail System is a planned 88-mile mountain bike optimized trail system (open to all forms of human powered use) on over 9,000 acres of Ohio's only national forest.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PARTNERSHIP INVITATION](#)

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