



Helping Communities Leverage Their Outdoor Recreation Assets

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ORCA Frequently Asked Questions

What is ORCA?

The Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) is a council of governments created by multiple Athens County jurisdictions to sustainably develop, manage, and promote outdoor recreation assets across Appalachian Ohio. ORCA works to leverage outdoor recreation as a driver of economic opportunity, regional collaboration, environmental stewardship, and quality of life.

Why was ORCA created?

ORCA was founded in 2019 to turn a bold community vision into reality: creating a world-class outdoor recreation destination in Appalachian Ohio. As planning for the Baileys Trail System gained momentum, community leaders recognized the need for a collaborative organization that could coordinate partners, manage investments, and support long-term outdoor recreation development throughout the region.

What does ORCA do?

ORCA's responsibilities include:

- Managing and developing outdoor recreation assets
- Overseeing operations and maintenance of the Baileys Trail System
- Securing and administering grants and investments
- Supporting economic development through outdoor recreation
- Managing branding, marketing, and visitor engagement efforts
- Building partnerships across government, nonprofit, and private sectors
- Planning future recreation and community development projects
- Advancing Ohio's Rolling Hills, a shared regional brand that positions Appalachian Ohio as an outdoor recreation destination and supports economic and community development across 18 counties
- Organizing and supporting the Ohio Outdoor Recreation & Economic Conference (OOREC), bringing together leaders and partners to advance outdoor recreation and its role in the regional economy

What is a Council of Governments?

A Council of Governments (COG) is a formal organization that allows multiple local governments to work together on issues of shared interest. In Ohio, COGs are

authorized under Ohio Revised Code Chapter 167 and provide a structure for regional collaboration, planning, and resource management.

What is AWOADC?

The Athens-Wayne Outdoor Asset Development Corporation (AWOADC) is ORCA's nonprofit partner. Established in 2019 as a 501(c)(3), AWOADC supports the long-term development, activation, and stewardship of outdoor recreation assets across Appalachian Ohio.

What does AWOADC do?

AWOADC develops revenue-generating and community-focused initiatives that help sustain outdoor recreation projects. Current efforts include:

- Baileys Trail System bike rentals
- Merchandise sales
- Community events such as the Baileys Dirt Fondo
- Fundraising and partnership development

Why does ORCA have a nonprofit partner?

As a nonprofit organization, AWOADC can pursue funding opportunities, partnerships, and revenue-generating initiatives that complement ORCA's work and help sustain outdoor recreation investments over the long term.

What is the role of the ORCA Board of Directors?

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

- Setting organizational priorities and policies
- Providing oversight and accountability
- Supporting regional collaboration among member communities
- Guiding long-term planning and investment decisions
- Ensuring ORCA fulfills its mission of advancing outdoor recreation and community development across Appalachian Ohio

How are board members selected?

Board members are appointed by ORCA's member jurisdictions. This structure ensures that local governments have a direct voice in shaping ORCA's priorities and decision-making.

Who serves on the ORCA Board?

The Board is composed of representatives appointed by ORCA member jurisdictions within Athens County. Current board members represent communities and organizations throughout the region and bring experience in local government, economic development, recreation, and community leadership.

What is the ORCA Advisory Committee?

The Advisory Committee is a collaborative group of public and private sector leaders who provide guidance and expertise to ORCA. Members represent a wide range of interests, including:

- Outdoor recreation
- Tourism
- Economic development
- Conservation
- Education
- Workforce development
- Public health
- Regional planning

What does the Advisory Committee do?

The Advisory Committee helps ORCA:

- Identify opportunities and challenges across the region
- Provide technical expertise and local knowledge
- Foster collaboration among partners
- Inform planning and project development
- Ensure diverse perspectives are considered in decision-making

How large is ORCA's regional partnership network?

ORCA works with a regional coalition that includes 18 partner counties and additional communities throughout Appalachian Ohio. This network helps strengthen collaboration, share resources, and support outdoor recreation initiatives across the region.

Why is regional representation important to ORCA?

Outdoor recreation, tourism, and economic development often extend beyond local boundaries. By bringing together leaders from multiple communities and sectors, ORCA can coordinate efforts, leverage resources, and maximize benefits for Appalachian Ohio as a whole.