



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Jessie Powers, Executive Director | Delia Palmisano, Director of Communications and Philanthropy
[Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia \(ORCA\)](https://www.orcaohio.com) jessie@orcaohio.com | delia@orcaohio.com |
740.677.0113

ORCA EXPANDS SERVICE AREA OFFER TO TWO ADDITIONAL COUNTIES

ATHENS, OHIO, September, 2023- The Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia (ORCA) is excited to announce it has extended its invitation for counties to join ORCA as Partners, at no cost for a limited scope of services, to Clermont and Brown counties in Southeast Ohio.

This May, 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. The addition of Clermont and Brown, will bring that number to 18 new counties.

Although originally composed of jurisdictional members in Athens County, ORCA was always intended to collaborate beyond one county. Counties that have resolved to join ORCA as partners to date include– Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Noble, Perry, Pike, Ross, Vinton, and Washington as well as the Cities of Jackson and Wellston and the Vinton County Parks District. (Map Attached)

“As outdoor activity and health and wellness become more and more important, we need to take advantage of every opportunity to be involved and included with organizations such as ORCA. They can help push Meigs County to become a destination for outdoor enthusiasts and visitors to rural, Southern Ohio. I fully support becoming a partner of ORCA,” said Paige Cleek, President of the Pomeroy Merchants Association, in an email to the Meigs County Commissioners.

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. Additionally, Partner Counties will become the service area for a multi-state ARC ARISE Planning Grant Application in partnership with the Pennsylvania Wilds. ORCA Partner decisions need to be made as soon as possible; ideally, by the end of the month to advance the ARC ARISE application. [FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE PARTNERSHIP INVITATION](#)

Chandler Grooms, the Tourism Development Director at the Pike County Chamber of Commerce, said, “We look forward to joining ORCA as a partner community for the ARC ARISE program. The opportunities this will bring to our community and to Appalachian Ohio will hopefully be a catalyst for our future and long term success, not only in outdoor recreation, but also in building communities with a stronger quality of life for residents and visitors alike.”

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.

###

