

*Old Kent Valley
Habitat Survey: Commission*



1995, James Knight

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Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Phillip C. Morgan, Director
Danville Sanitary District

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* As of December 31, 1996

The Commissioners of the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO)—an interstate water pollution control commission created jointly in 1948 by the State of Illinois, the State of Indiana, the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the State of New York, the State of Ohio, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the State of West Virginia, with approval of the Congress of the United States—respectfully submit the following report of the Commission's activities for 1996 to:

The Honorable Jim Edgar Governor of Illinois

The Honorable Frank O'Bannon Governor of Indiana

The Honorable Paul E. Patton Governor of Kentucky

The Honorable George Pataki Governor of New York

The Honorable George V. Voinovich Governor of Ohio

The Honorable Thomas J. Ridge Governor of Pennsylvania

The Honorable George Allen, Jr. Governor of Virginia

The Honorable Cecil H. Underwood Governor of West Virginia

and

The Honorable William J. Clinton President of the United States



Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission
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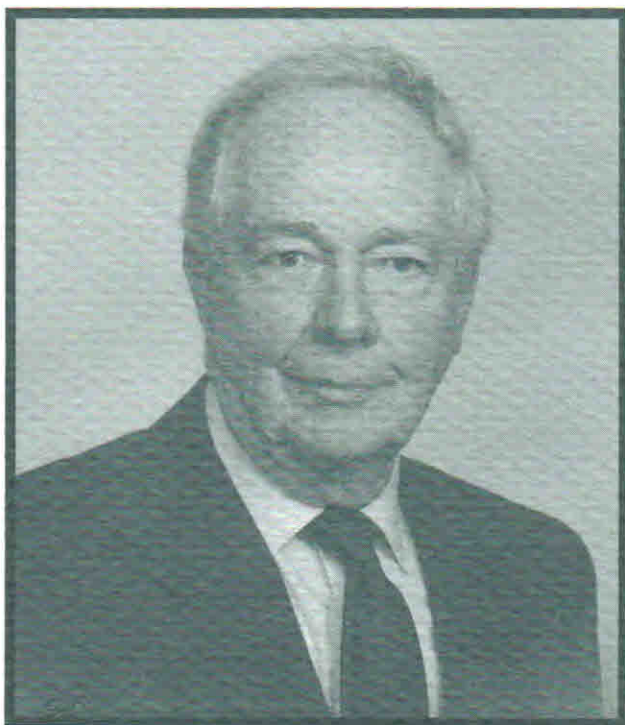
Visit ORSANCO on the World Wide Web at <http://www.orsanco.org/>

Message from the Chairman

The magnificent Ohio River unfortunately commands attention most often in times of stress and hardship. Major floods or spills of toxic substances which threaten drinking water supplies occupy headline space in our newspapers and considerable time slots on radio and television broadcasts. But the wealth of the River, which is shared by millions of people in the watershed, receives little attention or recognition.

Who shares in that wealth and how does the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission's programs both benefit from, and contribute to that wealth? This 1996 Annual Report will supply many answers to that question.

Sharing in the River's Wealth



Chairman Richard Miller, former director of Cincinnati Water Works, was instrumental in developing the Commission's Organics Detection System.

Certainly the scenic beauty of the River, as it cuts through the steep rolling hills of its upper 500 miles and the gently rolling farmlands of its lower reaches of equal distance, is a priceless treasure that can be enjoyed by all. The Ohio River was the nation's interstate highway of the late 1700s and the early 1800s, providing the road west for thousands of settlers hoping to improve their lot in life and their fortunes. They shared its wealth.

During the next 200 years, the River became a vehicle for commerce. A recent study published by ORSANCO indicates that over 35,000 people are employed in more than 600 businesses whose jobs and companies are directly dependent on the Ohio River. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' records show that barge tonnage on this waterway is eight times that which is shipped on the Great Lakes System. Those involved in these activities share its wealth in a most important way.

As the nation moved west, the major growth of population and commerce in the Ohio River Valley changed the environmental quality of its waters, leading to the formation of ORSANCO in 1948. The eight signatory states pledged to control future pollution and to abate existing pollution in the waters of the Ohio River Basin. Through the cooperative efforts of many, a milestone was reached in 1995

when all publicly-owned treatment facilities discharging to the River achieved secondary treatment. This accomplishment has benefited recreational boaters and fishing enthusiasts who share in the wealth of cleaner water.

Although this milestone was reached, the Commission realized that this was not a time to rest on its laurels. Accordingly, some existing programs are being expanded and new programs instituted to increase our knowledge of this large and dynamic Ohio River. These programs are addressed in detail within this Report.

The individual Commissioners and staff of ORSANCO know that sound and expansive scientific knowledge is a prerequisite to our task of stewardship of this invaluable resource. Many in-depth studies have been done on lakes and estuaries, but few, if any, have been done on large rivers, such as the Ohio. That is why our task is so challenging; there is no path to follow. As such, criteria for many ORSANCO projects and studies have to be developed in house.

On a personal basis, many of us have shared in the Ohio River's wealth. I spent my childhood within sight of the River, approximately four miles west of Cincinnati, OH. The River was my playground in the 1930s. I surely shared its wealth by the relief that it provided me on a hot summer day. As a child, I was not cognizant of the pollution problems, because study of our environment was not part of my school's curriculum.

That is why I am so pleased with the ORSANCO programs that involve the Valley's young citizens. The annual Ohio River Sweep and the RiverWatchers volunteer monitoring programs invite thousands of children to participate in improving the quality of the main stem and its tributaries. These youngsters are benefiting from a hands-on environmental experience with this mighty resource, and the knowledge they are gaining will certainly make them better stewards of the River than were those of my generation. Future generations will only be guaranteed a sharing in the wealth of the great Ohio River by being aware of its problems and contributing to possible solutions.

Richard Miller



