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Ohio River Basin Alliance - ORBA

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Ohio River Basin Alliance Advances Ohio River Basin Partnerships

The Ohio River Basin Alliance (ORBA) has entered into a strategic agreement with the Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO), the Foundation for Ohio River Education (FORE) and Thomas More College that will provide leverage, influence, and funding opportunities for regional initiatives designed to address resource issues throughout the Ohio River Basin.

ORBA is a regional collaborative that has included more than 200 representatives from over 80 state, local and federal agencies, and industry, academia, and not-for-profit organizations. ORBA began in 2010 as a voluntary collaboration as an outgrowth of the 2009 Ohio River Basin Summit that was co-lead by ORSANCO, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. ORBA has provided a forum for addressing issues facing the Ohio River Basin in today's changing environment.

The agreement secures ORSANCO and FORE as fiscal sponsors which will help the collaborative prioritize and secure funding for regional projects that would otherwise be lost due to lack of a non-federal sponsor. The agreement also secures the use of Thomas More College's state of the art Biological Field Station located on the Ohio River as an exceptional meeting location, research and educational resource for ORBA's stakeholders.

Harry Stone, Chair of ORBA, said, "ORBA is engaging strategic organizations consistent with our guideline to capitalize on existing collaborations. The fiscal agreement leverages existing authorities and avoids the creation of a new commission or non-profit organization. ORBA's effectiveness will come from supporting the missions of existing collaborations and effectively communicating their priorities within the regional consensus strategy that is developed."

The agreement was signed during ORBA's 2017 Summit on September 27-29 at Marshall University in Huntington, WV. The Summit was cosponsored by Marshall University and held in conjunction with the scientific symposium of the Ohio River Basin Consortium for Research and Education (ORBCRE).

The Summit brought together representatives from participating organizations to prioritize and clarify regional goals identified in the America's Watershed Initiative report. These regional goals include: clean and abundant water supply; flood control and risk reduction; economic prosperity; protection and restoration of ecosystems; nature-based recreation; and reliable river navigation. Other goals, such as research and education, were also discussed. ORBA will develop a regional strategy for projects in 2018.

Participating organizations in the ORBA collaborative include: Silver Jackets, Appalachian Partnership for Economic Growth, Ashland Alliance, Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals Inc., Ohio River Basin Fish Habitat Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, US Army Corps of Engineers and the US Geological Survey.

Richard Harrison, Executive Director of ORSANCO said, "ORSANCO is very excited to support and participate in this partnership with ORBA and Thomas More College and looks forward to working on regional initiatives for the Ohio River Basin."

Dr. Christopher Lorentz, Director of Biology Field Station, said, "Thomas More College and the staff at our Center for Ohio River Research & Education are excited and honored to be a partner with ORBA and with ORSANCO. This collaboration has the potential to be a game changer for our region by leveraging the strengths of multiple agencies and organizations throughout the region and by providing a single voice for the Ohio River."

For more information visit www.OhioRiverBasinAlliance.com. To join the ORBA collaboration, contact ORBA at ohioriverbasinalliance1@gmail.com



From left to right: Christopher Lorentz, Harry Stone and Richard Harrison.