

ORSANCO

*An interstate water pollution control
agency for the Ohio River
and its tributaries*



Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission

OHIO RIVER FACTS

The Ohio River is 981 miles long, beginning in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania and emptying into the Mississippi River near Cairo, Illinois.

More than 25 million people, or about 10 percent of the U.S. population, live in the Ohio River Basin.

Approximately 130 species of fish call the Ohio River home.

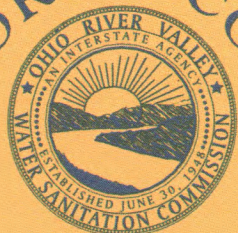
The Ohio River borders or flows through 6 states-- Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

About three million people use the Ohio River as the source of their drinking water.

More than 230 million tons of cargo are transported by barge on the Ohio River each year.



ORSANCO



*Improving water quality
in the Ohio River Valley
for over 50 years*

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POLLUTION CONTROL STANDARDS

ORSANCO sets Pollution Control Standards for waste water discharges to the Ohio River, and tracks certain discharges whose effluent can seriously impact water quality. The standards designate specific uses for the river and establish guidelines to



ensure that the river is capable of supporting these uses. To keep pace with current issues, ORSANCO reviews the standards every three years. As part of the review process, workshops are held for public input.

ORGANICS DETECTION SYSTEM (ODS)

To protect drinking water supplies, ORSANCO operates a spill detection and notification system at 15 municipal and industrial intakes along the Ohio River. The ODS was established in 1978 as a cooperative effort with Ohio River utilities and industries to monitor for the presence of certain volatile organic compounds. Data collected enhance ORSANCO's ability to promptly notify downstream drinking water utilities if a harmful substance enters the waterway. ORSANCO maintains a 24-hour response service to receive spill information and posts reports to an electronic bulletin board.

YEAR-ROUND BIMONTHLY SAMPLING

From 31 stations, 17 on the Ohio and 14 on major tributaries, ORSANCO collects and analyzes samples bimonthly, examining specific physical and chemical characteristics generally associated with water quality. These characteristics include certain toxic pollutants that may be harmful to humans or aquatic life. Bimonthly sampling results are published in ORSANCO's *Quality Monitor*.

DISSOLVED OXYGEN MONITORING

Because fish and other aquatic life depend on dissolved oxygen in a water body, ORSANCO monitors dissolved oxygen at 13 Ohio River locations from May through October. Data are sent from monitors operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at dams and hydropower plants.

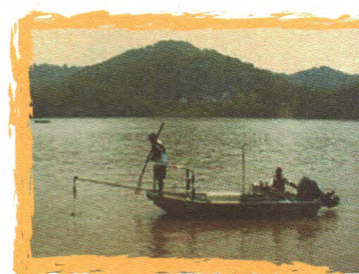
The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Commission (ORSANCO) to implement an interstate compact. The eight member states-- Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and West Virginia-- pledge to cooperate in the control of water pollution for water quality monitoring and assessment, spill response and information and education. Additionally, ORSANCO coordinates among federal agencies and the water pollution control

BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS

The Ohio River Valley Water Sanitation Compact specifies that the Ohio River should be capable of supporting and maintaining a balanced, diverse and healthy ecosystem. To determine if pollution control efforts have achieved this objective, ORSANCO conducts biological assessments.

Fish Population

Improvements in Ohio River water quality over the past 40 years have provided a cleaner home for aquatic life. Data collected during ORSANCO's yearly fish population studies demonstrate this progress. In recent years, pollution sensitive fish like blue sucker and paddlefish have returned to the river.



Macroinvertebrates

ORSANCO assesses these small, water-dwelling organisms as indicators of water quality because some macroinvertebrates require good, clean water to survive and reproduce. ORSANCO's study of macroinvertebrates is an important component in the development of specific biological standards, or biocriteria, for the Ohio River.

Fish Tissue Contaminants

Because many people eat their catch from the Ohio River, ORSANCO collects fish and examines their tissue for the presence of certain chemicals that may be harmful when eaten by humans. If necessary, results are used by states bordering the river to issue consumption advisories, placing limits on the types and amounts of fish that can safely be eaten. Contact your state health department or natural resources/environmental protection agency for current Ohio River fish consumption advisories.

(CO) is a water pollution control agency established in 1948 in Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia. ORSANCO operates programs for water quality monitoring, detection, discharge pollution control standards, and public information activities and facilitates an exchange of information and technology and natural resources agencies of the member states.

BACTERIA MONITORING

Good water quality is essential for recreational activities like boating, swimming and skiing. From May through October each year, ORSANCO tests for fecal coliform and *E. coli* bacteria five times monthly at six stations on the Ohio River. Elevated levels of these bacteria can indicate the presence of more harmful, disease-carrying bacteria. Contact with the water when bacteria levels are high increases the risk of infection and gastrointestinal illness.

SPECIAL PROJECTS & STUDIES

ORSANCO is working with communities to study and understand the impacts of urban areas on Ohio River water quality during rainy weather conditions.

ORSANCO is studying the impacts and sources of pollution from the Ohio River subbasin to the Mississippi River and the Gulf of Mexico.

ORSANCO is working with river utilities, industries, and municipalities to identify factors influencing Ohio River fish populations.

ORSANCO is working with state water supply agencies and U.S. EPA to improve the protection of Ohio River public water supplies.

ORSANCO provides up-to-date water quality information on our Internet web site. Visit <http://www.orsanco.org/empact> for more information.

ORSANCO is providing support to states and the federal government for the development of total maximum daily loads, the maximum amounts of specific pollutants that can be assimilated by a stream without impairing or exceeding water quality standards.



PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROGRAMS

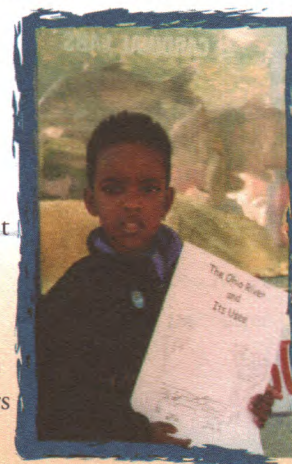
Friends of the Ohio

In 2000, ORSANCO launched a public information initiative to enhance environmental education about water quality and the Ohio River. The mission of Friends of the Ohio is to protect the natural beauty of the river by creating meaningful educational and recreational opportunities, and by inspiring widespread commitment to this magnificent natural resource.



River Sweep

Since 1989, this award-winning cleanup event for the Ohio River and its tributaries brings tens of thousands of volunteers to the riverbanks each year to collect thousands of tons of trash and debris. The cooperation of state environmental agencies, industries, businesses, corporate sponsors, and the dedication of volunteers and volunteer coordinators make this event successful. In conjunction with River Sweep, an annual poster contest is open to students in kindergarten through grade 12 who live in counties along the Ohio River. Winning posters help promote River Sweep, and the artists receive awards for their creations.



RiverWatchers Volunteer Monitoring

ORSANCO'S efforts to involve citizens in monitoring the Ohio River began in 1992 with five groups. Since that time, thousands of volunteers have collected samples from the Ohio River and its tributaries to test water quality. Outfitted with chemical test kits, a basic knowledge of water quality, and a desire to learn more about the effects of pollution on local rivers and streams, participants collect samples and conduct tests to evaluate the health of local waterways.



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