

A New Case For:

# OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA



*Valuing Our Region's History, Nature,  
Culture, and Recreation*



# *Preserving Regional Heritage Since 1996*



Main Street, downtown Shawnee. / DELIA PALMISANO

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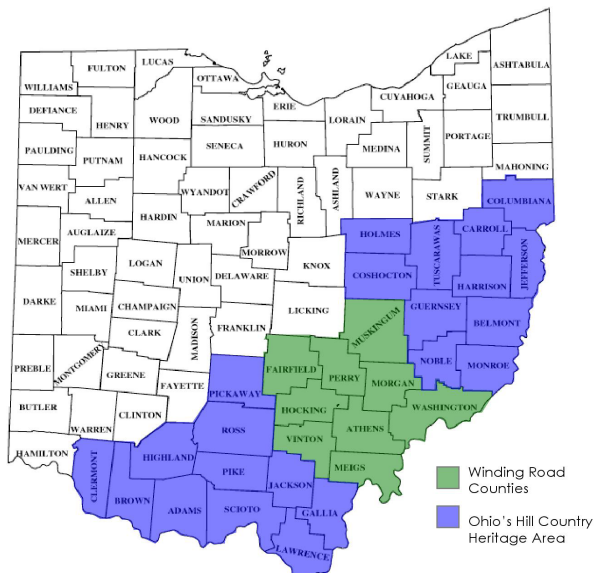
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# WHO WE ARE

## WHAT IS OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA?

Designated as an official Ohio State Heritage Area over two decades ago, Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area (OHCHA) encompasses all of Appalachian Ohio. We are a non-profit, community-supported organization that advocates for and supports this region.



## OUR MISSION

Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area values and preserves the integrity of the land, culture, and history of Appalachian Ohio. We do this for the prosperity, pride, learning, and enjoyment of local residents, visitors, businesses and organizations, and future generations.

## OUR VISION

We gather across differences — organizations, disciplines, and walks of life — to find meaning together, to preserve what we cherish, and to do what no one can do alone. Our thriving heritage is a foundation for the quality of life of present and future generations. We are shaped by our history and the places where we live.

Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area sees a future where all residents find economic and social benefit, healing, and pride in our diverse heritages and communities, stories, and special places. We generate prosperity and a creative economy through the investment in and sustainable development of our authentic historical, cultural, recreational, and economic assets. Residents experience a high quality of life, and visitors are offered an authentic connection to the natural beauty, cultural heritage, and story of a rising Appalachian Ohio.



The Meigs County Farmers Market, currently in its third season as of 2021, is a rising local market. / DELIA PALMISANO

# WHAT WE DO

## OUR OBJECTIVES



**CONVENE** key leaders and stakeholders from all walks of life in the region to give voice to the integrity of diverse heritages, and to collaboratively build regional strategies, identify markets and brands, and shape policies. This reinforces the importance of our authentic assets, and **catalyzes economic activity** that benefits the people who live here.



**RECOGNIZE** inspiring practices, identify themes, and tell the stories of our shared history, culture, and land. This helps residents and leaders see the **value and integrity of what is here** and the meaning it holds in their lives.



**SUPPORT** residents, organizations, businesses, and enterprises to bring authentic heritage projects and ideas to fruition. As capacity allows, this includes acting as a fiscal agent for projects and events, and offering thought partnership, promotion opportunities, and small business “seed grants.” This encourages **new jobs and business creation** and brings to life the contemporary value of heritage in Appalachian Ohio.

## OUR CURRENT ACTIVITIES

**APPALACHIAN HERITAGE LUNCHEON AND AWARDS** are held annually at the Ohio Statehouse and convene representatives and community leaders. These awards celebrate the economic development of **authentic heritage businesses** in Appalachian Ohio, and highlight how this region is special. We have offered ten years of recognition to more than 150 individuals, businesses, and organizations.



Honorees at the 8th Annual Appalachia Heritage Luncheon. / HERITAGE OHIO





Ohio's Winding Road Marketplace on Main Street in Shawnee. / DELIA PALMISANO

**NETWORK MANAGEMENT AND FISCAL SPONSORSHIP OF OHIO'S WINDING ROAD**, a regional brand pilot that connects and promotes authentic assets in nine counties of Appalachian Ohio. This highly successful **regional brand** focuses on six sectors — outdoor recreation, local foods, arts, history, education, and authentic amenities — that all serve as practical ways to define and enliven heritage in the region. With sufficient capacity, Ohio's Hill Country aims to apply our experience with managing this regional brand and network to other sub-regions in Appalachian Ohio.

**OHIO'S WINDING ROAD MARKETPLACE** provides an on-line and storefront space for promotion and sales of products made in and representing the region. These efforts contribute to the **growing local economy** in our region featuring artists, food producers, and authors. This concept will soon spread to the experience economy with sales of tickets for tours, adventures, boutique lodging, and interpretive programs.

**OHIO'S WINDING ROAD SEED GRANTS** provide small grants to **regional entrepreneurs** who feature authentic experiences and products. Initial support comes from the Sugar Bush Foundation, and other investors are being sought.

**APPALACHIA EXPERIENCE GUIDEBOOKS** are digital and print guides highlighting local tours, products, outdoor recreation, and stories targeted toward visitors.

**OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY VOICE NEWSLETTER** provides information on events, regional histories, and promoting local heritage organizations and efforts.

**EXPERIENCE TOURS** support the development of intimate and authentic interpretive experiences of the region for visitors. Examples include "Crossing the River: African Americans in Southeast Ohio," and "Finely Crafted in Ohio's Hill Country."

**A NEW LEADERS SUMMIT**, recruiting the next generation of leaders for this organization.

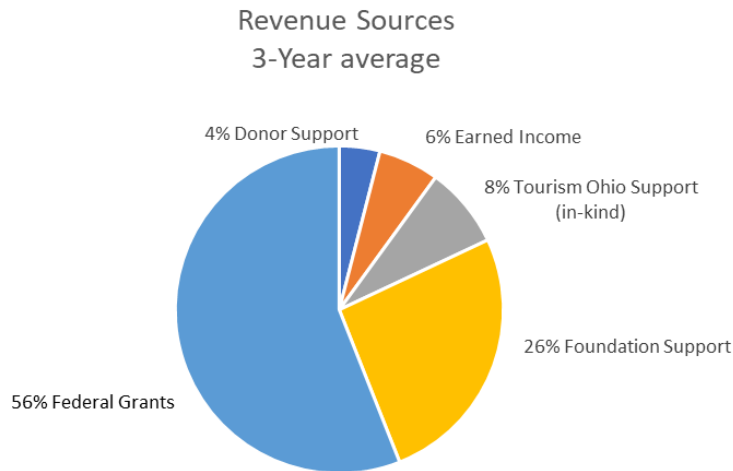
**FISCAL SPONSORSHIP OF THE OHIO PAW-PAW FESTIVAL** and one-time projects for active stakeholders in the regional economy.



Certified Guide and Burr Oak State Park naturalist Julie Gee leads guided hike interpreting the natural heritage of public lands in our region. / OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA

# HOW WE DO IT

## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW



OHCHA's Board and Staff Members (L to R): Grant Joy (Americorps Volunteer), Amy Grove, Pat Henahan, Joyce Barrett, Evan Shaw (pictured), Tim Traxler, John Winnenberg, Tom O'Grady, Brian Harnetty (staff) / OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA

## OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFFING

Our current governing board is made up of seven members from across Ohio. They offer a wide range of experience and expertise in cultural heritage, historic preservation, economic development, media storytelling, and the arts.

- **TOM O'GRADY, President (Stockport)**  
Director Emeritus, Southeast Ohio History Center
- **AMY GROVE, Secretary (Stockport)**  
Ohio's Winding Road, OSU Cooperative Extension (retired)
- **TIM TRAXLER, Vice-President (Millfield)**  
Tradesman, general building contractor, preservation advocate
- **JOYCE BARRETT (Columbus)**  
Director, Heritage Ohio
- **JOHN WINNENBERG, Treasurer (Glouster)**  
Ohio's Winding Road Network Manager, Community organizer
- **PAT HENAHAN (Columbus)**  
Program Officer, Ohio Arts Council (retired)
- **EVAN SHAW (Athens & Meigs Counties)**  
Independent filmmaker and videographer

Our staffing has remained flexible and responsive in an uncertain funding environment. We operate with independent contractors and, for the past seven years, have hosted an Americorps position. We seek to build a more sustainable organization by raising reliable financial support for an on-going management staff.



## OUR CURRENT AND PAST PARTNERS

Initially organized in 1996 by the Ohio Arts Council (lead in part by board member Pat Henahan), Ohio's Hill Country has worked with many partners over the past two decades. This includes:

- Heritage Ohio
- The Ohio State House Regional Economic Development
- The Ohio Humanities Council
- Rural Action
- ACEnet
- Ohio University
- Hocking College
- Ohio State Parks
- The Sugarbush Foundation
- Tourism Ohio
- Outdoor Recreation Council of Appalachia
- Governor's Office of Appalachia
- USDA Rural Development
- OSU Cooperative Extension
- Appalachian Regional Commission
- Ohio University Voinovich School of Leadership and Public Service
- American Electric Power
- Wayne National Forest Ohio
- Paw Paw Festival
- Southeast Ohio History Center
- Ohio Environmental Education Fund
- Buckeye Trail Association
- Muskingum County Foundation
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- As well as additional state travel and tourism governmental partners and convention and visitor bureaus



A poster advertises the "Crossing the River" Tour from 2016. / OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA



*I am drawn to the Ohio's Hill Country board because it is working to protect and promote the historic integrity of the Southeastern Ohio Appalachia region, which really does have a distinctive personality. I think their advantage for economic opportunity is based on preserving their cultural and natural assets.*

— Joyce Barrett

*I see valuing Ohio Hill Country's historic, cultural, natural, and recreational heritage as a viable foundation for economic improvement. It is important to ensure that the region's past is an important part of its future, and to appropriately protect, preserve, and develop this unique place that will attract visitors to experience our region's authentic historic, cultural, and natural environment assets. Tourism is the likely outgrowth of something good we can do for ourselves.*

— Tim Traxler

*"I have always had a special feeling for Appalachia. When I started working for the Ohio Arts Council I knew there were many ways in which we as a government entity could help this community; however, we needed to see what Appalachia wanted from us and our many partners and not what we wanted to do for them. Ohio's Hill Country Heritage Area was born from this experience, and continues today. My commitment to this area of the state and to this organization continues, and it has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life. This is because of the people of Appalachia and their commitment to their communities and their authentic way of life."*

— Pat Henahan



# FAQS

## WHAT IS A HERITAGE AREA?

Inspired by National Heritage Areas, we define our heritage area — Appalachian Ohio — as a culturally, historically, and geographically important and meaningful place. As we tell the stories of Appalachian Ohio's people and landscapes, we help to define and articulate it. These efforts encourage heritage and experience tourism, senses of regional pride, more sustainable local economies, and stewardship of the land.

## HOW IS HERITAGE DIFFERENT FROM HISTORY?

While both history and heritage are connected and inform one another, we understand heritage as the objects, places, and traditions that have remained from our common history, and inform our quality of life right now. We focus on ways to acknowledge, preserve, interpret, and (when appropriate) celebrate these important parts of our history, and we support direct experiences with these authentic assets as a way to connect to the past and enrich the present.

## WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OHIO'S HILL COUNTRY HERITAGE AREA AND OHIO'S WINDING ROAD?

In 2016, Ohio's Hill Country identified an emerging need to create regional brands that focus on specific areas of Appalachian Ohio. The first regional brand pilot to address this demand is Ohio's Winding Road, which encompasses nine counties in the region, including Morgan, Athens, Perry, Hocking, Fairfield, Vinton, Meigs, Washington, and Muskingum counties. Six heritage sectors were identified and promoted, which include outdoor recreation, local foods, arts, history, education, and authentic amenities. In addition, Ohio's Hill Country worked alongside several regional partners — including Rural Action, ACEnet, Ohio University, and Hocking College — to form the Ohio's Winding Road Network, forging a new collaborative model of shared governance and management.



## CONTACT US:

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