



FOUNDATION for OHIO RIVER EDUCATION

December 2, 2020

Dear Supporter,

Like many organizations throughout the country, FORE's programming was turned upside down when the pandemic hit earlier this spring. Our organization carries out its mission through hands-on experiences, and we suddenly had to find new ways to connect with our learning communities.

We quickly got to work producing online DIY Creek Exploration videos for children and families. The videos also aired on CPS TV, a public television station launched for students in Cincinnati Public Schools. We developed DIY River Exploration Kits for 3rd through 6th graders attending Newport City Schools. The kits contained materials for students to conduct self-directed activities at their homes to learn about river ecology and aquatic organisms. We started an interactive "Morning Macroinvertebrate" feature on social media, and partnered with Stroud Water Research Center to provide free downloads of our Water Quality app, which includes a digital macroinvertebrate identification guide.

Although we had to cancel our River REACH floating classroom program this year, our staff developed engaging virtual field trips for Cincinnati Public Schools, Community Christian Academy, the Art Academy of Cincinnati and the Civic Garden Center's Green Girls in STEM program. We conducted the virtual trips at local creeks and ponds using our smart phones. The field trips were a big hit, with one teacher from Cincinnati Public Schools commenting that the program we designed for his class "was TREMENDOUS!"

Luckily, we still had some great opportunities to conduct in-person programming (socially distant, of course)! We provided creek testing programs for children attending Cincinnati Parks' summer camps and a Pond Exploration program for Girl Scouts of Southwest Ohio. We also partnered with Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District to host a Pond Management field course for farmers and landowners. We capped off our in-person programming in October with our first-ever Lake Ecology 101 class. This program got high school students in canoes on Doe Run Lake, where they spent the day analyzing the lake alongside a scientist from the Kentucky Division of Water. We plan to continue this new program in 2021!

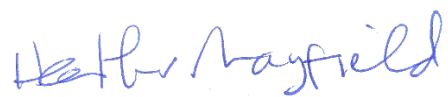


We were honored this fall to help plan the 2020 Ohio River Basin Summit, which was held virtually at the University of Louisville. At the summit, the Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan was launched. The plan is a multi-state initiative by the Ohio River Basin Alliance (ORBA) designed to restore, protect and to bring new economic and recreational opportunities to the entire Ohio River Watershed. FORE is represented on the ORBA Steering Committee and will be leading the Knowledge and Education to Inform Decisions work group for the next two years. This work group represents one of six goals under the Ohio River Basin Strategic Plan.

We are thrilled that we've been able to stay strongly connected to our students and communities over this crazy year and we are excited to capitalize on the new educational programs we have created in 2021! We are also proud to be playing such a crucial role in implementing a strategic plan that will preserve waterways in the Ohio River Basin for generations to come.

Your support of our organization provided us the foundation we needed to accomplish our mission, even when our plans changed so quickly nine months ago. For that, we are grateful, and hope you will continue your support as we get ready to take on the new year!

Sincerely,



Heather Mayfield
Executive Director

