ABOUT RURAL ACTION

Nestled in the foothills of Appalachian Ohio, Rural Action was founded in 1991 on the principle that locally-based, sustainable and inclusive development is the main strategy for building resilient rural Appalachian communities.

Rural Action’s mission is to build a more just economy by developing the region’s assets in environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable ways. Together, we envision a region with clean streams and healthy forests; A place where thriving family farms, meaningful livelihoods and vibrant communities exist for everyone, with people engaged as good stewards of the world they live in and working together to make this vision a reality.

As a membership-based organization, we believe the best development is done with participation from diverse groups who have a stake in the outcome. Our role is to empower communities to value and take ownership of our environment, economy, and community, so we can meet the needs of the current generation while also building a just and sustainable future.

See where we work on page 5. Rural Action continues to expand because there is great demand for smart local solutions to global and regional problems. Our reach is made possible through a robust 31-member AmeriCorps program, Ohio Stream Restore Corps, administered by Rural Action in partnership with more than a dozen organizations across the region.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE 2    About Rural Action
PAGE 3    Letter From The CEO + Board Chair
PAGE 4    How We Work
PAGE 5    Where We Work
PAGE 6-7   What We’ve Gotten Done Together
PAGE 8-9   Sustainable Agriculture
PAGE 10-11 Entrepreneurial Communities
PAGE 12-13 Environmental Education
PAGE 14-15 Ohio Stream Restore Corps
PAGE 16-17 Sustainable Forestry
PAGE 18-19 Social Enterprise
PAGE 20-21 Watershed Management
PAGE 22-23 Zero Waste
PAGE 24-25 Giving Society, Sustaining Members, + In Memoriam
PAGE 26    Board of Directors
PAGE 27    Staff + AmeriCorps Members
PAGE 28-29 Support the Work You Love
PAGE 30    Funders + Sponsors
PAGE 31    Financial Information

LETTER FROM THE CEO + BOARD CHAIR

2017 WAS A YEAR OF MANY SUCCESSES FOR THE MEMBERS OF RURAL ACTION AND THE REGION WE LOVE.

We began some new work in 2017, launching the Entrepreneurial Communities program, in which teams from five counties are working to help communities take charge of their economic future. We received a generous gift from a long-time member to launch our first efforts toward impact investing to support new farmers with timely 0% interest loans. And our vendors helped build a new barn at the Chesterhill Produce Auction to be able to add livestock and expand wood products sales.

In addition to these new developments, we also want to celebrate the strong legacy made possible by our founders, the passion of our members, and hard work by many people over many years. Here are just a few examples of the impact this work in recent years.

Since 2009, our partners and members have helped small communities do big things by:

- Generating over $3 million in revenue for local farmers through the Chesterhill Produce Auction, while distributing fresh produce to communities, schools, and food banks across a 20-county area, and
- Recruiting more than 10,000 volunteers who have served more than 33,000 hours supporting organizations and programs in communities of need, and
- Educating more than 70,000 youth and adults on the wonders of our natural assets, better environmental practices, and outdoor skills and knowledge.

The patient, collaborative nature of this work is creating sustained, positive impact in our local watersheds and communities. You can see more results of our work together on pages 6 and 7. We, as individuals, don’t have all the answers. What we do have is a deep appreciation for the rich opportunities and the great beauty of the region and real respect for people and their ability to work together to creatively solve problems.

We encourage you to see yourself as an essential part of this process of sustainable development that begins with engagement and learning together.

This way of working may be a slower path, but one that we believe is correct and that builds lasting assets in the place we call home. Thank you for your support, your hard work, and your encouragement as we create a new narrative for the region we all love.

Please read and enjoy this summary of our 2017 body of work. Share with your friends and help us grow even stronger together. Thank you!

Sincerely – Randy and Michelle

R. MICHELLE DECKER
Chief Executive Officer

RANDY LEITE
Chair of the Board

PAGE 27

R. MICHELLE DECKER
Chief Executive Officer
HOW WE WORK

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to build a more just economy by developing the region’s assets in environmentally, socially, and economically sustainable ways.

OUR CORE WORK CENTERS ON:

- Helping small communities do big things
- Growing local businesses and jobs
- Restoring our environment
- Cultivating the next generation of leaders

Our decades of experience have taught us some critical lessons and shaped an Appalachian approach to participatory development in Ohio. Our approach is rooted in the work of many partners across Central Appalachia and rural America who believe we have the power to write our preferred future.

OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

A Theory of Change is a planning tool. We wrote one to explain what we think needs to be in place in order to achieve our big goal: a new, more just economy in support of people, their communities, and the environment we all rely on.

The graphic included here describes the things we believe need to exist – at a sufficient enough scale – to bring about this new economy. You can jump into this circle at any point but all elements are required for lasting change to take place.

Let’s look at this in the context of food systems. You have to engage the people most affected – in this case, it’s consumers and farmers. What do they need and what would they do for them to grow the local and regional food system? You’re going to need to do a lot of learning – as an organization, with partners, through training and peer-to-peer learning with other producers. It helps to understand, value, and control the assets you need. Knowing which producers grow which products, who has a truck they can share, and who can provide what training, helps you understand where gaps exist and where extra support is needed. Ensuring the proper infrastructure is in place is also really important – having a business like the Chesterhill Produce Auction where produce can be aggregated, or having enough refrigeration at local kitchens and distribution sites. Finally, where are the markets? What do people want to buy? Where do they want to buy it? What market opportunities exist for producers?

WHERE WE WORK

In 2017, Rural Action reached 26 out of 32 Appalachian Ohio counties, 21 directly through Rural Action programs, and 6 additional counties through our Ohio Stream Restore Corps partners. Additionally, we reached 19 Ohio counties outside of Appalachia as we continue to strengthen relationships across the state and our work continues to grow. Rural Action has 9 offices located on the ground in communities where we work. Rural Action also worked and collaborated in 12 other states in 2017; most notably in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and Illinois.
WHAT WE’VE GOTTEN DONE TOGETHER

SINCE 2009, WITH OUR MEMBERS + PARTNERS...

6 7

WHAT WE’VE GOTTEN DONE TOGETHER

INCREASED RECYCLING TO 21.25%

INCREASED RECYCLING TO 21.25% in Athens and Hocking counties by implementing a 10-year plan within the Athens-Hocking Solid Waste District. In 2009, the recycling rate was just 8.9%.

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SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE

In July of 2017 Washington County native Caitlin Bond became Rural Action’s Farm to Institution to School VISTA, placed by our partner, the Ohio Community Development Corporation Association. Caitlin brought with her a passion for healthy local food access in our schools, an exceptional aptitude for project management, and above all a deep understanding of food based health problems and a belief that everyone deserves access to fresh local produce.

Since 2004, Rural Action has been developing a farm to school program as a key food access strategy for rural communities, and Caitlin significantly moved the program forward during her service term. Caitlin has accomplished this as a VISTA (Volunteer in Service to America) member.

The goal of the VISTA program is to build the capacity of an organization to sustain a project that impacts poverty. Caitlin’s year of VISTA service exemplifies just that. She was able to create implementation and evaluation tools that will enable Rural Action to fulfill its farm to school mission far into the future.

“Throughout my year as the Farm to Institution to School VISTA, I had the opportunity to connect with AmeriCorps members, community members, and culinary students, where I began to see the impact of the work we were accomplishing. I began to realize the outcomes of our farm to school model were greater than increasing food access. Through my connection with volunteers I heard stories of how they enjoyed the social interaction with other volunteers, how their food preparation skills were honed and developed, how their understanding of the local food system was expanded, and how they valued the teamwork our farm to school processing days instilled. I saw great potential for our farm to school model to include a youth workforce component in hopes to instill these same skills within our future generations of youth, as these skills connected with what I experienced in my youth, with my high school friend.”

One of her greatest achievements are the partnerships that she created and strengthened during her term. This includes expanding the program to new schools and other institutions. One key new relationship driven by Caitlin is Rural Action’s partnership with the Comprehensive Case Management and Employment Program (CCMEP). CCMEP is a state-operated program that offers meaningful employment opportunities to low-income Ohioans age 16-24.

Through Caitlin’s effort, Rural Action will be able to engage a CCMEP cohort to work with staff, culinary partners, and community volunteers to process fresh local food from the Chesterhill Produce Auction over the summer. The processed produce will then be used during the academic year by local school districts in their lunch programs. As Caitlin said “I grew up here, as a youth my friends were in CCMEP programs like this, I know how valuable they are in shaping people’s lives.”

“"I began to realize the outcomes of our farm to school model were greater than increasing food access. Through my connection with volunteers I heard stories of how they enjoyed the social interaction with other volunteers, how their food preparation skills were honed and developed, how their understanding of the local food system was expanded, and how they valued the teamwork our farm to school processing days instilled."”

~ Caitlin Bond

BY THE NUMBERS

10,048 LBS of locally grown produce was processed with 576 community volunteer hours. 5,154 students across 18 schools benefited from these volunteers’ efforts through our Farm to School project.

689 ACRES were under production to grow the 223,837 lbs of fresh produce sold through the Chesterhill Produce Auction, from 1,059 buyers and 71 businesses and organizations.

$308,597 was generated by the Chesterhill Produce Auction in gross sales (a 20% growth from 2016!), supporting 152 growers from 17 Ohio and West Virginia counties.

14,917 LBS of locally grown produce was sold at 10 SITES in food desert communities through Country Fresh Stops, a pop-up retail project of Rural Action.
Entrepreneurial Communities

Pomeroy Village Council member Maureen Hennessy (known locally as Mo) stepped into her role when a mid-term vacancy occurred. That was three and half years ago, and she has been working to support her community ever since. “These are my friends and my family,” Mo says, “and I’ll do anything to help.” Mo understands that as revenue declines, so can a community’s population rate and the average income of its residents. Bringing prosperity to the Village and surrounding area is her primary motivation.

Mo sees Pomeroy’s partnership with Rural Action’s Entrepreneurial Communities program as a way to help achieve her goal. Coming from a family of entrepreneurs, Mo sees local business and creating more opportunities for the next generation to come home to as critical solutions. Forming the Big Bend Entrepreneur Support Team (BBEST) with other community members creates a network that can focus on growing the Big Bend region. “I am a stakeholder in the community. I am definitely a partner in this enterprise and can give the historical viewpoint,” Mo says.

BBEST co-chair Larry Hess and his wife, Candice, represent the young entrepreneur demographic of Pomeroy. Both locals to the region, they moved back after years away, to put down roots. After purchasing a building on Pomeroy’s Main Street, they are nearing the opening of River Roasters Coffee Company. Larry finds that being a part of BBEST has helped them reach out and get to know the community. “It’s helped us build relationships, trust, and influence before even opening,” Candice adds.

Rural Action is proud to be partnered with the wonderful communities of Southeast Ohio on this journey to grow an entrepreneurial network. By supporting dedicated citizens like Maureen and all of our core team members, we work to bring economic justice to the region.

By the Numbers

5 Teams in 5 Counties

joined the launch of a pilot effort funded by the Appalachian Regional Commission to help communities take charge of their economic future.

2 Community Based Roles

were added at Rural Action in 2017, to support the Entrepreneurial Communities work. Dan Vorisek was hired as the full-time Entrepreneurial Communities Coach; while Jenna Horiuchi served as an AmeriCorps member. Together, they built out a robust support system for participating communities.

346 Volunteer Hours

were contributed by 28 core team members as they met, planned together, participated in training, and visited with members of their business community.

10 Media Stories

demonstrated regional excitement about the Entrepreneurial Communities effort, which is supported by the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship and participating organizations in WV, OH, and KY.

These are my friends and my family, and I’ll do anything to help.” ~ Maureen Hennessy
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

In 2017, four students and two teachers from Huntington Local Schools (Ross County) started an entire recycling program in their district from scratch. These high school students and teachers are part of the Youth Climate Action Team (YCAT), a project managed by Rural Action and Big Brothers Big Sister of Central Ohio’s Camp Oty’Okwa. YCAT provided 40 Appalachian Ohio students and 10 teachers from nine schools with an opportunity to lead change in their schools and communities in 2017.

The Huntington High School team includes students John Hutson, Madison Pope and Josie and Sadie Tornberg, with guidance from teachers Halle Minney (pictured here) and Kim Ginther. They participated in two overnight workshops at Camp Oty’Okwa where they learned about environmental issues and leadership with all of the YCAT participants. Ohio University professors Tom Smucker and Ryan Fogt led engaging segments focused on the physical and social sciences of climate change. Some graduate students from Dr. Smucker’s department also participated in the workshop, sharing climate change impacts in their home countries with the high school students. YCAT also visited the Byrd Polar and Climate Research Center at The Ohio State University to view some of the oldest samples of glacial ice cores and participate in a mock Paris Climate Accord.

The workshops were designed to inspire and prepare students to lead a project in their schools that impacted climate change in some way. The Huntington team honed in on starting a recycling program at their school but had to tackle several issues in order to achieve their vision. First, they had to get buy-in from the Huntington Board of Education, which they did by making a presentation to the Board. It was well-received and earned the Board’s approval. The students then successfully advocated for two large recycling dumpsters to be located on school grounds. They conducted a school-wide challenge, encouraging each home room to decorate their own recycling box. Halle Minney’s environmental science class now collects the boxes daily, diverting literally tons of material from entering the landfill throughout the year. They record data on how much is being recycled in each class. Their YCAT team has successfully increased recycling rates in their school and have also educated younger grade levels on the benefits of recycling.

In addition to Huntington’s recycling program, the Vinton and Adena YCAT teams have also focused on increasing recycling rates in their schools. Logan-Elm has adopted a different focus, replacing light bulbs in their buildings with LEDs. Wellston High School students have created a community garden on their campus, and Alexander’s team taught a climate lesson to peers during an English class.

"Hope is a word often used to describe the promise of a new generation, and when it comes to the future of the environment, some new partnerships involving local student-led endeavors are turning that hope into real solutions.”

~ Chris Balusik, Reporter, Chillicothe Gazette (On covering YCAT)

BY THE NUMBERS

4,295 PEOPLE
(3,545 children and 750 adults) were reached with 675 hours of outdoor experiential learning through 245 environmental education programs.

85 CHILDREN & ADULTS
participated in citizen science projects, including 10 volunteers who helped to create and monitor 24 Warbler, Bluebird, and Tree Swallow nest boxes.

398 TEACHERS
received direct programming or professional development through Rural Action; at least 284 of whom have incorporated outdoor experiential learning into their classes.

49 STUDENTS
participated in the Youth Climate Action Team or Junior Counselor programs, growing in their leadership skills and stewardship ethic.
OHIO STREAM RESTORE CORPS

In 2017, Hocking College graduate Destiny Langdon moved to Barnesville to inaugurate Ohio Stream Restore Corps’ brand-new position with Captina Conservancy. Since then, she has made herself an indispensable member of their team and built a role for future AmeriCorps members that will endure for years to come.

Formed in 2010, Captina Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust whose mission is to conserve and protect Captina Creek, one of Ohio’s healthiest waterways and an important home for the endangered hellbender salamander. In addition to its remarkable biotic integrity, Captina Creek and its tributaries are astoundingly beautiful. Nowhere is this more apparent than at Raven Rocks, where this photo was taken. Local knowledge has it that the area was named for the birds that Native Americans often found congregating there, but what will probably stick out to most visitors today are the caverns and ravines that hide just past the outskirts of the forest.

Destiny’s position was one of several new additions this past year for OSRC, which now boasts 31 members in 18 Appalachian Ohio counties. Initially, she knew very little about the Conservancy or its namesake, but with the help of Executive Director Rich Sidwell, she learned quickly. Through her service, she handles the lion’s share of the conservancy’s social media and archival work, leads tours, and serves as production assistant for a documentary that will air on PBS in the fall of 2018.

It has been an unexpected turn of events in the best possible way and she’s already agreed to stay on for a second service term. At the top of her to-do list: build new trails so that more visitors can see why the area is so special. After that, Destiny would like to pursue her newfound passion for biology and remain in Appalachia, her newfound home.

“"My greatest resources of knowledge are the people who are here."  
~ Destiny Langdon
Helena Goncalves, an environmental manager from Brazil, spent four months working with Rural Action’s Sustainable Agriculture and Forestry program. As a 2017 Community Solutions Program (CSP) fellow – a learning exchange program of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. State Department – she came to Rural Action as one of 93 leaders from 53 countries embedded in numerous community development organizations across the country.

Helena’s interest in non-timber forest products grew out of her nonprofit work, where she serves with NAPRA, the support center for the riverside populations of the Amazon region. NAPRA trains students and adults for community action and economic development in communities with very low infrastructure. Given that most communities are forested, NAPRA focuses on wild agroforestry opportunities and the adoption of sustainable practices in harvesting and marketing the fruit, nuts, and other products the forest naturally produces.

Over the course of the exchange experience, Helena and Rural Action came to realize that the forest communities of Brazil confront many of the same challenges faced by forest farmers across Appalachia, including access to land, capital, markets and infrastructure. Helena and Rural Action share a belief that the only response to these challenges is to develop locally rooted, asset based, and innovative solutions.

Helena is taking her experience with Rural Action and returning to help struggling riparian communities strengthen their Brazil nut harvesting groups and structuring the commercialization of a Brazil nut value chain directly with cooperatives or companies, obtaining a better price point and better living standard, for her fellow countrymen. As Helena concludes, “Having the opportunity to work at Rural Action was a great way to learn from initiatives to improve the well-being of people who live from the forests and land. I came back to Brazil full of ideas and inspiration.”

“One of the keys for building a sustainable society is reconnection - to the land, the forest, the water. Once we change our relationship to these resources, we will be able to change the actions we take on this planet. Rural Action is fighting for this change in Appalachia and NAPRA is fighting for it in Brazil.”

~ Helena Goncalves

**BY THE NUMBERS**

114 LBS
of ginseng seed and ramp bulbs was sold to 127 buyers through our annual plant stock sale representing $307,953 in income to woodland producers that will be generated from this year’s sale.

$4,965
was paid out to local pawpaw and black walnut wild harvesters in a pilot project at the Chesterhill Produce Auction that aggregates these products and sells them to larger companies seeking small-scale wild harvested forest products.

217,202 SEEDS
of at risk plants, such as goldenseal and American ginseng, have been collected and planted on the Wayne National Forest since 2014 as part of an on-going restoration partnership.

$36,904.25
of locally crafted wood products was sold through Rural Action’s Chesterhill Produce Auction in 2017.
Tyler Bonner, Joe Steinbrecher, and Shannon Pratt-Harrington—all former Rural Action Ohio Stream Restore Corps service members—stepped into new roles at Zero Waste Event Productions, a Rural Action social enterprise. Over the years, their hard work with the help of many volunteers, contractors, and supporters, has transformed Zero Waste Event Productions into a growing social enterprise that serviced 23 outdoor festivals and events across three states in 2017.

Zero Waste Event Productions provides recycling, composting, and waste management services to outdoor festivals and events, aiming to maximize the amount of waste they can divert from the landfill—60,449 lbs. in 2017 alone. Along the way, it has also become a way for Tyler, Joe, and Shannon to build a business around doing what they love and reducing the impact of events and festivals on the environment.

“When I left college I thought, ‘I can find a job where I get two out of the eight things I really want out of a job.’ Zero Waste Event Productions is like seven out of the eight things I really want”

~ Shannon Pratt-Harrington

Tyler started working on small events in Athens and Hocking counties during his first AmeriCorps term in 2013. He now manages the enterprise and leads sales and outreach to festivals of all sizes across the Midwest. According to Tyler, “it wasn’t what I had expected as far as where I thought I would be in life, but it has really just become one of the biggest passions of my life.”

In 2018, Zero Waste Event Productions is slated to become its own LLC. Rural Action will continue to support the growth of the business through our Social Enterprise program to ensure their continued growth is smart and sustainable.
**WATERSHED MANAGEMENT**

Ed Taggart, a Rural Action member and long-time resident of Mineral City, has been president of the Huff Run Watershed Restoration Partnership (HRWRP) for nearly a decade. The HRWRP was founded in 1996 by concerned citizens who wanted to clean up their local stream. It is sponsored by Rural Action and works to restore Huff Run to the healthy warm water habitat it once was. The group conducts extensive environmental education and works closely with agencies to accomplish their restoration mission. Ed helps with all aspects of the group, running community meetings, inviting residents to events, and leading buses on field trips.

Huff Run is a small watershed located in Tuscarawas and Carroll Counties. Although it is small, the watershed has a big problem: acid mine drainage (AMD). This pollutant is the result of a long history of unregulated coal mining. “Our streams were orange. When I first moved here, I was excited to fish behind my house until I saw the state of the water,” shares Ed. HRWRP and Rural Action joined forces to work on the AMD, including a project known as the Farr AMD project. At Farr, a mine discharge was adding iron into Huff Run, rendering the stream largely lifeless.

In 2016-2017, a project to re-route the affected stream to avoid the seep was completed with $1.7M of mitigation-required funding support from the Ohio Department of Transportation. As a result of this work, three new stream channels equaling almost one mile total were built by Oxbow River and Stream Restoration, an Ohio-based engineering firm. Signs of new life are already returning to Huff Run, improving water quality and biology all the way to the Tuscarawas River, a waterway critical to the region’s environmental and economic future.

As Ed remarked, “It takes a lot of people working together in order to see these kinds of improvements.” In the case of the Farr Project and Ohio Department of Transportation Stream Restoration Project, it took committed citizens collecting data and advocating for their watershed, it took the support and expertise of public agencies, and it took the implementation skills of private, local companies. We’re proud to have such dedicated partners to be able to get the work done.

**BY THE NUMBERS**

- **31 SPECIES** of aquatic insects were found in the new stream channel in Huff Run and the Stonecat Madtom fish was seen in Monday Creek for the first time ever — evidence of life returning to streams we are working to restore with partners local, state, and federal levels.
- **34 CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS** were built or maintained in watersheds Rural Action works in, preventing nearly 1.5 million pounds of acid and other heavy metals from entering our streams.
- **11 PROJECTS** addressing water quality impairments and preserving our water resources were underway in 2017, including wetland, river erosion, septic system failure, and other issues.
- **3 PROJECTS** were researched and submitted for PILOT funding, a new source of federal support for innovative abandoned mine reclamation and reuse.

“It takes a lot of people working together in order to see these kinds of improvements.” ~ Ed Taggart
Real World Organizing (RWO) is a local business dedicated to providing professional organizing services, including household organizing, consulting, and coaching. A large aspect of organizing involves getting rid of unnecessary items, so it’s easy for clients of RWO to generate a large volume of waste. However, inherent in owner Aubrei Krummert’s commitment to minimalism is a dedication to zero waste. As a Rural Action Business Member, she has been committed to the Zero Waste Pledge through her business for two years. The pledge is a project through Rural Action to help businesses reduce their waste through recycling and composting as well as connect to resources.

Aubrei’s initial pledge addressed aspects of RWO that could be improved to become more sustainable, such as implementing fabric and ink cartridge recycling. Aubrei’s latest pledge focuses more on how she can influence and engage her community. This primarily includes her efforts through Terracycle—a program that allows anyone to send in a myriad of otherwise non-recyclable waste to be recycled at their facility. For Aubrei, the focus has been on the pervasive single use chip bag and granola bar wrapper, which she now collects in bulk to be terracycled from local schools, as well as her clients. Terracycling takes a bit more effort than your regular weekly curbside ritual, but it has greatly expanded the waste that her clients and community can divert.

“A lot of people collect things they know can be recycled, they just don’t know how to. I believe most people genuinely want to do the right thing, but we can’t do everything ourselves.” ~ Aubrei Krummert

BY THE NUMBERS

- 83 BUSINESSES + ORGANIZATIONS attended sustainability socials or committed to improving their waste reduction and recycling through the Zero Waste Pledge.
- 60% of the action steps in the Athens Hocking Zero Waste Action Plan have been completed by over 20 partners, contributing to a more-than doubling of the recycling rate since 2009.
- 2,108 CHILDREN participated in zero waste lessons, learning about waste reduction, reuse, recycling, and composting.
- $10,000 was saved by OhioHealth O’Bleness Hospital by reducing the number of landfill dumpsters at the hospital and Castrop Center locations by 50%. They were able to make the reduction through their partnership with Rural Action and commitment to their Zero Waste Pledge.
2017 GIVING SOCIETY

Members are central and essential to the work of Rural Action, and we count on them for their leadership, advocacy, volunteerism, and financial support. The following Giving Society members have made multi-year pledges that help sustain the organization and allow us to plan for the future. For more information on the Giving Society call us at 740-677-4047 or visit our website at www.ruralaction.org/giving-society

- Merle & Min Almquist
- Charles & Natalie Barman
- Wanada & Terry Baxter-Potter
- Dave & Myca Haynes
- Dave & Gillian Berchowitz
- Cynthia & Ron Birt
- Chuck & Carol Blyth
- Shawna Bolin
- Mary Ann Borch & Bob Kerber
- Chad Borlle
- Jen & Jeremy Bowman
- Sue & Alan Boyd
- Mike & Jane Broecker
- Ann & Ken Holroyd Brown
- George Wood & Marcia Burchy
- Kent Butler & Lori Gronem
- Ken & Linda Button
- Heather & Phil Cantino
- Kelly Capuzzi
- Mike Gartner
- Meranda & Nate Chesser
- Chris Cheriel
- Pete & Linda Clark
- Mary Boone Costello
- Micah Covert
- David & Elaine Dabelko
- Dale & Gloria Devol
- Barbara Donohue
- Lorna Jean Edmonds
- Bob Eichenberg
- Belle Everett
- Mitch Farley
- Chris Feger
- Leslie Fleming
- Don & Mary Flourney
- Ann & Rich Tombs Fugate
- Felix Gagliano
- Norm & Maryann Garber
- Janet Garske
- Alan Geiger
- Sara Gilfert
- Lee Gregg

- Steve Grimes
- Bob & Amy Grove
- Mimi Hart
- Luther & Jeanne Haseley
- John Hauser
- Rick Hindman
- John & Suzanne Howell
- Meg Hummon
- Ralph & Janet Izard
- Mary Tracy & Larry Jageman
- Anita James
- Tom Johnson
- Beth & David Kaufman
- Kristin Kinnard
- Valerie & Tim Kinnard
- Cathy & Paul Knoop
- Faith Knutsen
- John Kolowski
- Kellie Kolowski
- Carol & Bruce Kuhre
- Tanja Kuhre
- Neil & Karoline Lane
- Joel Laumon
- Marissa & Nick Lautzheiser
- Robert Lazuka
- Randy & Teresa Leite
- Don & Sally Linder
- Svenn Lindskold
- Randall & Marla Longenecker
- Mary & James Lorenz
- Susan Loughridge
- Sheila & Max Mark
- Diana Marvel
- Debra McBride
- Tom McGuire
- Sarah Milligan
- Danny Moates
- John Molinaro
- Penny Morgan
- Michelle Papai
- Linda Parsons
- Michael Piprul & Paul Patton
- Debbie Phillips
- Kerry & Ryan Pigman
- Mary Anne Reeves
- Allyn & Marshe Reilly
- Kristin & Chip Rice
- Jane & Don Richter
- Sue Righi
- Sallie Anne Roberts
- Becky Rondy
- Jerry & Robin Shaffer
- Bob & Arlene Sheak
- Jen & David Simon
- Eddie Smith
- Eric Smith
- Mark & Rita Snider
- Larry Snyder
- Pieta Steffers
- Heath Stehle
- Nancy Stevens & Patrick O’Connor
- Shannon Stuart
- Cita Strauss
- Erin Sykes
- Linda Thornton
- Kay Tousely
- Brian Vatadin
- Jay & Annie Warmke
- Robin Webb
- Mark & Wanda Weinberg
- Travis West
- Lois & Bob Wobbe
- T. Chris Wilson
- Jane Woodrow
- Stan & Sally Zalek
- Athens County Economic Development
- Gary Goosman & Mary Ann Wester
- Katherine Kelley & Willem Roosenberg
- Eric Fenstermaker & Nancy Manring
- Wayne & Mary Jones
- Tedi & John Kehr
- Lea & Mark Koontz
- Tim & Jennifer Kurtz
- Steve & Cheryl Lipe
- Kelly & Mike McLaughlin
- Sue & Mike Miller
- Mike & Sherry Monroe
- Pam & Fred Moyer
- Fern & Hal Nelson
- Dale &Joan Orth
- Matt & Elaine Pettit
- Oly & Dean Pollock
- Dave & Laura Ransley
- Anne & Jim Ready
- Rob & Lynne Redford
- Debbie Robertson

2017 SUSTAINING MEMBERS

Sustaining members give monthly and help to ensure stability for Rural Action’s work. Thank you to:


IN MEMORIAM

Whether people knew Gifford from OU, around town, his local parish, diocese or international relationships, he was known as someone who cared about others, was genuinely interested in how people were doing, and wanted to do what he could to make the world a better place. For 35 years, Gifford taught European, African and Middle Eastern history at Ohio University. During his years at OU, Dr. Doxsee was considered a scholar of Middle Eastern History, he served on committees for the university, including chairing the Energy Conservation Committee in the 1970’s and directing the African Studies graduate program from 1983-1991, and is remembered by many students as a supporter and encourager who helped his students achieve their goals. After Dr. Doxsee retired from teaching, he and his wife chose to stay in Athens, Gifford was an active member of the Athens community, volunteering and sometimes serving as director for many local organizations including: the Athens County Historical Society and Museum, Rural Action, Planned Parenthood of S.E. Ohio, Appalachian Community Hospice, and others. He was inducted into the Ohio Senior Citizens Hall of Fame for his many years of community service. Remembering his prisoner of war days, he taught GED classes to prison in-mates and mentored ex-convicts.

JIM COUTS

Born on the Couts farm in 1943 to what he proudly called the poorest family in the poorest county in Ohio, Jim devoted his time on Earth to elevating the lives of people in need-the hungry, poor, sick, oppressed, disabled, disenchained, and just plain unlucky among us. He did so with endless energy, infectious optimism, and unbridled openness that inspired those fortunate enough to know him to do more, to be better people, to love life itself. He saw the best in everyone-everyone-he met. After retiring as a minister, Jim founded the Appalachian Nutrition Network, a nonprofit devoted to feeding kids. The organization grew under his leadership to become the largest rural feeding program in the United States. A farmer at heart, he later went on to found Jubilee Gardens, a company he created to help people grow organic food and heal the planet-his final noble mission. To know Jim was to know his generous heart, his fierce advocacy for social justice, his deep love for his family and friends, his easy sense of humor, his compassionate intellect, his unrivaled capacity for hard work, his strength in body and soul.

MEMBERS WE LOST IN 2017

In addition to Gifford Doxsee and Jim Couts, we also lost Don Gilmore, Patricia P. Light, Todd Wingett, Larry Jageman, and Hannah Elizabeth Harper in 2017. Our sympathy to their friends and family.

INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE HONORED THROUGH MEMORIAL GIFTS TO RURAL ACTION IN 2017

Ken Huff, Ross Greene, John Woodrow, Christine Wieg, Dr. W. J. Lavelle, and Jim Couts
BECOME A MEMBER

Rural Action’s MEMBERS are its heart and soul. Having a MEMBERSHIP BASE means you have people who invest in your work, share their ideas, and roll up their sleeves. Some members choose a SUSTAINING MEMBERSHIP through automated giving. Some members become MAJOR DONORS and give more than $250 each year to keep us strong. Some members become multi-year donors and join Rural Action’s GIVING SOCIETY, pledging a major gift for 3 to 5 years. Some members even put us in their wills, making PLANNED GIFTS to ensure Rural Action continues to change the world for the better. Some members provide CAPITAL GIFTS so our facilities are clean, efficient, and vibrant homes for sustainable development. Please support the work you love, and talk with a staff or Board member about how you can help. Thank you.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Each year, more than 1,000 people volunteer with us. We offer many kinds of opportunities, so whether you like to be in the field or in the office, we will find the right spot for you! When you volunteer 3 hours per year (or more) you will receive a 1-year membership. Join our mailing list at www.ruralaction.org to receive our latest volunteer opportunities:

Examples of Volunteer Opportunities

- National Service Through AmeriCorps, ComCorps, and VISTA
- High School & College Internships
- Plant Monitoring & Restoration on Wayne National Forest lands
- Assisting at the Chesterhill Produce Auction
- Processing fresh vegetables for school children
- Helping at Rural Action Events
- Dumpsite & Stream Clean-ups
- Recycling at Festivals

MORE WAYS TO GIVE...

To support Rural Action’s work far into the future, we have established endowment funds with two community foundations. These endowments allow us to set aside funds for specific programming, secure against unforeseen hurdles, and help plan for organizational growth, all while protecting our longevity and legacy in Appalachian Ohio for generations to come.

LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR FUNDS:

Foundation for Appalachian Ohio Rural Action Fund for a Sustainable Future.
www.appalachianohio.org

Athens Foundation Communities of Hope Fund
www.athensfoundation.org

RURAL ACTION SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE IMPACT FUND

The growth of southeast Ohio’s local food economy depends on the success of new and beginning farmers. We are pleased to share that beginning in 2018 farmers will be able to access small business loans through the newly created Rural Action Sustainable Agriculture Impact Fund. We have partnered with the non-profit Kiva (online at www.kiva.org) to provide 0% interest loans to beginning farmers in our region.

Through the fund, farmers and other agricultural businesses may apply for 0% interest loans, which can pay for infrastructure (high tunnels, cooling units, irrigation systems, tractors and tillers, etc.), operating capital, marketing, and pre-season inventory. Other needs will be considered by request and with strong business rationale. Loan amounts can be between $500 and $10,000 and will offer a loan term of up to 3 years.

The Fund was made possible thanks to a generous gift from Rebecca Dale, a Rural Action member with a deep interest in sustainable agriculture.

LEAVE A LEGACY. REMEMBER RURAL ACTION IN YOUR WILL

Planned gifts made to Rural Action help us plan for the long-term. If you are considering a planned gift, please contact us to discuss the type of gift you would like to leave, or the work you would like to support through your legacy. You may also share this information with your attorney or financial planner:

“I bequeath $_________ or ___% of my estate to Rural Action, Inc. 11350 Jackson Dr., The Plains, OH 45780.”

Have you planned a gift to Rural Action? We’d love to hear from you. Please give us a call at 740-677-4047 if you would like to discuss planned giving.

Thank you for your generosity and your concern for the future of the people of the region and the places we call home.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

On December 2nd, Mike and Kathryn Lorz, Rural Action members, celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary. In lieu of gifts, the couple requested that donations be made to Rural Action. Thank you to the following families who gave in honor of the Lorz Golden Anniversary. Thank you to Mike and Kathryn for your generosity.

David & Diane Uehlein, Melinda and Martin Jenkins, Rhea Hook, Shirley Graumlich, KA & MJ Rawlings, David Lorz, Nancy Lorz, Gayle Hahn, Rhee Phillips, Carolie Menge, Joann Poczick, Joyce Kissell, Frederick Vierow, Charles R. Mason & Faye Warren, Paul, Julie & Matthew Ellis, Kenton J Bertram, and Donald & Patricia Grey
2017 NATIONAL SERVICE

2017 OHIO STREAM RESTORE CORPS MEMBERS

Dave Banchich  Big Brothers Big Sisters Camp Ohi’Okewa  Buckeye Trail Association
Rudi Brechner  Big Brothers Big Sisters Camp Ohi’Okewa  Buckeye Trail Association
Dave Corele  Big Brothers Big Sisters Camp Ohi’Okewa  Buckeye Trail Association
Destiny Langdon  Capital Conservation
Meghan Ellis  Dairy Barn Arts Center
Jenna Balak  Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District
Aaron Ambrosio  Licking Soil and Water Conservation District
Kennedy Gardner  Licking Soil and Water Conservation District
Daniel Chipper  Little Cities of Black Diamonds
Jeff Wunderly  Little Cities Social Enterprise
Shayna Roberts  Morgan County Convention and Visitor’s Bureau
Esther Shih  Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District
Jeremy Maple  Ohio’s Hill Country Heritage Area / Wayne National Forest
Selina Nadeau  Perry Soil and Water Conservation District
Sam Stachick  Perry Soil and Water Conservation District
Rachael Thayer  ReUse Makerspace
Heather Brindza  Rural Action Capacity Builder
Frank Cracchiolo  Rural Action Capacity Builder
Tito Aquino  Rural Action Capacity Builder
Theo Peck-Suzuki  Rural Action Entrepreneurial Communities
Jenna Horleti  Rural Action Environmental Education
Becca Farley  Rural Action Environmental Education
Nick Cruise  Rural Action Environmental Education
Jacob Mulder  Rural Action Environmental Education
Sam Romeo  Rural Action Environmental Education

2017 AMERICORPS VISTA + COMCORPS MEMBERS

Jackson Garrity  Americorps Summer Associate VISTA
Hanah Passmore  Americorps Summer Associate VISTA 2017
Caitlin Bond  OCDC Americorps VISTA 2017
Caroline Kayes  OCDC Americorps VISTA 2017
Caitie Sheban  OCDC Americorps VISTA 2017
Meredith Hamshur  COMCORPS Americorps Member 2017

2017 RURAL ACTION STAFF

Michelle Decker  Chief Executive Officer
Linda Thornton  Chief Financial Officer
Eric Smith  Chief Program Officer
Debbie Phillips  Development Director
Deb Moreland  Financial & HR Manager
Susi Accord  Media & Communications Manager
Penny Morgan  Administrative Assistant
Allan Withem  Computer Specialist
Tom Redfern  Director of Sustainable Agriculture & Forestry
Kathlyn Eilbeck  Sustainable Agriculture & Forestry Program Manager
Tammy Elyayv  Non-Timber Forest Products Manager
Erin Sykes  Zero Waste Program Director
Andrea Reany  Zero Waste Program Manager
Tylan Bonner  Zero Waste Event Productions
Marissa Lautzenheiser  Middle Tuscarawas Watershed Coordinator
Michelle Shively  Sunday Creek Watershed Group Coordinator
Joe Brehm  Environmental Education Program Director
Sarah Fisher  AmeriCorps Program Director
Candi Withem  Ohio Stream Restore Corps Program Manager
Shannon Slevant  Monday Creek Restoration Project Coordinator
Nate Schlinker  Monday Creek Water Quality Specialist
Tim Forre  Social Enterprise Coordinator
Brian Vodnik  Entrepreneurial Communities Coach
Dan Vorisek  Entrepreneurial Communities Coach
FUNDERS + SPONSORS

#Fest
Alchemy Rising
Appalachian Center for Economic Networks
Appalachian Regional Commission
Appalachian Voices
Athens County Foundation
Athens County Job and Family Services
Athens County Public Libraries
Athens Harvest Fest
Athens-Hocking-Vinton 317 Board
Big Brother/Big Sisters of Central Ohio - Camp Oty Ohana
Blue Moon Fund
Boogie on the Bricks
Buckeye Trails Association
Captive Conservancy District
Central Appalachian Network
City of Athens
Claude Worthington Benedum Foundation
Community Foundation of Perry County
Corporation for National & Community Service
Country at the Congress
Country Nights Lights Festival
Dairy Barn Arts Center
Dig Fest
Dogme Fest
Duck Creek Log Jam
Epstein Teicher Philanthropies
Freakstomp Music Fest
Green Columbus
Haunted Fest
Heritage Day
Hocking College
Hocking County Solid Waste District
Hocking Soil and Water Conservation District
Hookville
Huff Run Watershed Restoration Partnership
Keep America Beautiful Inc
Laurelville
Licking County Solid Waste District
Little Cities of Black Diamond
Lowe Marshall Trust
Martha Holden Jennings Foundation
Midnight at Moonville
Morgan Community Trust
Morgan County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Mussingum Watershed Conservancy District
National Forest Foundation
Nelsonville Music Festival
New York Community Trust
O’Bleness Health System
Ohio Brew Week
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Ohio Hill Country Heritage Area
Ohio State University
Ohio University Kids on Campus
Ohio University Wittenberg School
One Foundation
Osteopathic Heritage Foundation
Ohio River Valley River Restoration, Inc.
Parade on the Point
Ohio Pawpaw Festival
Peoples Bancorp Foundation
Perry County Soil and Water Conservation District
Perry County Solid Waste Conservancy District
Polaris Music Festival
Pyro De Mayo Fest
Raccoon Creek Partnership
Resonance Music Fest
ReUse Industries
Rockefeller Family Fund - Just Transition
Roohiare Festival
ServeOhio
Sisters Health Foundation
Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council
Stark-Tuscarawas-Wayne Joint Solid Waste District
Stream and Wetlands Foundation
Sugar Bush Foundation
Summer Camp Music Fest
Tuscarawas County Commissioners
United Plant Savers
United States Department of Agriculture
United States Department of Interior Office of Surface Mining
University of Minnesota-North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
Upgrade Ohio
US Environmental Protection Agency
University of Minnesota-North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education
Upgrade Ohio
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Forest Service - Wayne National Forest
Virginia Tech

GRANTS + CONTRACTS

PROGRAM SPONSORS

Athens-Hocking Solid Waste District
Coldwater Consulting LLC
Crane Hollow, Inc
Eclipse Company Store
Fat Head’s Brewery
Fluff Bakery & Catering
Hocking College
Jackie-O’s Pub and Brewery
Keep America Beautiful
Kimble Companies
Kiser’s Barbecue
Nelsonville Rotary
New Straitsville History Group
Nichols Auction Service
Ohio Ornithological Society
Ohio University Kids On Campus
Shamrock Auction Service
Southeast Ohio Public Energy Council
Sugar Bush Foundation
The Farmacy
Tonya Dodd, Auctioneer
UpGrade Ohio
ZOD, LLC

WANT TO BE A SPONSOR?
Call us at 740.677.4047 to learn about opportunities to become a program sponsor. Sponsorships are available for a 12 month period or for a single event.

2017 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

REVENUE

23% DONATIONS & MEMBER DUES
16% EARNED INCOME
61% GRANT & CONTRACT REVENUE

TOTAL REVENUE $2,701,443

EXPENSES

8% FUNDRAISING
17% ADMINISTRATION
75% PROJECTS

TOTAL EXPENSES $2,724,102

ASSETS

$84,438 PLEDGES RECEIVABLE
$267,561 CURRENT ASSETS
$244,000 UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS
$212,774 ENDOWMENT INVESTMENTS
$235,107 TEMPORARY LIABILITIES
$282,653 LONG-TERM LIABILITIES
$1,122,623 TOTAL ASSETS
$1,224,623 TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

$559,549 FIXED ASSETS
$100,301 IMPACT FUND
$250,089 CURRENT LIABILITIES
$212,774 BOARD ADVISED RESTRICTED
$235,107 ENDOWMENT INVESTMENTS
$282,653 TEMPORARY RESTRICTED
$1,224,623 TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS