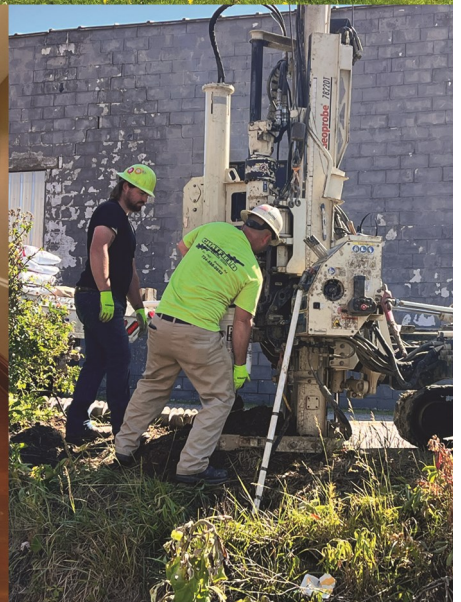




Project & Program Summary

2023

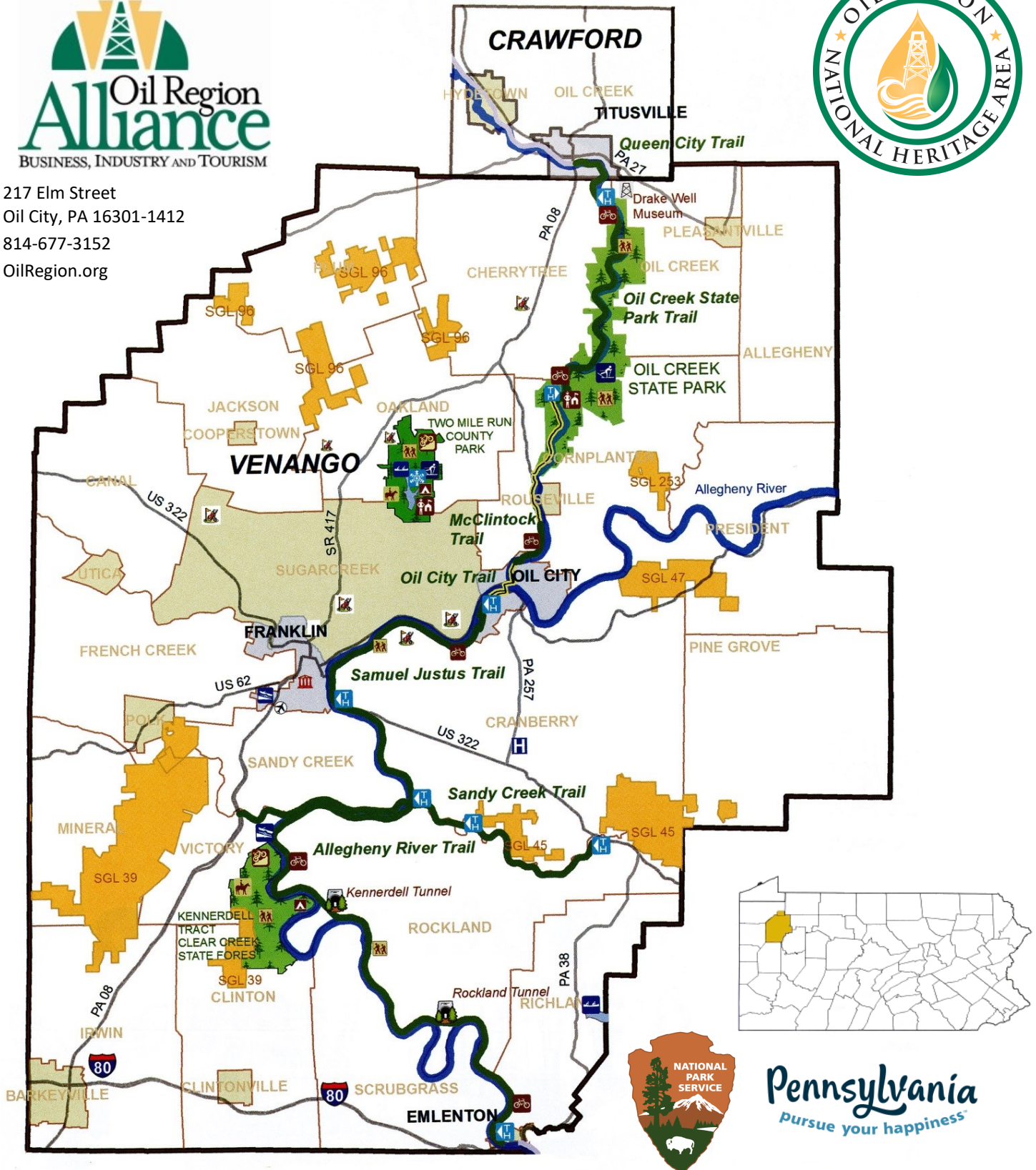


Oil Region National Heritage Area

Managed by:



217 Elm Street
Oil City, PA 16301-1412
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OilRegion.org



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DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
AND NATURAL RESOURCES



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DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY
& ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Projects & Programs.....3

Strategic Partners.....13

Membership14

Board of Directors.....14

Staff.....15

Budget.....15

The Oil Region National Heritage Area designation is arguably the region’s most valuable competitive advantage.

Welcome!

The Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism began in 1956 when a group of Venango County business people decided to address vacant commercial buildings. The ad-hoc group became the Venango County Industrial Development Corporation, later renamed the Venango Economic Development Corporation. In 2005, the VEDC merged with Oil Heritage Region, Inc., Oil City Community Development Corporation, and Oil Heritage Region Tourist Promotion Agency to form the current Oil Region Alliance.

Over its lifetime, the Alliance and its predecessors filled many empty buildings and brought millions of dollars of federal and state funds into the Oil Region leveraged with hundreds of thousands of dollars in local foundation funds. With those funds, they established recognition of the region as both state and national Heritage Areas, developed industrial parks, assisted the growth of local businesses, built recreational trails and amenities, preserved and interpreted the region’s heritage, produced educational materials for students and adults, and provided leadership in historic preservation, tourism marketing, recreational development, and economic development.

The Alliance is proud of its past—both as a steward of “the Valley that Changed the World” and as an organization providing regional leadership—and looks forward to building upon more than a half-century of service and success. As laid out in the 2021 Oil Region National Heritage Area Strategic Plan, the Alliance continues its transition into that future by emphasizing the value of the region’s National Heritage Area (NHA) designation via an asset-based approach.

Authorized by President George W. Bush in 2004, the Oil Region National Heritage Area is one of 62 National Heritage Areas in the United States, with the Oil Region Alliance as its federally designated manager. At the dedication of the first NHA in 1984, President Ronald Reagan talked about a new kind of national park—a place that married heritage conservation, recreation, and economic development. Though the National Park Service does not own or manage property in National Heritage Areas, NHAs receive invaluable technical assistance, funding, and oversight from the NPS. The National Heritage Area Act (S. 1942) was signed into law in January 2023 by President Biden. This reauthorized most NHAs, including the ORNHA, until 2037.

Congress designates a National Heritage Area because of its unique nationally significant qualities and resources—a place where a combination of natural, cultural, historic, and recreational resources have shaped a cohesive, nationally distinctive story, and landscape. The Oil Region is a place of natural beauty with clean waterways, recreational trails, and attractive scenery. Many such places exist in the nation with which the Oil Region must compete for attention. What sets the Oil Region apart is its distinctive legacy as the birthplace of the modern petroleum industry. The Oil Region National Heritage Area designation is arguably the region’s most valuable competitive advantage.

This 2023 Project/Program Summary highlights the Alliance’s plans for the next year of heritage preservation, tourism marketing, recreational development, and economic development through the lens of the Oil Region National Heritage Area.

PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

Partnerships and Municipal Assistance

A strength of the Alliance is its close relationships with multiple partner and grantor organizations, often serving on the Boards of Directors or official advisory bodies for those entities. At the national level, these include the Alliance of National Heritage Areas and the Washington's Trail 1753. At the Commonwealth and regional level, Alliance staff are in frequent communications with the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, PA Department of Community and Economic Development, PA Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Environmental Council, PA Historical and Museum Commission, Heritage PA, Clear Lake Authority, and PA Restaurant and Lodging Association. Alliance staff also serve as officers for the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail as well as the PA Great Lakes Region, and as a member of the Northwest PA Transportation Advisory Council.

Furthermore, Alliance staff serve on Boards and attend meetings to maintain vital relationships that provide funding and joint programming opportunities for these and other local organizations: Allegheny Valley Trail Association, American Red Cross Western Central PA Chapter, Drake Well Museum & Park, Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance, Greater Titusville Development Foundation, Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition, Keystone Community Education Council, Oil City Arts Revitalization, PA State Water Trail, Titusville Historical Society, Titusville Renaissance, Inc., Venango Museum of Art, Science & Industry, Heritage Society of Oil City, and Venango County Historical Society.

Alliance staff advises and assists municipalities including Venango and Crawford counties without charge on a variety of issues including nature-based place making, Trail Town activities, transportation planning, recreational development, and preservation. The Alliance will continue to host guests at the state, federal, and international levels to promote our region and identify ways to collaborate and make improvements.

Tarbell House

Ida M. Tarbell (1857-1944) is possibly the most famous female investigative journalist in U.S. history. Her 1902-1904 serialized articles in McClure's Magazine, published in book form as *The History of the Standard Oil Company*, led to the breakup of John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil Trust and the implementation of America's first antitrust laws. Her work changed the oil industry as well as the journalism field.



Ida spent her teenage years at her family's home, 324 East Main Street in Titusville, built by her father with materials he salvaged from the Bonta House hotel in the neighboring oil boomtown of Pithole. Today, the Alliance owns Ida's childhood home, restored to its approximate 1870-1895 appearance. Ongoing programs interpret Ida's life and preservation of historic properties. The Alliance has won several awards for this rehabilitation including a 2017 Preservation PA Historic Preservation Award.

Programs

Public and private events, open houses, custom tours, workshops, and educational programs are part of the Tarbell House program. The Political Cartoons of the Oil Region exhibit will continue to be on display and a program about the exhibit will be offered. Titusville High School students, as historical re-enactors, serve public teas in the first floor of the home, which is furnished with period-appropriate furniture and accessories. The second floor is a private apartment.

Coal Oil Johnny House

The Alliance owns and operates the McClintock-Steele-Waitz House, also known as the Coal Oil Johnny House, which was the boyhood home of colorful oil-era personality John Washington Steele. Thanks to sizable income from oil wells on his property, John embarked upon a lavish spending spree in Philadelphia that earned him the nickname "Coal Oil Johnny."

In 2002, the house was relocated to its current location adjacent to the Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad's Rynd Farm Station, north of Rouseville. The Alliance rehabilitated and furnished the house with period-appropriate materials.

Programs Public open houses, sometimes including re-enactors or other interactive activities, and custom tours are part of the Coal Oil Johnny House program. In 2023, the Alliance will continue to work with the Oil Creek & Titusville Railroad to bring more visitors to the house.



Downs Building

Built in 1894 following the devastating flood and fire of 1892 that destroyed much of Oil City's downtown, the Downs Building is a contributing resource in the Oil City Downtown Commercial Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Alliance is rehabilitating the three-story building at 201 Center Street, which began as Patrick Downs' saloon and housed several businesses throughout the years.

When completed, the project will not only preserve a building of historical importance to Oil City, but is planned to provide first-story retail space directly adjacent to Oil City's segment of the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail and lodging units on the upper floors with wonderful views of downtown Oil City. Previous work included second- and third-story window replacement including the two distinct bay windows on the building's second story, roof replacement, electrical service, basement demolition and reconstruction, first floor demolition, and new plumbing, electrical, and HVAC on the ground floor.

Projects Work is expected to focus on the entrances and the ground level to finish two retail spaces and make them available to tenants. The central staircase to the second and third levels will also be completed to lead to future renovation.

William H. Scheide House

As a gift from the Titusville Area School District via the Titusville Historical Society, the Oil Region Alliance was honored in 2018 to receive the historic William H. Scheide House at 221 North Washington Street in Titusville. Using the 2019 Preservation Plan prepared by regional preservation specialists, the Alliance is gradually restoring this 1866 house.

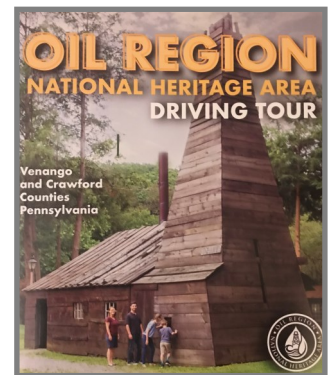
The goal is to bring this building into compliance with modern safety and construction code through best practices in historic rehabilitation, while adapting the house to serve as a Cultural Preservation Center hosting nonprofit organizations including a branch office for the Alliance. Work completed thus far includes installation of an exterior lift to provide ADA access to the first floor, stabilization of the building, restoration of the 1920s library wing, reconstruction of the first floor kitchen, rehabilitation of the two restrooms and study on the first floor, and installation of security and fire alarm systems.

Projects In 2023, a complete fire suppression (sprinkler) system will be installed, the basement will be modernized and brought up to code, and work will continue on the rehabilitation of first floor spaces.



New Publications

In 2023, the Alliance will produce and distribute a new, free brochure, "What is the ORA/ORNHA" to concisely explain the significance and influence of the Oil Region National Heritage Area. Materials completed late in 2022 including the updated ORNHA Driving Tour and PA Great Lakes Region Fishing Guide and Trails brochures will also be marketed and distributed.



Historic Preservation Awards and Workshops

The annual Oil Heritage Region Historic Preservation Awards will take place in May 2023. This annual event celebrates historic preservation in the Oil Region National Heritage Area and recognizes property owners who have actively preserved historic properties in the region. The Alliance plans to offer a hands-on, 3-coat plaster restoration workshop at the Judge McKee House in Clintonville in May 2023 in addition to other workshops.



Historic Markers and House Plaques

The region is rich in blue and gold state historical markers. This state program preserves the memory of special individuals, sites, and events across PA, including several dozen in the ORNHA. The Alliance is not planning to apply to install new markers in 2023; however, we are willing to assist individuals or groups interested in applying to this program. Additionally, the Alliance oversees the Historic House Plaque program within the ORNHA to raise awareness of the region's history and architecture. The Alliance will work with property owners who are interested in having a regional Historic House Plaque installed on their properties.

Natural Gas History Traveling Exhibit

The Alliance created a portable indoor traveling exhibit to display items from the Alliance's Natural Gas History Artifact collection and the region's role in the natural gas industry. "Walking the Line" was field-tested in 2016, focusing on how the linesman occupation changed over the decades and throughout the seasons.

Projects In 2021, the exhibit was displayed at Drake Well Museum. It will continue to be on display there in 2023.



Preservation Plans

The Alliance has assisted in the completion of Preservation Plans for various historically and culturally significant buildings in the ORNHA throughout the years. In 2023, the ORA will provide funding via a PA DCNR Partnership grant to complete up to three additional plans. Preservation Plans provide owners of these resources with a comprehensive understanding of their buildings, their current conditions, priorities of needed repairs, annual maintenance plans, and general cost estimates to help preserve the buildings for continued and future uses.

Interpretive Panels

The Alliance and our partners have installed several dozen interpretive wayside panels throughout the ORNHA. These educational panels provide visitors with information about the region's historical, cultural, and natural sites. Many of these panels need to be replaced due to constant weather exposure. In 2023, ORA will begin replacing panels in Emlenton, which are among the oldest in the ORNHA. The panels will be updated and will follow the Emlenton Walking and Driving Tour that was revised in 2022.

Heritage Mini-Grants

The ORA will offer mini-grant funding to non-profits and municipalities to create or enhance projects and programs relevant to the history and heritage of the ORNHA. Mini-grant funding is provided by a PA DCNR Partnership grant; applicants will be required to provide a cash and/or in-kind match.

ORNHA Gateway

Gateways throughout the region help travelers identify and residents take pride in the area's designation as a National Heritage Area. Wooden derricks that previously served as gateways at key locations throughout the region will be replaced and reimagined to suit a larger scale wayfinding and branding effort.

Projects The Alliance will develop an artistic gateway to the Oil Region National Heritage Area along Route 8 just south of Titusville in 2023. A sculpture and signage will welcome guests to the ORNHA and provide direction to Drake Well Museum & Park, a major attraction and amenity of the region. This first design may be a model for additional gateways throughout the region in the future.

Cultural Resource Survey

In 2020, the Alliance hosted a public town hall meeting with the non-profit Partners for Sacred Places to discuss the state of the region's numerous large and historic houses of worship. Participants agreed that many of these congregations could offer excess space for short- or long-term rental to help raise needed funds for building repairs. In 2023, the ORA will hire a consultant to complete a survey of 100 of these buildings to better understand which buildings and spaces are available. The ORA will then market this information on our website to encourage expanded uses of these spaces.

ORNHA Diversity Projects

The Alliance is working with partners to uncover lesser-known significant stories of underrepresented people or groups within the ORNHA to broaden our understanding of the region's history. The ORA will work with other National Heritage Areas to develop 4 – 8 stories in each region that can be used in future Heritage Area publications, social media posts, and other media to highlight these histories. The ORA will also hire a consultant to focus on the historic diversity of people who contributed to the significance of the ORNHA. This report will be used to inform future projects and programming in the region.

Wayfinding Signage Plan

The ORNHA includes various points of interests that are not always easily found by visitors to the region. The Alliance will hire a consultant to create a wayfinding signage plan that makes recommendations for the types of signs needed to guide visitors to these places. The consultant will also research and explain municipality and state agency regulations of where and how these signs can be installed.

Pollinator Project

As we look to grow the region's outdoor recreation offerings, the Alliance realizes that we also need to be sensitive to nature's well-being. Pesticide use and development throughout the country and the world is causing some species of bees and butterflies to dwindle in numbers. It is important that these species are helped for numerous reasons including our food supply's reliance on pollination. The Alliance worked collaboratively with the Allegheny Valley Trails Association and community member Nancy Walker to sow test areas of native pollinator plants along the Allegheny River Trail and at Oil Creek Memorial Landing. A Pollinator Pledge and Pollinator Resolution were added to OilRegion.org. These documents provide suggestions for individuals, businesses, and organizations to support pollinators by pledging to protect, preserve, create, or restore pollinator habitat on lands they manage and/or to donate money or plants for the development of additional pollinator spaces.



Project The Oil Region Alliance's commitment to ecologically friendly approaches including reviving native pollinators will be the focus of landscaping projects for two of its properties in 2023. The lawn surrounding Coal Oil Johnny House will be re-landscaped to feature an ecologically sound rain garden as well as the planting of native pollinators. Oil Creek Memorial Landing will see the mitigation of invasive Japanese knotweed, as well as the planting of native plants and pollinators to alleviate erosion and enhance the ecological diversity of the property. Additionally, the Alliance will expand the cultivation of native pollinator plants along the multiuse trails in the Oil Region, incorporate an educational component for both children and adults, and promote the Pollinator Resolution and Pollinator Pledge.

Allegheny Wild & Scenic River Water Trail Management

The Alliance manages and promotes the Allegheny Wild & Scenic River, a PA-designated Water Trail. The Alliance collaborates with numerous partners to market the river for recreational purposes and to host events including river clean ups.

Projects

In 2023, the Alliance plans to fabricate and install signage identifying the Allegheny Wild & Scenic River Water Trail, work with a private land owner to engineer and develop a river access north of Oil City, and continue to work with partners to prepare and plan for potential upgrades of several water access areas along the river to increase safety as well as the health of the waterway.



Outdoor Recreation Committee

The Alliance plans to assemble a committee to discuss the natural resource-based outdoor recreation available in the region, what is being expanded or developed, the needs of the region, local outdoor recreation events, how we can jointly promote the region, and how to convert visits to our area into experiences by connecting them to services and opportunities that lengthen their stay or provide them with reasons to return.

Project The Alliance plans to kick-off the committee in early 2023.

ATV Trail Study

The Alliance is conducting a feasibility study for establishing a system of multiuse trail corridors and related trailheads within the Oil Region, and possible connections with established and/or planned trails in adjacent counties. Phase I was completed in 2021. It included a survey for public input as well as public meetings and presentations by the project consultant. The Phase I report will be finalized.

Project In 2023 the Alliance plans to proceed with the organization of a group of ATV and side-by-side enthusiasts to develop the recreational activity here in the region.



Allegheny Valley Trails Association Partnership

The Alliance partners with the Allegheny Valley Trails Association to market, fundraise, plan, and develop trail improvements.

Projects The AVTA, with support from the Alliance, will continue with the engineering and construction of a trail connection from River Avenue in the East end of Emlenton to Ritchey Run Bridge near the Clarion County line. An elevation change on the 0.2 mile section will be constructed to meet ADA accessibility standards. Rehabilitation of the bridge is also planned. Environmentally themed signs will be designed, fabricated, and installed at Rockland Tunnel. A door will also be fabricated for the tunnel's southern portal that will assist in preserving the brick tunnel liner when closed during the winter.

East Branch Trail Partnership

The Alliance works to market, fundraise, plan, and develop trail improvements for the East Branch Trail.

Projects The Alliance supports plans for the engineered rehabilitation of the Sportsman's Bridge in partnership with Clear Lake Authority. Approximately \$1.2 million in funding is secured for trail projects. An additional three miles of trail will be constructed in 2023.



Erie to Pittsburgh Trail

The Alliance will continue to support the Erie to Pittsburgh Trail Alliance through administrative tasks such as serving as the communications hub for the organization and assisting the completion of the long-distance trail through advocacy and contracted services.

Projects Through a written agreement, the Alliance will continue to administer and project manage a DCNR Partnership Grant for the EPTA, which includes managing and administering the grant and its multiple projects from contracting, providing oversight of projects contained within the grant contract, to producing required reports and project closeouts.

Additional Trail Activities

As an advocate for trails throughout the region, the Alliance supports many trails and trail organization in a variety of ways.

Projects The Alliance will install kiosks (informational panels) at three trailheads throughout the region to inform guests about outdoor recreation opportunities and the Oil Region National Heritage Area. The Alliance will also participate in the 10-year review of impact of the Industrial Heartland Trail Coalition project, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's study to explore opportunities to develop and promote the local region as a hub/gateway for the outdoor economy within the Greater Pittsburgh Tri-State Area, and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council's gravel mixed surface riding.



Outdoor Recreation Business Contest

The contest provides cash assistance to the top trail-related business plans submitted in each contest cycle. The contest encourages entrepreneurs to contact partners such as Clarion University's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to help make solid business dreams a reality. For more information, visit the contest website at ORAGOT.com.

Project The Alliance plans to host the eleventh contest in 2023. Emphasis will continue to be on all outdoor, nature-based recreation. The Alliance hopes to continue the award amounts at \$10,000 for first place and \$5,000 for second place to attract a larger number of high quality applicants and to make the contest more desirable.



Local Industry Assistance

Through a partnership with the Northwest Commission and the PA Department of Economic Development (DCED) and its Partnership for Regional Economic Performance (PREP) program, the Alliance provides resources and expertise to local and regional individuals who have an idea and need help with the basics of starting a new venture and existing companies that seek assistance in all aspects of successful business development and growth. The Alliance meets regularly with regional businesses to determine investment and workforce needs, offering information about state programs along with the Alliance's own revolving loan funds and other resources.

PEDA Certification

The Pennsylvania Economic Development Association provides training and certification for economic development agencies in PA. The Alliance attends required training classes and events to maintain its certification for the region's benefit, which includes the ability to offer PIDA loans.

Venango Regional Airport Marketing

The Alliance assists the airport with local marketing, tying the Venango Regional Airport to the region's economic development and tourism assets.

Project Continue to advocate at the Federal level for Venango Regional Airport to be accepted back into the Essential Air Service Program (EAS).



Sandycreek Industrial Park

The Sandycreek Industrial Park offers 65 acres of prime industrial real estate in Sandycreek Township, easily accessible from I-80 by way of the Route 8 Expressway and less than two miles from the Venango Regional Airport. The park has roadway and utilities available to building sites. Approved in December 2022 for ten years, Venango County's only Keystone Opportunity Zone (KOZ), the park offers companies a major incentive to have their business taxes reduced to near zero through credits, waivers, and abatements through December 2032.



Projects The Alliance will continue to market the park to those industries that will most benefit by moving to Venango County, those who need to be closer to established vendors and/or customers, those who need to be located near regional resources, and those who value the quality of life available in the Oil Region.

In addition to Sandycreek, the Alliance will also continue to market its industrial parks at Barkeyville, Cranberry, and Sugarcreek.

Brownfield Development

Reclaiming and redeveloping local brownfield assets — former industrial and commercial locations with potential or known environmental hazards — is critical to the revitalization of the Oil Region. The Alliance, as a nonprofit corporation and certified Economic Development Agency, is in a unique position to assist with the reclamation of brownfield sites due to redevelopment grants, exemptions, and expert technical assistance not available to other entities.

Projects The ORA's testing and assessment of brownfield sites started in October 2020 and will continue through 2023 with grant writing for cleanup and redevelopment efforts ongoing throughout. Several priority brownfield sites have been designated along the Allegheny River corridor, including the former Fuchs Lubricants property in Emlenton (pictured at right), which is the brownfield property owned by the ORA the longest.



The Dahlstrom property in Oil City, an abandoned junkyard for more than eighty years, was cleared of tires and debris in late 2022.

The Alliance has aggressively developed a Brownfield Reclamation Program since receiving a \$300,000 brownfield assessment grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2021. The Alliance has taken ownership of three contaminated properties and are developing remediation plans for these two sites to address contaminated soils and impacts to nearby pristine waterways and is actively seeking remediation funding to turn these sites back into viable developable contributing properties. The ORA has also identified three other target properties for potential acquisition.

Projects In 2023 a building at the corner of Duncomb Street in Oil City will be demolished for assessment with soil remediation to follow depending on funding. The Alliance will continue to serve as a rural development hub, investigating adaptive reuse projects on additional brownfield sites. The organization will take an innovative approach to repurposing these properties with a particular interest in renewable energy.

Oil Region Guide

In 2023, the Alliance will again publish and distribute the region's premier annual visitor guide. For the second straight year, the Guide was produced completely in-house and filled the display ad space allotment. However, this guide is the ORA's first that was designed to have a two-year shelf life.

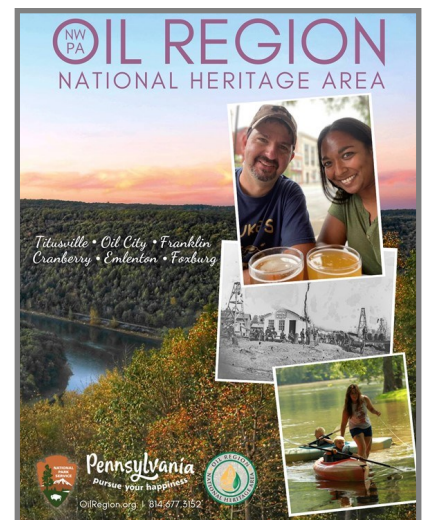
Because of this extended lifespan, 85,000 hard copies of the Guide were printed locally by Seneca Printing. The Guide was also expanded from 52 to 56 pages.

The Guide is distributed locally and in response to direct requests and leads generated through advertising, as well as at stops on the Pennsylvania turnpike, several rest stops, Welcome Centers, select AAA offices across the state, and at three spots on I-95 in Delaware and Maryland.

The Guide uses the theme of "Grab Life by the Trails," building upon one of the region's greatest tourism assets—its system of biking and hiking trails. Featured "trails" include water, arts and culture, golf, taste, shopping, and heritage.

The 2023-24 Guide will also be available online at OilRegion.org with an interactive version that allows readers to link directly with events and advertiser websites or social media pages with just a click.

Projects The 2023-2024 Guide will be promoted as a resource on ORA social media and shared at numerous local events. Development of the 2025 Guide will begin in Summer 2024.



Literature Distribution

Scores of brochures from regional attractions and the Oil Region Guide are distributed to local venues and mailed around the world by Alliance staff members and partners upon request. Contracts with larger service providers place literature at strategic locations such as Welcome Centers throughout the state. Brochure racks offer Oil Region literature at Perry Street Station, Venango Museum, Franklin Area Chamber of Commerce, Crawford Center, Venango Campus of Clarion University, Cranberry Mall, and hotels and shops throughout the region.

Mini Grants

The Alliance will offer the Tourism Destination Mini Grant in 2023. Oil Region tourism destinations (both for- and non-profits) can apply for half the cost of printing brochures or rack cards up to \$500. Grants require a one-to-one cash match by the grantee. Applications will be available early in the year with awards in the form of refunds distributed beginning in May. The intention is to have new publications to distribute at local reference locations in time for the busy summer travel season.

Web Sites and Social Media

OilRegion.org, completely revamped in 2019, is the official site for both the Alliance and the Oil Region National Heritage Area. Previously developed websites for the region have been discontinued.

ORAGOT.com is the website of the Outdoor Recreation Business Contest.

The Alliance also maintains Facebook pages for the ORA, Tarbell House, Coal Oil Johnny House, and Neilltown Church as well as Instagram accounts for the ORA organization and ExperienceTheOilRegion for tourism.

Projects Additional content will be added to OilRegion.org including extended tourism and heritage information. The Alliance will also work to add content to its YouTube channel. An additional Facebook page on outdoor recreation in the region is planned to coincide with the development of the Outdoor Recreation committee. Following the success of the first years of #AdoptableOilRegion, the Alliance will continue to partner with local animal shelters Precious Paws and the Venango County Humane Society to feature pets available for adoption in locations of interest throughout the ORNHA.



Merchandise Sales

The Alliance offers non-fiction books and documentaries about oil and gas history, especially the roots of these energy twins in the Oil Creek Valley and the greater Oil Region in Pennsylvania at its office, the Tarbell House, online (OilRegion.org) and at special events. Related products and commemorative items are also available.

Projects Plans to expand the inventory of the Alliance include branded apparel and new souvenir items, specifically ones featuring the ORNHA logo.



Tourism Promotion

As the region's designated Destination Marketing Organization (DMO), the Alliance works directly with members of the tourism and lodging industries of the Oil Region National Heritage Area, the Pennsylvania Great Lakes Region, the Pennsylvania Restaurant & Lodging Association (PRLA), the Venango Regional Airport, the National Park Service's Passport Program, and others to promote the Oil Region as a tourist destination.

Projects In addition to the Guide and digital media projects, 2023 projects include:

- Supporting PRLA's advocacy for an increased PA State Tourism Budget in order to be competitive with neighboring states and boost tourism-related revenue
- Partnering with PA Great Lakes Region on continued Google Ad Words digital advertising campaign plus expansion of social media advertising
- Providing regular communications directly with members via Constant Contact e-mail campaigns
- Developing a Hotel Incentive Program to help local lodging facilities enhance their offerings
- Furthering brand recognition of the ORNHA
- Issuing the NWPA Regional Fishing Report
- Contracting digital advertising services to analyze visitation, spending, and guest demographics
- Paid advertising in the Visit PA Guide *Happy Traveler*, Livability PA's *Work Smart, Live Happy*, Canadian lifestyle publication *Travel America and the Caribbean*, and other publications offering print and digital exposure locally, regionally, and beyond.

ANHA Interaction

The Oil Region Alliance is an active member in the advocacy organization the Alliance of National Heritage Areas. Its member NHAs join in collective educational publications, professional development training, mutual support and information sharing, and field experiences hosted by various NHAs.



Projects In 2023, ORA will participate in meetings and trainings. Since the National Heritage Area Act was enacted into law in early 2023, ANHA's top legislative priority in 2023 is the full funding of National Heritage Areas within the federal budget.

Regional Identity Program

A new logo was chosen to represent the Oil Region National Heritage Area by its managing entity the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism in late 2020. The new logo, shown at right, depicts an oil derrick, a wave, and a leaf inside an oil drop. The derrick and the oil drop represent the region's heritage as the birthplace of the oil industry. The wave represents the region's waterways, but also the outdoor recreational opportunities that abound here. Lastly, the leaf is both a nod to the outdoors, but also represents the ORA's commitment to ecology and preserving the beautiful scenery that has been reclaimed from the area's industrial past. The green leaf is also a sign of a prosperous future for the Oil Region. Branding the ORNHA will help guests recognize the significance of the area and be a point of pride for residents.



Projects Flags featuring the new logo will be distributed throughout the region. The logo will appear on advertisements, literature, and OilRegion.org. Souvenir items such as t-shirts, tote bags, and coffee cups displaying the new logo will be developed for sale in 2023.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS



The Alliance houses the Oil City Main Street Program. Both organizations work closely together for community and economic development in Oil City's designated Main Street district through multiple revitalization activities. In 2023, its target projects include the completion and launch of a new program website, closeout of its third Façade Improvement Grant Program, completion of a Design Guide for Historic Resources, planning for the purchase of streetscape amenities, organization of seasonal planting projects and clean-up events, the coordination of various promotional events including Music on the Square, Christmas Past, "Oil City Uncorked" Wine Walks, BridgeFest (with the Oil City Arts Council), and others, as well as providing continued support and assistance to downtown business and property owners. The Oil City Main Street Program was designated a Keystone Main Street in 2019 and has been nationally-accredited by Main Street America since 2012.

The Oil City Main Street Program also facilitates ARTS Oil City, an economic development initiative focused on marketing Oil City as prospective home for relocating artists throughout the country. ARTS Oil City also strives to provide a supportive network for native and relocated performing and visual artists, and helps to promote and facilitate ongoing arts-related engagement with the community such as performances, exhibitions, artist residencies, and arts education opportunities. In 2023, arts revitalization efforts will emphasize a renewed focus on the national artists relocation program and new creative ventures in the community. To this end, ARTS Oil City has received one of three statewide "Creative Sector Advancement Project" grants. Funds from this grant will support these initiatives. Additionally, ARTS Oil City facilitates the rental of affordable art studio space in the historic National Transit Building, owned by the Oil City Civic Center. In 2023, the Oil Region Alliance and ARTS Oil City are embarking on a new strategic partnership with the OC Civic Center, which will help further the arts revitalization efforts in the community. ARTS Oil City was launched in 2006 through the Oil City Arts Council and has been a part of the Oil City Main Street Program since 2017.

For more information visit OilCityMainStreet.org and ArtsOilCity.com.

A-C River Valley River Roots

The Alliance houses the A-C River Valley River Roots Community program, which works for community and economic development through multifaceted revitalization efforts. Projects include reuse planning, identity building, beautification and physical improvements, entrepreneurial ecosystem support, historic preservation, community engagement, and promotional events.

In 2023, the Community Farm at A-C Valley will continue to be an area of focus due to the USDA award under its Farm 2 School program.

For more information visit ACRiverValley.org.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism is to manage the Oil Region National Heritage Area and to increase the prosperity of the Oil Region by enticing all people to live, work, learn, and play in "the valley that changed the world" through the preservation, promotion, development, and support of historical, educational, natural, recreational, residential, commercial, and industrial destinations.

ORA MEMBERS as of February 1, 2023

AA Nagy Excavating and Construction, Inc.
 Jim & Janet Aaron
 Darl & Marilyn Black
 Central Electric Cooperative
 The EADS Group
 Edward Jones --Christopher Rakow Office
 Friends of Drake Well
 Grandview Lookout, LLC.
 Gustafson General Contracting
 Clark & Carole Hall
 Hydettown Borough
 Kapp Alloy & Wire, Inc.
 Betsy Kellner
 KJ Consulting & Environmental Services, LLC.
 Deb Lutz
 Moody and Associates
 Oil Creek Railway Historical Society, Inc.
 Petroleum History Institute
 RL Murray, LLC.
 Sandycreek Township
 Senator Scott Hutchinson
 Specialty Fabrication and Powder Coating
 State Representative R. Lee James
 Cecile Stelter
 Stifel
 Titusville Community Development Agencies
 Titusville Council of the Arts
 Titusville Renaissance, Inc.

United Way
 of the Titusville Region
 UPMC Northwest
 Venango Area Chamber
 of Commerce
 Venango Museum of Art, Science
 & Industry
 Vince Witherup

ORNHA MEMBERS

as of February 1, 2023

Jim & Janet Aaron
 KJ Consulting &
 Environmental Services, LLC
 Oil Creek Railway
 Historical Society, Inc.
 RL Murray, LLC
 Moody and Associates
 Central Electric Cooperative
 Venango Museum of Art, Science
 & Industry
 Vince Witherup

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Interested in joining the Oil Region Alliance? Request info by e-mailing ealtomare@oilregion.org or visit OilRegion.org/the-alliance/membership/

ORA Memberships and Friends of the ORNHA Memberships each begin at \$50 per household. Special rates available for non-profits.

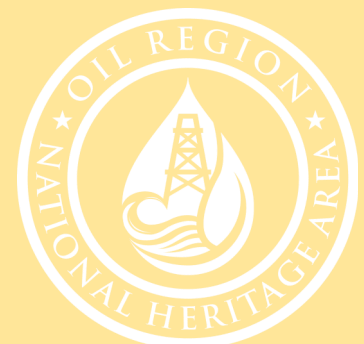
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AA Nagy Excavation & Construction*

Rachael O'Neil
Crawford Center Manager

Arlene Rodriguez
Grant Writer



Changing of the Guard at Vice President
John R. Phillips, II, ORA President and CEO (left) with outgoing ORA VP Daniel Twombly (right) and incoming ORA VP Debra Sobina (seated). Fall 2022.

2023 BUDGET

(Approved by the Board of Directors on December 15, 2022)

Revenue			Expense		
Grants	\$ 2,222,464	73%	Project/Program	\$ 1,903,360	63%
Destination Marketing	208,750	7%	General & Admin.	798,443	26%
Memberships	85,000	3%	Property Management	320,673	11%
Property Management	124,762	4%	Fundraising	7,000	<1%
Sales of Development Prop.	75,000	3%	Total Expense	\$ 3,029,476	
Use of Reserves for Match	250,000	8%			
Events, Sales, Admin. Fees	63,500	2%			
Total Revenue	\$ 3,029,476		Net Income	\$ 0	

The Oil Region Alliance of Business, Industry & Tourism is a non-profit corporation formed in Pennsylvania and registered with the PA Bureau of Charitable Organizations. It is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Contributions to the Alliance may be tax-deductible. BCO #21782.