

# NOWCorps Annual Report 2024-2025



**SERVE OHIO**  
Ohio Commission on Service and Volunteerism



**Tinker's Creek**  
WATERSHED PARTNERS  
Rediscover • Respect • Revitalize



# Building Capacity, Inspiring Change

2024-2025 marked NOWCorps' 6<sup>th</sup> year as a state and national AmeriCorps program funded by ServeOhio and it was our largest corps to date. We hosted 32 members serving at 17 partner organizations across the region.

Throughout the year, members advanced **stewardship, conservation, education,** and **capacity building**. They led hands-on restoration projects, and **professional development** by participating in hands-on conservation projects, developing and implementing environmental education programs, and engaged community volunteers, while building their professional skills.

While federal funding cuts brought the year to an early close, we are incredibly proud of what this cohort achieved—and the lasting impact they've made in the communities they served.







Jennifer Wilber,  
CSWCD



Brandon Weeber,  
Holden F+G



Cori Slaw, TCWP



Harper Smith,  
CSWCD



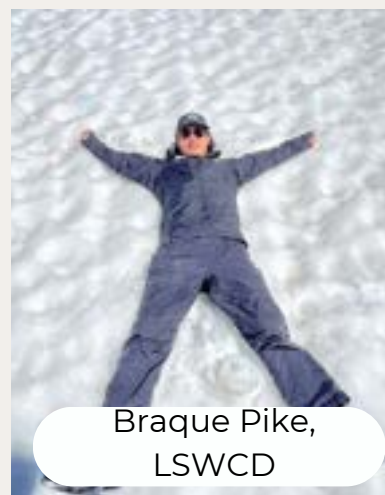
Jarrod Robinson,  
CCBH



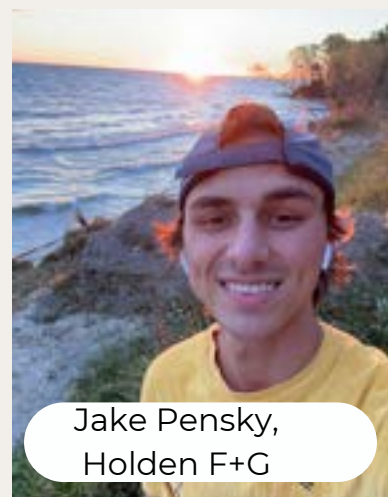
Kristi Reklinski,  
TCWP



Jane Puzder,  
PSWCD



Braque Pike,  
LSWCD



Jake Pensky,  
Holden F+G



Rachel Lasso,  
NCSL



Len Rincon Martinez,  
DBWP



Alex Kirchner  
SSWCD



Hayley Lalchand,  
DBWP



Sydney Jekutis,  
WCC



Sophia Gugliotta,  
UAFS



Ava Fornara,  
OWC NERR





Sarah Faber,  
Holden F+G



Adam Farraj,  
Holden F+G



Jaime Del Real,  
WRLC



Maggie Engsign,  
CRWP



Danielle Dejak,  
CRWP



Mikhayla Callahan,  
TNC



Jacob Corbitt,  
Holden F+G



Ellie Benedict,  
Holden F+G



Katherine Batemen,  
Holden F+G



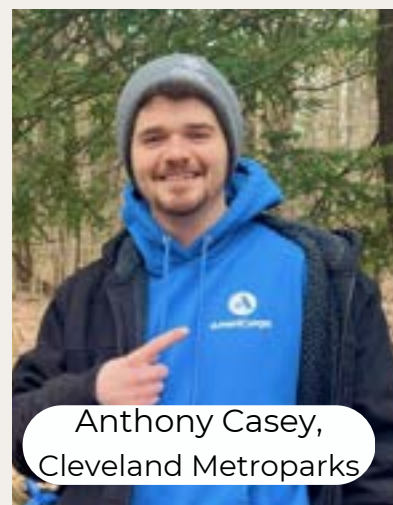
Jake Foley,  
Geauga PD



Rosana Villafan,  
Holden F+G



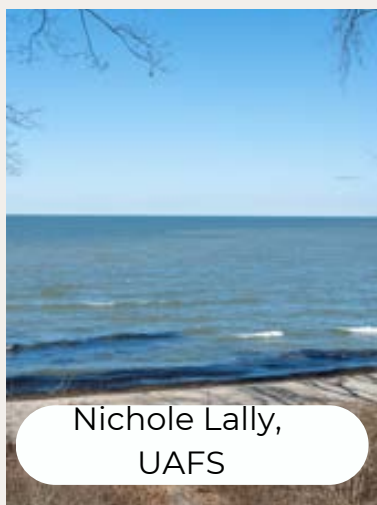
Ellery Schneider,  
Cleveland Metroparks



Anthony Casey,  
Cleveland Metroparks



Joshua Durr,  
CCBH



Nichole Lally,  
UAFS



Quynh Phung,  
OWC NERR



# Celebrating Service

AmeriCorps is a life-changing experience. It's an opportunity for people in the area to come together to **improve their communities, build connections**, and **foster a healthy relationship** with the environment. As one member noted, *"My service with AmeriCorps has been **one of the proudest achievements of my life**. Prior to my service I was...rather hopeless in regard to the significant challenges I saw ailing our country and our planet. **Serving with AmeriCorps represented a turning point in my life** where I decided to dedicate my time to helping solve some of those problems, no matter how large the challenge and how small my contribution might be."*

This year was AmeriCorps' 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. To celebrate, we journeyed to the State House in Columbus where we met with other Ohio AmeriCorps programs and all recited the pledge together. Members noted, *"It was fascinating to see all the other AmeriCorps programs in the state"* and *"inspiring to know **we're in this together**."*



# Investing in Growth: Member-Driven Professional Development

This year, we placed a strong emphasis on member-driven professional development - going beyond monthly trainings to encourage deeper career exploration and skill building. Members were supported in attending and presenting at conferences, conducting informational interviews, pursuing certifications, and connecting with mentors for resume reviews and career advice.

To guide their progress, each activity was assigned a point value, with members working toward a goal of ten professional development points over the course of their service year. By the seven-month mark, 20 members had already reached their goal, with several exceeding ten points - a testament to their initiative and drive.

As one member shared:

***“This quarter was one of growth in not only my skills and knowledge in environmental education, but also my confidence in performing and executing different programs and tasks.”***





# Lessons, Leadership, and Lasting Change



“During my service, I worked alongside fellow NOWCorps members to restore a rain garden at HOLA Ohio, a Hispanic heritage center in Painesville. After completing the restoration, HOLA’s Executive Director...shared stories about their struggles...and the resilience required to overcome these barriers. This reminded me that service is about more than planting or cleaning, **it’s about building connections and contributing to the dignity and well being of communities that have long been underserved.**”

*Braque Pike, Hosted at Lake SWCD*



“We met an older member of the East Cleveland community... She, a longtime resident of East Cleveland, explained how much the city had changed over the past few decades and **how impactful environmental degradation is to a city with not much greenery to begin with...** It also showcased the immediate beneficial nature of our service. **It's experiences like those that make me proud to serve.**”

*Jarrold Robinson, Hosted at Cuyahoga County Board of Health*



"As part of my service, I developed a new classroom program to teach students about vermicomposting... The first two children to enter the room immediately wanted to look at the worms and one little girl even wanted to hold one in her hand!...After seeing how excited the children were... **I have revised my lesson plan to allow for more time for hands-on exploration,** and I've started to develop a similar lesson for library programs."

*Jennifer Wilber, Hosted at Cuyahoga SWCD*



"This quarter of service was a testament to the power of vigilance, observation, and teamwork. Even though the fight against invasive species continues, there is a lesson to be learned: **every effort, no matter how small, can make a difference in preserving the natural world for generations to come.**"

*Ellie Benedict, Hosted at Holden Forests and Gardens*

**"...a testament to the power of vigilance, observation, and teamwork."**



# Member Impact

**2,079** people participated in **environmental education** programs

**236** individuals reported an **increased knowledge** on environmental topics

**172 acres** treated

**2,417 trees** properly planted.

**669** bags of **invasive vegetation and debris** removed from natural areas.

**332 Volunteers** engaged for **1,032 volunteer hours**

**28,720** hours served!







I will get things done for  
America—  
to make our people safer,  
smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together  
to strengthen our communities.



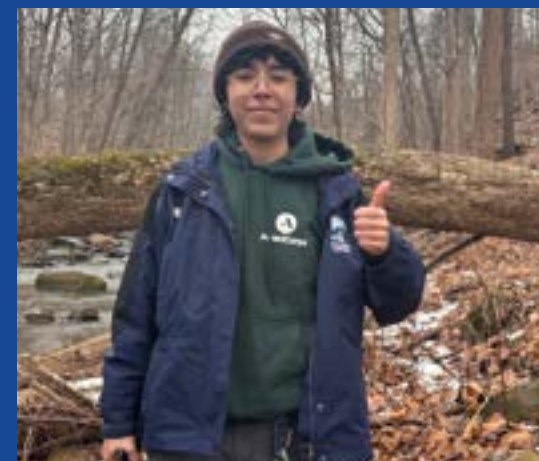




Faced with apathy, I will take  
action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek  
common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will  
persevere.







I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

**I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done!**





# Thank you!

Thank you to **ServeOhio**, Ohio's Commission on Service and Volunteerism, **AmeriCorps**, and **Tinker's Creek Watershed Partners** for funding and sponsoring our program as well as the **Gund Foundation** for providing additional funding support to ensure our program is accessible to nonprofit organizations across Northern Ohio.

We also extend our gratitude to all the members, host site supervisors, and collaborators who made this year full of learning, mentorship, and growth achievable. This program would not have been possible without the tremendous support of all of our community partners!





# 2024-25 NOWCorps Host Sites

