

# Summit Brings Interested Organizations Together

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By Tim Preston, The Daily Independent, Ashland, Ky.

Aug. 4--ARGILLITE -- A weekend retreat at Greenbo Lake may have a lasting impact for those living along waterways leading to the Ohio River.

The Ohio River Watershed Summit brought together representatives of independent coalitions and organizations with mutual interests in improving water quality issues for mankind and wildlife alike as well as the challenges that remain to accomplish their tasks.

"For many years watershed groups have not been involved with Ohio River issues," said Judy Peterson, executive director of the Kentucky waterways Alliance. "With this meeting we can begin to form partnerships and dialogues, and establish some baselines. From the Kentucky perspective, yes we learned about the quality of the river, but most importantly we made really good contacts in West Virginia and Ohio who will work with us."

Peterson said she was encouraged by much of the information exchanged, including thriving fishery operations and increasing recreational opportunities.

"Of course, the bad news is it is a big river and we've got a lot of challenges too," she said.

On the challenging side of the work list, naturalists and others with interests in waterway heard census reports for different mussel and snail species in the Ohio River and tributaries; studies about the accumulation of mercury in fish and related wildlife; and a list of endangered species along the river.

Citing "a really amazing recovery effort," the group discussed the Ohio River's increase of fish species from 32 to 60 and sportfish populations that have prompted a surprising number of bass tournaments and similar events providing significant economic contributions to many towns and cities along the 981 mile long river.

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