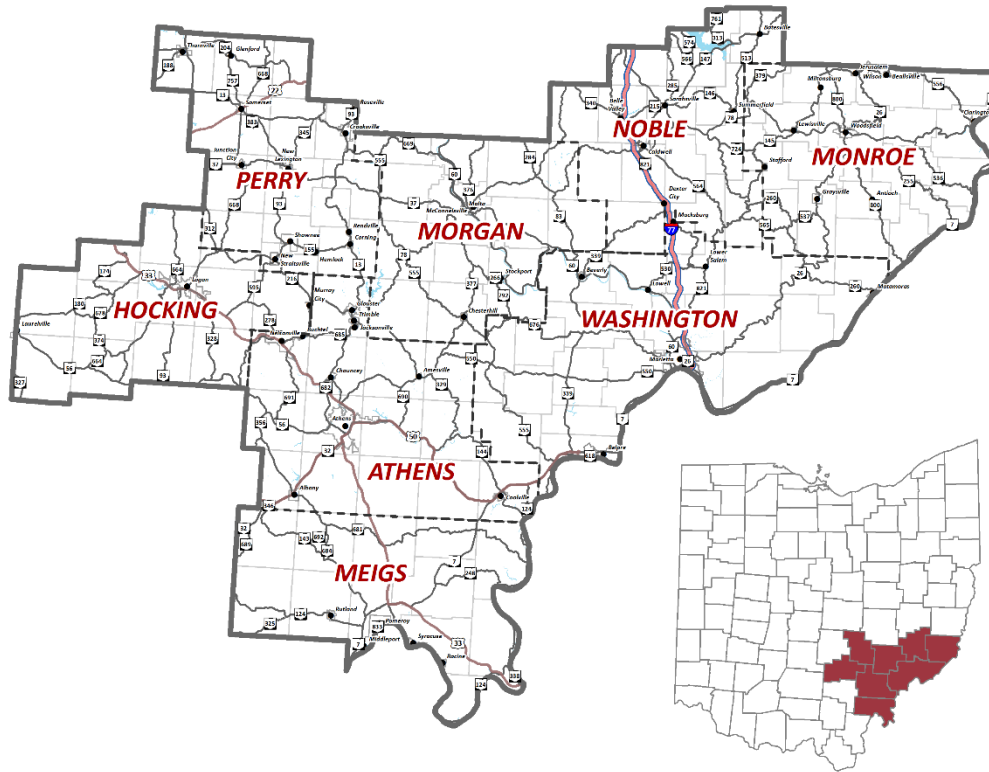


# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## Regional Overview



Buckeye Hills – Hocking Valley Regional Development District is a council of governments formed in 1968 to provide administrative assistance to local governments in southeastern Ohio. This region encompasses 8 counties, 120 townships, and 57 municipalities. All eight counties in the region are part of the area acknowledged as Appalachian Ohio, which includes 32 counties in total, from Ashtabula County in the northeast, to Clermont County in the southwest.

## Physical Environment

The Buckeye Hills region in southeastern Ohio is predominantly rural in nature, with large areas of the district covered by rolling hills and vegetation. The region is bordered by the Ohio River, which when coupled with relatively low elevations, causes many areas to be prone to regular flooding conditions. The table below illustrates the types of land cover present in the region according to Ohio Department of Natural Resources information.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

ODNR Land Cover		
Land Cover	Acres	% of Total
Agriculture/Open Urban	643,232	27.13%
Barren	7,847	0.33%
Nonforested Wetlands	5,697	0.24%
Open Water	19,278	0.81%
Shrub/Scrub	57,332	2.42%
Urban	26,813	1.13%
Wooded	1,610,317	67.93%
Total	2,370,517	100.00%

The region is steeped in United States and Appalachian history, as it is home to the first permanent settlement in the Northwest Territory (Marietta) and the first legislated public university as part of the Northwest Ordinance (Ohio University).

The rural nature of the region has lent itself to a historically strong economic sectors of mining, natural resource extraction, and manufacturing. More recently, counties in the region have become fast growing locations for oil and gas exploration and extraction from the Marcellus and Utica Shale formations that span the eastern counties of the district.

## Population

The population of the Buckeye Hills region as of the most recent U.S. Decennial Census (2010), was 260,084. Population growth in the region has been flat between 2000 and 2013, and is projected to remain flat or slightly declining until 2040.

Population Change 2000 - 2013							
	Census 2000	Census 2010	ACS Est. 2011	ACS Est. 2012	ACS Est. 2013	Change 00-13	% Change 00-13
Ohio	11,353,140	11,538,514	11,544,951	11,544,225	11,570,808	217,668	↑ 1.92%
BHHVRDD	255,000	260,084	260,279	258,699	258,266	3,266	↑ 1.28%
Athens	62,223	64,757	64,769	64,304	64,681	2,458	↑ 3.95%
Hocking	28,241	29,380	29,394	29,273	28,665	424	↑ 1.50%
Meigs	23,072	23,770	23,680	23,593	23,496	424	↑ 1.84%
Monroe	15,180	14,642	14,642	14,549	14,585	-595	↓ -3.92%
Morgan	14,897	15,054	15,034	14,911	14,904	7	↑ 0.05%
Noble	14,058	14,645	14,702	14,579	14,628	570	↑ 4.05%
Perry	34,078	36,058	36,303	36,015	35,997	1,919	↑ 5.63%
Washington	63,251	61,778	61,755	61,475	61,310	-1,941	↓ -3.07%

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

Projected Region Population 2015-2040							
	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	Pct. Chg. '15-'40
Ohio	11,549,120	11,574,870	11,598,670	11,615,100	11,635,110	11,679,010	1.12%
BH-HVRDD	258,650	258,250	256,860	254,890	256,630	250,240	-3.25%
Athens	64,180	64,700	64,500	63,960	63,100	61,960	-3.46%
Hocking	29,540	29,480	29,150	28,620	28,220	27,870	-5.65%
Meigs	23,610	23,630	23,300	23,170	22,670	22,340	-5.38%
Monroe	14,420	14,160	13,900	13,590	13,290	13,120	-9.02%
Morgan	14,880	14,770	14,600	14,360	14,100	13,820	-7.12%
Noble	14,760	14,900	15,080	15,280	15,480	15,700	6.37%
Perry	36,850	37,610	38,710	39,690	40,770	41,710	13.19%
Washington	60,410	59,000	57,620	56,220	59,000	53,720	-11.07%

Perry county is projected to have the most significant population growth between 2015 and 2040, generally due to the northern portion of the county being within the driving shed of the Columbus Ohio metro area.

## Workforce

In comparison to other regions in the state, and as a percentage (.07%) of the overall state workforce, the workforce of the Buckeye Hills region is small.

Regional Civilian Labor Force						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Ohio 2014
Civilian Labor Force	121,800	119,200	115,800	114,900	113,900	155,921,800
Employment	108,300	108,200	106,100	104,900	106,400	146,304,600
Unemployment	13,500	13,600	9,900	10,300	7,500	9,616,400
Unemployment Rate	11.1%	11.4%	8.5%	9.0%	7.6%	6.2%

The regional labor force has seen some moderate fluctuations between 2010 and 2014, and is projected to remain relatively flat through 2040. Employment reached a five year low in 2014. The lower rates could be attributed to the sharp increase in oil and gas exploration and extraction activities, as well as the overall economic recovery taking place in the U.S. following the recession of 2008 – 2011.

# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

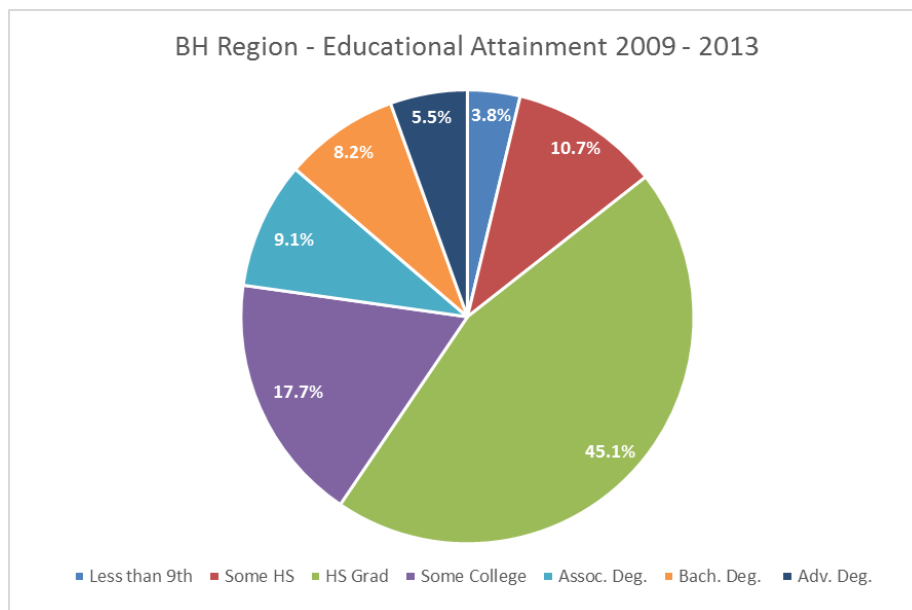
Future Employable Population				
	2020	2030	2040	Proj. Change
BH-HVRDD	185,660	184,590	181,810	-3,850
Athens	50,860	49,420	50,310	-550
Hocking	20,510	19,230	18,220	-2,290
Meigs	16,470	15,620	14,990	-1,480
Monroe	9,290	8,300	8,010	-1,280
Morgan	9,980	9,340	9,060	-920
Noble	10,870	10,430	10,550	-320
Perry	26,350	26,040	27,120	770
Washington	41,330	37,620	35,980	-5,350

The table above represents individuals from age 15 to 69 as depicted in population projections produced by the State of Ohio. This age cohort was chosen as the potential employable population for the Buckeye Hills region based on the fact that many individuals seek employment directly out of High School.

Traditionally the sectors which employ the most workers in the Buckeye Hills region have been manufacturing, retail trade, health care, accommodation services, as well as local government.

## Education

The region has a wealth of educational resources, including all or parts of 28 school districts, and seven colleges. Between 2009 and 2013, the Buckeye Hills region has exceeded the state and federal rates of high school graduates, and individuals with associate’s degrees; but lags behind in bachelors and advanced degrees.



# SUMMARY BACKGROUND

## Housing

Housing in the Buckeye Hills region has recently become a concern as oil and gas activities have brought new residents (both temporary and permanent) to the region. Similar natural resource booms in other parts of the country have led to housing hardships for existing low to moderate income residents, as they are forced out of existing housing by higher paying tenants.

Between 2009 and 2013 the region experienced an 86% occupancy rate of available housing units.

Regional Housing Information 2009 - 2013					
	Housing Units	Occupied	Owner Occ.	Renter Occ.	Vacant
Athens	26,279	22,181	12,561	9,620	4,098
Hocking	13,349	11,478	8,747	2,731	1,871
Meigs	11,093	9,560	7,596	1,964	1,533
Monroe	7,523	6,111	4,830	1,281	1,412
Morgan	7,862	6,204	4,794	1,410	1,658
Noble	6,030	4,883	3,919	964	1,147
Perry	15,129	13,793	9,721	4,072	1,336
Washington	28,217	25,029	18,843	6,186	3,188
Region	115,482	99,239	71,011	28,228	16,243

## Transportation

The Buckeye Hills region has multiple modes of transportation actively contributing to the regional economy, including highway, rail, maritime, and limited public transportation. The district contains over 8,900 total miles of roads, 182 miles of rail, 147 miles of Ohio River frontage, six transit agencies, as well as other transportation assets that benefit the region.

(For further information visit the Buckeye Hills Regional Transportation Planning Organization Website – <http://rtpo.buckeyeohio.org>, or contact Transportation Planning Manager Karen Pawloski.)

## Infrastructure

Infrastructure assets in the region have always been a challenge for economic development activities. The region has challenging geography making some areas difficult to extend primary utilities in to including water, sewer, gas, and telecommunications. Regional organizations continue to work in coordination with local governments to identify and prioritize infrastructure needs for the district.

Most recently, efforts have been made to bolster broadband availability in the region. As of November 2014, the region has an 84.02% average of availability of non-mobile broadband service to households. This is 14.81% below the estimated state average (98.83%).

The Buckeye Hills region also lacks complete mobile telephone coverage, which is a hindrance to economic development activities.