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## Thomas More crew keeps eye on habitat in and around Ohio River

BY HOWARD MCEWEN | ENQUIRER CONTRIBUTOR

**CRESTVIEW HILLS** - While many spend the summer playing on the Ohio River, Christopher N. Lorentz and his students test it.

Lorentz, an associate professor at Thomas More College, is the director of the Center for Ohio River Research & Education. Its field station is at the former site of Lock and Dam No. 35 in California.

"Our mission is threefold: research, teaching and outreach," Lorentz said.

The station was built in 1919 by the Army Corps of Engineers and retired in the 1960s when larger dams replaced the old system. In 1997, Thomas More College renovated the site into a research facility.

"Our work around the station has improved the habitat and riparian zone (bank) of the river near the station," Lorentz said. "More broadly, our research, in particular our fish studies, have been used by Cinergy to monitor and adjust their operations at two power plants along the River. Cinergy uses its fish studies to adjust operations at two power plants.

About 20 Thomas More students work at the station each year as researchers or field trip instructors.

"The college students benefit from taking courses in a field setting, conducting research in an applied setting, making professional contacts, and enjoying the unique social and academic environment of a field station," Lorentz said.

Most are biology majors, but students in fields such as environmental science and education also participate.

"Our research has shown that students who gain experience at the field station are more likely to go on to grad school and receive scholarships to do so." Lorentz said.

The field station also hosts an extensive outreach program and weeklong summer camps for high school students and teachers.

"Teachers are much more interested in incorporating Ohio River topics into their curriculum, they are getting trained and getting workshops related to the Ohio River," Lorentz said.

He has seen an improvement in public perception of the river in the last decade.

Take a look at the development along the banks on both sides, Lorentz said. "Folks wouldn't be inclined to invest near a river with a poor image."

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