

# *Ohio State Parks*

2007 ANNUAL REPORT



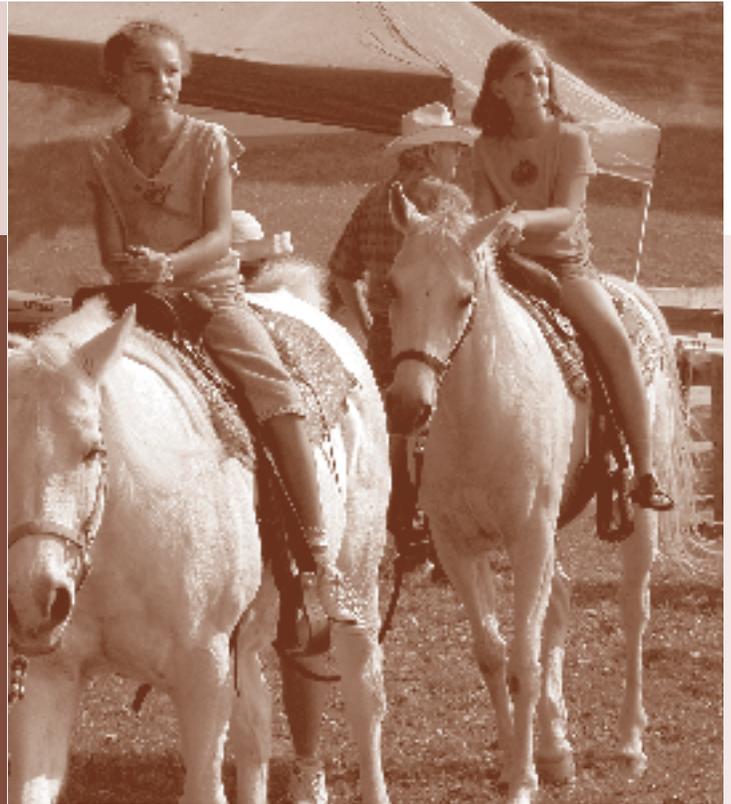
PROVIDING FUN, SAFE, CLEAN AND FRIENDLY PLACES FOR FAMILIES TO GATHER AND ENJOY THE GREAT OUTDOORS

STRONG FOUNDATION

Our values

mission

vision



## Our Values

**Leadership** in our industry

**Customer Focus** is our top priority

**Stewardship** of our natural, financial and human resources

**Professionalism** in all we do

**Innovation** to keep making improvements

## Our Mission

To provide an outdoor recreational experience for Ohio State Park visitors that exceeds their expectations.

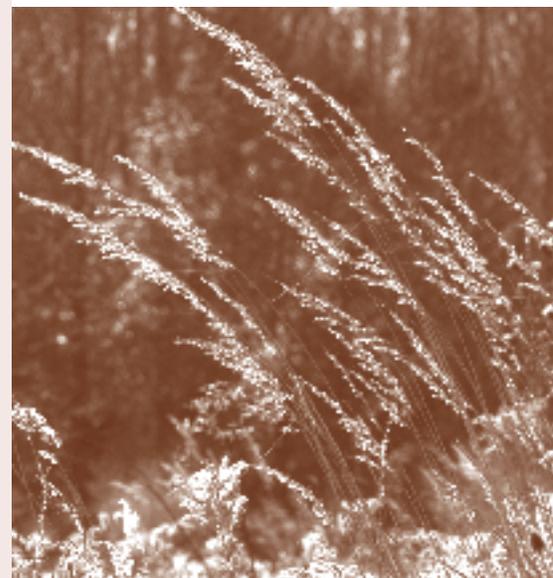
## Our Vision

We, the employees of Ohio State Parks, are proud of our incredible natural resources and facilities, and we are devoted to providing fun, safe, clean and friendly places for families and friends to gather and enjoy the great outdoors.



# Table of Contents

<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	2
<b>Staying Relevant</b> .....	3
<b>Table of Organization/ Map of Regional Park Units</b> .....	4
<b>Customer Service</b> .....	5
Customer Focus	
Centralized Reservation System	
Special Events and Tourism Initiatives	
Interpretive Services	
Getting Kids Outdoors	
Recreational Offerings	
Publications	
Marketing and Advertising	
Website	
Promotional Programs	
Surveys	
Partnerships	
Visitor Safety and Protective Services	
Visitor Occasions	
<b>Resource Management</b> .....	18
Land Transactions	
Wetland Projects	
Waterway Improvements	
Water Quality Issues	
Beaches	
Recreational Trail Projects	
Biological Diversity and Wildlife Management	
Management of Nuisance Species	
Sustainable Practices and Green Initiatives	
Natural Resource Management Plans	
Drought, Flooding and Storm Damage	
Special Designations	
<b>Professional Development</b> .....	23
Employee Satisfaction Survey	
Training	
Employee Recognition Programs	
<b>Infrastructure Improvements</b> .....	27
NatureWorks	
Capital Improvement Projects	
Project Design	
Roadway Maintenance and Striping Program	
Miscellaneous Park Construction & Improvement Projects	
In-House Construction Initiatives	
In-House Products and Services	
Accessibility Improvements	
Fleet Management	
<b>Fiscal Management</b> .....	31
Budget	
Funding	
Expenditures	
Revenue	
<b>Statistical Abstract of the Ohio State Park System</b> .....	34
<b>2008 Goals</b> .....	35



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



It has been ten years since Ohio State Parks was named America's finest. In 1997, Ohio was the very first recipient of the national Gold Medal Award for state parks and recreation excellence. We have faced many challenges since that award was presented, but Ohio's state parks still inspire pride with the finest staff, the finest volunteers, and the finest family experiences in the outdoors.

Ten years after receiving the highest honor in our industry, we are still providing leadership for our peers in parks and recreation, but with a new focus: how to accomplish a great deal with increasingly limited resources. Thanks to plenty of public goodwill, the generosity of our partners, the support of our stakeholders, and the creativity and dedication of our staff, we have been able to achieve our goal of providing quality outdoor recreation for the public. Our parks are filled with examples of new programs and recreational offerings, especially for kids. We have made significant progress in natural resources management planning, and made a dent in our critical infrastructure needs with our in-house industries. Our talented employees have continued to hone their skills and bring even more efficiency to our operations. We have protected our division's essential revenue stream, and made the most of every dime.

Times have changed, but we have remained steadfast in our enduring commitment to customer service. Our second five-year strategic plan has been a valuable tool for keeping us on track, and guiding our innovations. Of course, the beauty and diversity of our state parks, themselves, is our most precious and secure asset.

In a world that has become a little less certain, where families are struggling a bit more, and leisure time has become more precious than ever, Ohioans need something they can count on. They can rest assured that our state parks will remain clean, safe and friendly places where families and friends can gather and enjoy the outdoors.



Dan West

Dan West

CHIEF, OHIO STATE PARKS

## Staying Relevant

Our state parks are as diverse as the state of Ohio—and so are our customers. As stewards of Ohio’s finest natural resources and outdoor recreation facilities, our work has a direct impact on the health and well-being of all Ohioans. The health benefits of connecting with nature are undeniable, whether getting fit naturally, or relaxing and reducing stress. To remain vital and relevant in a fast-paced world, we are constantly examining our offerings, forging partnerships, and striving to appeal to new generations of park visitors.



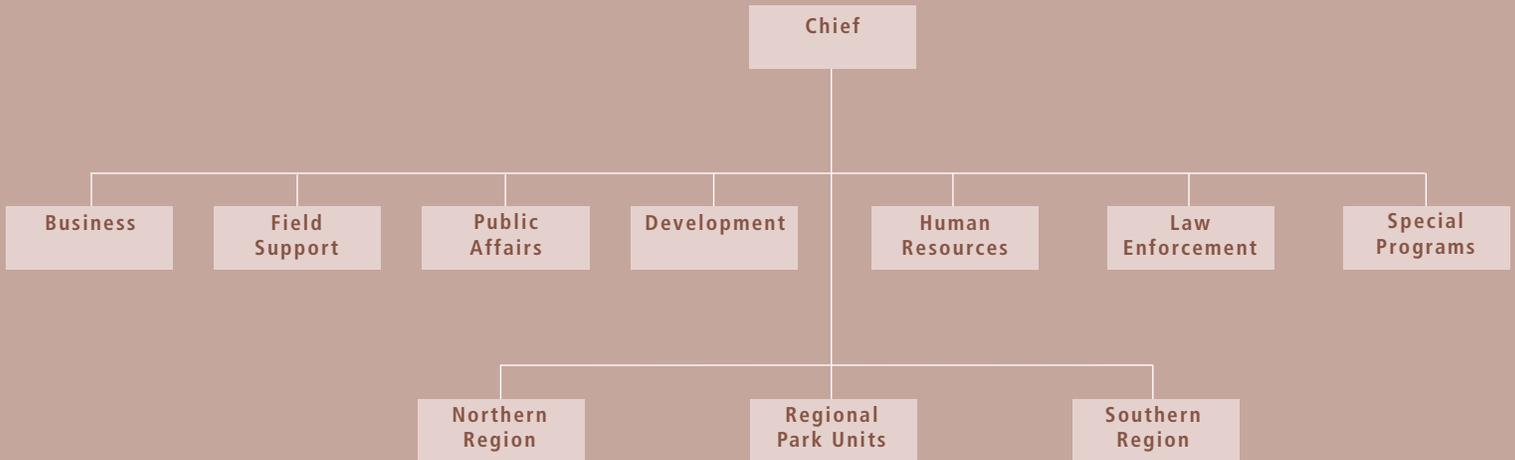
We take our responsibilities to Ohio’s youth very seriously. Inspired by concerns about “nature deficit disorder” and sedentary lifestyles, our state parks have amplified outreach to children, parents, and educators through programs in the parks, new recreational offerings, website features and publications. We have fine-tuned our naturalist programs and special events to involve parents and their children, encouraging wholesome outdoor activity as part of a healthy family lifestyle. We offer a wide range of getaway rentals with more creature comforts to provide a convenient and affordable way for parents to introduce their children to the joys of camping. We are embracing technology with our improved website and WiFi installations, and offering more activities that appeal to teenagers and young adults, like archery, disc golf, geocaching and mountain biking.

While we strive to be forward-looking, we also honor our rich and interesting history. We bring history to life and preserve the past for future generations as we protect and restore historic structures in our parks, often with help of the parks’ friends groups. As we tell the fascinating stories of Ohio’s past through programs, events, historical markers, interpretive displays and brochures, we encourage heritage tourism.

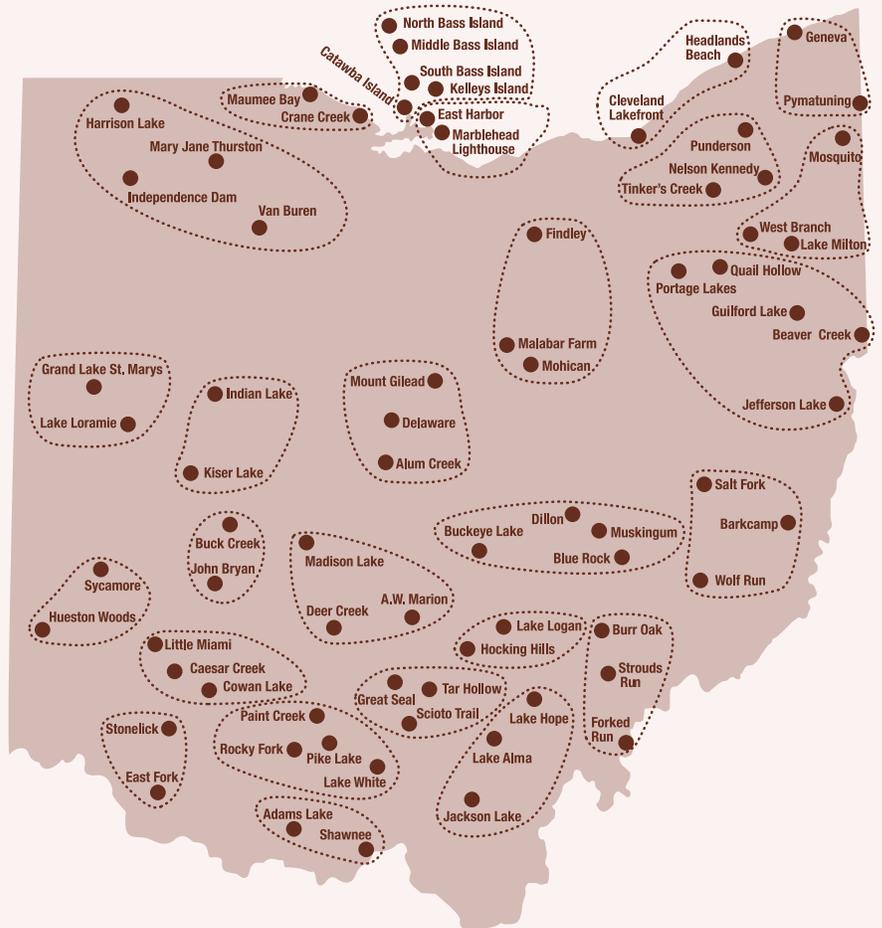
Many of our parks are popular destinations for scenic hikes, camping trips, boating excursions and family vacations. Events and programs give visitors the excitement of learning a new skill or pursuing a lifelong passion for birding or fishing, the added satisfaction of performing a valuable community service in the outdoors, and the sheer fun of playing at the beach or in the campground amid a friendly community atmosphere. By providing a wide variety of programs and recreational opportunities as well as overnight facilities, we offer nature tourism options for all types of outdoor enthusiasts.

# Table of Organization

The organization of Ohio's 74 state parks into regional units continued, with the total number of regional units remaining at 26. The regional units consist of two to five parks in close proximity. Each region works together as a team, sharing financial and human resources as necessary for better economy and efficiency.



Map of Regional Park Units



# Customer Service

**Our dedicated staff and volunteers continued Ohio State Parks' long tradition of extending hospitality and helping visitors discover natural wonders, celebrate our heritage, and enjoy life's simple pleasures through programs, special events and recreational facilities.**



Maple Syrup Festival

## CUSTOMER FOCUS

**R**egional customer service champions planned and presented two separate two-day training sessions for more than 140 front line employees. The training focused on providing exceptional service, dealing with difficult customers and effective use of the centralized reservation system.

## CENTRALIZED RESERVATION SYSTEM

**T**he number of reservations made, as well as the number of nights that guests stayed in state-operated cottages, getaway rentals and campsites, increased compared to 2006. The number of reservations made increased by 8 percent, and the number of nights stayed increased by 6.2 percent. The on-line reservation system continued to enhance the visibility of Ohio State Park offerings for potential customers doing their travel planning on the Internet. Systemwide, the proportion of overnight customers who opted to make advance reservations, rather than walk-in, was 52 percent. About 47 percent of these advance reservations were made through the call center, while 53 percent were made on-line through the division's website.

Salt Fork piloted a new program for on-line golf course tee-time reservations that tied into the point-of-sale system. The on-line tee times made it more convenient for customers to reserve a spot on the golf course with round-the-clock access.

Data derived from the CRS has served as a powerful tool for analysis of policies and programs. The ready availability of reservation data for specific state-operated cottages facilitated an analysis of the relative popularity of the pet friendly cottages at Lake Hope. A cottage-specific evaluation of occupancy during the year indicated that the seven cottages that allowed pets experienced a 14 to 23 percent increase in occupancy over the previous year, while the 18 non-pet cottages experienced occupancy trends ranging from a 5 percent decline to a 10 percent increase.



Reptile program at Shawnee

## SPECIAL EVENTS AND TOURISM INITIATIVES

Nearly half a million visitors attended special events held at state parks throughout the year, boosting occupancy at our overnight facilities and providing economic benefits to local communities. With the help of volunteers and friends groups, 50 parks hosted a wide variety of traditional family-friendly events, from campouts and guided hikes to nature workshops and park clean-ups. These parks sponsored a total of 350 events, and served as the venues for dozens more, including fishing derbies, disc golf tournaments, boat races, triathlons, fireworks and community picnics.

Several parks have complemented their typical offerings with new events that appeal to contemporary niches, including cultural and heritage tourism, nature tourism, and outdoor adventures for kids and adults. For example:

Three premier events promoted nature tourism, in partnership with local tourism bureaus, nature-based tourist attractions and businesses. Floraquest, a new event held in early May at Shawnee, capitalized on the extraordinary biological diversity and unique plant communities at Shawnee State Park and State Forest, along with neighboring nature preserves. Biological survey field trips led by expert guides not only enhanced the conference participants' learning, they also yielded inventories of birds, butterflies, trees and wildflowers that will serve as important baseline data for future natural resource planning efforts. The Mohican Wildlife Weekend and the Hocking Hills "Shoot the Hills" nature photography weekend, both held for the sixth consecutive year, helped fill their respective parks' state-operated cottages during a relatively slow period in April.

A number of events combined outdoor adventure with fun and learning. The Portage Lakes region offered a series of geocaching events throughout the summer, attracting new visitors who enjoy this family-oriented, teen-friendly activity that blends technology and outdoor skills. The Salt Fork resort lodge offered a geocaching package, including use of GPS device, for lodge and cottage guests. A new series of workshops at the Beaver Creek nature center explored topics from geology, forest ecology and wild mushrooms to archery, birding and fly fishing. Lake Hope continued the popular "Hand-Feeding Hummingbirds" program for the fifth year, attracting nearly 4,000 park visitors.

The new "Mysterious Muskingum" series of special events, along with the new "Night Haunt" programs at Malabar Farm and the "Haunted Hocking" series introduced last year at Hocking Hills, combined adult-oriented natural history night hikes with story telling and exploration of local legends that gave visitors a unique look at familiar places. These novel programs were conducted monthly during the peak season, attracting capacity crowds for each program.

The first Appalachian Music Festival at Caesar Creek was the newest offering on Ohio State Parks' busy slate of family-friendly heritage events. Other large heritage-theme festivals included the Muskingum Riverfest, Lake Hope's ROAR (Rural Appalachia Ohio Revisited) Day, Pike Lake's Appalachian Festival, Pioneer Days at Beaver Creek and Ohio Heritage Days at Malabar Farm.

In October, Malabar Farm hosted a dinner theater production of the historical drama, "Ceely," in cooperation with The Mansfield Playhouse. This was the fifth year for the successful partnership. In December, Malabar Farm's traditional "Christmas at Malabar" tours took a dramatic turn with the addition of actors portraying Louis Bromfield and his family, and their famous house guests.

Lake Hope continued the energy-conscious, walk-through "Holiday Trail of Lights," featuring more than 50,000 lights along a quarter-mile trail near the park's Nature Center. The animated displays and landscape lighting were equipped with timers and motion detectors to automatically turn on and then turn off after visitors passed by.

## INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

An estimated 300,000 park visitors attended summer naturalist programs offered in 50 of the state parks. A number of parks adjusted their naturalists' schedules to concentrate programming on weekends, thereby serving more customers and promoting cost efficiency.

The traditional Junior Naturalist Program, which has historically been geared to participation by young children, was replaced by the new Family Nature Adventures program. The Family Nature Adventures are designed to appeal to parents and older youth, as well as young children, and to encourage the entire family to enjoy fun and educational outdoor activities together.

Naturalists at several parks, including Beaver Creek, Caesar Creek, Cleveland Lakefront, Dillon, Hocking Hills, Hueston Woods, Lake Hope, Maumee Bay, Malabar Farm, Quail Hollow and Shawnee, hosted school groups year-round and provided outreach to students and teachers through hands-on environmental programs. Cleveland Lakefront and Shawnee partnered with their local public libraries to offer summer programs in the parks that foster reading and literacy.

Naturalists at Shawnee and Mt. Gilead held teacher workshops in nationally recognized programs geared to K-12 students to help teachers incorporate natural resource education into their classroom activities. Shawnee hosted the Project Learning Tree program, which focuses on forest ecology, and Mt. Gilead offered the Project WET program, which addresses water resources, as well as Project Land, Food and People, which interfaces with science and social studies curricula with emphasis on food, fiber and soil resources.

New naturalist programs focusing on energy conservation and alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power, have been added to the mix at Malabar Farm. Interpretive displays in the visitor education center explain the concepts and refer to the photovoltaic panels and wind generator that provide electricity for the building. In addition, Malabar Farm received an Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant to conduct green energy workshops for teachers, and to develop educational materials regarding sustainable energy.

The second phase of major renovations was completed at the Old Man's Cave visitor center at Hocking Hills, one of the most visited nature centers in our parks. New displays feature historic photos that illustrate the park's rich heritage, as well as the dramatic changes that have occurred with regard to trail improvements and increased vegetation. Alum Creek installed new exhibits in its recently upgraded nature center, which was constructed around an existing shelterhouse near the campground entrance. Cleveland Lakefront received an Ohio Environmental Education Fund grant for computers with self-guided educational programs and banners for a new nature center that is under development.

New displays in the division's exhibit area at the Ohio State Fair highlighted the natural and cultural history of Malabar Farm, Marblehead Lighthouse and the Upper Falls at Hocking Hills State Park. Additional historical displays featured the African-American CCC camps in Ohio in the 1930s and 1940s, along with various workers associated with protection of Ohio's natural resources prior to the establishment of ODNR. A photo-collage also promoted the "no child left inside" movement. At the log cabin area, a "green energy – then and now" outdoor interactive display and kiosk traced the evolution of energy harvesting technologies and energy conservation over the last 200 years. Volunteers from Malabar Farm's Spinning and Weaving Guild gave demonstrations at the log cabin throughout the fair.

### GETTING KIDS OUTDOORS

A new kid-friendly initiative, the Ohio State Parks "Wild Things" Kids' Art Contest, helped nurture children's interest in nature and the outdoors, as well as foster goodwill with participating families. The contest was announced in the spring-summer issue of *Ohio State Parks* magazine and publicized on the division's website, through news releases, and on posters displayed in public libraries, in cooperation with the State Library of Ohio. A total of 517 entries were received, and the winning entries were published in the fall-winter issue of *Ohio State Parks* magazine. In cooperation with lodge concessionaires Xanterra and ARAMARK, each entry was displayed in the lobby of the resort lodge closest to the participant's hometown, to encourage participating kids and their families to get out to the parks and experience the lodges, while providing a comfortable place for them to enjoy the artwork.

In addition to the Family Nature Adventures and traditional summer naturalist programs, a number of special events in the parks were tailored especially to children, including youth fishing derbies, bike parades, egg hunts, pioneer games, beach treasure hunts and sandcastle building contests.

Portage Lakes transformed a little-used parking lot into the "Big Oaks Kids-Only Zone" where children can bicycle, skate and skateboard without interference by vehicles. A new playground was installed at the beach through a grant from the Portage Lakes Advisory Council. With the help of park volunteers and the Lake Loramie Improvement Association, Lake Loramie purchased new playground equipment and built a large sandbox at the campground.

### Wild Things Art Contest



## RECREATIONAL OFFERINGS

A number of parks offered new and expanded recreational facilities and attractions. Most of these projects were accomplished at little or no cost to the park, with donations raised by friends groups as well as volunteer labor and donated or salvaged materials. Some examples include:

- A limited number of electric campsites at Portage Lakes
- Accessible hunting blind at East Fork
- Archery ranges at Beaver Creek, Salt Fork and Shawnee
- Basketball court and volleyball court at Pymatuning campground
- Butterfly gazebo at Van Buren
- Canoe and kayak rentals at Wolf Run
- Disc golf courses at Buck Creek, Delaware, East Harbor, Hueston Woods and Rocky Fork
- Gazebo at John Bryan
- Horse arena at Mohican
- Horse corral at Van Buren
- Ice skating rink at Shawnee
- KAMP Dovetail shelterhouse at Rocky Fork
- Kids zone and skate area at Portage Lakes
- Matt Maupin welcome pavilion at East Fork
- Mini golf course at Lake Loramie
- Mountain bike trail at Van Buren
- Nature center addition at Tar Hollow
- Playgrounds at Guilford Lake and Jefferson Lake
- Recreation area at Mt. Gilead
- Sunshelter rentals at Maumee Bay
- Volleyball court at Mary Jane Thurston
- WiFi hotspots in the campground at Grand Lake St. Marys

To accommodate park guests who travel and vacation with pets, a pet-friendly policy was piloted at two of the state-operated cottage locations. Seven of the two-bedroom vacation cottages at Lake Hope, and two of the cottages at Pymatuning were designated as pet-friendly, in addition to concession-operated resort cottages at Burr Oak and the resort lodge at Geneva. Ohio Administrative Code rule 1501: 41-3-07 was amended to allow for the change.

Consistent with the statewide smoking ban passed by Ohio voters, the state park getaway rentals, cottages and resort lodges adopted a global non-smoking policy.

The getaway rentals program was refined to provide upgraded offerings at a few parks where the rentals have been popular, and eliminate a few aging facilities that have experienced significant declines in occupancy. Camper cabins were offered for the first time at Deer Creek, and an additional camper cabin was constructed at Shawnee. Shawnee's existing Rent-A-Camp units were eliminated, and rental tepees were eliminated at John Bryan and Hueston Woods. An aging, rustic camper cabin at Strouds Run was also eliminated.

## PUBLICATIONS

In its thirteenth year of production, two issues of *Ohio State Parks* magazine were published and direct mailed to a subscriber list of nearly 53,000 households. Nearly 900,000 promotional pieces were printed, including the park directory, getaway rentals, overnight facilities fees, individual park brochures, and magazines. Hundreds of thousands of these brochures, along with brochures promoting camping, golf courses, and winter recreation were distributed through the parks, travel shows, 1-800-BUCKEYE operators, Department of Transportation's Travel Information Centers, American Automobile Association outlets, various convention and visitor bureaus, direct mailings, and requests generated from the division's website. The division exchanged informational brochures with the Ohio Historical Society to cross-promote Ohio State Parks and Ohio Historical Society sites, with parks distributing the new OHS visitor guide, while historic sites distributed the OSP heritage brochure introduced last fall.

### Dog-friendly facilities



## MARKETING AND ADVERTISING

Print advertising was placed in a number of publications that provide reader response service, generating over 9,600 requests for general information about Ohio State Parks. The number of requests declined significantly compared to 2006, consistent with an overall trend of travelers relying on Internet for their travel planning. Advertisements were placed in the “Great Vacation Getaways” and “See Ya There” travel brochure inserts in the travel sections of the Sunday newspaper in all the major Ohio cities as well as over 30 other Midwest and eastern cities. The division participated in the Ohio Department of Development, Division of Travel and Tourism’s Discover Ohio, and partnered with the Division of Travel and Tourism for inclusion in special travel sections focused on Ohio destinations in Midwest Living, MORE, and AAA’s Michigan Living and Home and Away magazines distributed throughout the Midwest. Additional exposure in travel publications included advertisements in Pittsburgh Magazine and Columbus Magazine’s “Best Driving Vacations.” Ads were also placed in publications targeted to campers, including Woodall’s Campground Directory, Ohio Camper, and Trailer Life magazine.

In partnership with the Ohio News Network (ONN), several parks were featured on ONN’s weekly Discover Ohio television program, and television ads promoting the state park system were aired on ONN throughout the summer. The Discover Ohio spots promoted broad themes including heritage tourism, nature tourism, camping and cottage stays, golf, getting fit naturally, and family-friendly outings for getting kids outdoors, while highlighting special events, activities and facilities at the featured parks. The ads and Discover Ohio spots were filmed at Alum Creek and Delaware, Buck Creek and John Bryan, Deer Creek, Dillon, East Harbor and Marblehead Lighthouse, Hocking Hills, Hueston Woods, Malabar Farm and Mohican, and Salt Fork. The promotional package also included a streaming news ticker, and a featured link on ONN’s website.

Ohio State Parks continued its participation in the annual travel shows and golf shows held in Cincinnati, Cleveland and Columbus, as well as many other locally-sponsored shows. In addition, through the Ohio Travel Pavilion, brochures were distributed at travel shows in surrounding states.

## WEBSITE

The Ohio State Parks website was redesigned with a fresh new look, more detailed content and better navigation to enhance its visual appeal and improve its efficacy as a marketing, promotional and informational tool. Web design guidelines by industry experts and the division’s own data on customer inquiries and comments were considered in the development of the revamped website.

The Internet continued to be an important component of the division’s marketing mix as well as a vehicle for environmental education outreach, especially for children. Internet marketing consisted of tile ads on the ONN, Woodall, Discover Ohio, and Midwest Living websites that linked back to the Ohio State Parks website. One issue of “E-News from Ohio State Parks” was sent to 14,900 subscribers. The electronic newsletter highlights special offers and discounts, new programs and recreational offerings, and upcoming events in the parks.

Park naturalists provided tips on spring wildflower viewing and updates on species in bloom on weekly wildflower blogs hosted on the ODNR website.

## PROMOTIONAL PROGRAMS

The Cardinal Camper Club promotional program for camping continued for the eighth and final year. More than 1,600 memberships were sold, generating over \$40,000 in revenue. The price of the card remained at \$25. The Cardinal Camper Club discounts, good for one year from the month of purchase, remained at 15 percent off camping fees and getaway rentals from April 1 through October 31, and 20 percent from November 1 through March 31. In addition to generating revenue, the program goal of building the database for targeted marketing activities continued to be achieved. Sales of new cards were discontinued in August to phase out the program and allow for the adoption of a new frequent camper incentive program that will be integrated into the centralized reservation system when the CRS contract is rebid in 2008.

To increase cottage usage during the off-season, special rates were offered at all state-operated cottage locations January through March, with some locations offering extended time periods. For the fourth consecutive year, the discount offered at each location was \$20 off the regular nightly rate Sunday through Thursday, and \$10 off on Friday and Saturday nights.



Re-designed website

Other promotional programs that were continued include the Passport America Card, Golden Buckeye Card, and VA Disability/POW program. As in previous years, select state park campgrounds honored the Passport America Card offered for sale by a private vendor. Card holders received a 50 percent discount, Sunday through Wednesday at select state park campgrounds, and for the first time, a 10 percent discount at select state-operated cottages on Sunday through Wednesday. The Golden Buckeye discounts and the free camping program for disabled veterans and former POWs remained the same. Coupons for 25% off one camping visit and information packets were provided to Tom Raper RV for their customers purchasing a recreational vehicle.

#### OTHER PUBLICITY

Several state parks received the benefit of free publicity from various media outlets, prompted by news releases, ongoing relationships with journalists, and high visibility in the local community.

A news release issued in May promoting state parks as close-to-home destinations and emphasizing savings in gasoline costs was published by several major newspapers. The Chicago Tribune promoted Ohio State Park lodges as fall color destinations in a “Trips, Tips & Deals” online feature.

The Ohio State Parks directory chart was published in the Columbus Dispatch’s annual “Summer Fun Guide” supplement, offering an excellent opportunity to reach a large, broad audience free of charge.

Malabar Farm was featured as a culinary destination in an article in the August issue of *Ohio Magazine*. The article provided a complimentary review of the Malabar Farm restaurant and the home grown produce supplied by park.

Several parks were recognized as superlative tourism destinations in southern Ohio with “Point of Pride” awards by *Over the Back Fence* magazine. The fall issue of the magazine promoted the following state parks in the following categories: best place to see fall colors – Paint Valley Skyline Drive (including portions of Pike Lake State Park); best place to go sledding – Dillon; best southern Ohio Beach – Burr Oak; best place to watch a sunset – Salt Fork; best scenic walk – Hocking Hills’ Old Man’s Cave; best spot for a family reunion – Great Seal.

Indian Lake was named best place to camp in Ohio in the August issue of *Country Living* magazine, and Burr Oak was recognized as runner up. Readers of Brown Publishing’s local area newspapers selected Lake Hope for the “gold award” for the category of entertainment and recreation, and the “bronze award” for their favorite tourist destination in the annual All Star Awards sponsored by Brown Publishing. Alum Creek’s dog park was named best dog beach by dogchannel.com in their annual list of America’s best dog parks.

Three state parks, John Bryan, Malabar Farm and Shawnee, were highlighted in a nationwide listing of the best state parks to visit in the spring on a web-based travel feature on About.com, sponsored by the New York Times Company. In addition, three state park employees (Park Naturalists Jenny Richards and Dave Sapienza, and Park Officer Dave Johnston) were profiled in a “State Park Jobs and Career Opportunities” feature on About.com.

The evening weather report and a live tourism segment were broadcast from Hocking Hills as part of the WBNS TV evening news program in July. Independent of the partnership with Ohio News Network for promotional spots at state parks, ONN filmed travel segments at Cowan Lake and Grand Lake St. Marys. Dayton’s Public Broadcasting Service station compiled and aired a short feature promoting the Rent-A-Yurt getaway rental at Hueston Woods for the station’s “Our Ohio” program. The History Channel filmed at Malabar Farm for a program on the Ceely Rose story. Court TV filmed at Alum Creek for a park-like backdrop to a “Haunting Evidence” program regarding a cold case investigation and also filmed backdrop footage at Cowan Lake.



Old Man’s Cave

# Surveys

The annual customer satisfaction survey continued to serve as a valuable tool for gathering customer feedback on what we're doing well, where we need to improve, and how we can stay relevant.



## CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Customer satisfaction surveys have been conducted each season since 1992. A single survey format was reintroduced, consolidating three separate surveys tailored to day-use, camping and resort guests, which had been in use for five years. The amended survey instrument focused on customer satisfaction with various aspects of overnight and day-use facilities, such as cleanliness of a specific building or area, the condition of that building or area, and helpfulness of the employees at those facilities. This data provides specific feedback on park operations and identifies where improvements are needed.

The survey was conducted during the primary operating season, May through October. Visitors were asked to rate their satisfaction with various facility and service categories on a five point scale ranging from excellent (5) to unacceptable (1). A total of 8,490 surveys were returned, with 92.77 percent of respondents rating their overall visit as excellent or good. (See Table 1, below)

Visitors were also asked to provide comments on facilities and services. This valuable feedback allows park managers to make continuous improvements throughout the season, and provides insight on customer needs and wants for future planning. Demographic information was also collected to help determine visitor characteristics. This information can be used for targeted marketing efforts and planning for future amenities and services.

Of those visitors who responded to the survey, 57 percent were repeat visitors to a specific state park, 67 percent had visited other state parks, 71 percent would return to that specific state park, and 69 percent would visit other state parks. In addition, 50 percent of respondents were between 31 and 60 years of age, 39 percent had one or more children, 74 percent were in groups of two or more people, 57 percent stayed more than one night on their visit, and 35 percent visited one to three times per year, while 39 percent visited more than four times.

Parks that received the highest ratings for each type of facility listed in the surveys were recognized with the Service Excellence Award. To be eligible for the award, at least 100 surveys in that category had to be completed by park visitors. The ratings for each facility type were averaged and the parks with the highest average rating from 100 or more surveys received the awards. (See Table 2, below)

**TABLE 1: OVERALL AVERAGE RATINGS FOR FACILITY AREAS**

Facility Area	2007	2006
Campground Operation	4.375	4.155
Resort Lodge Operation	4.352	4.197
Cottage Operation	4.377	4.200
Getaway Rentals	4.427	N/A
Golf Course	4.704	4.556
Beaches	4.078	4.057
Boating Facilities	4.344	4.220
Trails	4.236	4.409
Picnic Areas	4.288	4.258
Visitor/Nature Centers	4.518	4.583

**TABLE 2: SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Facility	Park	Average Rating
Picnic Areas	West Branch	4.603
Beach	Lake Milton	4.620
Lake/Boating Facilities	Deer Creek	4.730
Trails	Lake Milton	4.745
Visitor/Nature Center	Malabar Farm	4.833
Getaway Rentals	Harrison Lake	4.861
Cottages	Lake Hope	4.481
Golf Course	Deer Creek	4.768
Campground	Harrison Lake	4.655
Resort Lodge	Mohican	4.476

## Partnerships



Thanks to the generosity and support of our friends groups, volunteers, partners and stakeholders, our state parks continued to make improvements, offer enriching experiences, and enhance the quality of life for visitors from around the community, and around the globe.

### **FRIENDS GROUPS AND SUPPORT GROUPS**

Individual park friends groups continued to grow and provide a variety of high quality park improvement projects. New friends groups were formed at Barkcamp, Caesar Creek, Dillon, East Fork, Geneva, Guilford Lake, Mosquito Lake, Madison Lake and Scioto Trail. Friends groups and other community support groups, including lake advisory councils, civic clubs and Coast Guard auxiliaries, provided an array of services at parks such as hosting tours, assisting with special events, and leading fundraising drives and securing grant money for park projects. Improvement projects completed by friends and community support groups include:

A 14' x 20' stage at the campground amphitheater at Deer Creek

A disc golf course at East Harbor

Basketball courts at Mt. Gilead

Completion of phase two of the Lake Milton walking path

Completion of 25 miles of mountain biking trails at Mohican

A shelterhouse at Rocky Fork

Improvements to the manor house and nature center at Quail Hollow

The Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks (FPOSP), which was chartered as a non-profit advocacy group for the parks, continued to serve as an umbrella organization linking the individual park friends and support groups. The FPOSP sponsored two statewide meetings at which individual park friends groups received training in fundraising, managing a nonprofit, and other relevant topics. Both of these meetings drew record attendance. The group continued to improve its website, [www.fposp.org](http://www.fposp.org), in order to enhance communications with member groups.

This FPOSP also served as a lead participant in a coalition of statewide conservation and environmental groups, the Ohio Natural Resources Stakeholder Group, which is working on identifying a source of sustained funding for state parks as well as three other divisions. Other members include the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association, The Nature Conservancy, Ohio League of Conservation Voters, Ohio Environmental Council, Ohio Bass Federation, Ohio Trails Partnership, League of Ohio Sportsmen, Audubon Ohio, Ohio Civil Service Employees Association, Fraternal Order of Police of Ohio, Ohio Travel Association, Ohio Biological Survey, Lake Erie Coastal Ohio, Ohio Federation of Soil & Water Conservation Districts, Ohio Ornithological Society, Central Ohio Tournament Anglers Association, Izaak Walton League of America, Ohio Forestry Association, and Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts. The stakeholder group sponsored a legislative summit in Columbus, which was attended by more than 100 legislators, officials and interested citizens who explored the idea of sustained funding for the parks.

In its second year, the Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation announced its first series of grant awards at the FPOSP's spring symposium at Mohican. The six cash grants went to:

- Friends of East Harbor for a large fire ring for special events
- Friends of Hueston Woods for new trail signs
- Friends of Jackson Lake towards construction of a new amphitheater
- Friends of Lake Hope towards construction of a classroom addition to the nature center
- Mohican Trails Group for GPS mapping of trails
- Friends of Van Buren towards construction of a butterfly gazebo

The Chief's Award was presented to the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association to recognize the group's important partnership with the division over the years. This was the 11th time the award has been presented.

### **VOLUNTEER PROGRAM**

In its 25th year, the Ohio State Parks Volunteer Program continued to offer thousands of citizens of all ages an opportunity to pitch in and help improve their local state park. Some 7,000 volunteers contributed about 350,000 hours of service. More than 200 volunteers attended the statewide campout at Deer Creek, the division's annual "thank you" to volunteers for their service.

The Volunteer Park-of-the-Year Award was presented to both Indian Lake and Buckeye Lake for the parks' active and wide-ranging volunteer programs. At Indian Lake the volunteer association constructed an all-weather pavilion to host special events in the campground. At Buckeye Lake, volunteers completed a number of projects including renovating and beautifying an historic fountain, the last tangible evidence of the former amusement park that once occupied the site.

### **CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS**

Ohio State Parks partnered with national outdoor retailer, Gander Mountain, to offer "Catch the Outdoor Fun" events in May during the statewide "Fish Ohio Free" weekend. All of the Gander Mountain stores in Ohio held fishing seminars, offered free bait to customers, and distributed coupons for a free night of camping with the purchase of a regular night of camping at any Ohio State Park campground. At the same time, Gander Mountain associates along with the park staff at select parks offered free coffee and doughnuts, bait giveaways, fishing workshops, and fishing contests with prizes provided by Gander Mountain. The participating state parks included Alum Creek, Caesar Creek, Deer Creek, East Harbor, Geneva, Maumee Bay, Mosquito Lake, Salt Fork, and West Branch.

Malabar Farm partnered with Lehman's Hardware, which specializes in energy-saving and environmentally friendly products, to offer an assortment of unique and appealing merchandise in the Malabar Farm gift shop. In addition, Lehman's provided for the printing of 30,000 copies of Malabar Farm's schedule of events to help promote visitation.

Many other state parks received corporate sponsorships for local projects and special events, including fishing derbies, campouts and the like.

### **COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

At East Fork, ten local companies including architectural and engineering design firms, construction contractors, concrete and trucking companies and material suppliers donated their products and services to build the Matt Maupin Welcome Pavilion in honor of Sgt. Matt Maupin who was captured and killed in Iraq. The pavilion is located near the beach, and serves as a gathering place for the



Matt Maupin Welcome Pavilion

numerous regattas held at the park each year. A graduate of Clermont High School, Sgt. Maupin was a member of the school's crew team and competed in the regattas on East Fork's Harsha Lake when he was a student. To further encourage community involvement in the project, the park accepted donations of rocks from the general public to be used for landscaping around the pavilion.

Rocky Fork partnered with a local non-profit, Supplemental Assistance for the Handicapped (SATH) by hosting the annual KAMP Dovetail for more than 200 children with disabilities from Highland and surrounding counties. With assistance from the park, SATH built a new shelterhouse at the group camp area to serve as the hub of activities for the annual KAMP Dovetail event. The new shelterhouse was dedicated in June.

For the second year, Shawnee partnered with the Cincinnati Museum Centers, Cincinnati Nature Center and other organizations to present FloraQuest, a series of naturalist-led hikes featuring the region's extraordinarily diverse and rare flora and fauna. These activities promoted the region as a premier destination for nature-based tourism, and boosted overnight use of the park's lodge and cottages.

For the third year, Ohio State Parks and the Ohio Mountain Bike Championship (OMBC) Series presented Get Fit Naturally events at 12 parks. More than 1,200 mountain bikers of all ages, including dozens of children, participated in the OMBC race events.

A number of scouting organizations worked on a variety of community service projects at their local state parks. For example, an Eagle Scout and his troop built a 9-hole mini golf course at Lake Loramie. At Buck Creek and East Fork, urban Boy Scout troops held work weekends to pick up trash in the parks. At Buck Creek and Deer Creek, Boy Scouts planted trees in the parks. At Mohican, a local Eagle Scout coordinated a volunteer project with the Friends of the Old Grist Mill and the county fair board to build a horse arena near the grist mill site for equestrian competitions during the annual county fair. In addition to these projects, a number of scouts made trail improvements described in the Resource Management section.

### INTER-AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Work continued on development of the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program through a series of pilot workshops, hosted by various partner organizations to refine the program content and organization prior to its being formerly released statewide.

The Mohican region continued its partnership with Mansfield Correctional Institute to provide a variety of work projects for inmates, and broadened the program benefits to include parks outside the region. Through this cooperative program, the inmates have rebuilt and repaired a total of 25 pieces of equipment including 10 tractors, which are in use at Barkcamp, Burr Oak, Lake Milton, Punderson and West Branch, as well as Malabar Farm. Cost savings realized through this program are estimated at \$500,000.

A cooperative training program developed in partnership with ODOT was piloted at Dillon and Rocky Fork. The program goals are to accomplish needed improvement projects at the parks while providing ODOT trainees with valuable hands-on practice in the ODOT training curriculum. At Dillon, the trainees gained skills with backhoes, bulldozers, chainsaws and chippers as they cleaned up flood debris, removed brush, cleared an area for an equestrian camp, and improved drainage at the campground. At Rocky Fork, the ODOT trainees operated backhoes, bulldozers, graders and tractors as they built a new 1,800-foot roadway and improved drainage at the campground entrance.

Buck Creek established a partnership with the Greene County Juvenile Court system to provide park clean-up and minor repair projects for supervised offenders who are required to perform community service.

State park staff partnered with the Division of Wildlife regional offices on a variety of local initiatives to offer expanded recreational opportunities. Some examples include new archery ranges at Salt Fork and Shawnee, a dog field trial area at Caesar Creek, a youth dove hunt at Cowan Lake and a youth deer hunt at Tinkers Creek with crossbows donated by a local business.

Disc Golf



## Visitor Safety and Protective Services



Of the 79,723 visitor contacts by commissioned law enforcement personnel, 35 percent were visitor assists. Of the visitor contacts for law enforcement actions, 88 percent were friendly warnings.

### SPECIAL RECOGNITION

Two commissioned park officers received prestigious honors for their outstanding lifesaving efforts. **Rick Alderman**, a park officer at Geneva, and **Jerry Cunningham** a park officer at Mohican, received the Meritorious Lifesaving Award, the division's highest lifesaving honor. Officer Alderman responded to a report of a fire in an apartment building near the park while on patrol, and entered the smoke-filled building to escort a resident to safety. Officer Cunningham responded to a report of a car going over the cliff at the park, and rappelled approximately 135 to a ledge where the car was resting. Officer Cunningham freed the motorist from the wreckage and assisted rescue personnel as they pulled the motorist to safety.

### GLOCK CONVERSION

The Beretta 96D, which had served as the primary duty weapon for park officers for 13 years, has been replaced with the Glock 22 and 23, which is easier and less costly to maintain. All park officers received the Glock weapons along with new duty and plain clothes holsters. The Safariland holster was selected because of its excellent retention features and durability. All officers attended a one-day conversion training class at the Ohio State Highway Patrol Academy.

**PHYSICAL FITNESS ASSESSMENTS**

Physical fitness assessments were conducted by the division’s physical fitness specialists on all commissioned officers during the winter in-service. A total of 157 officers participated, 26 of whom were hired after January 1, 2004 and are required to take and pass an annual fitness test. All of the recently hired officers who were required to meet the fitness standards passed the test. Overall, the test results showed a slight improvement among our park officers in each of the four assessment categories; maximum volume of oxygen intake (VO2 max), upper body strength, abdominal strength and body composition.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT GRANTS & FUNDS**

A \$58,988 grant from the Department of Public Safety, Governor’s Highway Safety Office provided funding for 13 state parks to participate in speed, adult and child restraints and DUI enforcement. A \$24,464 grant from the Division of Watercraft, matched with \$8,155 from the parks, assisted with lake patrols on the waters of Lake Milton, West Branch, and Mosquito Lake.

The Drug/DUI account received \$ 17,775.40 in fines resulting from O.R.C. Title 4511.19, Operating under the influence and O.R.C. Title 2925, Drug abuse. These fines, provided \$12,140.95 toward the purchase of law enforcement equipment.

**PROTECTIVE SERVICES**

Commissioned law enforcement personnel provided an array of protective services including assisting park visitors, issuing visitor warnings, conducting investigations and making arrests. The following are the law enforcement statistics that were reported through the computerized Law Enforcement Tracking System (LETS) Program:

Enforcement Activity	2007	2006	2005
Visitor Assists	28,130	30,513	27,950
Warnings (written or verbal)	45,360	48,848	55,914
Misdemeanor Citations/Arrests	6,050	6,070	6,455
Felony Arrest	183	204	148
Outside Agency Assists	564	775	477
Property Stolen	\$412,275	\$177,456	\$208,088
Vandalism	\$9,676	\$121,297	\$ 41,266
Investigations	3,893	4,161	3,636



Park Officer Jerry Cunningham

There were 55 instances in which park officers were required to respond to resistance while performing law enforcement duties. Seventy-five park officers reported the need to use some level of force and, in some instances, multiple tactics, to respond to an incident. This number is reflective of the ever increasing dangers that officers face in the course of promoting public safety in Ohio State Parks. More conducted energy weapons (CEW) were available for park officers to use, resulting in an increasing trend in the number of incidents in which a CEW was used.

**Type of Response to Resistance Used**

Unholster Weapon	31
Bodily Force	9
Chemical Agent	1
Vehicle Pursuit	11
Injury to Officer	5
Road Block	0
Display Shotgun	2
Suspect Injury	4
Baton	1
Canine	0
CEW	5
Unholster CEW	22
Patrol Rifle	0

# Visitor Occasions

Visitor occasions increased modestly, and campsite rentals got a significant boost from a combination of good weather during the busy season, plenty of appealing events and activities, improvements to the Ohio State Parks website, and customers' increasing comfort with the centralized reservation system.

State Park	2007 Total Visitor Occasions
Adams Lake	270,174
Alum Creek	2,946,633
Aw Marion	493,899
Barkcamp	168,894
Beaver Creek	289,100
Blue Rock	134,060
Buck Creek	349,657
Buckeye Lake	377,143
Burr Oak	415,574
Caesar Creek	2,150,402
Cleveland Lakefront	8,500,876
Cowan Lake	1,811,010
Crane Creek	283,140
Deer Creek	958,171
Delaware	337,422
Dillon	795,149
East Fork	1,072,453
East Harbor	1,478,061
Findley	605,579
Forked Run	172,079
Geneva	964,051
Grand Lake St Marys	768,239
Great Seal	16,019
Guilford Lake	146,091
Harrison Lake	236,142
Headlands Beach	2,352,938
Hocking Hills	2,895,878
Hueston Woods	2,694,105
Independence Dam	74,305
Indian Lake	1,695,752
Jackson Lake	40,939
Jefferson Lake	109,845
John Bryan	248,954
Kiser Lake	548,611
Lake Alma	127,936

State Park	2007 Total Visitor Occasions
Lake Erie Islands	768,632
Lake Hope	847,076
Lake Logan	153,600
Lake Loramie	511,974
Lake Milton	640,448
Lake White	29,280
Little Miami	645,691
Madison Lake	202,502
Malabar Farm	292,383
Marblehead Lighthouse	1,272,180
Mary Jane Thurston	119,709
Maumee Bay	1,124,983
Mohican	521,704
Mosquito Lake	2,296,452
Mt Gilead	122,220
Muskingum River Parkway	289,218
Nelson Ledges	21,589
Paint Creek	510,132
Pike Lake	133,969
Portage Lakes	998,820
Punderson	757,399
Pymatuning	440,629
Quail Hollow	259,980
Rocky Fork	716,548
Salt Fork	1,077,845
Scioto Trail	32,426
Shawnee	263,220
Stonelick	346,810
Strouds Run	566,379
Sycamore	272,256
Tar Hollow	128,132
Tinkers Creek	28,442
Van Buren	105,069
West Branch	480,795
Wolf Run	70,154

**TOTAL**

**53,577,927**

# Resource Management



**Ohio State Parks staff embraced their role as stewards of Ohio's finest land and water resources as they developed natural resource management plans and pursued innovative projects to improve wetland and woodland habitats, protect water quality, conserve energy and adopt sustainable practices. Several of our treasured natural resources and recreational facilities received special recognition.**

## **LAND TRANSACTIONS**

Land purchases, sales, easements and trade agreements help to satisfy the needs of Ohio's individual citizens as well as the State's private and public organizations, while protecting the resource base and public trust concerns. The requests of 14 adjacent land owners were satisfied through the sale of surplus property at three state parks. These sales involved 2.4 acres of surplus property, and were sold for a total of \$24,550.

Mohican State Park exchanged land with the Division of Forestry to facilitate the creation of a pioneer village adjacent to the historic Wolf Creek/Pine Run Grist Mill. The park traded 19 acres for an 18-acre parcel adjacent to the grist mill, where a collection of historic buildings from Paint Creek State Park were relocated and will be restored.

## **WETLAND PROJECTS**

Caesar Creek partnered with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Huntington District, to create several vernal pools with a combined size of nearly two acres. The vernal pools will improve seasonal wetland habitat while improving drainage of the bridle trail areas.

With assistance from the Division of Wildlife, Shawnee built a small vernal pool at the nature center to create rich habitat for amphibians, birds and plants.

Wetland determinations were conducted at Indian Lake, Lake Loramie, Grand Lake St. Marys and Buckeye Lake in preparation for various park improvement projects.

## WATERWAY IMPROVEMENTS

The focus of dredging and other waterway improvement projects is the enhancement of harbors, channels, and waterways to foster vessel safety. Approximately 375,000 cubic yards of sediment were dredged from Ohio State Park waterways, including the Muskingum River Parkway, Buckeye Lake, Grand Lake St. Marys, Indian Lake, Lake Loramie, Rocky Fork, Hueston Woods' Acton Lake, the Maumee River at Independence Dam, and Shawnee's marina on the Ohio River. New dredge projects were initiated at Delaware and at Geneva's marina on Lake Erie.

The nuisance aquatic vegetation harvesting program provided safe access for boaters into waterways otherwise choked with vegetation and not navigable. Approximately 5,000 tons of nuisance weeds were removed from 13 state park waterways.

## WATER QUALITY ISSUES

At South Bass Island, work was completed on the connection to Ottawa County's new water distribution system. The switch to municipal water for the park and its campground was undertaken as a permanent resolution to concerns about well water on the island, prompted by an outbreak of gastrointestinal illness among hundreds of island visitors in 2004. Although the well at the park's campground consistently tested negative for harmful bacteria, the park voluntarily discontinued use of the well and provided drinking water for customers until municipal water became available.

At Salt Fork, the installation of granular activated carbon filters was successful in achieving compliance with Ohio EPA's maximum allowable standards for levels of total trihalomethanes (TTHM), a by-product of chlorination. The park may pursue a project to connect to municipal water as a permanent resolution to TTHM contamination issues.

Concerns about watershed management practices and related lake water quality continued at Grand Lake St. Marys. A watershed action plan was developed pursuant to the Ohio EPA's ranking of the Wabash River watershed, in which Grand Lake St. Marys lies, as "Ohio's most degraded watershed" in a 1999 evaluation. The plan is being implemented in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies along with local community groups, as well as state and federal legislators. The plan includes reduction of incoming sediment and nutrients, which involves changes to existing residential, agricultural and construction practices, along with stabilization of the lake's many miles of state owned shore. Additional recommendations involve replacement of failing septic systems, restoration of wetlands, and continual dredging. The plan's success depends on the community's adoption of the recommendations, as well as adequate funding from many different sources.

## BEACHES

Throughout the swimming season, Ohio State Park beaches were monitored for bacterial contamination by *E. coli* in accordance with guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Health. Advisories were posted at beaches where the total amount of *E. coli* was found to exceed 235 colony forming units per 100ml of sample. Twenty-five advisories were issued at 20 of 65 inland state park beaches and 63 advisories were issued at 11 of the 13 Lake Erie beaches in state parks. Many of these advisories were single-day postings, although lengthy postings occurred at Cleveland Lakefront's Euclid Beach, where bacteria levels were elevated for 41 days, and at Shawnee's Turkey Creek Lake, where the posting continued for 29 days. Additional testing at Cleveland Lakefront indicated that high concentrations of waterfowl in the area (especially Canada geese) were the likely source of the elevated bacteria levels.

## RECREATIONAL TRAILS

Two parks received grant funding through the Ohio Recreational Trails Program for trail improvements. Indian Lake was awarded \$32,500 for restoration and enhancement of 1.25 miles of the bike path. Lake Milton received \$80,000 for the development of two additional miles of walking path along the east side of the lake.

A number of trail improvements were accomplished as a result of volunteer efforts and outside funding. Eagle Scout projects included rebuilding an existing trail at Punderson with new culverts, foot bridges, base materials and signage; construction of a boardwalk at Delaware on a poorly drained segment of the disc golf trail; installation of a bridge on the trail connecting the campground to the park office at John Bryan; extension of the walkway and repairs to the existing boardwalk on John Bryan's

Recreational Trail Users





Bobcat at Shawnee

South Gorge Trail; and construction of boardwalk at Shawnee to protect sensitive salamander habitat. At Cowan Lake, volunteers built an impressive 33-foot bridge on the Beechnut Trail near the campground. Local mountain biking groups rerouted a section of trail at East Fork and created three miles of new mountain bike trail at Van Buren. East Fork received a \$2,500 grant from Duke Energy to create GPS maps of the park's extensive hiking, mountain biking and bridle trail system.

### BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

**B**uckeye Lake partnered with the Division of Wildlife and the Ohio Bass Federation on a spawning habitat improvement project to increase bass populations in the lake through habitat enhancement. The project entailed building bass nesting boxes and placing them strategically along the lake. The park received the Ohio Lake Management Society's Lake Management Award for the project. Pymatuning installed submerged fish habitat near the campground with help from the park's friends group, the Division of Wildlife, and the park staff of the adjacent Pennsylvania state park.

In cooperation with the Division of Wildlife, pheasants were released at Mary Jane Thurston's North Turkeyfoot area and at North Bass Island. East Fork worked with Quail Forever to establish food plots and corridors linking habitat areas for quail and pheasants at the park. At Findley, an osprey nesting structure was installed at the spillway trail at the north end of the lake to encourage osprey nesting in the area. Fifteen new bluebird boxes were installed at Deer Creek. Bat boxes were installed at John Bryan as part of an Eagle Scout project.

Buckeye Lake and the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves cooperated with the Dawes Arboretum near Newark to provide pieces of the Cranberry Bog that have become detached from the unique floating island for transplanting at the arboretum's wetland.

Harrison Lake initiated a tree nursery to provide replacements for diseased and aging trees around the park. At Deer Creek, the park planted 900 trees of various species near the golf course area. With funding from the Division of Wildlife and assistance from local elementary school students, Shawnee planted native trees, shrubs and forbs to improve habitat.

At Punderson, rare plants were identified along the campground roadway. The park naturalist and management team worked with the staff of the Cleveland Natural History Museum to document the locations of the plants and develop a plan to protect them. The division has worked with the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves to conduct plant inventories at North Bass Island in the spring, summer and fall as part of the master planning process.

Naturalists and volunteers who assisted with the 17th annual butterfly count at Shawnee, accomplished in conjunction with the North American Butterfly Association, tallied 1,734 butterflies of 36 species. Monarch butterfly tagging programs were conducted at Cleveland Lakefront, Maumee Bay and Van Buren.

To protect an eagle nest at the north end of the campground, Pymatuning temporarily closed 135 campsites during the nesting season. Unfortunately, no eaglets hatched. The campsites reopened in time for the July 4 holiday.

Shawnee's reputation as Ohio's wilderness state park was enhanced as sightings of black bear and bobcats became more prevalent. Following the discovery of an adult female bobcat roadkill on State Route 125 near the park, bobcat kittens were frequently sighted near the park's campground. The park experienced an uptick in out-of-state deer hunters as southern Ohio's reputation grows as a trophy buck destination. A 23-point buck that was killed on the nearby highway was mounted for use at the park.

Tar Hollow developed a plan in cooperation with the Division of Wildlife to manage its rattlesnake population, establish protocols for rattlesnake encounters with park visitors, and educate visitors about the snakes. Information posted on the park's bulletin boards reminded visitors that the rattlesnakes are endangered and a part of the ecosystem, and that any sightings of rattlesnakes should be reported to park staff. Captured snakes are to be tagged and monitored by the Division of Wildlife.

## MANAGEMENT OF NUISANCE SPECIES

Canada geese continued to cluster in large numbers at many parks, particularly at beaches and golf courses, creating a nuisance for visitors and threatening water quality. The “Goose Buster,” a mobile speaker system that plays recordings of alarm calls at irregular intervals, has been introduced at several parks, but has proven minimally effective.

Beaver activity has increased significantly and the destruction of trees has become an emerging issue at a number of parks, including Burr Oak, Cleveland Lakefront’s Wildwood Park, Forked Run, Headlands Beach, Pymatuning, Scioto Trail, Stonelick, and Strouds Run. The affected parks cooperated with the Division of Wildlife to allow for trapping of the beaver.

At Lake Hope, evidence of wild boars had become pervasive around the park in early spring. The park secured permission for a special permit for a local trapper, and signs of boar activity diminished significantly as park visitation increased in late spring.

At Shawnee, park staff are keeping a close watch on the park’s hemlock trees for signs of an emerging threat, the hemlock woolly adelgid. This non-native pest is rapidly moving toward southern Ohio, and may encroach in the next several years. Once infested, native hemlocks typically die within five years.

With the help of volunteers and sister agencies, several parks continued to work on elimination of nuisance plants including phragmites and purple loosestrife at Maumee Bay, garlic mustard at Cleveland Lakefront and Strouds Run, honeysuckle at John Bryan, and American lotus water lilies at Pymatuning’s marina.

Ohio State Parks continued to cooperate with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to slow the spread of the destructive emerald ash borer (EAB). The impact of the EAB has become more noticeable at Maumee Bay, which is particularly vulnerable to EAB infestation because of its proximity to Michigan, and because the majority of trees in the campground are ash trees. Detection traps established on two trees by Ohio State University researchers yielded 100 EAB larvae. The park staff transplanted healthy volunteer saplings of other tree species growing elsewhere in the park to help maintain some tree cover in the campground as ash trees die off.

All of the parks were provided with updated information on the EAB quarantine zone for posting at campground offices so campers could comply with the restrictions on the movement of firewood as the quarantine boundary continued to expand south and east across the state, encompassing 34 counties containing 28 state parks. Campers continued to be advised against moving firewood as they made their camping reservations over the Internet.

## SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND GREEN INITIATIVES

The division continued to adopt and refine practices to reduce energy consumption on a number of fronts including vehicles, equipment, and mowing operations, as well as public buildings and park maintenance and administrative facilities. For example, Lake Hope piloted a “no-heat, no-cool” month in May in the park office and maintenance buildings, and Deer Creek reduced mowing in day use areas by 10 percent.

The new geothermal heating and cooling system at Malabar Farm’s Visitor Education Center, which houses the park office and public meeting space, has saved an estimated 60 percent in utility bills, and the pressure assisted dual flush low flow toilets in the public restrooms have reduced water use by about 50 percent. The green building’s hybrid renewable energy system, which includes a solar panel array and wind turbine, was part of the National Solar Energy Tour held in conjunction with the American Solar Energy Society’s annual conference in Cleveland. The system provides an estimated 20 percent of the building’s electrical energy needs.

In accordance with Governor Strickland’s Executive Order 2007-02S, the division initiated audits of energy usage at every facility in Ohio State Parks from FY06 through the present. The information collected through this audit will help guide decisions for capital improvements and energy efficiency policies. The division also participated in the department’s new Energy Team, with division staff chairing three of the team’s subcommittees.



Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center



Mohican Scenic River

Foundational work began on the implementation of a statewide recycling program at state parks in cooperation with the Division of Recycling and Litter Prevention, local solid waste districts, and various private entities. Individual parks have also undertaken local recycling efforts. For example, Lake Hope offered a recycling program for their vacation cottages and Quail Hollow served as a community drop-off point for recyclable materials. Park volunteers at Lake Loramie personally encouraged campers to recycle aluminum cans, and with the proceeds from the can recycling effort, provided \$1,000 for playground equipment at the park. Malabar Farm invited park visitors to bring in their clean used egg cartons and plastic grocery bags for re-use in the park's gift shop, and Lake Milton collected 650 used tires to create mulch for the park's playground areas.

To assess the impact of the new statewide refuse contract negotiated by the Department of Administrative Services, the division conducted a comprehensive analysis of the existing costs and delivery of refuse collection services at each park compared to the potential costs and delivery of services under the new contract.

### NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS

Natural resource management plans were initiated at the following seven parks: Caesar Creek, Cowan Lake, Indian Lake, Little Miami, Pymatuning, Sycamore and Van Buren. The natural resource management plans for Buck Creek and John Bryan were finalized and approved, bringing the total of approved plans to five. Many other parks' natural resource management plans were in various phases of development during the year.

### DROUGHT, FLOODING AND STORM DAMAGE

At East Fork, an extended period of dry weather caused lake levels to drop more than five feet below the normal summer pool. The campground beach and North Shore ramp were closed for the season prior to the Labor Day weekend due to the low lake levels, although the main beach and other boat launch ramps remained open.

The beach and boat ramps at Delaware were closed for a day in late August due to flooding after heavy storms. The campground at Mary Jane Thurston was closed for nearly a week in late August due to flooding.

### SPECIAL DESIGNATIONS

Malabar Farm and Mohican were recognized as "Important Birding Areas" by the Audubon Society. Malabar Farm's prairie grass plantings received official certification from the National Wildlife Federation as a backyard habitat.

A 32.3 mile stretch of the Mohican River was designated as a state scenic river, including the five-mile segment that winds through Mohican State Park.

The entire Muskingum River Parkway lock system was officially placed on the National Register of Historic Places. The ten historic locks, which are hand-operated today in the same manner as when they were built in 1841, comprise the nation's only remaining system of hand-operated river locks.

Geneva's marina received the Clean Marina Certification from the Office of Coastal Management.

Shawnee was included in a newly designated scenic byway in Scioto County. In addition to the tourism advantages of scenic byway status, the designation may make some future park projects eligible for scenic byway grant funding.

The mountain biking trails at Findley have been incorporated in the new Lorain County "Beaches and Backroads" Bicycle Tour.

# Professional Development

During the peak season, Ohio State Parks employed a workforce of 469 permanent and 1,142 less-than full-time employees. Within the workforce, there were 353 new hirings of permanent or seasonal employees, 98 reclassifications or promotions, 311 resignations and 13 retirements.

Managers continued to consolidate administrative, maintenance and law enforcement operations within their regional units. The number of park regions remained at 26.

As part of an initiative for all Ohio state government agencies to streamline and modernize administrative and business functions, the division began implementation of the web-based Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS) for a number of human resources functions. The human resource functions included in the initial Human Capital Management (HCM) module implemented this year are employment and related activities, employee base benefits, and position management. The conversion to the OAKS system entailed various training sessions and hands-on entry into the system. The OAKS-HCM module on selection and recruitment will be introduced in 2008.



All Ohio Parks Maintenance Olympics

## Personnel

Numbers of permanent employees by general job categories are:

Administration	11
Professional and Technical	129
Clerical/Office Support	35
Skilled Craft	135
Protective Services	98
Operational Support	61
<b>Total Permanent Employees</b>	<b>469</b>

## Employee Development Programs

### EMPLOYEE SATISFACTION SURVEY

Several of the action steps developed by the multidisciplinary teams assigned to the four Priorities for Improvement (PFIs) identified in the 2005 employee satisfaction survey were implemented. A Chief's "Statement of Direction" was issued establishing mandatory protocols for employee and management meetings within each region. A "Budget News" feature was added to the division's ParkNet Intranet site to familiarize employees with the budgeting process and budget status. A survey was conducted to identify and compile management's "best practices" in employee recognition. Each of these implemented action steps helps address one or more of the four PFIs: "Ohio State Parks values its employees," "I feel recognized for work well done," "Employees receive equal (consistent) treatment from management," and "Ohio State Parks is financially secure for the long term."

### TRAINING

Four exempt employees entered the Ohio Certified Public Manager (OCPM) Program. Since its inception in 1998, 61 division employees have graduated from, or are currently enrolled in the program. The OCPM curriculum is 300 hours of professional management and leadership training in four learning areas of general administration skills; technical, quantitative and qualitative skills; analytical and conceptual skills; and human relations skills. The program continued to be the management training program of choice.

The annual Park Managers Conference was held at Mohican in April. The conference was attended by approximately 200 park managers, assistant park managers, golf course superintendents, group and section managers, and other key administrative staff as well as special guests. The agenda included division and department updates, and a presentation by Archie Griffin, Executive Director of The Ohio State University Alumni Association, two-time Heisman Trophy winner and former NFL football player, who spoke on motivation. The keynote speaker was Jodi Rudick, whose topic was marketing.

A continuing education program was provided for graduates of the Ohio State Parks Flickinger Leadership Academies conducted in 2002 and 2004. The 2-day program was held at Hocking Hills in February. The Flickinger graduates, 60 percent of whom have received a promotion since attending the academy, were encouraged to assess and recommit to their career goals in park management. Speakers included two former Flickinger Academy instructors; Dr. Neil Andrew of The Ohio State University, who has also served as a mentor for many of the graduates, and Dan Lambert, Director of Safety and Health for American Electric Power, whose presentation focused on the struggles of regionalization within a large organization, emphasizing individual accountability and competency. The program was concluded by Mark Anthony Garrett, a professional speaker who has his roots in ODNR through his former employment in the CCC program and education at Hocking College, School of Natural Resources. Mr. Garrett challenged the graduates to evaluate their professional career choices, challenging each of them to set the bar higher.

For the third year, front-line staff who provide direct service to customers were provided with customer service training at the outset of the busy summer season, as part of the division's hospitality management initiatives. The comprehensive 2-day training programs were presented at Mohican and Hocking Hills in April for 140 park employees. In addition to the contractually required training from InfoSpherix on the centralized reservation and point-of-sale systems, participants received training on providing exceptional customer service and managing difficult transactions.

The first All-Ohio Parks Maintenance Conference & Olympics was held at Deer Creek in conjunction with the Ohio Parks & Recreation Association. The program featured hands-on instruction in basic trade skills as well as presentations about the Emerald Ash Borer and the benefits of parks and recreation. More than 70 division employees attended the event. Two teams representing the division placed first and second overall in the contests that were focused on park maintenance trade skills such as picnic table building, backhoe operation and posthole digging.

### IN MEMORIAM

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our friends and coworkers, **Robert Grollmus**, Natural Resources Worker at Hueston Woods, who passed away on March 2; **Brenda Hollar**, Natural Resources Worker at Dillon, who passed away on March 31; **Michael Moore**, NRS at South Bass Island, who passed away on June 6; **Tony Vinnedge**, NRW at Hueston Woods and Army reservist, who was killed in Iraq on July 5; and **Donovan Svab**, Park Officer at Portage Lakes, who passed away on August 26.

The annual interpretive service training program for permanent and seasonal park naturalists was offered at four regional locations to reduce travel costs and foster regional teamwork among the staff. Parks that hosted the training sessions were Malabar Farm, Hocking Hills, Hueston Woods and Indian Lake. The training agenda emphasized sharing of best practices, including a new statewide program, “Family Nature Adventures” which replaced the Junior Naturalist Program and emphasized the design of family-friendly programs that were more inclusive of parents and older youth, rather than programs designed exclusively for participation by young children.

Background investigation training was offered to 23 park officers. Topics included division and department policies on hiring commissioned officers, along with the Ohio Law Enforcement Gateway (OHLEG) program offered by the Attorney General’s Office.

Training for all commissioned officers included the annual in-service training, fall firearms training, and handgun conversion training. During the in-service training, held at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy in London, all commissioned officers qualified with the handgun and received training in weapon retention and weapon defense. All officers were also fitted for a respirator as part of Homeland Security requirements. Additionally, officers participated in a physical fitness assessment and were provided with an individualized plan to help them improve their fitness level. Fall firearms training entailed shotgun qualification, shotgun shooting drills and live fire shooting scenarios. The division continued to partner with Hocking College by providing traffic stop instructors who trained students in basic peace officer classes at the Natural Resources Ranger Academy.

For the second year, Ohio State Parks partnered with the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association to hold the Ohio Resource Development Academy to provide tips for securing grants and other funding. The Ohio EPA’s Office of Environmental Education conducted a grant writing workshop. Representatives from ODOT and ODNR’s divisions of Watercraft, Recycling, Real Estate and Land Management, Wildlife and the Office of Coastal Management gave presentations on their respective grant programs and how best to apply for funding. More than 80 state park employees and representatives of Ohio’s metro parks, city parks, local government agencies, and non-profit organizations attended the two-day program held in December at the ODNR central office.



Hocking Hills Lifesaving Team

## Employee Recognition Programs

### EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

In its fifteenth year, the Employee of the Quarter Award program recognized four employees each quarter for outstanding performance and service to the division. To date, 226 employees have been nominated by their peers, selected by committee, and recognized for exceptional characteristics. The Employee of the Quarter Award recipients were:

#### Winter Quarter

**Janet (Sue) Fitzgerald**, Dillon – Administrative Support  
**Mark Geldien**, Maumee Bay – Maintenance  
**Steven Smith**, Pymatuning – Law Enforcement  
**Gary James**, C/O-Business Group – Management

#### Spring Quarter

**Dave Sapienza**, Lake Hope – Administrative Support  
**Cathleen Huey**, Dillon – Maintenance  
**Joe Soukup**, Cleveland Lakefront – Law Enforcement  
**Bruce Carpenter**, Portage Lakes – Management

#### Summer Quarter

**Debbie Griffith**, Lake Alma – Administrative Support  
**Paul Mason**, East Fork – Maintenance  
**James Frias**, Maumee Bay – Law Enforcement  
**Chris Grupenhof**, Hocking Hills – Management

#### Fall Quarter

**Lisa McIntyre**, Buckeye Lake – Administrative Support  
**Larry Kessler**, Jackson Lake – Maintenance  
**Leo Wixom, Jr.**, Harrison Lake – Law Enforcement  
**Tim Waln**, Buckeye Lake – Management

### DIVISION LIFESAVING AWARDS

Twenty individuals were recognized for their participation in lifesaving actions of a distinguished nature.

The Lifesaving Commendation Award was presented to the following employees whose actions saved or attempted to save the life of another:

**Keith Peterson**, Park Officer, Cowan Lake  
**Ina Brolis**, Park Manager, East Harbor

The Lifesaving Recognition Award was presented to the following employee whose actions saved or attempted to save the life of another, putting their own lives at risk:

**Kathy Wilson**, Marina Dock Operator, Mosquito Lake

The Meritorious Lifesaving Award was presented to the following employees whose actions saved or attempted to save the life of another, putting their own life at risk to an extraordinary degree:

**Richard Alderman**, Park Officer, Geneva  
**Jerry Cunningham**, Park Officer, Mohican

The Team Lifesaving Award was presented to the following employees whose actions, working together as a team, saved or attempted to save the life of another:

**Paul Baker**, Park Officer, Hocking Hills  
**Mark Bryant**, Park Officer, Hocking Hills  
**Jeremy Davis**, Park Officer, Hocking Hills  
**Chris Grupenhof**, Assistant Park Manager, Hocking Hills  
**Dave W. Miller**, Park Officer, Lake Logan  
**Patrick Quackenbush**, Naturalist, Hocking Hills  
**Joseph Smathers, Sr.**, Natural Resources Worker, Lake Logan



### SERVICE & STEWARDSHIP AWARD

**Virgil Goodwine**, regional manager of Buck Creek and **John Bryan**, received the Service & Stewardship Award for his efforts to continually make improvements to facilities and services, add new special events to attract visitors, and develop fruitful partnerships with the community.

### GAZELLE AWARD

The staff at **Buckeye Lake** was presented the Gazelle Award for their solidly managed operations and positive interaction with park visitors and the local community, despite a long history of challenging issues and difficult community relations.

### CUTTING EDGE AWARD

**Hocking Hills** was recognized with the Cutting Edge Award for its innovative approach to programs and development, and recent accomplishments, from hosting the park system's first Maintenance Trades Academy and constructing a helipad for emergency transport, to helping to develop the Hocking Valley Birding Trail.

### BILL PRICE AWARD

**Connie Michaels**, park naturalist at Quail Hollow, received the annual Bill Price Award for her outstanding efforts to juggle multiple responsibilities at the park as a volunteer coordinator, a naturalist with a demanding program schedule, and the caretaker for the park's raptors and other wildlife used for interpretive programs.



### PARKS LEADERSHIP AWARD

**Frank Giannola**, regional manager of Indian Lake and Kiser Lake, received the peer-driven Leadership Award for fostering a professional yet fun workplace, providing outstanding leadership for his regional team and colleagues, and forging beneficial relationships with local groups.

### TEAM AWARD PROGRAM

The Team Award Program was designed to acknowledge teams of division employees or volunteers who work together to complete a specific project or accomplishment. A total of 123 team award certificates were issued during the program's tenth year. The following teams were recognized:

- Pymatuning Cottage Renovation Team
- Geneva Boat Dock Renovation Team
- Delaware Marina Improvement Team
- Waterway & Construction Equipment Trailer Renovation Team
- Salt Fork Electronic Tee Time Registration Team
- Buck Creek Region Buckhorn Trail Team
- Buck Creek Region Natural Resources Management Plan Team
- Public Affairs Group Web Design Team
- Law Enforcement Glock Conversion Team

The Team of the Year Award was presented to the Mohican Region Flood & Storms Repair Team for their heroic response to severe storms and flooding in July 2006. Mohican staff evacuated 600 visitors from the swamped campground, and at Malabar Farm, park staff saved the valuable agricultural library collection as powerful gusts tore off sections of roofing. After the storms, staff in the region worked diligently to make the necessary repairs so that the parks could reopen quickly to visitors.

# Infrastructure Improvements



Accommodating visitors of all abilities, making campers more comfortable with new and upgraded electrical service and sparkling new restrooms, providing improved facilities for boaters and swimmers, and working behind-the-scenes to protect water quality and improve dams were the focus of park facility improvements accomplished at an estimated total cost of \$24.5 million.

## NATUREWORKS - OHIO'S NATURAL INVESTMENT

In its 13th year, the NatureWorks program provided partial funding for a number of facility rehabilitation projects in the parks. Completed projects include upgrades of existing electrical service at the Deer Creek and Indian Lake campgrounds, and boiler replacement at the Hocking Hills Dining Lodge. Projects in progress include the Burr Oak Lodge and Hocking Hills Dining Lodge renovations, Middle Bass Island marina renovation and expansion, and construction of a new water treatment system at Indian Lake.

The Deer Creek campground electric project, completed in the early summer, involved the installation of electrical supply pedestals and associated electrical system distribution equipment to serve a total of 232 campsites. The Indian Lake campground electric upgrade, also completed in the early summer, entailed installation of electrical supply pedestals and associated equipment to provide electrical service to 177 campsites.

Construction work began in December on the Burr Oak Lodge project, which will provide greatly increased access to the lodge for persons with disabilities with the installation of a new three-stop elevator, modifications to four guestrooms, and replacement of existing handrails and guardrail. A new fire alarm system, replacement of the existing asphalt shingle roof and repairs to structural column bases in the swimming pool area are also included in the project scope. The lodge was temporarily closed in December for the construction work, with re-opening in March 2008, and construction work scheduled for completion in summer 2008.

Planned renovations to the Hocking Hills Dining Lodge took an unexpected turn when the boilers that provide heat to the building failed in February. After the boilers were replaced, work began on exterior painting and repairs, with anticipated completion in summer 2008.

At Middle Bass Island, the ongoing issue of providing water and wastewater for the proposed park facilities was resolved with plans to connect to existing community water and wastewater treatment systems, and assist with upgrades of the plants to provide sufficient capacity using in part, the division's "fair share" dollars. Work continued on the Middle Bass Island marina project, which entails relocation of the marina entrance and construction of new entrance breakwalls, reshaping of the marina perimeter and placement of riprap stone, and construction of a new two-lane boat launching ramp. All work on the project is scheduled for completion in fall 2008.

At Indian Lake, work commenced on replacement of water treatment plants that serve the campground and Fox Island picnic areas of the park. All work is schedule for completion in spring 2008.

**CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

Several renovation and improvement projects were undertaken using capital funding sources other than NatureWorks. Completed projects include a beach house at Buck Creek and new restroom buildings at Lake Loramie. Design work was undertaken on projects at five parks to improve boating facilities.

At Buck Creek, the existing 1970s era open-air shower and restroom building in poor condition was demolished and replaced with a new masonry block restroom structure of a smaller size, which is better suited to the current use of the beach area. The new building is handicapped accessible and has an outside shower pedestal.

At Lake Loramie, five new buildings were constructed, including a shower building in the campground, and four restroom buildings in other areas of the park. All of the buildings are durable concrete structures that are fully handicapped accessible. The shower building also has limited heating capability to support winter camping.

A campground electrification project at Findley provided electrical service for the first time for one third of the park's campsites. Electrical supply pedestals and associated equipment were installed at 91 campsites.

Significant progress was made on construction and upgrades to improve underground fuel storage units (UST) to bring outdated UST systems into compliance with current regulations and to obtain a status of "No Further Action" for those sites where soil or groundwater contamination was discovered. An updated inventory of underground and above-ground petroleum storage tanks has been completed, site checks and Tier I/Tier II evaluations for 44 removed USTs have been performed, remedial action plans were prepared for five USTs, plans and specifications for construction of upgrades to 34 underground tanks at 17 different facilities have been prepared, and "No Further Action" status has been achieved for 42 previously removed UST sites. Additionally, parks have continued to make improvements to more than 50 above-ground tanks that are not compliant with current regulation.

**PROJECT DESIGN**

Design work continued on Phase 2 of the Lake White dam rehabilitation. The next phase of this complex and extensive dam rehabilitation is application of roller compacted cement to the face of the dam to prevent overtopping damage during the next extreme storm event. ODOT has been approached as a potential partner in this phase of the project.

Planning and design continued for water and wastewater improvements, including rehabilitation of wastewater treatment plants at Lake Hope and Kelleys Island.

Preliminary design reports were prepared for dock replacement and utility improvements at Delaware, Hueston Woods, Paint Creek and Shawnee. In addition to the dock improvements, preliminary design

**EXAMPLES OF NATUREWORKS/  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

The following summary is a sampling of projects under construction or design in 2007 with funding released for design and/or construction.

PARK	PROJECT	Funds Released
Buck Creek	Beach bathhouse	\$ 422,378
Burr Oak	Lodge rehabilitation	\$ 1,504,290
Cleveland Lakefront	Marina concessions electric	\$ 105,200
Cleveland Lakefront	Upgrade underground fuel tanks	\$ 80,110
Deer Creek	Camp electric	\$ 963,551
East Harbor	Beach house design	\$ 100,000
Findley	Camp electric	\$ 529,000
Grand Lake	Waterline work	\$ 318,600
Hocking Hills	Dining lodge heating	\$ 104,000
Hocking Hills	Dining lodge painting	\$ 131,300
Indian Lake	Water/wastewater rehabilitation	\$ 1,402,005
Indian Lake	Camp electric	\$ 766,000
Kiser Lake	Well work	\$ 82,000
Kiser Lake	Trailer dump station	\$ 26,200
Lake Loramie	Trailer dump station	\$ 26,200
Lake Loramie	New restrooms	\$ 1,388,900
Lake White	Dam phase 1	\$ 4,402,576
Mary Jane Thurston	Marina rehabilitation	\$ 981,938
Middle Bass	Marina development	\$ 4,682,621
Middle Bass	Water/wastewater upgrade	\$ 1,060,000
Mosquito Lake	Camp sewer	\$ 114,747
Portage Lakes	Site work –regional office	\$ 7,100
Portage Lakes	Water/wastewater rehabilitation	\$ 22,386
Punderson	Water/wastewater rehabilitation	\$ 400,600
Various State Parks	Upgrade underground fuel tanks	\$ 657,890
Various State Parks	Water/wastewater rehabilitation	\$ 522,635
Various State Parks	Boating facilities development	\$ 624,476
West Branch	New ramp in campground	\$ 1,135,000
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$22,561,703</b>

reports were also prepared for replacement of the floating concession building at Paint Creek, as well as shoreline retaining wall modifications at Shawnee. The reports will be used to allocate existing capital improvement funds for construction of the highest priority repairs.

A number of additional projects were under active design, with anticipated design completion or construction in 2008. They are:

- Caesar Creek: North Pool Project (construction 2008)
- Cleveland Lakefront: Gordon Boat Ramp (design 90% complete)
- Mosquito Lake: SR 88 Launch Ramp (design 90% complete)
- Pymatuning: Cottage Beach and Birch Launch Ramps (design 90% complete)
- Kelleys Island: Wastewater Treatment Plant

**ROADWAY MAINTENANCE AND STRIPING PROGRAM**

Major projects completed through the Cooperative Roadway Maintenance Program with ODOT included resurfacing and drainage at Kiser Lake, Tinkers Creek and Forked Run. Phase 1 roadway resurfacing at Buck Creek was also completed, and Punderson’s cabin area received asphalt repair. This fund also assisted with a bridge repair at Malabar Farm. Expenditures on these project totaled \$1,800,174. Through this program a total of 1,104 regulatory and directional signs were produced by ODOT for the parks and for the divisions of Forestry and Watercraft. The total cost for signage was \$36,440.

**MISCELLANEOUS PARK CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

A number of repair, replacement and improvement projects at revenue generating park facilities such as lodges, cottages, marinas and concession buildings, were completed using park operating funds and the lodge maintenance, repair and replacement funds.



Mary Jane Thurston marina improvements

PARK	PROJECT	COST
Burr Oak Lodge	Door replacement & mattresses	\$ 55,795
Cleveland Lakefront	East 55th St. Marina, electrical upgrades	\$ 135,200
Cleveland Lakefront	Edgewater Marina, repairs to B&D docks	\$ 8,100
Deer Creek Lodge	Kitchen items, ceiling	\$ 33,606
Deer Creek Lodge	Landscaping, lawn tractor, roof repair	\$ 45,437
Deer Creek Lodge	Meeting room/common area renovations, floors	\$ 140,644
East Harbor	Marina A/C replacement	\$ 4,990
Geneva	Dredging of the marina entrance	\$ 49,030
Hueston Woods Lodge	Patio doors; new fryer for kitchen	\$ 19,554
Maumee Bay Lodge	Spa pipes; window repairs; room locks	\$ 21,899
Maumee Bay Lodge	Lodge roof restoration & repairs	\$ 341,604
Mohican Lodge	Restroom, guest room & common area updates	\$ 334,552
Mohican Lodge	Pool deck & tennis court repairs; outdoor lighting	\$ 199,942
Mohican Lodge	Roof repair	\$ 129,680
Mohican Lodge	Storm damage clean up	\$ 27,000
Punderson Lodge	PTAC replacements in guest rooms	\$ 71,225
Punderson Lodge	Restroom updates; new TVs, mattresses, carpet	\$ 77,222
Salt Fork Lodge	Room locks; carpet; cottage & pool furniture	\$ 94,777
Salt Fork Lodge	Cottage steps; lodge boiler replacement	\$ 27,832
Salt Fork Lodge	Meeting room renovation; dining room POS	\$ 41,225
Salt Fork Lodge	Roof re-seal	\$ 49,825
Shawnee Lodge	Restroom upgrades; pool & room furniture	\$ 35,651
Shawnee Lodge	Pro shop heat pump	\$ 16,918
Shawnee Lodge	PTAC replacements in guest rooms	\$ 15,191
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,976,899</b>

**IN-HOUSE CONSTRUCTION INITIATIVES**

Statewide, more than 169 construction projects, including 10 emergency projects, were completed with in-house labor and equipment. Special projects included relocating antique barns and buildings from the pioneer farm at Paint Creek to Mohican, as well as relocating a kiosk building donated to Mohican from a local business. At Shawnee, a CCC-era log cabin was relocated from a Division of Forestry area to the park, where it will be restored and used as a nature center. A trades program was initiated within the Statewide Construction Crew, and two maintenance repair workers were added to the traveling crews to assist parks with projects requiring specific skill sets such as electrical, plumbing, carpentry and masonry. These trade employees assisted with the assembly of the new campground check-in building at Buck Creek, constructing a new foundation for the log cabin at Shawnee and restroom renovations at the South Construction headquarters. Crews working from the Portage Region as well as the Waterway & Construction Section accomplished incremental dock renovations at Delaware, Buck Creek and Geneva.

**IN-HOUSE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

The very successful in-house dock shop in the Portage Lakes region continued during the off-season, and the South Construction Crew also established a dock shop to rehabilitate state-operated boat docks, 80 percent of which are more than 15 years old, and 60 percent of which are in poor condition. The Portage Lakes shop refurbished 20 dock fingers and two mains at Buck Creek and replaced five courtesy docks at Geneva. The South Construction Crew replaced 46 dock fingers and associated mains at Delaware.

The vinyl graphics shop at Dillon produced several thousand signs, decals, stickers and banners to provide the parks with uniform signage, decals for law enforcement equipment marking and banners for special events. A new wide format printer for outdoor-grade materials was purchased to broaden the shop's offerings and enhance efficiency.

Barkcamp established a new operation that produces routed, professional quality park entrance signs using two-color HDPE plastic plywood made primarily from recycled milk jugs. This high-density, weather impermeable product will provide extended life with virtually no maintenance while it offers a clean and professional appearance. A total of 40 park entrance signs were produced. The sign shop also produced smaller informational and directional signs for use within the parks. The routed entrance signs cost an estimated 20 to 50 percent less than similar signs produced by private companies.

Additional products produced by the team at Barkcamp for the parks included 1,000 picnic tables, 1,000 fire rings, 400 waist-high grills and 70,000 bundles of firewood.

"In-house Industries" web pages were developed on the division's Intranet site, to provide the parks with information on the full line of services and equipment available, including assistance from the dredge and construction crews, vinyl graphics and dock repair shops; shared division equipment; and products from the Barkcamp enterprises.

**ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS**

Accessibility design standards are incorporated into all new and rehabilitated park structures in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. The new campground launch ramp at West Branch includes an accessible boarding ramp along with accessible parking spaces. At Findley and Deer Creek, accessible campsites were improved as part of campground electrification/up-grade projects.

At Burr Oak's resort lodge, construction work began on incorporating a new three-stop elevator into the lodge to improve access. Additional access upgrades include modifications to four guest rooms and replacement of existing handrails and guardrail.

In addition to major capital projects, park staff continued to improve facility access by widening doorways, toilet compartments, and shower stalls; constructing access ramps, modifying campsites, and adding handicapped parking spaces. Accessibility also continued to be enhanced through numerous small projects such as removing thresholds, changing door handles, and updating plumbing fixtures and drinking fountains.

**FLEET MANAGEMENT**

The division's vehicle fleet remained steady at nearly 600 vehicles. During FY07, \$1 million was allocated for vehicle replacements including 44 new vehicles and eight used vehicles, a 47 percent increase in vehicle expenditures from FY06 allocations. In addition to these vehicle purchases, the division obtained 40 vehicles originally destined for salvage sale by other ODNr divisions. This exchange of vehicles resulted in a reduction of the overall accumulated fleet mileage by 2.76 million miles. However, despite these new and used vehicle acquisitions, the parks continue to operate utilizing a significantly aged fleet. Across the fleet, the average vehicle is 8.0 years old, and has been driven 98,028 miles.

The division's non-motor vehicle rolling fleet of 1,170 includes tractors, riding mowers, specialized golf course maintenance equipment units, trailers, heavy construction equipment such as bull dozers and excavators, utility vehicles and golf carts including rental carts at the golf courses, and watercraft, including lake patrol boats, dredges and public rental craft at several marinas. The ongoing strategy of mowing equipment rental versus ownership shifted in favor of ownership as equipment rental rates began to rise and the owned equipment continued to age. With a year-end purchase of nine commercial mowers and two medium tractors, the division has reduced the rented/leased equipment to less than five units.



Refurbished docks at Buck Creek

# Fiscal Management



Ohio State Parks expended \$89.9 million in fiscal year 2007, including \$28.2 million from revenues generated from fees and charges. The division implemented the new Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS), which consolidates business and human resources processes statewide. The finance segment of OAKS, including accounts payable, purchasing, and accounts receivable, went live on July 1.

## BUDGET

The division's budget is comprised of several funding sources. The primary source is the state's General Revenue Fund (GRF). The GRF is providing 63.1 to 64.3 percent of funding, of which \$17.9 to \$18.3 million is earmarked for debt reduction.

The second largest source of operating funding is fees and charges generated by the state parks and deposited into Fund 512. This fund accounts for approximately 31.3 to 32.4 percent of the total budget in both FY 07 and FY 08.

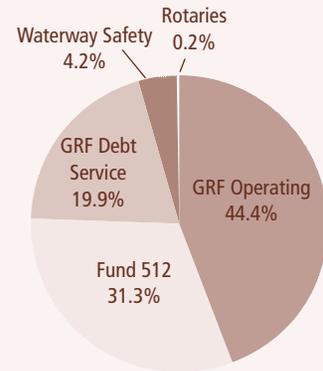
Approximately 4.2 to 4.3 percent of the budget is provided by the Waterway Safety Fund, which is designated for specific purposes. The balance of the funds received is obtained from miscellaneous rotary accounts.



Actual expenditures for FY 07 and the total appropriation for FY 08 are indicated in the following charts:

**FUNDING**

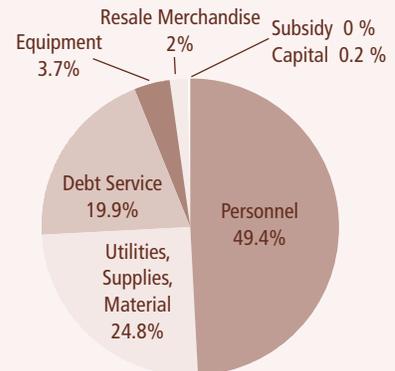
FUNDING SOURCE	FY '07 EXPENDED	FY '08 BUDGETED
GRF Operating	\$ 39,874,241 44.4%	\$ 39,874,841 43.2%
Fund 512 Fees & Charges	\$ 28,170,437 31.3%	\$ 29,890,528 32.4%
GRF Debt Service	\$ 17,927,504 19.9%	\$ 18,316,200 19.9%
Waterway Safety	\$ 3,770,453 4.2%	\$ 3,925,075 4.3%
Rotaries	\$ 164,837 0.2%	\$ 204,406 0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 89,907,472</b>	<b>\$ 92,211,050</b>



**EXPENDITURES**

An itemization of major expenditures to pay salaries, debt service, utility and maintenance costs, resale items, subsidy payments, operating capital and equipment purchases is as follows:

EXPENSES	FY '07 EXPENDED	FY '08 BUDGETED
Personnel	\$ 44,371,851 49.4%	\$ 46,231,979 50.1%
Utilities/Supplies/Material	\$ 22,280,500 24.8%	\$ 23,247,667 25.2%
Debt Service	\$ 17,927,504 19.9%	\$ 18,316,200 19.9%
Equipment	\$ 3,345,304 3.7%	\$ 2,461,593 2.7%
Resale Merchandise	\$ 1,811,103 2%	\$ 1,921,567 2.1%
Capital	\$ 158,710 0.2%	\$ 32,044 0%
Subsidy	\$ 12,500 0%	\$ 0 0%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 89,907,472</b>	<b>\$ 92,211,050</b>



**REVENUE**

Ohio State Parks generated \$28,869,863 in revenue, an eight percent increase over 2006 revenue. All revenue generated by state parks is deposited into Fund 512.

The revenues received in calendar years 2006 and 2007 were as follows:

<b>REVENUE CATEGORY</b>	<b>CY 2007</b>	<b>CY 2006</b>	<b>PERCENT CHANGE</b>
Camping	\$11,232,748	\$ 9,871,561	14 %
Self-Operated Retail	\$ 4,087,193	\$ 3,791,065	8 %
Cottage Rentals	\$ 2,941,529	\$ 3,100,194	-5 %
Dock Permits	\$ 2,829,651	\$ 2,623,570	8%
Concession Agreements	\$ 2,759,243	\$ 2,702,753	2%
Golf Greens Fees	\$ 1,849,299	\$ 1,651,533	12 %
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,630,564	\$ 1,038,569	57%
Getaway Rentals	\$ 579,577	\$ 595,933	-3 %
Group Lodge Rentals	\$ 240,923	\$ 214,678	12%
State Agency Transfers	\$ 174,996	\$ 499,487	-65%
Grants	\$ 166,101	\$ 126,956	31%
Royalties & Easements	\$ 131,476	\$ 103,293	27%
Donations	\$ 69,375	\$ 80,330	-14 %
Laundromats	\$ 49,704	\$ 44,498	12 %
Land Rentals	\$ 48,641	\$ 51,193	-5 %
Pools & Lockers	\$ 33,946	\$ 28,435	19 %
Sales Assets	\$ 21,701	\$ 73,060	-70 %
Duck Blinds	\$ 15,258	\$ 15,955	-4 %
Fines & Penalties	\$ 7,938	\$ 23,483	-66%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$28,869,863</b>	<b>\$26,636,546</b>	<b>8 %</b>



# Statistical Abstract

Ohio State Park System 2007

## GENERAL PARK

# State Parks	74
Total Acreage	174,212 <sup>1</sup>
Acreage -- Land	107,807
Acreage -- Water	66,405
Miles of Shoreline	1,025
% of Land that is Developed	21.2%
% of Shoreline that is Developed	26.8%
Visitor Occasions	53,577,927
# Buildings	2,638
# Water Systems	146
# Sewer Systems	142
# Restroom Buildings -- Water Borne	462
# Restroom Buildings -- Pit Privies	497
Miles of Roads Patrolled	1,844
# Felonies	183
# Citations	6,050
# Visitor Assists	28,130
# Park Residences	83
# Dining Lodges/Restaurants	2

## CAMPGROUNDS

# Campgrounds	87
# Family Campsites	9,379
# Full Service Sites	212
# Electric Sites	6,584
# Non-electric Sites	2,241
# General Group Areas	61
# No-fee, Non-group Primitive Sites	79
# Horse Camps	14
# Horse Camp Sites	342
# Showerhouses	114
# Amphitheaters	51
# Camp Store/Commissaries	44
# Campsites Rented	551,869
Campground Occupancy (244 nights)	24.6% <sup>2</sup>

## GETAWAY RENTALS

# Rent-A-Camp Sites	21
% Rent-A-Camp Occupancy (184 nights)	30.4%
# Rent-A-RV Sites	3
% Rent-A-RV Occupancy (184 nights)	63.0%
# Rent-A-Tepee Sites	2
% Rent-A-Tepee Occupancy (184 nights)	25.0%
# Rent-A-Yurt Sites	12
% Rent-A-Yurt Occupancy (184 nights)	52.9%
# Cabents	4
% Cabent Occupancy (184 nights)	26.0%
# Camper Cabins	40
% Camper Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	53.7%
# Cedar Cabins	24
% Cedar Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	63.0%
# Conestoga Cabins	22
% Conestoga Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	60.2%

## RESORT LODGES & CONCESSION COTTAGES

# Resort Lodges	9
# Resort Lodge Rooms	818
# Lodge Room Nights Rented	139,468
% Lodge Occupancy	46.7%
# Restaurants in Resort Lodges	9
# Concession Cottages	221

# Cottage Nights Rented	34,936
% Cottage Occupancy	43.3%

## STATE OPERATED COTTAGES

# State Operated Cottages	297
# Cottage Nights Rented	40,245
% Cottage Occupancy	37.1%

## GOLF COURSES

# Golf Courses	6
# Golf Rounds	124,491

## BOAT RAMPS/MARINAS/DOCKS

# Boat Ramps	188
# Boater Occasions	7,825,590
# Marina / Boat Rental Operations	45
# Docks - Concession Operated	1,514
# Docks - State Operated	6,069
# Private Docks Licensed	12,186

## BEACHES

# Swimming Beaches	80
# Swimming Occasions	4,314,259
# Beach Concessions	21

## GROUP FACILITIES

# Overnight Group Facilities	6
# Overnight Group Facility Users	27,589
# Beds in Group Facilities	309
# Day-use Group Lodges	13
# Day-use Group Lodge Users	253,415

## VISITOR/NATURE CENTERS

# Visitor/Nature Centers	36
# Visitor/Nature Center Visitor Occasions	1,335,757

## PICNIC AREAS

# Picnic Areas	463
# Picnic Area Visitor Occasions	7,895,425
# Picnic Shelters -- Total	177
# Reservable Picnic Shelters	117

## OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

# Swimming Pools	19
# Tennis Courts	16
# Basketball Courts	82
# Volleyball Courts	100
# Miniature Golf Courses	16
# Disc Golf Courses	9
# Playgrounds	183
# Parks with Bike Rental Operations	21
# Trails - Total	394
Total Miles of Trails	1,167.1
# Multi-Use Trails	134
# Hiking Only Trails	215
# Mountain Bike Only Trails	24
# Bridle Only Trails	22
# Parks with Snow Mobile Trails	10
# Parks with Cross Country Ski Trails	42
# Parks with Sledding Hills	38
# Shooting Ranges	5
# Archery Ranges	8

<sup>1</sup> Based on REALM's 2006 Land Inventory report.

<sup>2</sup> Includes Horse Camp Sites, and excludes 180 volunteer Camper Host sites.

## 2008 Goals



- Continue our successful hospitality management training program with remaining staff, emphasizing skill development for providing excellent customer service during austere times.
- Preserve existing levels of revenue through fees and charges, and maintaining visitation and occupancy.
- Work closely with individual park friends groups and the Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation to obtain short-term funding for park improvement projects, and the Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks and the Ohio Natural Resources Stakeholders Group to seek long-term stable funding for the division.
- Increase our emphasis on connecting youth and nature as well as physical fitness through our programs, facilities, and services.
- Educate and empower employees through the "Ohio State Parks Get Green Program" on how to conserve energy by incorporating sustainable, energy efficient practices into park operations.
- Continue to utilize limited capital dollars to improve state park facilities such as Burr Oak Lodge renovations, launch ramp re-construction at East Fork and Caesar Creek, construction of two wastewater treatment plants at Indian Lake, and marina basin construction on Middle Bass Island.
- Work closely with the divisions of Water and Engineering to enhance dam safety by developing emergency preparedness plans for dams, training staff in dam monitoring techniques, and initiating assessments of deficient dams for possible lowering/breaching.
- Increase cost savings to the division by utilizing in-house industries to produce entrance and facility signs, firewood bundles for our camp stores, and complete the rehabilitation of docks at Buck Creek.
- Collaborate and partner with the Division of Travel & Tourism and local tourism bureaus (CVB's) to promote nature tourism and the state park system.
- Expand our resource management planning and practices by completing natural resource management plans for ten additional parks.
- Expand customer services in the new RFP for the CRS/POS system for Ohio State Parks including online dock rentals and other non-overnight rentals, online customer change capabilities, and a customer rewards program.
- Continue to reorganize, restructure, and consolidate regional park operations for greater efficiency with limited resources.







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Ted Strickland, Governor  
Sean Logan, Director  
Dan West, Chief

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