

# Ohio State Parks

## 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



PROVIDING FUN, SAFE, CLEAN AND FRIENDLY PLACES WHERE VISITORS CAN GATHER AND ENJOY OUR  
OHIO STATE PARKS

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## Strategic Plan

Ohio State Parks adopted its third five-year strategic plan, “Service & Stewardship 2011-2015” and began implementation of action steps to achieve the strategic goals set forth in the plan.

Like the previous strategic plans, “Service & Stewardship 2011-2015” was crafted by a core group of division employees and informed by a broader spectrum of employee, stakeholder and public input.

An interdisciplinary team of central office employees was convened to initiate and shepherd the strategic planning process. All division employees were given the opportunity to comment on the previous strategic plan (“Service and Stewardship 2006-2010”), and small teams of employees reviewed progress made on each of the strategies of the existing plan and made recommendations to revise, delete, or carry the strategies forward to the 2011-2015 plan. Group managers and field managers were consulted to identify the division’s strengths, weaknesses and opportunities through a SWOT analysis. Stakeholders and the general public were invited to an open house to share their ideas on each of the focus areas. Dozens of employees representing all facets of park and central office operations participated in a workshop to refine the draft objectives for each of the focus areas.

Unlike the previous strategic plans, “Service & Stewardship 2011-2015” is designed to be a dynamic document, providing an open framework of the division’s desired outcomes, with a blank slate of details to be filled in by the employees.

The 2011-2015 strategic plan lays out three primary goals to be achieved in each of six focus areas: customer service, resource management, financial resources, human resources, infrastructure resources, and partnerships and outreach. Several objectives are provided in each focus area to guide employees’ efforts with incremental achievements that move the division toward significant progress on attaining the broad goals. To complete the plan and tailor it to the needs and capabilities of the various field locations and central office disciplines, each park region and central office group is tasked with prioritizing several goals and objectives to tackle during the year, and developing their own action steps to address those goals and objectives at the local level. The overall result is a plan that is more realistic and achievable, simpler and more concise, in a format that can be read and understood at a glance.

The division’s core values - leadership, customer focus, stewardship, professionalism and innovation – remain the same although our understanding of these values has evolved. The division’s mission statement has been modified and the vision statement has been refreshed with brief and clear declarations that employees can embrace:

Our mission – To enhance the quality of life through exceptional outdoor recreational experiences and sound resource management.

Our vision – We are devoted to providing fun, safe, clean and friendly places where visitors can gather and enjoy our Ohio State Parks

## Customer Service

### Park-Based Programs

#### VISITOR OCCASSIONS

Visitor occasions in Ohio State Parks in 2011 totaled 51,224,756. This includes overnight guests in campgrounds, cottages and lodges, along with estimated numbers of visitors at day-use facilities including trails, beaches, picnic areas, boating facilities, etc. See the statistical abstract for more details.

#### SPECIAL EVENTS AND TOURISM INITIATIVES

Ohio State Parks hosted a total of 416 special events, including dozens of spring clean-up events and wildflower or birding hikes, summer campouts and beach parties, and fall-themed campouts and festivals. Friends groups made many of these events possible.

State parks continued to partner with community groups to host popular nature and heritage tourism events. The revitalized pioneer village at Caesar Creek served as an attraction for history buffs, as well as the backdrop for popular themed events, including Civil War reenactments and traditional music performances. Hueston Woods' pioneer farm served as the venue for Oxford Township's bicentennial celebration in August. Two of the Ohio State park systems' premier nature tourism events, the Mohican Wildlife Weekend and the "Shoot the Hills" Photography Weekend at Hocking Hills, were held for the tenth consecutive year. In its second year, the Queen City Bird Festival at Hueston Woods grew significantly in recognition and attendance, and the new outdoor adventure weekend at Pike Lake was well received by park visitors. Malabar Farm's traditional maple syrup festival not only attracted thousands of visitors to the park in the off-season for a taste of cultural heritage, it also generated over \$12,400 in sales of maple syrup products over two weekends in March.

Parks continued to capitalize on their recreational facilities to attract events sponsored by others, providing a boost to the local economies as well as the parks. Hueston Woods hosted a national archery competition at its archery range, attracting more than 1,000 registered participants. More than 800 runners participated in the 33<sup>rd</sup> annual Hocking Hills Indian Run, which is cosponsored by the Hocking Hills Tourism Association, the Friends of Hocking Hills, and the park. Triathlon events brought several hundred athletes and their fans to events staged at the trails, roads and waters of Buck Creek, Caesar Creek, Deer Creek, Hueston Woods, Maumee Bay, Portage Lakes and Shawnee. Several parks with mountain biking trails including Alum Creek, Dillon, East Fork, Lake Hope, Mohican and West Branch, hosted Ohio Mountain Bike Championship races and West Branch served as the venue for the annual CRANKFEST statewide race. The Ohio Horseman's Council held statewide trail rides at Hueston Woods and Sycamore, and Caesar Creek hosted the annual Abi-Khan Horse Ride and the Ride for the Cure charity event at its horseman's camp and bridle trail system. The golf course at Maumee Bay hosted the Ohio Amateur Qualifier for the first time; the course has hosted the U.S. Open Regional Qualifier for the past 18 years.

Popular fun and fitness events in the non-peak season included "Polar Bear Plunge" fundraisers held at Caesar Creek, Geneva, Grand Lake St. Marys, Indian Lake, Maumee Bay, Mosquito Lake, Portage Lakes, and Scioto Trail; the second annual Wildcat Marathon at Burr Oak in November, the Bigfoot Relay at Salt Fork in December, a winter trail run at East Fork in January, and the Dirty Dog 10k run at Mosquito Lake in February.

Hueston Woods cooperated with the Preble County Engineer's Office to replace an aging steel truss bridge on the park's border with a new covered bridge constructed according to traditional design, featuring a covered walkway on either side offering scenic views for pedestrians. The picturesque bridge is expected to become a popular tourist attraction in the area, which boasts the oldest covered bridge in Ohio.

The Malabar Farm Restaurant was named "Outstanding Dining Area" by the county convention and visitors bureau. The restaurant's growing reputation for excellence, along with the regional recognition, boosted the restaurant revenues by \$50,000 for the year.

#### INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

The former maintenance center at Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve was renovated by regional staff and equipped with educational displays to create a new nature center, which has been very well received by preserve visitors, and serves as a hub for nature programs. New exhibits donated to Cleveland Lakefront's Exploration Station Nature Center, which opened in 2010, include mammal pelts and skulls, and an assortment of live animals including native fish and snakes. The Wildlife Education Center at Beaver Creek was expanded with additional display space featuring mounted specimens of native and extirpated species in realistic diorama settings. Funds for the expansion were raised by volunteers, who also provide staffing for the wildlife center.

Work began on the first phase of remodeling the Hueston Woods nature center, which attracts more than 200,000 visitors each year, to make a better first impression, and enhance the display space. The Hueston Woods naturalist's vehicle was covered with a vinyl graphic wrap depicting a woodland nature scene, providing a traveling billboard which helps promote the park whenever the vehicle is in use.

In addition to attracting visitors to the parks and adding value to park visitors' experiences through on-site park programs and events, park naturalists also provided a variety of off-site programs. Examples include teacher workshops conducted by the Cleveland Lakefront naturalist, along with programs on managing invasive species presented during the Great Lakes Adventures Week event at the Great Lakes Science Center. Naturalists in the Cowan Lake region continued to appear in monthly episodes of "Nature's Corner" program produced and aired by Channel 6 in Lebanon.

#### GETTING KIDS OUTDOORS

Park events targeted specifically to young audiences included Easter egg hunts at six parks, 18 kids' fishing derbies, youth dances at Mosquito Lake, Farm Fun Day at Malabar Farm, and the Lake Erie Beach Treasure Hunt at Maumee Bay. In addition, family-friendly nature and heritage events at several parks catered to kids and campers, including the Grassman Festival at West Branch, the Family Fun Fling at Lake Loramie, Railroad Days Rendezvous at Pike Lake, Mark Twain Family Fun Day at Blue Rock, and Huckleberry Finn Fest at Paint Creek. Quail Hollow's Camera Club hosted a photography events for kids with funding provided by ArtsinStark.

Burr Oak hosted a new "Play Safe" event featuring displays and demonstrations on personal and outdoor safety provided by the Ohio State Highway Patrol, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, the Ohio Horseman's Council, Athens Bike Club, and ODNR divisions of Wildlife, Forestry, and Watercraft. Annual safety day events were also held at Mosquito Lake and Shawnee, with family friendly activities and demonstrations, along with safety related giveaway items for kids.

An estimated 1200 elementary school students and teachers attended School Days environmental education programs at Cleveland Lakefront. Lake Hope hosted more than 700 students and teachers at its School Days program in May. Hocking Hills staff collaborated with the Hocking County Soil and Water Conservation District

to present a youth program at Lake Logan featuring a live bird program and archery. Tar Hollow invited students from area schools for special youth fishing programs in May.

#### RECREATIONAL OFFERINGS

A number of parks developed new or enhanced recreational facilities, thanks to the ingenuity of the park staff, the talent of volunteers, and the generosity of donors and sponsors. These park improvements include:

- Accessible A-frame pedestrian bridge on Hocking Hills' Old Man's Cave trail
- Accessible fishing dock at Lake Loramie
- Bird garden at Deer Creek lodge
- BMX bike trail at Deer Creek's campground
- Café area at Pike Lake's concession operation
- Camp store/commissary at Barkcamp
- 20-site horseman's camp at Dillon
- 60-site primitive campground at Salt Fork
- Disc golf course at Mosquito Lake
- Disc golf courses at Paint Creek and Van Buren expanded to 18 holes
- Dog park at Hueston Woods
- Mini golf course at Rocky Fork
- 8 additional miles of mountain biking trail at Deer Creek
- 4 additional miles of mountain biking trail at West Branch
- Nature center at Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve
- Shooting platform at Hocking Hills' existing archery range
- Sand volleyball court at Tar Hollow's resident camp
- WiFi offered campground-wide at Grand Lake St. Marys and Lake Loramie

The access permit requirements were discontinued at seven permit-only state nature preserves. As a result, more than 1,600 acres of high quality natural habitat were opened to the public for minimal impact activities such as birdwatching, photography and hiking on established trails. However, any research or off-trail activity would still require a permit.

These preserves are:

- Miller Nature Sanctuary; Highland County, 86 acres
- Pallister; Ashtabula County, 85 acres
- Rhododendron Cove; Fairfield County, 75 acres
- Christmas Rocks; Fairfield County, 554 acres
- Gallagher Fen; Clark County, 213 acres
- McCracken Fen; Logan County, 94 acres
- Boch Hollow; Hocking County 547 acres

## Marketing and Outreach

### ADVERTISING AND PUBLICATIONS

Advertising expenditures totaled \$50,387, an increase of 16.5% increase over 2010. Ads were placed in 15 print publications, generating over 20,000 requests for information, a 30% increase over 2010. A new partnership was initiated with the Ohio Tourism Division's Buckeye Fulfillment Center to take advantage of their existing fulfillment service to mail out state park information packets. This partnership not only increased efficiency, it also saved over \$23,000 in postage costs.

In partnership with ABC 6 and FOX 28 TV in Columbus, promotional pieces featuring state parks were produced and aired on the respective stations as part of the "Deal Detectives" series. The partnership also included an online campaign.

The Ohio State Park system was represented at six major travel/trade shows, including the AAA Great Vacations Expo and the 97.1 Get Fit Expo. Division staff also attended numerous smaller events, including the Scarlet, Grey and Green Fair at OSU Wooster and the ECOT family nights in Columbus, Cleveland, and Cincinnati.

For the 17<sup>th</sup> year, two issues of Ohio State Parks magazine were produced and direct mailed to more than 61,000 subscribers. Other brochures printed and distributed included individual park brochures and campground brochures, "Overnight Rates," "Getaway Rentals," "Camping" and "Golf," in addition to the "Park Visitor Welcome Map" provided by Good Solutions Group. In addition, more than half a million brochures were distributed at out-of-state travel shows through the Ohio Travel Pavilion; direct mailed to potential customers who requested them through the Ohio State Parks website, the Ohio Travel Division's ohiotourism.com website or 1-800-BUCKEYE operators; direct mailed to potential customers who responded to our ads with requests for information; made available to travelers at ODOT Travel Information Centers and American Automobile Association outlets; and distributed to park visitors at the parks.

### WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The Division's website continued to serve as an important tool for marketing and public information, as well as a portal to the centralized reservation system and concession operated reservation web pages. The total number of visits was 2.7 million, a 3.5% increase over 2010 while the total number of page views was 8.7 million, a 5.6% decrease over 2010. A new merchandise page was set up in advance of the holiday shopping season, resulting in a 6.5% increase in page views for the time period of October 1 through November.

Social media continued to grow to more than 5,000 Facebook fans and 2,000 Twitter followers. Nine new Facebook pages for individual parks went on-line. The number of YouTube views increased by 20,000, boosted by the introduction of the "Ask a Naturalist" video series. Ohio State Parks was featured on the Department of Aging's Facebook page as a Golden Buckeye business, generating goodwill as well as publicity among a large constituency.

### SURVEYS

Customer satisfaction surveys were conducted for the twentieth consecutive year to gauge customers' overall satisfaction with their experiences, as well as collect specific feedback on park operations and identify where improvements are needed. Once again, the 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.

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 poor (2). A total of 11,559 surveys were returned, with 92.74 % of respondents rating their overall visit as excellent or good. (See Table 1)

**Overall average ratings for facility areas**

<b><u>Facility Area</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>
Campground Operation	4.427	4.432
Resort Lodge Operation	4.472	4.481
Cottage Operation	4.392	4.363
Getaway Rentals	4.429	4.476
Golf Course	4.629	4.526
Beaches	4.120	4.093
Boating Facilities	4.481	4.408
Trails	4.298	4.255
Picnic Areas	4.376	4.349
Visitor/Nature Centers	4.619	4.573

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, 70 % were repeat visitors to a specific state park, 82 % had visited other state parks, 85 % would return to that specific state park, and 83 % would visit other state parks. In addition, 57 % of respondents were between 31 and 60 years of age, 43 % had one or more children, 88 % were in groups of two or more people, 67 % stayed more than one night on their visit, and 42 % visited one to three times per year, while 47 % visited more than four times.

Parks that received outstanding customer ratings for the various park facilities were recognized for their achievement with the Service Excellence Award. The award program honors the park with the highest overall rating in that category. To be eligible for a Service Excellence award, the park must have received a minimum of 100 surveys in that category, and have the highest calculated overall rating for the applicable category.

**Service Excellence Award Recipients**

<b><u>Facility</u></b>	<b><u>Park</u></b>	<b><u>Rating</u></b>
Day-Use Park	Lake Milton	4.716
Cottage Operation	Pike Lake	4.565
Campground Operation:		
Small Campground (<150 sites)	Barkcamp	4.601
Large Campground (150 or more sites)	West Branch	4.700
Golf Course	Deer Creek	4.826

## Visitor Safety

West Branch received a National Water Safety Congress Award of Merit for outstanding efforts, accomplishments, and contributions to water safety. The park's joint efforts with Division of Watercraft and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the summer of 2010 resulted in more than 5,000 contacts with state park boaters and swimmers to promote water safety.

A \$30,413.79 grant from the Division of Watercraft, matched with \$10,137.93 from the parks, assisted with lake patrols on the waters of Lake Milton, West Branch, and Mosquito Lake.

Ohio State Park officers participated in two national traffic safety mobilizations, "Click It or Ticket" and "Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over," generating over 800 citations for violations ranging from speeding to operating under the influence.

The Drug/DUI account received \$ 8,862.50 in fines resulting from O.R.C. Title 4511.19, Operating under the influence and O.R.C. Title 2925, Drug abuse. The money from this account was used to purchase eleven in-car camera systems along with a server for the video storage.

Ohio State Parks again partnered with Hocking College by providing traffic stop instructors who trained students in basic peace officer classes at the Natural Resources Ranger Academy. In addition, the instructors provided valuable "Force on Force" training.

### 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 statistics reflect law enforcement activity in the parks:

<b><u>Enforcement Activity</u></b>	<b><u>2011</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2009</u></b>
Visitor Assists	24,094	25,707	20,296
Warnings (written or verbal)	32,133	29,757	35,223
Misdemeanor Citations/Arrests	2,773	3,170	4,065
Felony Arrest	199	138	136
Outside Agency Assists	250	299	365
Property Stolen	\$87,823	\$174,785	\$85,453
Vandalism	\$48,183	\$11,998	\$5,839
Investigations	1,919	2,312	2,268

### Incident Counts

A total of 7,335 incidents responded to or initiated by state park officers were logged into the computerized aided dispatch (CAD) system. The incidents ranged from vehicle stops to taking theft reports. Each time a park officer contacts the ODNR Communications Center by radio advising of a law enforcement action, or initiates activity on a mobile communication terminal (MCT), an incident is created in the system. In 2010, the first year the division received these statistics, 5,559 incidents were reported

### Response to Resistance

The number of instances in which park officers were required to respond to resistance while performing law enforcement duties decreased dramatically to ten instances of resistance, compared to 29 instances in 2010. The reduction is attributed in part to a change in procedure, which no longer requires reports for un-holstering a weapon, un-holstering a conducted energy weapon (CEW), and for vehicle pursuits.

Fourteen park officers reported the need to use some level of force and, in some instances, multiple tactics, to respond to these incidents. All reported incidents were reviewed by the department's Law Enforcement Administrator, and in each incident the park officers involved were found to have acted in accordance with department policy and training standards.

<u>Type of Response to Resistance Used</u>	<u>Number of Incidents</u>
Bodily Force	5
Chemical Agent	0
Injury to Officer	0
Road Block	0
Suspect Injury	0
Baton	0
Canine	0
CEW	7
Firearm	0

## Partnerships & Outreach

### FRIENDS GROUPS & SUPPORT GROUPS

Members of 55 friends' groups were actively involved raising funds, planning and building improvement projects in parks. Fundraising was done in a variety of ways, including grant writing, auctions, car shows, providing food at special events, etc. Some of the many projects funded by the friends groups include:

- A new boiler at Quail Hollow's historic mansion funded through a \$16,000 donation by the Quail Hollow Volunteer Association and Quail Hollow Herbal Society
- Archery range and marketing improvements at Hocking Hills
- New disc golf course at Mosquito Lake, and expansion of the disc golf course at Paint Creek
- Playground at Jackson Lake
- Shelter house improvements and expansion at Maumee Bay
- Construction of a storage building for bikes and firewood at Maumee Bay
- A new recycling program at Cleveland Lakefront's Edgewater Park
- An accessible fishing dock at Lake Loramie
- Electronic signage promoting community events at the amphitheater at Lake Milton
- Expansion of the Paint Creek shelter house
- Beach improvements at Buckeye Lake's Crystal beach including \$3,200 worth of new sand provided by the Buckeye Lake Area Civic Association
- A new bird garden in the lodge area at Deer Creek
- New cedar shake roof installed on Doty house at Hueston Woods' Pioneer Farm through efforts of Oxford Museum Association
- A pedestrian bridge with handrails at Blue Rock's campground

Ongoing projects spearheaded by friends groups include:

- Ongoing maintenance projects at the big house at Malabar Farm
- Pioneer village improvements at Beaver Creek, Hueston Woods and Mohican
- Continued weed eradication program at Jackson Lake
- Improvements to the dog parks at Alum Creek, Grand Lake St. Marys and Mosquito Lake
- Trail improvements at John Bryan and Lake Milton
- Trail safety improvements at the Little Miami trail that included erosion control and ongoing clean-up and maintenance projects along the entire trail. An adopt-a-trail program was put in place and all positions along the trail were filled by volunteers.

Friends and volunteer groups also assisted parks with special events and initiated a variety of new events to make the parks inviting to more community groups and families. For example, the campground friends' group at Jackson Lake for the second year in a row sponsored a series of turkey shoots which attracted enthusiastic participants and raised several thousand dollars for a new playground for the park.

The Friends of Lake Hope have actively partnered with staff to improve and expand the park's holiday light festival and provide hay wagon rides for visitors throughout the year. The group also assisted with the popular hand-feeding hummingbird program at the nature center now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year.

The Friends of Shawnee co-sponsored the fifth Flora-Quest conference, a two-day program of lectures and guided hikes with experts spotlighting the diverse and rare wildflowers in the state park, state forest and nearby Edge of Appalachia Preserve.

The Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks, the nonprofit advocacy and umbrella organization for individual park groups, marked its eighth year by hosting two statewide meetings. The Spring Symposium drew a record turnout to Mohican State Park lodge. The agenda included an update on the FPOSP legislative advocacy program, along with breakout sessions on how to plan and fund park improvement projects, recruiting and retaining members, fundraising strategies, tips for more effective leadership of a non-profit group, etc.

#### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The Ohio State Parks Volunteer Program celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with strong enrollment of more than 7,000 people who provided a wide variety of service to the parks. Duties ranged from trail maintenance and park beautification projects to campground hosting and assisting at special events. The volunteers provided more than 390,000 service hours.

More than 300 volunteers from across the state attended the annual volunteer campout, held at Maumee Bay and the friends group provided food for the weekend. In addition to informational meetings, the volunteers enjoyed tours of local recreational and historic attractions, environmental programs including hikes and general entertainment.

The annual Volunteer Park-of-the-Year Award was presented to Paint Creek for its variety of volunteer and friends' group opportunities and for the large number of volunteers and projects. The volunteers are integral to planning and carrying out a variety of special events at the park as well as fundraising for improvements which included the disc golf course. Four parks were recognized with honorable mention awards, including Jackson Lake, Lake Loramie, Maumee Bay and Quail Hollow.

A new marina host program was piloted at Mosquito Lake to provide assistance for boaters, as well as deter vandalism and theft at the park's seasonal docks. The program was very successful, with no reports of theft occurring.

#### OHIO STATE PARKS LEGACY FOUNDATION

In its sixth year, the Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation distributed grants to three parks. The grants will assist funding for pioneer village improvements at Beaver Creek, expanded nature center equipment at Findley and trail improvements at Mohican.

#### COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In cooperation with area chambers of commerce and convention and visitor bureaus, Burr Oak developed regional welcome kits promoting the southeast Ohio state parks and area tourist attractions.

Community service projects by Boy Scouts provided a number of new facilities for our park visitors. Examples include an information kiosk and bulletin board at the entrance to Cleveland Lakefront's new nature center, trail repairs at Deer Creek, flower bed and flag pole installation at Findley, bat boxes and bird nesting boxes at Lake Loramie, benches and directional signage on Lake Loramie hiking trails, an information kiosk at Punderson's disc golf course, flower bulb transplanting and walkway improvements at Quail Hollow, and gazebo and footbridge renovations at Scioto Trail.

With grant funding and volunteer assistance from the Ohio Horseman's Council, the horseman's camp at Caesar Creek was improved with the addition of picnic tables, fire rings and grills. At West Branch, the Buckeye Trail Association partnered with park staff on a project to extend the Buckeye Trail around the reservoir, connecting

it to the existing trail system. Teachers and students from Theodora Roosevelt High School in Kent committed to monthly work days to assist with the project.

At Findley, a new annual event, Wellington High School Community Service Day, was established to bring high school students to the park and engage them in service projects to benefit the park and the local community. At Maumee Bay, students from Clay High School's hospitality program assisted the camp office, nature center and maintenance staff with customer service, administrative duties and light maintenance.

Volunteers from the East Central Audubon Club worked at Stages Pond State Nature Preserve to refurbish a bird blind and replace fencing at the preserve entrance.

#### INTERAGENCY PARTNERSHIPS

Ohio State Parks again partnered with Hocking College by providing traffic stop instructors who trained students in basic peace officer classes at the Natural Resources Ranger Academy. In addition, the instructors provided valuable "Force on Force" training.

For the second year, Ohio State Parks partnered with the State Library of Ohio to provide camping and getaway rental discounts for participants in the summer reading program for children held at local libraries statewide. More than 11,300 certificates for 50% off weekday camping and getaway rentals were distributed by the libraries, and 91 were redeemed at state parks.

#### CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

For the fourth consecutive year, Ohio State Parks' partnership with the Good Solutions Group (formerly the Government Solutions Group) yielded multiple benefits to the state park system, including the production and printing of 100,000 copies of the Ohio Welcome Map (valued at \$15,000) at no cost to the division. As part of the "20% for Parks" profit share component of the Welcome Map partnership, Ohio State Parks received an additional donation of \$623.00.

One of the Welcome Map corporate sponsors, GEICO, funded the printing and production of 100,000 copies of the Ohio State Parks camping brochure valued at \$5,000. Another sponsor, CLIF, provided 30,000 CLIF bars for distribution to park visitors in the Alum Creek, East Fork and Portage Lakes regions near the Columbus, Cincinnati and Akron metropolitan areas.

Another benefit of the Welcome Map program was the ongoing partnership with Odwalla, Inc. for tree planting. Through Odwalla's annual on-line contest for distribution of \$100,000 to participating states for establishing trees on state park land, a total of \$6,000 was donated to Ohio State Parks and allocated to Harrison Lake for the purchase and planting of 65 large trees to help replace ash trees damaged by the emerald ash borer at Harrison Lake's campground.

At Quail Hollow, employees of Diebold Corporation and Marathon Oil assisted with park clean-up and beautification projects during the annual United Way Day of Caring.

In partnership with the Mohican Lodge concessionaire, Xanterra Parks & Resorts, and Turk Brothers Custom Meats in Ashland, Malabar Farm held a "Picnic in the Park" fundraiser to benefit efforts to preserve the Malabar Farm Big House. Xanterra offered the services of Mohican's chef, while Turk Brothers donated locally raised pork for the meal. Additional businesses also provided materials and services for Big House improvements

including renovation of the floors and walls of the breakfast area by J & B Acoustical, and painting in the kitchen by Park Avenue Painting.

#### OUTREACH

Rocky Fork hosted the annual Kamp Dovetail for the 30<sup>th</sup> year. The week-long event is run by volunteers and sponsored by a local non-profit, Supplementary Assistance to the Handicapped ( SATH), for children with disabilities in Highland and surrounding counties. Cowan Lake hosted the annual Fishing Has No Boundaries outing, bringing more than 300 special needs participants to the park for a day of fun with their families. A special assisted deer hunt was offered at Lawrence Woods State Nature Preserve for hunters with disabilities.

Park and volunteer naturalists from Buck Creek and Clifton Gorge State Nature Preserve provided off-site natural history programs at Adriel School, a residential facility in Bellefontaine that provides foster care and educational programs tailored for children with learning, behavioral or emotional disorders.

Hueston Woods selected several outstanding applicants for interviews and possible hiring at a job fair event that attracted nearly 100 potential candidates.

## Resource Management

### LAND TRANSACTIONS

Land purchases, sales, easements and trade agreements help 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 seven adjacent land owners were satisfied through the sale of 0.1277 acres of surplus property at two state parks. These parcels were sold for a total of \$8,078. A land trade agreement for the purpose of realigning State Route at Hocking Hills State Park resulted in the State giving 6.637 acres and receiving 4.06 for a net loss of 2.577 acres. Another land trade agreement at Indian Lake resulted in the State giving 2.098 acres and receiving 3.203 for a net gain of 1.105 acres. As a result of these transactions, Ohio State Parks reduced its holdings by a net total of 1.3443 acres, with a total land transaction income of \$8,078.

Nearly 50 leases, licenses, right of entries, and memoranda of understanding were issued at 21 parks to allow organizations and individuals to access state land for various purposes.

### CANAL LANDS

For the third year, Ohio State Parks assumed responsibility for the operational management of the Miami & Erie and Ohio & Erie Canals, including canal land real estate sales and leases. The day-to-day operations of the watered sections of the historic Miami and Erie Canal continued to be managed through Grand Lake St. Marys State Park, while the Ohio and Erie Canal watered sections were managed through Portage Lakes State Park. The Division of Soil & Water Resources oversaw water sales and water leases, while the Division of Engineering provided oversight of canal related projects that could affect canal hydraulics. Land and water lease revenues, along with approved canal land sales continued to significantly supplement GRF funding.

### WETLAND PROJECTS

Wetland determinations were conducted at Buckeye Lake, Grand Lake St. Marys, Indian Lake, Lake Loramie, Rocky Fork and Portage Lakes in preparation for various park improvement projects. Maumee Bay conducted a prescribed burn at its coastal wetland to help control invasive species and encourage the emergence of native species from the seed bank.

### BEACH SAMPLING AND RECREATIONAL WATER QUALITY

Swimming beaches at Ohio State Parks were monitored for E. coli contamination in accordance with the Ohio Department of Health's guidelines. Several beaches were posted with advisories when E. coli levels exceeded 235 colony forming units per 100 ml of sample. Advisories were issued at 36 of 67 beaches on inland lakes at 24 state parks. Ten of 12 Lake Erie beaches in Ohio State Parks were also posted.

Significant progress was made in the development of a multi-agency response strategy for harmful algal blooms that occur on any state park lake, as well as in the treatment of recurring harmful algal blooms at Grand Lake St. Marys. In cooperation with the Ohio Department of Health and OEPA, a minimum threshold was established for recreational exposure to toxins generated by harmful algal blooms, and a three-tiered system of public advisories was developed to notify the public of potential health hazards associated with the algal blooms. State park staff received training to recognize potential harmful algal blooms and take samples for analysis.

As a follow-up to a small-scale pilot project at Grand Lake St. Marys in the fall of 2010 to test aluminum sulfate (alum) as a treatment option for eliminating excess phosphorus in the lake, a demonstration project was conducted in April to evaluate the effectiveness of a granular form of alum at higher dosages, and large scale treatment with alum, along with dredging, was tested in June.

## TRAILS

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funded ten recreational trails projects throughout the state park system. Shawnee used RTP funding to construct a 60 foot bridge across Turkey Creek, repair 1,200 linear feet of existing trails, and add a trailhead kiosk. Malabar Farm used RTP grant funding to replace an existing boardwalk trail, and construct an overlook deck in the wetland area near the Jungle Brook Trail. Tar Hollow constructed three small footbridges along the Ross Hollow and Homestead trails, and purchased equipment for ongoing trail maintenance. Mohican re-graded and applied fresh gravel at an existing trailhead facility, placed trail markers and bike crossing signs along the main park roads, and replaced a 40-foot wooden bridge over a stream in a ravine along the Little Lyons Falls Trail. Additional work at Mohican completed with volunteer labor included the construction of three new bridges on the Hog Hollow Trail. Pike Lake rehabilitated sections of the Lake Trail, which included the construction of a 64 foot long boardwalk and replacement of a stairway section on a hillside portion of the trail. John Bryan used their RTP funding to improve mountain bike trails in the park, which entailed rehabilitation of 12 miles of existing trails, replacement of two bridges, resurfacing of all bridges, repairs at the trail tread, and spraying for invasive honeysuckle. RTP-funded trail work at Quail Hollow will involve application of new asphalt on 12,360 square feet of the paved Nature for All Trail. Salt Fork purchased a front loader mowing attachment to expedite mowing more than 70 miles of equestrian trails in the region.

Two wooden bridges were constructed at Geneva along the multi-use trail to link the lodge with the park's trail system. The bridges are intended for use by snowmobilers as well as bicyclists. Twenty-four volunteers from the Ohio Snowmobile Association assisted with the project.

Discussions were held with the State Recreation Vehicle Fund Advisory Board (SRVFAB) regarding a proposal to create motorized trails at Burr Oak and connecting trail to the Wayne National Forest using the State Recreation Vehicle Fund (SRVF) and RTP dollars.

The Miami Valley Mountain Biking Association assisted the regional staff with the creation of 14 miles of mountain biking trail at Deer Creek. At John Bryan, improvements were made to the mountain biking trail and to the trailhead parking area in partnership with the Miami Valley Mountain Bike Association.

With grant funding and volunteer assistance from the Ohio Horseman's Council, bridle trails at Caesar Creek were improved, and the horseman's camp was enhanced with the addition of picnic tables, fire rings and grills. Volunteers from the Highland Horse Council assisted with bridle trail improvements at Paint Creek. In cooperation with the Ohio Department of Transportation, the Mt. Gilead park entrance off State Route 42 was reconfigured, thereby widening and improving access to the park's multi-use hiking and bridle trail.

As part of a comprehensive effort to increase trail opportunities at West Branch, four new miles of mountain bike trail were developed, and work continued on a new section of hiking trail linking the Buckeye Trail to the park's trail system.

## BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY, FOREST AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

As part of a parking lot reclamation project at Buck Creek's beach, an area was set aside to provide enhanced habitat for ground nesting birds. Warm season switch grass was donated by Pheasants Forever for the project.

At Cleveland Lakefront, planning began for a restoration project at the Wildwood park area, in cooperation with the Cuyahoga County Soil and Water District. The soil and water district was awarded a grant through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative to make modifications to the lands immediately adjacent to Euclid Creek to return the creek to a more suitable and sustainable habitat for fish and wildlife.

In partnership with the Pennsylvania Fishing and Boating Commission, the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pymatuning Lake Association and the Division of Wildlife, wooden fish structures were installed in Pymatuning Lake as part of a regional project to place 500 such structures in northeast Ohio lakes.

At Indian Lake, 70 large trees of various species were planted as part of the annual tree donation program. More than 550 trees have been donated and planted at the park since the program was initiated in 1996.

Once again the north section of Pymatuning's campground was closed for several weeks in the spring due to the presence of three eagle nests. The nests appeared to be empty, and none produced eaglets.

Timber management plans were developed in cooperation with the Division of Forestry for Forked Run, Lake Hope, Scioto Trail and Tar Hollow.

Shawnee held a special event in conjunction with the North American Butterfly Association's 20<sup>th</sup> annual butterfly count. Led by the park naturalist, park visitors and school groups at Cleveland Lakefront participated in monarch butterfly tagging and survey programs as part of the University of Kansas' Monarch Watch initiative.

#### MANAGEMENT OF NUISANCE SPECIES

At Buck Creek, invasive honeysuckle was removed from the cottage area. Autumn olive and honeysuckle were removed from Deer Creek's campground. Cleveland Lakefront collaborated with the soil and water conservation district to hold a volunteer garlic mustard pull at the Wildwood park area. Mohican partnered with the Division of Forestry and recruited volunteers to help staff remove garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed and other invasives.

At Cleveland Lakefront's E 55th Street Marina, pyrotechnics were used to disrupt nesting geese, as recommended by the Division of Wildlife. Prompted by flooding problems on trails and other facilities caused by animal activity, trapping was undertaken to control muskrats at Hueston Woods' golf course, beavers at Geneva and West Branch.

To help contain the spread of the emerald ash borer (EAB) and eliminate potential hazards to park visitors, 100 dead or dying trees were removed from East Harbor's campground and the Marblehead Lighthouse grounds. An additional 30 trees infested with EAB were removed at Mary Jane Thurston, bringing the total to 200 trees eliminated at the park. More than 250 infested trees were removed from the campground at Harrison Lake.

The Asian longhorned beetle, an emerging tree pest that can damage or kill host trees, including maple, birch, horse chestnut, poplar, willow, elm and ash, was detected at East Fork and other Clermont County locations. As a result, the entire acreage of the park was quarantined, and monitoring was initiated at Stonelick. Another emerging tree pest, the Zimmerman pine moth, was identified at Maumee Bay.

Bed bug infestations occurred at some cottages, getaway rentals and retail locations. In every case, temporary shut-down followed by heat or chemical extermination have proven successful in eliminating the pests.

#### SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND GREEN INITIATIVES

At Burr Oak, new technologies were adopted at the marina and campground to improve energy efficiency and utilize renewable energy. Examples include installation of LEED certified induction lights to replace the

conventional parking lot lighting at Dock 4. Inefficient water heaters in campground showerhouses were replaced with on-demand instantaneous water heaters, and a restroom was equipped for solar lighting with the installation of batteries and a solar charger, and conversion from AC to DC power. Other parks also adopted technologies. For example, solar lighting was installed in vault restrooms at Barkcamp and at Salt Fork's primitive and horseman's camps, and on-demand water heaters were installed at Great Seal's maintenance shop as well as Tar Hollow's resident camp.

At Deer Creek's golf course, new low pressure irrigation heads were installed to reduce water use and irrigation pump was modified to increase efficiency, thereby reducing electricity cost by nearly 60%. A greens roller was purchased for Shawnee's golf course, enabling the golf course staff to alternate greens rolling with mowing. The reduced mowing not only saves fuel and time, it also contributes to healthier turf and faster greens speed for golfers.

Recycling efforts were expanded with the introduction of recycling containers at Forked Run's and West Branch's campground, and the adoption of a more user friendly co-mingled recycling program at Burr Oak and Strouds Run. Fishing line recycling containers were placed in fishing areas at Hueston Woods by a student volunteer who has recruited sponsors to help manage the fishing line recycling program.

The carry-in-carry-out program was expanded to include day-use areas at East Harbor. This program encourages picnickers, boaters, beach-goers, anglers and trail users to be responsible stewards and bring the beverages, food, bait and other gear in re-usable or recyclable containers.

#### FLOODING AND STORM DAMAGE

Hazardous tree removal was a statewide priority, with many parks experiencing tree damage due to winter ice and severe storms with high winds, as well as trees weakened by pests such as the emerald ash borer.

On average, Ohio experienced the wettest April in 129 years, and the sixth wettest May resulting in spring flooding around the state that necessitated debris clean-up at numerous beaches, marinas, boat launch facilities, and low-lying picnic areas before the start of the peak recreation season. Courtesy docks at Caesar Creek were damaged in the spring floods. The walls of Shawnee's marina were damaged by flood waters, and five holes on Shawnee's golf course were submerged. Trails at Deer Creek were closed temporarily while washed-out bridges were replaced, trails at Hocking Hills' Ash Cave and Old Man's Cave area were partially destroyed by flash flooding, and the Hosack's Cave trail at Salt Fork was closed temporarily due to a tree fall. The Resident Camp buildings at Tar Hollow were inundated with water and silt, and bank slips occurred in the campground.

In addition, several parks experienced weather-related structural damage through the year. Cleveland Lakefront's Edgewater Park was closed for four days in late August to clean up hazardous trees damaged during a storm. Two cottages at Lake Hope were damaged by trees uprooted in an April storm. Cowan Lake's campground was closed after trees fell in a July storm.

## Professional Development

### PERSONNEL

During the peak season, Ohio State Parks employed a workforce of 393 permanent and 949 less-than full-time employees, including natural areas and preserves staff. Numbers of permanent employees by general job categories are:

Administration	6
Professional and Technical	105
Clerical/Office Support	33
Skilled Craft	116
Protective Services	75
<u>Operational Support</u>	<u>58</u>
<b>Total Permanent Employees</b>	<b>393</b>

Significant changes were made to the division's organizational structure to streamline operations, improve efficiency, and provide for equitable distribution of experienced management staff in light of the large number of retirements among field managers. Staff from the nature preserves, recreational trails, canal lands and grants programs continued to be integrated into the field and central office operations.

Field operations were consolidated, reducing the 23 park regions to 8 districts, as follows:

#### Central District

Comprised of former Alum Creek and Deer Creek Regions

#### East Central District

Comprised of former Dillon and Salt Fork Regions

#### North Central District

Comprised of former Cleveland and Mohican Regions

#### Northeast District

Comprised of former Portage Lakes, Mosquito, Punderson and Pymatuning Regions

#### Northwest District

Comprised of former East Harbor and Maumee Bay Regions

#### Southeast District

Comprised of former Burr Oak, Hocking Hills, Lake Hope and Tar Hollow Regions

#### Southwest District

Comprised of former Cowan Lake, East Fork, Hueston Woods, Rocky Fork and Shawnee Regions

#### West Central District

Comprised of former Buck Creek and Indian Lake Regions

Central Office operations were also restructured and consolidated, reducing the seven working groups to four teams, as follows:

#### Administrative Services

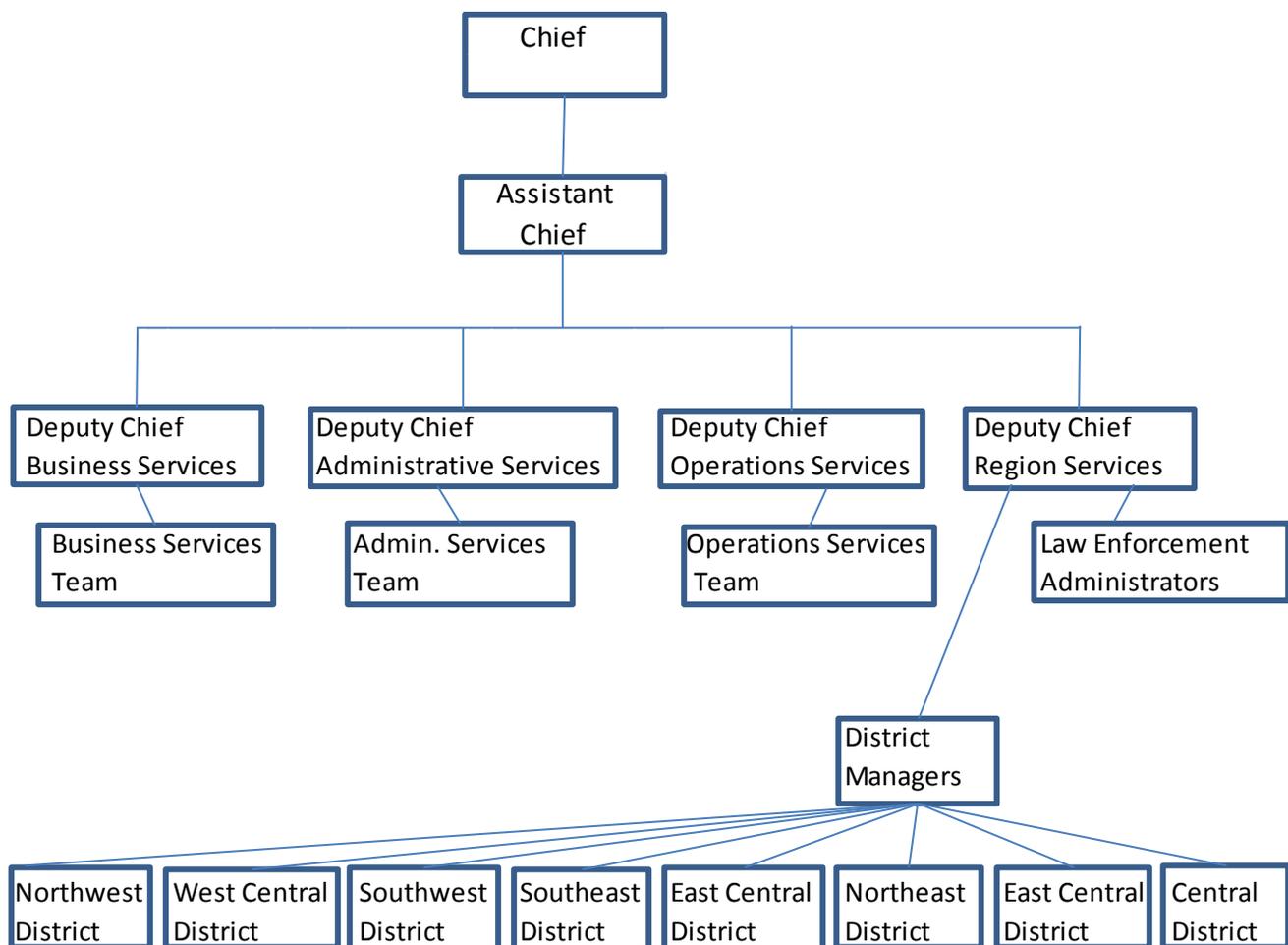
Comprised of the former Human Resources Group, Public Affairs Group and Recreation Services Group

#### Business Services

Comprised of the former Business Group; in addition, absorbed inventory and computer services

#### Operations Services

Comprised of the former Development Group and Field Support Group



## TRAINING

Customer service training was provided for all front-line staff in June. The program was presented in partnership with the Department of Public Safety, and emphasized hospitality skills and maintaining good relationships with customers as well as recovering from service errors.

Administrative Investigations training was offered to all managers and supervisors through the Department of Administrative Services, Office of Collective Bargaining. Optional new supervisor training was also provided to enhance proficiency in budget planning and management, public records law, and disciplinary procedures.

Training for all commissioned officers included the annual in-service training, fall firearms training, patrol rifle training and qualification, and conducted energy weapons 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 Strategies and Tactics of Patrol Stops. Officers also received training in defensive tactics, completed a department policy review, and completed legal update training. All officers were also fitted for a respirator as part of Homeland Security requirements. Fall firearms training entailed shotgun qualification, various handgun and shotgun shooting drills in low light and dark conditions. The division again partnered with Hocking College by providing traffic stop instructors who trained students in basic peace officer classes at the Natural Resources Ranger Academy.

A total of 57 commissioned officers participated in the annual physical fitness assessments and testing, 30 of whom were hired after January 1, 2004 and are required to pass an annual fitness test. An additional 25 officers took the test voluntarily.

## Employee Recognition Programs

### TEAM AWARD PROGRAM

In its 13<sup>th</sup> year, the Team Award program recognized a total of six teams comprised of 64 employees and volunteers who worked together to achieve to complete a specific project or achieve a shared goal. The following teams received the award:

Hocking Hills-Ash Cave Bridge Project Team  
Punderson Region Archery Team  
Cleveland Lakefront East 55<sup>th</sup> Marina "F" Dock Renovation Team  
Mosquito Lake Marina Renovation Team  
Lake Hope and Hocking Hills Cottage Custodial Team  
Geneva Bridge Project Team

The *Team of the Year Award* was presented to the Geneva Bridge Project Team for their efforts to build two bridges linking the lodge at Geneva State Park to other park facilities and trails. The bridge project was a collaborative venture between the park, the Operations Services team, the Division of Engineering and the Ohio State Snowmobile Association, who provided volunteer assistance. With the bridges in place, snowmobilers can now access trails by riding from the lodge parking lot directly to the park trails.

### DIVISION LIFESAVING AWARDS

Fourteen individuals were recognized for their participation in lifesaving actions of a distinguished nature. Twelve of the recipients are Ohio State Parks employees, one is a volunteer camper host, and one is a park visitor.

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

**Theodore Johnston**, Park Officer, *East Harbor*  
**Christopher Todd Metz**, Assistant Park Manager, *Guilford Lake*  
**D’Juan Hammonds**, Trail Grants Manager, *Central Office-Administrative Services*  
**Marlin Holloway**, Trails Administrative Assistant, *Central Office-Administrative Services*  
**Suzanne McAdams**, Recreation Planner, *Central Office-Business Services*  
**Brian Bishop**, Law Enforcement Staff Officer, *Central Office-District Services*  
**Martin McAllister**, Regional Preserve Manager, *Shawnee*  
**Timothy Clark**, Auto Mechanic, *Shawnee*  
**Joshua Thurman**, Golf Course Worker, *Shawnee*

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

**Paul Lallier**, Park Officer, *Rocky Fork*  
**Janie Bailey**, Park Officer, *Indian Lake*  
**Matthew Bourne**, Golf Course Superintendent, *Shawnee*

#### EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

In its 19th year, the Employee of the Quarter Award program recognized four employees in the spring, summer and fall quarters for outstanding performance and service to the division. The program had been temporarily suspended for the winter quarter. Since the program was initiated, a total of 286 employees have been nominated by their peers, selected by committee, and recognized for exceptional characteristics. The Employee of the Quarter Award recipients were:

##### Spring Quarter

**Lois Rinehart**, *West Branch* – Administration  
**Michael Swan**, *North Construction* – Maintenance  
**Brian L. Bishop**, *Mary Jane Thurston* – Law Enforcement  
**Curt Partee**, *Tar Hollow* – Management

##### Summer Quarter

**Florence Horton**, *Central Office, Human Resources* – Administration  
**Richard Schwark**, *East Harbor* – Maintenance  
**Ronald Wells**, *Maumee Bay* – Law Enforcement  
**Michael Powers**, *Burr Oak* – Management

##### Fall Quarter

**David Fisher**, *Central Office, Business* – Administration  
**Mark Broughton**, *Mosquito Lake* – Maintenance  
**Michael Zaborowski**, *Dillon* – Law Enforcement  
**John Wilder**, *West Branch* - Management

#### PROFESSIONAL AWARDS

The *Gazelle Award* honors park managers and staff who demonstrate the ability to respond quickly and skillfully under difficult or urgent circumstances. A team of employees from **Grand Lake St. Marys** received the *Gazelle Award* for mobilizing quickly and effectively to determine the public health threat and provide information to park visitors and the local community when harmful algae blooms were detected in Grand Lake St. Marys. In addition to safeguarding public health, the park also worked with local businesses to soften the impact on the area's vibrant tourism industry, and opened a dialogue with local landowners to address the sources of nutrients in the watershed that contribute to the algae blooms.

The *Leadership Award* recognizes an individual who demonstrates exceptional skills in motivating and guiding people, and garnering resources and support to accomplish a project or direct a program. Scott Kessler, Maintenance Supervisor at Hocking Hills State Park, received the *Leadership Award* for his extraordinary success in making improvements at Hocking Hills and nearby Lake Logan in a cost effective manner, while maintaining high standards for quality and attention to detail. Projects completed under Kessler's leadership include development of new mountain biking trails and installation of stairs on the park's hiking trails, development of an archery range, construction of boat ramps, and renovations to the park's vacation cottages.

#### IN MEMORIAM

We are deeply saddened by the loss of friend and coworker David Bertke, NRS at Grand Lake St Marys.

## Infrastructure Improvements

A number of facility renovation projects were undertaken by parks with in-house labor and materials. In most cases, staff and equipment within the region or district were pooled to provide a skilled workforce well-prepared to complete “blitz” projects in a timely and efficient manner. The types of projects ranged from restroom upgrades to roof replacement.

Asphalt shingle roofs were replaced by durable metal roofs on shelterhouses at A.W. Marion and Buckeye Lake, and deteriorating cedar shake roofs at several shelterhouses at Wingfoot Lake were also replaced with metal roofs. Restrooms were upgraded with new fixtures at Blue Rock, and a restroom in Lake Hope’s Laurel Lodge was renovated for handicapped accessibility. A new restroom facility was constructed at the boardwalk trailhead at Lake Milton, funded in part through trail grant monies, and in part by donations. At Portage Lakes’ public beach, a block latrine building was removed and replaced with two new Romtec units. Projects at Lake Logan included launch ramp repairs as well as restroom renovations.

The vacation cottages at Dillon were renovated, and the Lake Hope’s cottages and Laurel Lodge received a fresh coat of paint. A cottage at Pymatuning was completely remodeled, and the roof on the beach house was replaced.

Camp store upgrades at Hueston Woods including new siding, energy efficient replacement windows and doors, lighting upgrades and A/C; nature center and marina remodeling at Hueston Woods; Campground improvements at Lake Alma featured construction of a shower house. A multi-purpose building in Indian Lake’s campground was insulated and remodeled to provide a more comfortable space for park and community events and programs.

Two wooden bridges were constructed at Geneva along the multi-use trail to link the lodge with the park’s trail system. The bridges are intended for use by snowmobilers as well as bicyclists. Twenty-four volunteers from the Ohio Snowmobile Association assisted with the project.

Pending capital projects completed include renovation of the Howard Road boarding docks at Alum Creek, campground electric upgrades at East Fork; connection to the county water system and discontinuation of the park’s drinking water system at Hueston Woods; and wastewater treatment system rehabilitation at Lake Hope. Design work for the Lake Hope dining lodge was completed, and construction work commenced. Work began on a project to improve the lighting at Shawnee’s lodge. The outdated electrical component of Shawnee’s water system was upgraded to improve water service to the lodge and cottages.

The in-house constructions crews provided invaluable assistance with a number of projects including launch ramp improvements at Kiser Lake, parking lot reclamation at the Buck Creek public beach, replacement of the campground dump station at Buck creek, upgrades to the docks and utilities at Cleveland Lakefront’s E 55<sup>th</sup> Street marina, site preparation for a proposed archery range at Pymatuning, demolition of a cottage destroyed by fire at Salt Fork, bridle trail parking lot improvements at West Branch.

Boating Facility Improvement Grants and Emergency Boating Access funds from the Division of Watercraft provided a number of boating infrastructure improvements and repairs at parks. At Cowan Lake, a canoe/kayak access area was developed. The Division of Wildlife provided additional financial assistance for the addition of a Romtec restroom. Improvements were made at Deer Creek’s marina and the North Shore courtesy dock at Buckeye Lake. A new flush restroom was constructed at Hueston Woods’ launch ramp. Launch ramps were

improved at Lake Alma and Lake Hope. Twenty-four new courtesy docks were installed at Lake Milton, and a courtesy dock structure was placed near the main launch ramp at Mosquito Lake. Paint Creek's Deer Park launch ramp was renovated, and improvements were made to the North Beach launch ramp at Rocky Fork, including installation of solar lights. At Portage Lakes, three launch ramps on Nimisila Reservoir were rehabilitated. Ramp lighting was provided at Guilford Lake. Solar lighting was also installed at launch areas at Lake White, Scioto Trail and Tar Hollow.

**WATER AND WASTEWATER PROJECTS**

A number of water and wastewater system improvements were made at ten park areas, including the large scale capital projects, with assistance from the Division of Engineering. Many parks continue to struggle with increasing demand for clean water, coupled with the limitations of outdated equipment in a contemporary regulatory environment. The projects varied in cost and complexity from replacement of valves, to lift station repairs, to connections to municipal water supplies. The total cost of the various water/wastewater projects was \$5,215,800.

<u>Park</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Cost</u>
Alum Creek	Lift Station Control Panel	\$ 3,000
Buckeye Lake	Liebs Island Lift Station Repairs	\$ 1,100
Burr Oak	Lodge, Cabin & Campground Sewer Collection System Rehabilitation	\$ 1,140,000
Caesar Creek	Campground Loop D Electric Upgrade	\$ 1,000
Delaware	Marina Lift Station Repairs	\$ 12,000
Hueston Woods	Water System Improvements	\$ 1,450,000
Lake Hope	WW Treatment Plant Replacement	\$ 2,401,000
Scioto Trail	Campground Store Electric	\$ 1,000
Shawnee	Campground I/I Improvements	\$ 1,200
Shawnee	Campground WW Treatment Plant Air Line Replacement	\$ 2,000
Shawnee	Lodge Lift Station Repairs	\$ 7,000
Shawnee	Lodge WWTP Repairs	\$ 2,000
Shawnee	Marina WW Treatment Plant Repairs	\$ 1,200
South Bass Island	Water Booster Station Improvements	\$ 193,300
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 5,215,800</b>

**DAM SAFETY**

Work began on the rehabilitation of the 170-year-old earthen dam on Portage Lakes' West Reservoir. The project entails armoring the existing dam with a sturdy concrete structure that will be covered with soil and re-vegetated with grass to maintain its historic appearance. The existing spillway will also be replaced with a new concrete spillway. The pedestrian bridge on the crest of the dam will be demolished and replaced with a new bridge. The West Reservoir Dam project, which scheduled for completion in June 2012, is part of an ongoing capital improvement program for the Portage Lakes to ensure that the dams and associated structures are safe.

In southeast Ohio, a mock earthquake drill was held to test the parks' preparedness for earthquake-related damage. As part of the drill, each of the dams in the region were inspected after the mock event, with the park management and maintenance staff receiving expert advice from the Division of Engineering on proper inspection methods and emergency response.

Dam gates were repaired at Cowan Lake, Guilford Lake and Lake Milton, and the regulatory spillway gate at Buckeye Lake was repaired in an urgent project in the early spring.

#### FLEET MANAGEMENT

The Ohio State Parks fleet currently consists of just over 600 licensed vehicles, including 106 law enforcement patrol, investigator, and supervisor vehicles; 121 passenger sedans, station wagons and mini-vans used for administrative and resale operations; and 415 maintenance, housekeeping and heavy construction/special purpose trucks. The Natural Areas and Preserves fleet includes 30 vehicles and 23 trailers.

The integrity of the division's fleet continues to be compromised by a lack of adequate funding for replacement vehicles. During the year seven new vehicles were purchased at a cost of \$252,627, which included a new semi-tractor at \$135,185, and six used vehicles at a cost of \$22,550. All of the used vehicles were purchased from the DAS State Salvage vehicle lot. In addition, 29 salvage vehicles were acquired from other ODNR divisions. One dump truck was obtained from ODOT as part of an equipment exchange. In spite of the acquisition of these vehicles, the division's fleet continues to age, with the average vehicle age increasing from 11.3 years to 11.5 years, and the average mileage increasing from 107,106 miles to 114,057 miles.

The division's rolling non-vehicle equipment fleet of over 1,000 units includes tractors; riding mowers; utility vehicles; specialized golf course maintenance equipment units; golf carts, including rental carts at the golf courses; trailers; heavy construction equipment such as bulldozers and excavators; and various watercraft, including lake patrol boats, dredges and public rental craft at several marinas. A new tractor with a boom-mounted mower was purchased to enable the South Construction Crew to perform roadside mowing and tree trimming throughout the state.

#### ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS

Making existing facilities more accessible to all of our visitors, as well as providing accessible features for new facilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines, is a high priority at our state parks. Projects initiated by parks to better accommodate visitors include installation of a ramp at Tar Hollow's Big Shelter, the addition of an accessible portable latrine at Wolf Run's picnic shelter, and modifications to a cottage at Pymatuning to make the restroom, kitchen, bedroom and living area more accessible.

## Fiscal Management

Ohio State Parks expended \$68.3 million in fiscal year 2011, including \$26.2 million from revenues generated from fees and charges.

### BUDGET

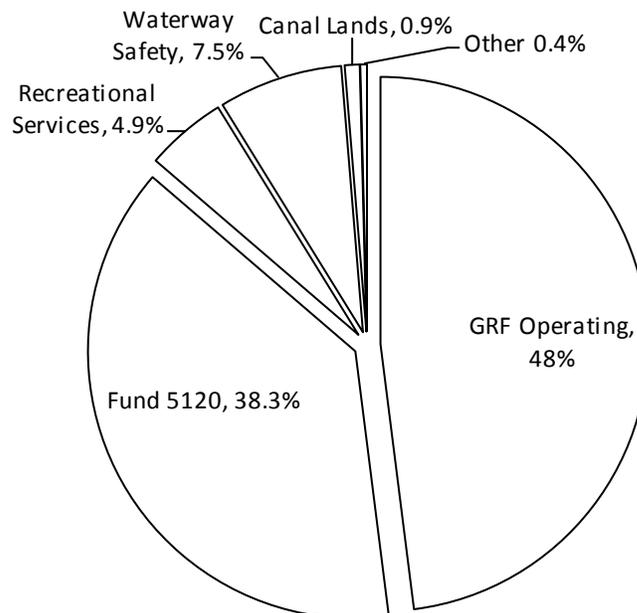
The division's budget is comprised of several funding sources. The primary source is the state's General Revenue Fund (GRF) which accounts for 48 % of the total funding in FY 11 and 41.5 % based on the FY 12 budget. The second largest source of operating funds come from fees and charges generated by the state parks and deposited into Fund 5120. This fund accounts for approximately 38.3 % of the total budget in FY 11 and 44.4 % in FY 12.

Approximately 7.5 % of the budget for FY 11, and 7.87 % for FY 12, is provided by the Waterway Safety Fund, which is designated for a specific purpose. The balance of the budget comes from several smaller dedicated funding sources.

Actual expenditures for FY 11 and the budgeted amount by fund for FY 12 are indicated in the following charts.

### STATE PARKS FUNDING

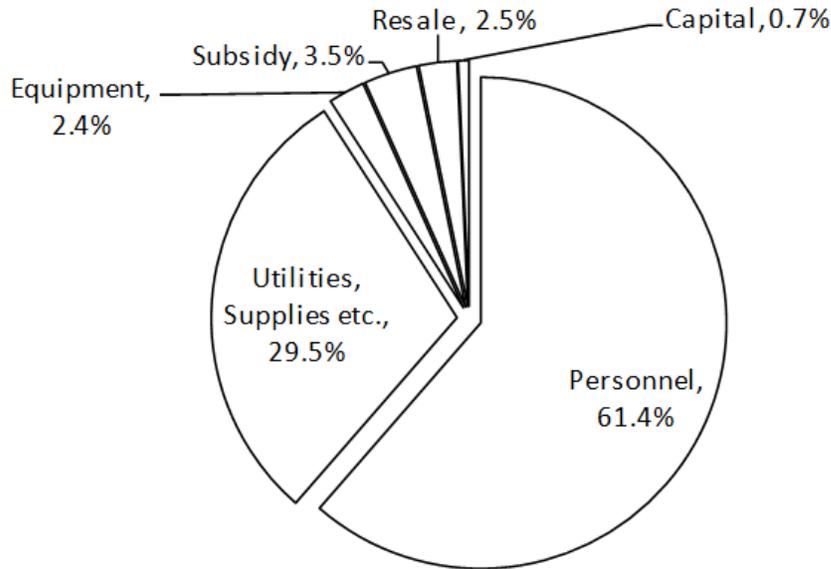
<u>Funding Source</u>	<u>FY 11 Expended</u>	<u>FY 12 Budgeted</u>
GRF Operating	\$32,822,850 48.0%	\$30,135,000 41.5%
Fund 5120 (Fees & Charges)	\$26,180,605 38.3%	\$32,284,117 44.4%
Recreational Services	\$ 3,357,951 4.9%	\$ 3,444,265 4.7%
Waterway Safety	\$ 5,116,015 7.5%	\$ 5,692,601 7.8%
Canal Lands	\$ 602,167 0.9%	\$ 907,618 1.3%
Other Dedicated Funds	\$ 259,220 0.4%	\$ 179,325 0.3%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$68,338,808</b>	<b>\$72,642,926</b>



STATE PARKS EXPENDITURES

An itemization of major expenditures in FY 11 to pay salaries, utility and maintenance costs, resale items, subsidy payments, operating capital and equipment purchases is as follows:

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>FY 11 Expended</u>	
Personnel	\$42,001,140	61.4%
Utilities/Supplies/Material	\$20,131,045	29.5%
Equipment	\$ 1,626,447	2.4%
Subsidy (Grants)	\$ 2,382,273	3.5%
Resale Merchandise	\$ 1,721,348	2.5%
Capital	\$ 476,555	0.7%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$68,338,808</b>	



## STATE PARKS REVENUE

Ohio State Parks generated \$26,851,974 in revenue in CY 2011 a 1.2 % decrease from 2010. Camping continues to be the revenue driver for Ohio State Parks and generated 41.1 % percent of the total revenue to the division. After camping, self-operated retail, cottage rentals and dock permits account for 37.3 % of the total revenue to the division.

The division continues to realize considerable reductions in contracted concession revenue. The majority of this revenue is derived from lodge, cottage, marina, and boat rental concessions, which decreased 4.6 % from 2010.

The revenues received in calendar years 2011 and 2010 were as follows:

<u>Revenue Category</u>	<u>CY 2011</u>	<u>CY 2010</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Camping	\$ 11,036,133	\$ 11,182,669	-1.3 %
Self-Operated Retail	\$ 3,667,377	\$ 3,701,390	-0.9 %
Cottage Rentals	\$ 3,311,756	\$ 3,345,202	-1.0 %
Dock Permits	\$ 3,031,948	\$ 3,056,401	-0.8 %
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,071,814	\$ 2,002,139	3.5%
Concession Agreements	\$ 1,260,340	\$ 1,320,995	-4.6 %
Golf Greens Fees	\$ 1,197,601	\$ 1,261,103	-5.0 %
Getaway Rentals	\$ 679,439	\$ 722,624	-6.0 %
Group Lodge Rentals	\$ 213,730	\$ 208,553	2.5%
Easements	\$ 133,671	\$ 114,835	16.4%
Laundromats	\$ 62,605	\$ 93,106	-32.8 %
Donations	\$ 64,054	\$ 50,641	26.5%
Pools & Lockers	\$ 36,537	\$ 35,276	3.6%
Royalties	\$ 46,110	\$ 32,920	40.1%
State Agency Transfers	\$ 11,350	\$ 19,250	-41.0 %
Duck Blinds	\$ 15,380	\$ 15,390	-0.1 %
Sales Asset	\$ 9,695	\$ 7,000	38.5%
Fines & Penalties	\$ 2,434	\$ 2,354	3.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 26,851,974</b>	<b>\$ 27,171,848</b>	<b>-1.2%</b>

## ADDITIONAL REVENUE SOURCES

### State Parks License Plate

In the program's seventh year, sales of the Ohio State Parks license plate decreased slightly to 1,053 plates sold, a 5 % decline compared to FY 10. Revenue from the license plates provided \$15,795 for state park interpretive educational programs and displays.

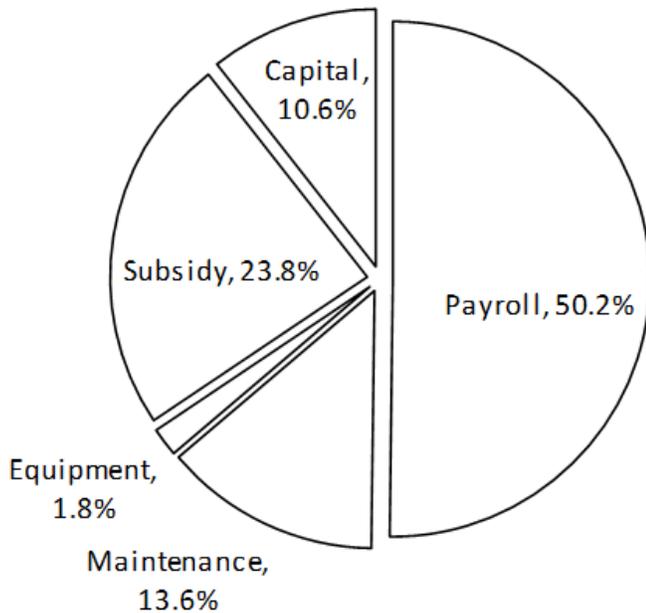
Canal Lands

Land and water lease revenues, along with approved canal land sales continued to significantly supplement GRF funding. Receipts from 270 active land leases totaled \$335,705 in 2011, representing a 2.5% increase in land lease receipts over 2010. An additional \$21,156 was collected from approved sales, royalty payments and a yearly canal maintenance agreement.

NATURE PRESERVES EXPENDITURES

FY 11 expenditures for Natural Areas and Preserves (based on funds 5220 and 1550) to pay salaries, maintenance costs, subsidy payments, operating capital and equipment purchases were as follows:

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>FY11 Expended</u>	
Payroll	\$ 2,093,535	50.2%
Maintenance	\$ 566,407	13.6%
Equipment	\$ 73,714	1.8%
Subsidy	\$ 994,818	23.8%
Capital	\$ 442,712	10.6%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 4,171,186</b>	



STATISTICAL ABSTRACT OF THE OHIO STATE PARK SYSTEM - 2011

**General Park**

# State Parks	75
Total Acreage	174,130 (1)
Acreage -- Land	107,725
Acreage -- Water	66,405
Miles of Shoreline	1,030
% of Land that is Developed	21.2%
% of Shoreline that is Developed	27.1%
Visitor Occasions	51,224,756
# Buildings	2,605
# Water Systems	140
# Sewer Systems	139
# Restroom Buildings -- Water Borne	532
# Restroom Buildings -- Pit Privies	475
Miles of Roads Patrolled	1,858
# Felonies	138
# Citations	1,280
# Visitor Assistants	25,707
# Park Residences	58
# Dining Lodges/Restaurants	2

**Campgrounds**

# Family Campgrounds	56
# Family Campsites	9,150
# Full Service Sites	212
# Electric Sites	6,593
# Non-electric Sites	1,972
# General Group Areas	68
# No-fee, Non-group Primitive Sites	75
# Horse Camps	16
# Horse Camp Sites	373
# Showerhouses	115
# Amphitheaters	52
# Camp Store/Commissaries	47
# Campsites Rented	484,842
Campground Occupancy (244 nights)	22.2% (2)

**Getaway Rentals**

# Rent-A-Camp Sites	19
% Rent-A-Camp Occupancy (184 nights)	27.9%
# Rent-A-RV Sites	2
% Rent-A-RV Occupancy (184 nights)	56.8%
# Rent-A-Tepee Sites	4
% Rent-A-Tepee Occupancy (184 nights)	26.2%
# Rent-A-Yurt Sites	14
% Rent-A-Yurt Occupancy (184 nights)	56.7%
# Cabents	4
% Cabent Occupancy (184 nights)	45.0%
# Camper Cabins	42
% Camper Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	52.4%
# Cedar Cabins	27
% Cedar Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	60.5%
# Conestoga Cabins	22
% Conestoga Cabins Occupancy (184 nigl)	62.5%

**Lodges & Concession Cottages**

# Resort Lodges	9
# Resort Lodge Rooms	818
# Lodge Room Nights Rented	125,531
% Lodge Occupancy	42.0%
# Restaurants in Resort Lodges	9
# Concession Cottages	221
# Cottage Nights Rented	32,552
% Cottage Occupancy	40.4%

**State Operated Cottages**

# State Operated Cottages	294
# Cottage Nights Rented	38,641
% Cottage Occupancy	36.0%

**Golf Courses**

# Golf Courses	6
# Golf Rounds	83,846

**Boat Ramps/Marinas/Docks**

# Boat Ramps	179
# Boater Occasions	6,047,378
# Marina / Boat Rental Operations	44
# Docks - Concession Operated	1,533
# Docks - State Operated	5,522
# Private Docks Licensed	16,218

**Beaches**

# Swimming Beaches	78
# Swimming Occasions	4,259,539
# Beach Concessions	11

**Group Facilities**

# Overnight Group Facilities	4
# Overnight Group Facility Users	17,124
# Beds in Group Facilities	309
# Day-use Group Lodges	16
# Day-use Group Lodge Users	17,450

**Visitor/Nature Centers**

# Visitor/Nature Centers	38
# Visitor/Nature Center Visitor Occasions	1,404,389

**Picnic Areas**

# Picnic Areas	456
# Picnic Area Visitor Occasions	10,260,857
# Picnic Shelters -- Total	183
# Reservable Picnic Shelters	135

**Other Recreational Facilities**

# Swimming Pools	20
# Tennis Courts	17
# Basketball Courts	83
# Volleyball Courts	100
# Miniature Golf Courses	16
# Disc Golf Courses	19
# Archery Ranges	14
# Dog Exercise Areas	11
# Playgrounds	193
# Parks with Bike Rental Operations	17
# Trails - Total	443
Total Miles of Trails	1,351.0
# Multi-Use Trails	149
# Hiking Only Trails	229
# Mountain Bike Only Trails	38
# Bridle Only Trails	27
# Parks with Snow Mobile Trails	6
# Parks with Cross Country Ski Trails	44
# Parks with Sledding Hills	38
# Shooting Ranges	5

(1) Based on REALM's 2009 Land Inventory report.

(2) Includes Horse Camp Sites, and excludes 191 volunteer Camper Host sites.

## Goals - 2012

- Continue to prioritize visitor and employee safety, with emphasis on public awareness efforts, employee training and preventive measures.
- Keep the division's successful focus on customer service in all facets of our operations, and continue to provide hospitality and skill development training to staff.
- Promote connecting children and nature, getting fit naturally and nature tourism themes through added programs and community partnerships.
- Grow relations with stakeholders and encourage our partners to serve as advocates for Ohio State Parks.
- Continue to pursue lake treatment options at Grand Lake St. Marys in collaboration with agency and community partners.
- Work with agency partners to refine the harmful algal bloom response protocol, and provide training and coordination to implement the updated state strategy.
- Continue efforts to provide leadership development, with special emphasis on renewing the manager-in-training program with updated curriculum.
- Prioritize investment in facilities, infrastructure and equipment based on health and safety, return on investment and visitor needs.
- Utilize partnerships, in-house industries and other cost-effective strategies to make incremental improvements to our facilities and infrastructure.
- Continue to examine and implement ways to reduce operating costs and increase revenues while protecting and enhancing our core revenue sources.
- Continue to work with the concession operators to enhance marketing and sales strategies.