

# *Ohio State Parks*

2006 ANNUAL REPORT



*Ohio State Parks*  
OHIOSTATEPARKS.ORG

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

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**DAN WEST**  
Chief, Ohio State Parks

### Moving Forward

By managing with common sense, staying focused on our mission, cultivating partnerships, and sharing a keen sense of purpose, Ohio State Parks has continued to thrive in a challenging climate of limited resources and increasing needs. With our priceless assets, including talented and dedicated employees, generous and energetic partners, and a wealth of wonderful natural resources, we continue to deliver memorable outdoor recreation experiences for millions of Ohioans.

Yet our public value goes far beyond the properties we manage and the services we provide. Our state parks are part of the very fabric of the quality of life in Ohio, woven with the threads of healthy individuals, cohesive families, engaged communities, and economic prosperity for our state.

Our innovative staff has developed new programs that get families together in nature to learn, have fun, get fit and enjoy each others' company. With the help of our partners, we have created a bounty of new recreational offerings, from archery ranges to Wi-Fi service in our campgrounds, that attract new customers and encourage our loyal customers to come more often and stay longer.

Although we are leaner than ever, it seems that we are more connected to our communities than ever before. The number of parks friends groups and community support groups continues to grow, and the projects they accomplish, like the Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center and the Alum Creek Dog Park, add tremendous value to the parks. When the historic Lake Hope Dining Lodge was lost to fire in February, neighbors and fans of the park mobilized to establish the Friends of Lake Hope State Park, and began fundraising to help rebuild this popular community gathering place.

Our state parks have also contributed to Ohio's financial well-being. Overnight visits to our state park campgrounds, cottages and lodges boosted Ohio's economy with \$244.1 million in direct sales for all kinds of businesses in and around the parks.

We have made significant progress in each of our overarching goal areas, including customer service, resource management, professional development, infrastructure improvement and stable funding. For example:

- We have taken a holistic approach to hospitality management where we provide front-line employees with the training, authority and incentives they need to provide services and experiences that delight customers and keep them coming back.
- We have initiated natural resources management plans to be sure that we are taking good care of the resources entrusted to us, we maintain a balance of preservation and development throughout the system, and we approach resource management decisions at each park strategically, with transparency and continuity.
- Acting on our belief that happy employees are the key to happy customers, we have measured our employees' satisfaction, and are taking measures to make the atmosphere in the workplace even better and more positive.
- We are innovating, working with partners, and maximizing efficiencies in the system to keep improving and building facilities with our limited resources.
- With the establishment of the Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation, we are not only taking steps to provide a more secure future for our park system, we are also inviting Ohioans to invest in their own future, and make their own personal contribution to a tremendous natural legacy that will endure and enrich Ohioans' lives for many generations to come.

Our new five-year strategic plan, Service and Stewardship 2006-2010, builds on our most successful programs and introduces a new level of performance measurement and accountability. We are dedicated to continuous improvement, and we look forward to becoming an even stronger, more sustainable organization, and serving as a leader in the evolving public environment.



Dan West  
CHIEF, OHIO STATE PARKS

# Table of Organization

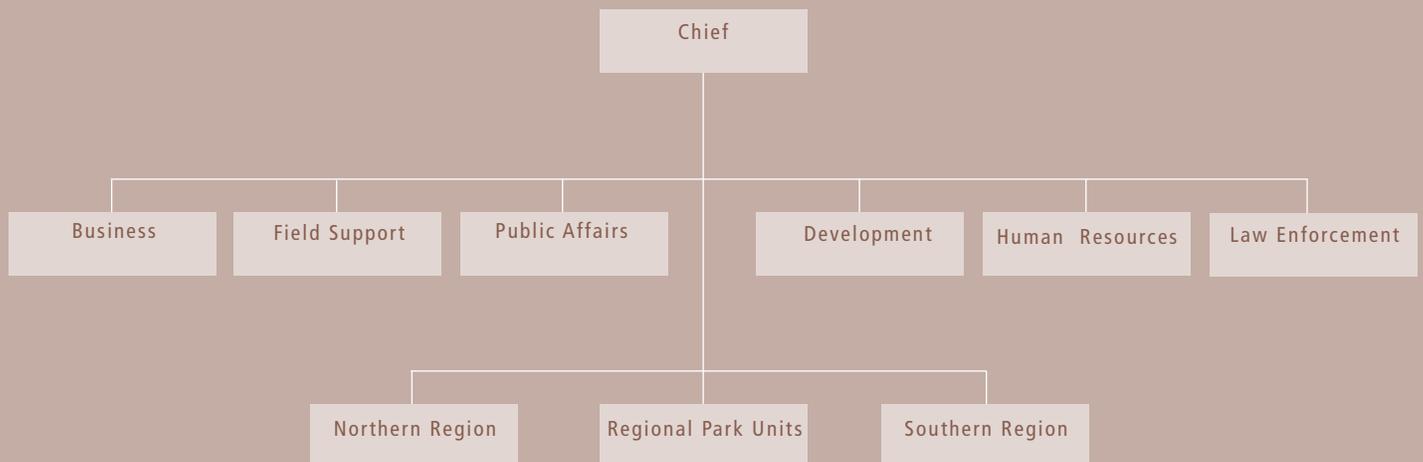
The organization of Ohio's 74 state parks into regional units continued, with the total number of regional units remaining at 26. The regional units consist of two to five parks in close proximity. Each region works together as a team, sharing financial and human resources as necessary for better economy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



The manager of one of the parks in each unit is designated as the regional manager, and exercises line authority over the other park(s) within the region. The regional manager provides leadership to best utilize resources within the region, and may shift resources to assist the other park(s), thereby ensuring the success of the entire region. In several of the regions, one or more of the smaller regional parks are operated as satellites without a manager on-site.

The north and south regional administrators serve as an extension of the chief's office in the field, providing assistance on operational matters and facilitating uniformity of management strategies within their respective state areas.

The central office groups provide support for the field, perform administrative functions and implement statewide programs.



# Strategic Plan

Our second strategic plan, *Service and Stewardship 2006-2010*, has been adopted as Ohio State Parks' road map for the next five years. The strategic plan is intended to be embraced by all of our staff and integrated into our daily operations, with emphasis on thoughtful evaluation of our practices and procedures, and measurement of our impact.

The strategic plan is built around our core values of **leadership**, **customer focus**, **stewardship**, **professionalism**, and **innovation**. These values are embodied in an action-oriented operating philosophy articulated in the following four themes that empower and inspire our staff.

*It always starts with our guests • Our staff make the difference • Measure and follow up • Just do it.*

Five broad, overarching goals provide the framework for our strategic direction. They are:

## Customer Service

Providing excellent programs and services that respond to existing and new customer needs and expectations.

## Resource Management

- Preserving, protecting, managing, and enhancing Ohio State Parks' historical, cultural, and natural resources.

## Human Resources Development

- Attracting, training, and retaining professional, knowledgeable, and service-oriented staff and volunteers.

## Infrastructure and Maintenance

- Adopting practices that optimize efficiency in building, improving and maintaining Ohio State Parks' facilities, infrastructure, and roads.

## Stable Funding

- Developing a stable funding base to provide for continued use, improvement, and protection of Ohio State Parks.

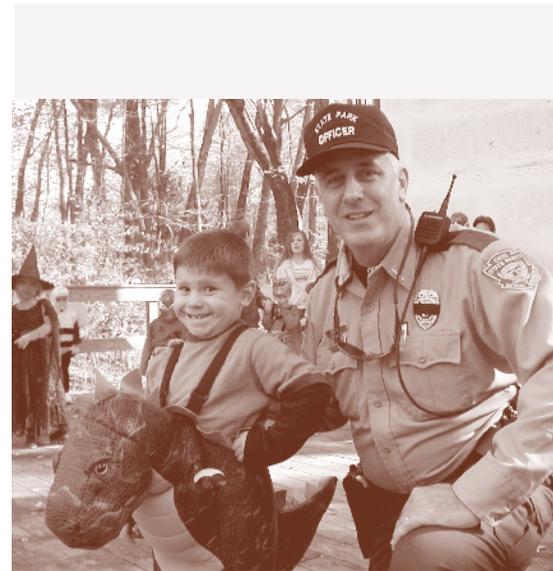
Dozens of practical, actionable strategies align with these overarching goals. Indicators of success tell us whether we are on-track—are we doing things right—and measures help us assess the impact of our strategies—are we doing the right things.

At every stage of creating and realizing our strategic direction, from developing strategies, to implementing actions steps, to tracking and measuring our success, we must remain mindful of our mission to provide outdoor recreational experiences that exceed our visitors' expectations, and our vision of providing fun, safe, clean and friendly places for families and friends to gather and enjoy the great outdoors.



# Customer Service

**Ohio State Parks' staff demonstrated their commitment to providing fun, safe, clean and friendly places for families to gather and enjoy the outdoors. Parks continued to reach out to the community with special events, interpretive and educational programs, as well as collaborate with partners to provide outstanding facilities and memorable experiences for visitors.**



Fall Festival at Stonelick

## Customer Focus

Regional customer service champions planned and presented a two-day training session 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

The number of reservations made, as well as the number of nights that guests stayed in state-operated cottages, getaway rentals and campsites, declined slightly from 2005. The number of reservations made declined by 2.74 percent, and the number of nights stayed declined by 1.67 percent. These declines are attributed in part to the very wet and flooded conditions in northeast Ohio parks, including Geneva, Punderson, West Branch, Pymatuning, and Mosquito Lake, in May and June and Mohican in July.

Systemwide, the proportion of overnight customers who opted to make advance reservations, rather than walk-in, increased to 54 percent. Half of these advance reservations were made through the call center, and half were made on-line through the division's website.

Customer complaints concerning the reservation system continued to decline, although there was a modest increase in the number of complaints about camping fees, particularly the fees charged at several parks for guests visiting registered campers.

Broadband service was installed at 45 park offices to provide faster, more stable Internet connections for point-of-sale terminals as well as office computers. The upgraded service has allowed InfoSpherix to discontinue the use of satellite connectivity for the centralized reservation system, and take advantage of the faster and more reliable connections for reservations. InfoSpherix has agreed to help the division recoup some of the costs associated with providing broadband Internet service.

## Special Events

Nearly half a million visitors attended special events held at state parks throughout the year. With the help of volunteers and friends groups, 57 parks hosted a wide variety of events, from campouts and heritage festivals to nature hikes and park clean-ups. These parks sponsored a total of 320 events, and served as the venues for hundreds more, including fishing tournaments, boat races, triathlons, fireworks and community picnics.

The oldest ongoing special event in Ohio State Parks, the annual Hocking Hills Winter Hike, celebrated its forty-first anniversary in January.

Two premier events that promote nature tourism, the Mohican Wildlife Weekend and Hocking Hills' "Shoot the Hills" nature photography weekend, were held for the fifth consecutive year. Both of these events, which have been successful in filling their respective parks' state-operated cottages during a relatively slow period in April, have been developed in partnership with local tourism bureaus and businesses.

Throughout the summer, Lake Hope offered its popular "Hand-Feeding Hummingbirds" program for the fourth year. More than 3,000 park visitors participated in the program. Although it is free of charge, the popular program has enabled the Friends of Lake Hope to raise funds for park improvements through sales of backyard hummingbird feeders, as well as souvenir photos of park guests hand-feeding the hummingbirds.

The new Haunted Hocking series introduced at Hocking Hills combined natural history night hikes with story telling and exploration of local legends that gave visitors a unique look at familiar places like Old Man's Cave, Moonville Tunnel and Ash Cave. This novel program was conducted one evening each month during the peak season, and attracted capacity crowds for each program.

In October, Malabar Farm once again hosted a dinner theater production in cooperation with The Mansfield Playhouse. In its fourth year, the event featured the second run of the historical drama, "Phoebe."

In December, Lake Hope introduced the 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, which enhanced the experience for visitors while saving energy. The event helped boost park visitation and cottage occupancy in the winter season. For the seventh year, Alum Creek held the drive-through "Fantasy of Lights" holiday light display in partnership with the Alum Creek Marina and Recreation Unlimited.

## Interpretive Services

Nearly 300,000 park visitors attended summer naturalist programs offered in 50 of the state parks. In its fifth year, the "Wildlife in the Parks" partnership program provided in excess of \$100,000 in program support funds.

Two new statewide interpretive themes were launched. One program theme is conservation of monarch butterflies, where park naturalists educate park visitors about the butterfly's life history, demonstrate butterfly rearing techniques, and discuss conservation issues. The statewide "Survival Ohio Style" program was introduced to promote outdoor safety and physical fitness as well as teach outdoor skills, teamwork and natural history. This innovative program involves family versus family competition so everyone participates, not just youth.

Interactive computer kiosks were installed at two state park interpretive centers, at Hueston Woods and Cleveland Lakefront. The kiosks provide interactive visual and audio learning experiences that are customized to the wildlife and other natural resources of each respective park, including the natural habitats and locations specific to each park. The kiosks were funded in part from sales of the Ohio State Parks bluebird license plate.

The first phase of renovations to the interpretive exhibits at the Old Man's Cave visitor center at Hocking Hills was completed. A new display featuring an interactive quiz promoting trail safety was installed. Photographs orienting visitors to all the various units within Hocking Hills State Park were replaced with new photos and updated mountings.

New displays in the division's exhibit area at the Ohio State Fair included a rabbit hutch to replace the chicken pen at the log cabin. Various types of preventative maintenance were done on the logs at the historic cabin in an effort to prevent moisture damage. Volunteers from Malabar Farm's Spinning and



Handfeeding Hummingbirds at Lake Hope



Buckeye Lake beach dedication

Weaving Guild gave demonstrations at the log cabin throughout the fair, and volunteers from Buckeye Lake, Deer Creek, Dillon, and Mt. Gilead helped staff the camper cabin display in the Natural Resources Park.

### 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:

Expanded mountain biking trails at Mohican

Wireless Fidelity (Wi-Fi) "hotspots" for customers in the campgrounds at Alum Creek, East Harbor, Hueston Woods and Rocky Fork

9-hole disc golf courses at Findley and Independence Dam

Archery ranges at Hocking Hills and Punderson

Shuffleboard courts at Delaware and Mt. Gilead

Accessible Hock-hocking Expedition Trail at Hocking Hills

Half-mile boardwalk trail and gazebo at Lake Milton

Monarch butterfly gazebo at Maumee Bay

Songbird aviary at Malabar Farm

Community art center in the former park office at Lake Loramie

Renovated nature centers at Alum Creek and Hocking Hills

Swimming beach at Buckeye Lake

Gazebo at Lake Alma

Dog swim area at Harrison Lake

New restroom facilities at Deer Creek Horseman's Camp

The division has continued to be responsive to customers seeking out Ohio State Parks as a venue for emerging trends in outdoor recreation activities. The Portage Lakes region offered a summer-long geocaching event from the Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day, with a total of 20 caches distributed among the five parks in the region. In addition to this park-sponsored event, several other state parks cooperated with local geocachers who have set up hunts on state park trails.

The 18-hole disc golf course at Pike Lake was rated the best disc golf course in Ohio by the Ohio Disc Golf Project (ODGP). The official ODGP website, [www.ohiodiscgolf.org](http://www.ohiodiscgolf.org), lists 70 disc golf courses around the state including the new course at Findley, along with the other excellent state park courses at Forked Run and Great Seal. Pike Lake received the top overall rating of "5 baskets," along with 5-basket ratings for scenery, family friendliness, available facilities and crowd-size, and a 4-basket rating for difficulty. Great Seal received an overall rating of 4.5 baskets, and Findley and Forked Run both received 4-basket overall ratings.

Shawnee's hiking trails were included in a listing of five fabulous fall hikes in the premiere issue of *Hobby Farm Home* magazine. *Hobby Farm Home* is a web-based magazine affiliated with the national *Hobby Farms* publication.

New getaway rental offerings include camper cabins at Burr Oak, and additional camper cabin units at Forked Run and Grand Lake St. Marys. The Rent-A-RV program was eliminated at the beginning of the season at Alum Creek and Caesar Creek, and after the close of the season at Burr Oak. Caesar Creek and Alum Creek replaced the Rent-A-RV units with cedar cabins, which offer similar amenities. The Rent-A-Camp program, which is the most rustic of the getaway rental offerings, was eliminated at Forked Run, Grand Lake St. Marys, Paint Creek, and Salt Fork as the parks shifted their resources to the more customer-friendly camper cabins.

### Publications

In its twelfth year of production, two issues of *Ohio State Parks* magazine were published and direct mailed to a subscriber list of more than 51,000 households. A new heritage brochure describing historical attractions in and near state parks was introduced to promote heritage tourism and encourage overnight stays in the parks. Nearly one million promotional pieces were printed, including the park directory, getaway rentals, overnight facilities fees, heritage and 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.

### Marketing and Advertising

Print advertising was placed in a number of publications that provide reader response service, generating over 14,000 requests for general information about Ohio State Parks. 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 *Family Fun*, *Midwest Living*, 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 specific outdoor recreational pursuits, including *Woodall's Campground Directory*, *Ohio Camper*, and *Trailer Life* magazine.

In partnership with the Ohio News Network (ONN), television ads promoting the state park system were aired on ONN throughout the summer. In addition, the division partnered with the Divisions of Wildlife and Watercraft to sponsor a 30 minute travel show, *Discover Ohio*, focusing on outdoor recreation opportunities in Ohio, which aired on ONN throughout the summer.

Ohio State Parks continued its participation in the annual travel shows held in Columbus and Dayton, 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 Internet continued to be an important component of the division's marketing mix as well as a vehicle for environmental education outreach. Visits to the website increased for the fourth consecutive year. User sessions totaled over 2.9 million, which is a 20.4 percent increase over last year. Sessions for the Ohio State Parks website totaled 24.9 percent of total sessions for the ODNR website. Users averaged 6.3 minutes and 4.0 page views per session. Individual park pages accounted for 55.9 percent of all page views. "Campground Availability," "The Wildflower Report," and "Nature Things for Kids" web features were continued. Page views for the "Nature Things for Kids" and "Campground Availability" increased 93.7 percent and 145.2 percent, respectively.

Internet marketing consisted of tile ads on the ONN, Woodall, Family Fun, Discover Ohio, and Midwest Living web sites that linked back to the Ohio State Parks web site. Four issues of "E-News from Ohio State Parks" were sent to 14,900 subscribers and 72,900 other recipients who have provided their email address. The electronic newsletter highlights special offers and discounts, new programs and recreational offerings, and upcoming events in the parks.

### Promotional Programs

The Cardinal Camper Club promotional program for camping continued for a seventh year. More than 2,200 memberships were sold, generating over \$55,000 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 a database for targeted marketing activities continued to be achieved. Listings of unique visitor addresses in the database increased by 28 percent to 9,000.

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. Each location offered \$20 off the regular nightly rate Sunday through Thursday, and \$10 off on Friday and Saturday nights.

Other promotional programs include a 10 percent discount, Sunday through Thursday, on camping fees to holders of the Ohio Department of Health's "Ohio Kids Card"; a 50 percent discount, Sunday through Wednesday at select parks, to members of the Passport America program; and a 25 percent discount coupon provided to Tom Raper RV for customers purchasing a new RV.

Nature Center display



# Surveys

Outreach through the annual customer satisfaction survey was enhanced as the surveys were made available on-line through the state parks website. An overnight economic impact survey once again affirmed Ohio State Parks' valuable contribution to Ohio's economy.



## Customer Satisfaction Survey

Customer satisfaction surveys have been conducted each season since 1992. For the fifth year, the revised program consisted of three surveys geared toward three major facility areas: campgrounds, resort lodge and cottage operations, and day use facilities. The survey instruments focus on customer satisfaction with various aspects of those three areas, 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 more specific feedback on park operations and identifies where improvements are needed.

The survey was conducted during the primary operating season, May through October. In addition, the survey forms were posted online on the division's website for customer convenience. 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 8,911 surveys were returned, with 90.83 percent of respondents rating their overall visit as excellent or good. (See Table 1, page 11)

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, 61 percent were repeat visitors to a specific state park, 81 percent had visited other state parks, 85 percent would return to that specific state park, and 78 percent would visit other state parks. In addition, 54 percent of respondents were between 35 and 60 years of age, 46 percent had one or more children, and 87 percent were in groups of two or more people. Eighty-seven percent of respondents were from Ohio. Of the respondents from other states, 64 percent were from the states bordering Ohio.

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).

### Economic Impact Study

The division again partnered with the Division of Travel and Tourism in a statewide study of the economic impact of travel. The division's portion of the study measured the direct and indirect expenditures of overnight visitors to Ohio State Park campgrounds, cottages, and lodges during the calendar year 2005. According to the study, direct sales to Ohio State Park overnight visitors contributed \$244.1 million to the state's economy. Including direct and indirect effects, state and local taxes supported by these visitors were \$22.0 million and \$14.9 million, respectively. In addition, sales to state park visitors supported 7,200 direct and indirect jobs in Ohio.

The direct economic impact of \$244.1 million is a 2.4 percent decrease from the 2004 study. The decline is primarily due to a decrease in camping revenue. The study was sponsored by the Ohio Division of Travel and Tourism, and again conducted by Rovelstad & Associates of Racine, Wisconsin and Longwoods International of Toronto, Ontario.



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

Facility Area	2006	2005
Campground Operation	4.155	4.185
Resort Lodge Operation	4.197	4.251
Cottage Operation	4.200	4.305
Golf Course	4.556	4.464
Beaches	4.057	3.998
Lake/Boating Facilities	4.220	4.419
Trails	4.409	4.355
Picnic Areas	4.258	4.171
Visitor/Nature Centers	4.583	4.403

**TABLE 2: SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Facility	Park	Average Rating
Picnic Areas	Malabar Farm	4.559
Beach	Lake Milton	4.557
Lake/Boating Facilities	Lake Milton	4.626
Trails	Lake Milton	4.795
Visitor/Nature Center	Maumee Bay	4.851
Getaway Rentals	Salt Fork	5.000
Cottages	Pike Lake	4.511
Golf Course	Deer Creek	4.585
Campground	West Branch	4.450
Resort Lodge	Hueston Woods	4.326

# Partnerships



Dog park dedication at Alum Creek

Ohio State Parks' statewide advocacy group, Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks, has become active in a number of areas of benefit to the system. At the same time, partnerships at the local level remained critically important to the parks' ability to deliver customer service and add value to visitors' experiences.

## Friends Groups and Support Groups

With the establishment of three new park-specific friends groups, a total of 48 parks now have friends groups in place and involved in park improvement projects and special events. Support groups, including lake advisory councils, civic clubs and Coast Guard auxiliaries, also provided an array of services at parks such as hosting tours, assisting with special events and leading fundraising drives for park projects.

The Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks (FPOSP) continued to serve as an umbrella organization linking the individual park friends and support groups. This statewide friends group, which was chartered as a non-profit advocacy group for the parks, was a lead participant in a new coalition of statewide conservation and environmental groups that is working on identifying a source of sustained funding for state parks. The FPOSP sponsored two statewide meetings at which individual park friends groups received training in fundraising, managing a nonprofit, and other relevant topics. The group improved its website, [www.fposp.org](http://www.fposp.org), in order to enhance communications with member groups.

The new Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation was created as a private nonprofit organization to seek contributions from families, businesses and foundations to help support making improvements in state parks. The legacy fund's finances will be managed by the Columbus Foundation, one of the largest community foundations in the nation. Individual park friends groups will receive grants from the legacy fund for projects, such as nature center enhancements, installation of playgrounds, construction of shelterhouses, etc.

The Friends of Alum Creek Dog Park collaborated with park staff to develop the first dog park in Ohio State Parks. The group raised \$18,000 for materials, and provided volunteer labor to clear and fence a four-acre lakeside area at Alum Creek where dogs can run and play unleashed. The Alum Creek Dog Park was officially dedicated in June, and it received extensive publicity during the summer, including an article in Columbus magazine where it was dubbed the “Lexus” of area dog parks. Traffic counters provided by the friends group logged more than 25,000 vehicles visiting the dog park between August and December, and an additional \$2,700 in donations for maintenance was collected from on-site donation boxes provided by the friends group. In November, the Alum Creek Dog Park was selected by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association for their 2006 Awards of Excellence with the top rating of “superior.”

The new Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center, a joint project between the division and the Malabar Farm Foundation, was completed in September. The Malabar Farm Foundation provided \$500,000 for construction of the innovative facility, which incorporates a number of green technologies. The visitor education center provides educational displays, as well as meeting space for park and community events. The Malabar Farm Foundation received the Chief’s Award, the highest honor bestowed to outside groups and individuals by Ohio State Parks, in gratitude for their outstanding contribution to this project. The Chief’s Award was presented in conjunction with the official dedication of the Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center during Malabar Farm’s annual Ohio Heritage Days event in September.

### Volunteer Program

In its 24th 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. More than 7,000 volunteers provided more than 350,000 hours of service. There were more “Individual” and “Campground Host” volunteers, while somewhat fewer “Group” volunteers were enrolled. Almost 300 volunteers from 27 parks attended the statewide campout at Indian Lake, which featured the grand opening of a new multi-purpose building funded by the park’s volunteers.

Background checks of volunteer Campground Hosts were conducted for the first time to help ensure the integrity of the program and the safety of park visitors.

A new Nature Host program was piloted at Maumee Bay. These volunteers worked at the nature center, assisting park naturalists in providing more programs for visitors. The Maumee Bay Nature Hosts received complimentary camping as part of the pilot program.

The Volunteer Park of the Year Award was presented to West Branch for the park’s wide-ranging program.

### Corporate Partnerships

Many state parks received corporate sponsorships for local projects and special events. In addition to these local partnerships, the division worked with corporate sponsors on the following state-wide projects that served all of the parks:

Pepsi-Cola, in its fifth year as official beverage supplier to Ohio State Parks, underwrote the cost of producing 100 new banners, including “Welcome” banners and special message banners promoting the “Get Fit Naturally,” “Swim Safe,” and “Hike Safe” public outreach themes. Some of the banners featured Spanish language text, and were installed in select parks with Hispanic clientele. A total of 700 banners have been produced with financial assistance from Pepsi.

The new Ohio State Parks Partnership Building Forum was launched in May to attract corporate partners. A two day conference was held at Mohican to introduce potential corporate sponsors to the state park system and suggest programs, projects and activities for corporate giving. Twenty-one representatives of businesses and organizations attended the forum, and three corporate sponsors who have donated generously in the past for park projects— Rocky Outdoor Gear, Sherwin Williams and Xanterra Parks & Resorts—were honored with special awards during the forum.

### Community Partnerships

In its ninth year, the Ohio Trails Partnership (OTP) continued to link volunteer trail user groups that construct and maintain many of the hiking, bridle and mountain bike trails in state parks and state forests. The OTP partners include the Buckeye Trail Association, the Ohio Horsemen’s Council and the Ohio Mountain Bike Association, with the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy serving in an advisory capacity. The Central Ohio Mountain Biking Organization (COMBO) piloted a trail patrol program at Alum Creek that may serve as a model for patrol programs at other state parks. The Alum Creek program is



Buck Creek’s youngest volunteer

affiliated with the National Mountain Bike Patrol, with emphasis on providing patrollers certified in first aid and CPR, who can also perform basic trail maintenance and repairs, and assist novice bikers.

Twelve parks partnered with the Ohio Mountain Bike Association to present Get Fit Naturally events in conjunction with the Ohio Mountain Bike Championship (OMBC) Series. More than 500 people of all ages were introduced to mountain biking through the series of events, and more than 900 mountain bikers of all ages participated in the OMBC race events, a 25 percent increase over last year.

The Hocking Valley Bird Trail partners produced promotional posters that provide a map and directory to birding destinations on the Hocking Valley Bird Trail, which include Hocking Hills, Lake Logan and Lake Hope state parks. The posters have been mounted on bulletin boards at the trailheads at each of the birding areas. Local corporate sponsors helped pay for bulletin boards at several of the birding areas that did not already have bulletin boards on-site. The Hocking Valley Bird Trail partners include the state parks along with the divisions of Wildlife and Natural Areas and Preserves, the Wayne National Forest, the Hocking Hills Tourism Association, Audubon Ohio, the Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative, and The Nature Conservancy.

With cooperation from the Division of Wildlife and the Ohio Biological Survey, Shawnee launched a highly successful partnership event, the “Reptile and Amphibian Adventure in the Land of the Great Snake.” The two-day conference combined indoor seminars led by leading experts in their fields with outdoor field excursions to capture and release reptiles and amphibians found in the park in order to record data on the diversity of animal species in the park. The highly successful event was attended by 115 participants, many from out-of-state.

Shawnee also partnered with the Cincinnati Museum Centers, Cincinnati Nature Center and other organizations to offer 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.

Steve Stephens, travel writer for the Columbus Dispatch, received the Chief’s Award in April for his exceptional coverage of Ohio State Parks in a series of articles in the Sunday travel section of the Dispatch. Stephens was the ninth recipient of this prestigious award since its inception in 1998.

### Inter-Agency Partnerships

Work continued on development of the Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist Program (OCVN), which was initiated last year to train and certify volunteers who assist with nature interpretation and resource conservation activities. A training manual and collateral materials have been produced, and a framework for administration of the programs has been developed. Local park systems, conservation organizations, and The Ohio State University Extension are partnering with the department to launch the program.

The Mohican region has partnered with Mansfield Correctional Institute to provide a variety of work projects for inmates. Through this cooperative program, the inmates rebuilt and repaired several tractors, a tree spade, a dump truck and several semi trailers. At Malabar Farm, they also provided assistance with installation of cattle gates, fencing and hog feeders. The total cost savings for the division resulting from this program is estimated at \$300,000 for the year.

The Division of Wildlife funded the construction of an aviary at Malabar Farm in conjunction with the development of the new Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center. The Division of Wildlife also provided several interpretive exhibits at the park’s new Visitor Education Center. In addition to providing an appealing attraction and year-round educational opportunities at the park, the aviary also houses songbirds to be used at an exhibit during the Ohio State Fair.

An agreement between the division and the Ohio Department of Transportation allows parks to pick up road salt stockpiled at ODOT facilities without any direct cost to park operating budgets. A memorandum of understanding has been adopted to formalize the procedures including tracking of salt used by the parks, estimation of future needs, and reimbursement for the salt used through the roadway paving fund administered by ODOT.

A cooperative training program was developed in partnership with ODOT to provide real-world improvement projects within the parks for the ODOT training curriculum, as well as provide ODOT instructors for training needed by park employees.



Hocking Valley Bird Trail

## Visitor Safety and Protective Services

Of the 85,635 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 division commissioned officers received prestigious honors for their outstanding lifesaving efforts. **Dave Johnston**, a park officer at Findley, received the Meritorious Lifesaving Award for rescuing two teenagers who were clinging to a tree surrounded by floodwaters after their vehicle was washed away in the rushing Black River. **Ben Derrick**, a treatment plant operator at the park, arrived on the scene and offered his assistance. A local fireman, who was already in the water tethered to a safety line trying to get to the teens, perished during the rescue attempt.

**Doug Lindsley**, a park officer at Dillon, received the Lifesaving Recognition Award for preventing the drowning of a young child he observed struggling in the swimming area at Dillon Reservoir. As Officer Lindsley approached the water, park visitors Matt and Ryan Geddes offered their assistance, pulled the child from the water and administered first aid. Officer Lindsley was also recognized as a "Hometown Hero" by the local chapter of the American Red Cross.

### Physical Fitness Assessments

For the second year, all commissioned officers participated in physical fitness assessments during the winter in-service. There was a slight overall improvement over last year's results in the four assessment categories, maximum volume of oxygen intake (VO2 max), upper body and abdominal strength, and body composition. A total of 155 officers were assessed, including 23 officers who were hired after January 1, 2004 and are required to pass an annual fitness test. Of the 23 officers required to pass the annual test, one officer was removed for failing to pass the annual test.

**Law Enforcement Grants and Funds**

A \$55,326 grant from the Department of Public Safety, Governor’s Highway Safety Office provided funding for 13 state parks to participate in increased speed and DUI enforcement. A \$26,465 grant from the Division of Watercraft assisted with lake patrols on the waters of Lake Milton, West Branch, and Mosquito Lake Reservoirs.

The Drug/DUI account received \$28,984 in fines resulting from violations of O.R.C. Title 4511.19, Operating under the influence and O.R.C. Title 2925, Drug abuse. These fines, in combination with remaining funds, provided \$17,394 toward the purchase of law enforcement equipment.

**Body Armor Replacement**

As part of a national class action suit regarding the material “Zylon,” which is a primary component of law enforcement body armor, the division pursued replacement of 197 units of body armor for park officers.

**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	2006	2005	2004
Visitor Assists	30,513	27,950	35,852
Warnings (written or verbal)	48,848	55,914	61,721
Misdemeanor Citations/Arrests	6,070	6,455	6,462
Felony Arrest	204	148	104
Outside Agency Assists	775	477	772
Property Stolen	\$177,456	\$208,088	\$349,499
Vandalism	\$121,297	\$41,266	\$188,439
Investigations	4161	3,636	4,943

There were 47 instances in which park officers were required to respond to resistance while performing law enforcement duties. Sixty 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, and as a result, the number of incidents in which a CEW was used increased accordingly.

Type of Response to Resistance Used	2006	2005	2004
Unholster Weapon	25	19	28
Bodily Force	17	14	22
Chemical Agent	1	2	2
Vehicle Pursuit	4	8	8
Injury to Officer	2	6	2
Road Block	0	0	0
Display Shotgun	2	2	4
Suspect Injury	4	0	1
Baton	0	2	0
Canine	2	0	1
CEW	20	9	-
Patrol Rifle	0	1	-
Total Incidents	77	63	59



Park Officer Dave Johnston and Ben Derrick

# Visitor Occasions

Total visitor occasions, including visits to day-use facilities as well as overnight stays, remained steady at around 50 million. Camping declined slightly, although occupancy of resort lodges, cottages and getaway rentals increased.

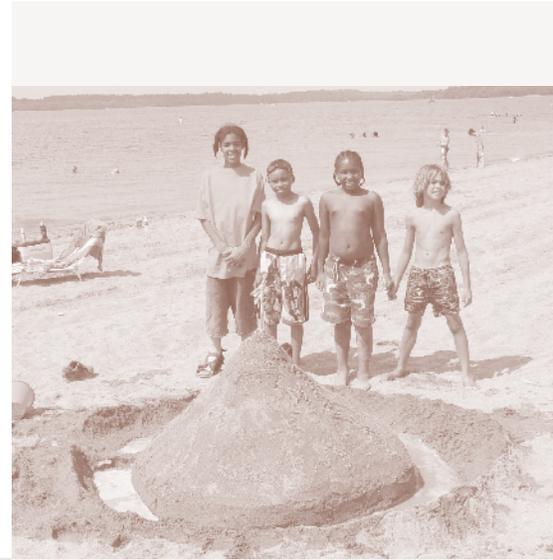
State Park	2006 Total Visitor Occasions
Adams Lake	267,500
Alum Creek	2,805,444
A.W. Marion	408,048
Barkcamp	184,103
Beaver Creek	297,549
Blue Rock	137,835
Buck Creek	317,522
Buckeye Lake	352,470
Burr Oak	428,119
Caesar Creek	1,882,899
Cleveland Lakefront	8,173,920
Cowan Lake	1,741,818
Crane Creek	272,250
Deer Creek	998,136
Delaware	326,591
Dillon	718,825
East Fork	1,056,494
East Harbor	1,417,264
Findley	463,834
Forked Run	178,741
Geneva	851,046
Grand Lake St. Marys	735,166
Great Seal	12,207
Guilford Lake	127,709
Harrison Lake	227,682
Headlands Beach	2,199,007
Hocking Hills	2,542,861
Hueston Woods	2,527,846
Independence Dam	73,570
Indian Lake	1,621,521
Jackson Lake	40,276
Jefferson Lake	129,417
John Bryan	258,370
Kiser Lake	408,704
Lake Alma	101,036

State Park	2006 Total Visitor Occasions
Lake Erie Islands	764,879
Lake Hope	765,170
Lake Logan	147,693
Lake Loramie	464,939
Lake Milton	615,815
Lake White	29,345
Little Miami	620,856
Madison Lake	194,714
Malabar Farm	199,613
Marblehead Lighthouse	1,223,250
Mary Jane Thurston	149,400
Maumee Bay	1,035,807
Mohican	493,005
Mosquito Lake	2,274,352
Mt. Gilead	131,354
Muskingum River	286,722
Nelson Kennedy Ledges	21,375
Paint Creek	486,312
Pike Lake	126,671
Portage Lakes	900,223
Punderson	740,116
Pymatuning	365,008
Quail Hollow	252,746
Rocky Fork	664,009
Salt Fork	1,024,736
Scioto Trail	29,549
Shawnee	246,056
Stonelick	328,207
Strouds Run	609,165
Sycamore	207,418
Tar Hollow	115,301
Tinkers Creek	28,160
Van Buren	84,648
West Branch	425,350
Wolf Run	64,103

**TOTAL**

**50,401,847**

# Resource Management



**Ohio State Parks staff embraced their role as stewards of Ohio's finest land and water resources as they pursued innovative projects to improve beaches, create wetlands, enhance woodland and meadow habitats, promote wildlife diversity, control nuisance species, and adopt sustainable practices. They also responded promptly to correct damage to landscapes and facilities impacted by storms and flooding.**

## Land Transactions

Land purchases, sales, easements and trade agreements helped 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. A total of .6926 acres were acquired, and a total of .6309 acres were sold for a net gain of .06 acres. A proposal to transfer ownership of Strouds Run to the city of Athens was rejected after several months of negotiations.

The requests of five adjacent land owners were satisfied through the sale of surplus property at two state parks. These sales involved .407 acres of surplus property, and were sold for a total of \$19,710.

As a result of a damage settlement with a landowner along Portage Lake's Iron Channel, the park acquired a small parcel and residence that had been impacted by the Iron Channel improvements. Rocky Fork exchanged property with an adjacent landowner in order to correct an encroachment onto state property. The park received .6716 acres and sold .2239 acres of land, for a net gain of .4477 acres.

A new operations and maintenance agreement between the department and the Natural Resources Conservation Service allows the division to operate the newly renovated dam at Wolf Run until the year 2103. The divisions of Engineering and Water assisted the division with development of the agreement.

A new land use agreement with a nearby landowner at Mohican will allow for the extension of a bridle trail across private property. Access to this private land will allow for the future development of a new bridle trail segment linking Mohican's existing trail with Malabar Farm's trails, while bypassing sensitive land at Mohican near Lyon's Falls.

### Wetland Projects

East Harbor continued to partner with The Ohio State University's School of Natural Resources to control phragmites on a 20-acre wetland area through water level manipulation.

A cooperative wetland creation project at East Fork was completed. The Division of Wildlife and the National Turkey Federation provided funding and assistance to create the six-acre wetland, install interpretive signage and establish a mowed trail to provide access to the wetland area.

Wetland investigations and delineations associated with various division projects were completed by in-house staff at Grand Lake St. Marys, Buckeye Lake and Lake Loramie.

### Waterway Improvements

The focus of dredging and other waterway improvement projects is the enhancement of harbors, channels, and waterways to foster vessel safety. More than 509,000 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, Burr Oak Lake, Rocky Fork and Acton Lake at Hueston Woods. Ongoing dredging projects were completed at Burr Oak and Lake Loramie. New dredge projects were initiated at Independence Dam and at Shawnee's marina on the Ohio River.

Following a major flood event at Lake White, an estimated 4,000 tons of debris were removed from the launch ramp area. Other waterway improvement and related projects around the state included launch ramp repairs, shoreline stabilization, silt trap construction and clean out, stump and debris removal, construction and restoration of dredge material relocation areas and, dredge rehabilitation.

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 state park waterways, a 41 percent increase over last year's production.

### Water Quality Issues

Efforts to improve the drinking water system at South Bass Island State Park continued in response to the 2004 outbreak of gastrointestinal illness among hundreds of visitors to South Bass Island. 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. As a permanent resolution to the problem, the park plans to connect to Ottawa County's new water distribution system, which is under development and scheduled for completion in 2007.

Advisories were posted at Salt Fork for elevated levels of total trihalomethanes (TTHM), a by-product of chlorination, which is not an immediate public health concern, but has been linked to potential liver, kidney or central nervous system problems, or increased risk of cancer with regular, long-term exposure over many years. Since the park began monitoring TTHM levels per Environmental Protection Agency requirements established in 2004, the TTHM levels have not increased, but are above the EPA maximum allowable standards. In October, the park installed granular activated carbon filters, which are recommended by EPA as an effective measure for limiting TTHM contamination, at a cost of nearly \$200,000. The park is working toward the eventual replacement of its existing sand filter treatment system with a newer, micro-filtration technology.

Concerns have arisen about watershed management practices and related lake water quality at Grand Lake St. Marys. The Ohio EPA ranked the Wabash River watershed, in which Grand Lake St. Marys lies, as "Ohio's most degraded watershed" in a 1999 evaluation. The division is cooperating with local community groups, state and Federal legislators and agencies that have initiated research and recommended actions to improve the watershed practices and resulting lake water quality. Some of the recommendations include increased upstream sediment trapping and stabilization of the lake shore.

### Recreational Trail Projects

An interdisciplinary team was convened to evaluate the feasibility of developing all-purpose vehicle (APV) trails at Jefferson Lake. The team initiated an assessment of whether enough trail miles could be created to provide a worthwhile experience for APV riders, taking into consideration the soil types, wetlands, unique flora and possible user conflicts.

Improved hiking trail signs were installed at trailheads at Deer Creek, and color-coded confidence-markers were placed along the trails to keep hikers from getting lost. The markers were labeled

Winter Trail maintenance





Soy biodiesel at Malabar Farm

sequentially with letters of the alphabet to facilitate the park staff and EMS personnel in locating hikers in need of assistance in remote trail areas.

An abandoned go-cart track on a parcel adjacent to the Hocking Hills welcome center has been transformed into an accessible interpretive trail, the Hock-hocking Expedition Trail. The park staff partnered with the Hocking County Tourism Association and the Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park to develop the self-guided trail, which features several information stations with displays and hands-on activities with natural history, cultural history, and environmental conservation themes.

### Sustainable Practices

The division adopted 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.

Hocking Hills introduced a tankless “on-demand” water heater in one of its vacation cottages, and Pike Lake continued to use the energy-saving tankless units in all of its cottages for the third year.

For the fourth year, Malabar Farm continued to use soy biodiesel in its tractors, and helped promote the use of biodiesel fuels through its community programs. Maumee Bay also uses locally produced biodiesel in its park utility vehicles.

The new Malabar Farm Visitor Education Center incorporates wind and solar power generation, and geothermal heating and cooling systems for building operations, as well as educational displays describing these technologies.

An electronic warehouse has been established on the division’s intranet site to facilitate information sharing regarding best practices in use at field locations. Best practices are defined as services, products or innovations that have worked well for a particular park, and are likely to be transferable to other parks. The site contains more than 70 examples of successful practices in the parks.

### Beaches

Throughout the swimming season, Ohio State Park beaches were monitored for bacterial contamination in accordance with guidelines established by the Ohio Department of Health. This year marked the first year for a new empirical standard and sampling method which relies exclusively on E. coli content of water at swimming beaches. Advisories were posted at beaches where the total amount of E. coli was found to exceed 235 colony forming units per 100ml of sample. During the swimming season, the parks experienced severe thunderstorm activity that resulted in a modest increase in the number of advisories being posted.

Twenty-five advisories were issued at 21 of 65 inland state park beaches and 99 advisories were issued at 6 of the 13 Lake Erie beaches in state parks. Many of these advisories were single-day postings due, in part, to the implementation of the new system for sampling. The longest postings were for 15 days each at Stroud’s Run and Deer Creek, where excessive thunderstorm action and high temperatures contributed to the high bacteria counts.

In an effort to promote swimming safety at state park beaches, the division developed and installed signs at each beach with the key safety messages, “No diving,” “Open water has hidden hazards,” and “Adults watch your children.”

A fish kill along the Lake Erie coastline severely impacted East Harbor’s Lake Erie beach throughout the summer. Tens of thousands of freshwater drum killed by species-specific viral infections washed up on the East Harbor beach, creating a nuisance for customers and an overwhelming maintenance problem for park staff.

### Wildlife Diversity Initiatives

Bald eagle nests at Kelleys Island, Lake Milton and Pymatuning were monitored from late winter through spring for nesting activity. At Pymatuning, a campground loop in the vicinity of the eagle nest was closed for more than four months, and the North Shore Pond area at Kelleys Island was off-limits to visitors during the nesting season. Each of the nesting pairs under observation produced eaglets.

Deer Creek established a wider zone of field and meadow habitat along park roadways, enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the park while reducing mowing to only once a season in order to prevent further succession of the habitat to brush. The park continued to plant trees in an ongoing effort to diversify the habitats for wildlife and provide shade for outdoor recreation.

The staff at Buckeye Lake partnered with the Division of Wildlife and the Ohio Bass Federation to place a total of 100 bass nesting structures around Buckeye Lake. The nesting boxes are intended to help mitigate the loss of spawning habitat due to residential development along the lakeshore.

Several state park lakes were acknowledged for producing catches of trophy fish that qualified for the Fish Ohio recognition program. Indian Lake produced the most trophy saugeye catches in the state, and Mosquito Lake produced the most abundant trophy crappie. Pymatuning Lake produced the second highest number of trophy yellow perch, Alum Creek ranked second for smallmouth bass, and West Branch ranked second for muskie.

Shawnee conducted its fifteenth annual butterfly count in July. Twenty volunteers assisted park staff in the count, in which 34 different species were identified among the 1,356 individual butterflies examined.

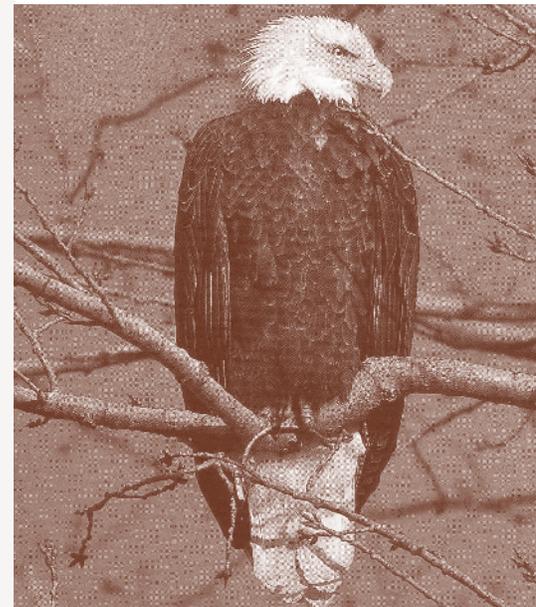
### Management of Nuisance Species

The division continued to cooperate with the Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) to slow the spread of the destructive emerald ash borer (EAB). Thousands of EAB tree detection traps were established within several state parks to monitor the progression of the pest. State parks in quarantine zones include Alum Creek, Caesar Creek, Cleveland Lakefront, Crane Creek, Delaware, East Harbor, Harrison Lake, Independence Dam, the Lake Erie Islands, Little Miami, Mary Jane Thurston, Maumee Bay and Van Buren.

With the assistance of the ODA and the Division of Forestry, several training workshops were conducted to advise park managers of the current status of the emerald ash borer in Ohio, enlist their help in informing visitors about the quarantine on firewood from restricted areas, and instruct the managers in the proper handling of potentially infested firewood. In addition, a monitoring and resource management strategy workshop was held for managers of parks most at risk for EAB infestation. This workshop emphasized forestry methods used to identify and quantify ash trees, and management practices that could minimize the risk of infestation as well as mitigate negative impacts on visitors if the park does eventually become infested.

The parks were also provided with signs informing campers about the EAB firewood quarantine, maps of the EAB quarantine zones, and plastic drums for use in temporary containment of firewood imported from quarantine zones until it could be burned. For the second year, the division sent letters to campers with reservations for Ohio State Park campgrounds encouraging those in quarantined areas to leave firewood at home.

As part of trail maintenance and improvement projects in the Buck Creek region, the regional staff focused on elimination of invasive honeysuckle along hiking trails at John Bryan.



Nesting eagles produced offspring at three parks



Lake Hope Dining Lodge

### Natural Resource Management Plans

A manual was developed for compiling natural resources management plans, and park management staff received training in the resource management planning process. Resource management plans were initiated in the two pilot parks, Maumee Bay and Shawnee, and in nine additional park regions, including Deer Creek, East Harbor, Hocking Hills, Lake Hope, North Bass Island, Salt Fork and Tar Hollow. The natural resources management plan for the Tar Hollow region, which encompasses Tar Hollow, Great Seal and Scioto Trail, was completed.

### Fire, Flooding and Storm Damage

The historic Lake Hope Dining Lodge was completely destroyed by fire in the early morning hours of February 10. The 1950s-vintage stone and timber building housed the park's reservation center, gift shop and a meeting room in addition to the popular Stone Terrace restaurant. No one was injured, and cold, calm weather conditions helped prevent the fire from spreading through the forest. Normal operations at the park resumed promptly. Park staff, with assistance from the newly formed Friends of Lake Hope, have collected stories, photos and memorabilia from park visitors and neighbors who valued the dining lodge as a community asset.

Campers and cottage guests were evacuated from Mohican during a storm in early July that toppled 100 trees and triggered serious flooding in northeast Ohio. At Malabar Farm, the roof of the Sustainable Agriculture Library was heavily damaged, and the Big House basement and Gift Shop were deluged with inches of water pooling on the floor. The flooding also impacted the historic Wolf Creek/Pine Run Grist Mill at Mohican, which has been painstakingly restored in recent years by the park's friends group. Volunteers and park staff turned out to reinforce the foundation during the flood, and to cleanup and repair damage to the mill and site afterward.

Headlands Beach was closed for more than two weeks after a severe storm in late July pushed the nearby Grand River far out of its banks and spilled floodwaters over the 126-acre park. A large stretch of beach was washed out by the flood, and park staff proposed replacing the beach sand with a man-made stockpile of wind-blown sand that had been swept off the road and parking lots over the years. Before disturbing the stockpile, however, the park staff worked with the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves to relocate a number of rare beach grasses and dune plants that had naturally colonized the stockpile over time. More than 200 plants were rescued and replanted at Sheldon Marsh State Nature Preserve.

In early October, extremely heavy rainfall caused the Lake White water levels to rise rapidly and overtop the earthen dam. The lake had recently been drawn down below normal summer pool as part of a spillway renovation project. Regional staff responded promptly and worked through the night to open the lake spillway gates fully and prevent potential failure of the dam.

### Special Designations

The Muskingum River was declared Ohio's second "Water Trail" in a ceremony held during the annual Muskingum Riverfest in July. Park staff worked with the divisions of Watercraft and Wildlife to establish the Muskingum River Water Trail and produce a comprehensive map and guide to facilities on the river for boaters and anglers. In October, the Ohio Historical Society recognized the Muskingum River Water Trail with the 2006 Ohio Historic Preservation Award. The Muskingum River Water Trail was also honored by the American Canoe Association with their prestigious designation as an "ACA-Recommended Water Trail."

A 32.3-mile stretch of the Clear Fork of the Mohican River, including the segment of the river that winds through Mohican State Park and State Forest, was designated as a state scenic river by the Division of Natural Areas and Preserves. The official designation, which was announced in December, makes this the 13th river segment in Ohio to receive state scenic river status. With 63 percent forest cover along its banks, this area easily meets the designation criterion of at least 25 percent of riparian corridor in forest cover for a width of 300 feet. This segment of river has also been designated as a warm-water habitat by the Ohio EPA because of the quality of its aquatic communities.

# Professional Development

During the peak season, Ohio State Parks employed a workforce of 451 permanent and 1,183 less-than full-time employees. Within the workforce, there were 382 new hirings of permanent or seasonal employees, 165 reclassifications or promotions, 304 resignations and 41 retirements.

The division's regional integration process continued with several regions consolidating administrative staff into a single office location, adapting law enforcement staff schedules to provide regional coverage, and organizing maintenance work to pool maintenance staff within the region to work together on a project-by-project basis. The number of park regions remained at 26.

The department offered all employees an opportunity to participate in a two-year early retirement program (ERI) effective August 5, 2005 to August 4, 2006. At the close of the ERI program, 37 division employees retired under the program.

Three park managers and 27 assistant park managers were reclassified from park manager 3 to park manager 4 as an incremental step towards addressing the division's managerial pay compression issue, providing internal promotional opportunities, and encouraging employee retention.

A pilot program was implemented to centrally recruit and hire five at-large, part-time permanent park officers. The hours per officer position were expanded to 1,560 annually, to make health insurance coverage more affordable for the employees and encourage retention. This pilot program is designed to address difficulties with recruitment and retention experienced with the traditional practice of hiring park officers in the field.



Lake Hope Nature Center Renovation Team  
(see page 26)

## Personnel

Numbers of permanent employees by general job categories are:

Administration	10
Professional and Technica	121
Clerical/Office Support	34
Skilled Craft	132
Protective Services	93
Operational Support	61
<b>Total Permanent Employees</b>	<b>451</b>

## Employee Development Programs

### Employee Satisfaction Survey

Continuing with the direction from the 2005 Employee Satisfaction Survey, the chief gave presentations in each park region explaining the survey results. Multidisciplinary employee teams were convened to develop action steps for addressing each of the four Priorities for Improvement (PFIs) identified through the survey; “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.”

Several of the strategies recommended by the teams have been implemented, including:

- Conducting bi-monthly management meetings as well as regional all-staff meetings in each park region. To support and enhance this initiative, the team provided guidelines on conducting productive meetings, including a suggestion that a non-management staff member be included in each management meeting.
- Identifying and distributing tips on best practices for employee recognition from the regions whose employees ranked highest in satisfaction.
- Providing staff with documents that illustrate monetary value of friends groups, donations and grants, and developing and conducting an Ohio Resource Development Academy to educate managers on soliciting grants and cultivating other funding sources.

### Training

Seven exempt program managers or supervisors graduated from the Ohio Certified Public Manager (OCPM) Program. Since its inception in 1998, 57 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 the Maumee Bay lodge 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, workshops on various topics, and presentations by Education Coordinator for the Ohio Ethics Commission, Susan Willeke, and keynote speaker Stephen M. Gower whose topic was public and employee perception of management.

As part of the division’s hospitality management initiatives, a detailed, two-day training program was presented at Mohican in April for 150 front-line staff who provide direct service to customers. The program combined contractually required training from InfoSpherix on the centralized reservation and point-of-sale systems with in-house training on providing exceptional customer service. The customer service segment of the program was developed by a team of the 26 customer service “champions” from each region, and emphasized creating good first impressions and renewing the focus on customer service. Training topics with regard to the retail sales segment of the program included working with difficult people, how to manage difficult transactions, and telephone usage. The training, which was offered at the outset of the busy summer season, is attributed to a significant drop in the number of complaints received as compared to previous years.

The annual Parks Maintenance Conference was held at Deer Creek. The program featured hands-on instruction in basic trade skills as well as presentations about the Union Education Trust, water and wastewater regulation, Ohio Fire Code and best practices. More than 120 employees attended the event.

A new water and wastewater training program was offered in February for all of the water and wastewater operators in Ohio State Parks. The division owns and operates more than 60 permitted wastewater plants and more than 75 licensed public drinking water systems across the state with some



Hands-on instruction at the Trades Academy

30 licensed operators or staff. Licensure requirements and increasing regulations, coupled with staff shortages exacerbated by retirements of experienced staff, have made this a key area for succession planning. Topics covered included current regulations, new regulations expected to be enacted, and best practices.

The division's first Trades Academy was held in September at Hocking Hills. This new week-long training session offered instruction in basic trade skills specially geared for newer employees. Participants received classroom instruction in the morning and applied their lessons to park improvement projects in the afternoon. The 43 participants included employees from the divisions of Real Estate and Land Management and Natural Areas and Preserves as well as park employees.

The annual interpretive service training program for permanent and seasonal park naturalists was offered at Malabar Farm and Lake Hope. The training agenda emphasized sharing of best practices, including a new statewide program, "Survival Ohio Style," that promotes family-oriented outdoor skills, as well as a complete program on the life history of the monarch butterfly.

Key support and management staff from each park region and central office group received training over the course of several months in the new Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS), which consolidates business and human resources processes statewide. The Human Capital System, comprised of the payroll and human resources segments of OAKS, went live on December 18.

Training for commissioned officers included the annual In-Service Training, Fall Firearms Training, CPR Recertification, and Emergency Vehicle Operation Training. In-Service Training and handgun qualifications were held at the Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy in London, Ohio. All commissioned officers received a legal update; training in first aid, including responding to the medical emergency referred to as "excited delirium"; training in the proper use of chemical aerosol and ASP baton; and fitting for a respirator and instructions on how to put on personal protective equipment as part of Homeland Security requirements. Additionally, officers participated in a physical fitness assessment and were provided an individualized plan to help them improve their fitness level. Fall Firearms Training entailed shotgun qualification; flashlight and low level light shooting techniques; and live fire shooting scenarios involving the proper use of barricades and vehicle stops. 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.

The new Ohio Resource Development Academy was developed in partnership with the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association to provide tips for securing grants and other funding. Topics included conducting a needs assessment, writing successful grant applications, researching funding sources, and attracting corporate sponsors. More than 150 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.

## IN MEMORIAM

We are deeply saddened by the loss of our friends and coworkers, Della Honicutt, Assistant Park Manager 3 at East Fork, who passed away on January 28; Deborah Carter, Administrative Assistant 2 at Rocky Fork, who passed away on March 1, and William Jordan, Maintenance Repair Worker at Indian Lake, who passed away on April 5.

## Employee Recognition Programs

### EMPLOYEE OF THE QUARTER

In its fourteenth year, the Employee of the Quarter Award program recognized four employees each quarter for outstanding performance and service to the division. To date, 210 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

Jackie King, Mosquito Lake – Administrative Support  
Steve Estle, Paint Creek – Maintenance  
Christopher Corl, West Branch – Law Enforcement  
Steve Stibaner, Maumee Bay – Management

### Spring Quarter

Sherry Barnett, Lake Milton – Administrative Support  
Ray Frabotta, Geneva – Maintenance  
Mary Sklodowski, West Branch – Law Enforcement  
Kelly Overly, Mohican – Management

### Summer Quarter

Deborah Paul, East Harbor – Administrative Support  
Ray Chaney, Hueston Woods – Maintenance  
Richard Gillilan, Lake Alma – Law Enforcement  
William Lodder, Hueston Woods – Management

### Fall Quarter

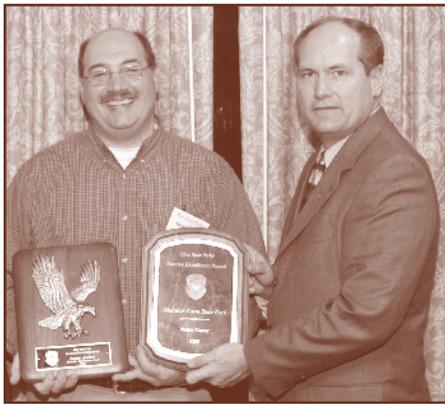
Kara Birt, Lake Loramie – Administrative Support  
Terry Roberts, Mary Jane Thurston – Maintenance  
Ron Cutright, Tar Hollow – Law Enforcement  
Mike Monnett, LEI – Kelleys Island – Management

**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 156 team award certificates were issued during the program's ninth year. The following teams were recognized:

- Sugartree Marina Dock Project Team
- Mosquito Lake Office Renovation Team
- Buckeye Lake Barge Reconstruction Team
- Buckeye Lake Crystal Beach Team
- Buckeye Lake Historic Fountain Renovation Team
- Mohican Region Flood & Storms Repair Team
- South Bass Island Campground Water Plant Operation Team
- John Bryan Special Camping Experience Team

The Team of the Year Award was presented to the Lake Hope Nature Center Renovation Team. The team's imaginative plan and creative remodel efforts successfully improved the Lake Hope Nature Center, which received well over 52,000 visitors in the past two years. The team corrected electrical problems in the 50-year old building, and gave the interior a new rustic look by exposing the original beam trusses and installing rough cut poplar on the walls and between ceiling trusses. Whenever possible, improvements were made using scrap materials. The total project cost was \$1,545.



**SERVICE & STEWARDSHIP AWARD**

Louis Andres, park manager at Malabar Farm, received the Service & Stewardship Award for producing tangible results in all five goal areas of the division's strategic plan.



**CUTTING EDGE AWARD**

The Cutting Edge Award, symbolizing the spirit of innovation and ingenuity, was awarded to the employees of Guilford Lake and Portage Lakes who participate in the parks' dock renovation program. The "Dock Shop" crew renovated the damaged docks from Salt Fork's Sugartree Marina at a cost of \$150,000, which is a \$500,000 savings over the estimated cost to have them replaced.



**PARKS LEADERSHIP AWARD**

Bob Cumbow, manager of the Waterway and Construction Section, received the Parks Leadership Award, a peer-driven recognition of a manager who demonstrates excellent leadership qualities in the areas of customer service, community relations, employee development, and attitude.

**DIVISION LIFESAVING AWARDS**

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

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

- Tom Lorenz, Park Officer, Hueston Woods

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:

- Steve Riddle, Assistant Park Manager, Lake Erie Islands (South Bass)
- Steve Moore, Park Officer, East Harbor
- William Crump, Assistant Park Manager, Buck Creek
- Doug Lindsley, Park Officer, Dillon
- Benjamin Derrick, Treatment Plant Operator, Findley

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

- Dave Johnston, Park Officer, Findley

A lifesaving letter of recognition was received by the following park employees for their assistance to park visitors:

- Tom Lorenz, Park Officer, Hueston Woods
- Randy Develbiss, Park Officer, Grand Lake St. Marys
- Jodi Shafer, Park Officer, Alum Creek
- Doug Johnson, Park Officer, Grand Lake St. Marys

# Infrastructure Improvements



Making visitors feel welcome with new gathering spaces, upgrading boating facilities, adding new and better recreational trails, repairing dams, overhauling water and wastewater systems, renovating historic locks and dams, and updating lodge and cottage offerings were among the park facility improvements accomplished at an estimated total cost of \$18.3 million.

## CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS:

### NatureWorks—Ohio's Natural Investment

Year twelve of rehabilitation projects funded wholly or in part by NatureWorks has concluded. The Buck Creek boat launch ramp project entailed relocating the existing four-lane launch area 300 feet to the west, as well as adding a fifth launch lane and a 240-foot boarding dock. The access road was reconfigured to relieve congestion on busy summer weekends, and the adjoining parking lot was expanded to accommodate more boaters. Relocation of the launch lanes, along with construction of a breakwater, have reduced wave action in the launch area, making it safer for both boaters and their watercraft. The divisions of Watercraft and Wildlife provided grant funding for the project.

The Harding Cabin boat launch ramp project at Deer Creek consisted of replacing an outdated ramp with a new two-lane ramp featuring v-grooves, two 80-foot floating launch docks, and an accessible boarding ramp, as well as installing shore line protection and a new seawall, constructing a new access road, and enlarging the parking lot. The new ramp extends into the lake to a depth that allows launching at winter pool. The existing access road was a steep 15 percent slope from the upper parking lot, creating a potentially unsafe condition for boaters. The new access road approaches the road from the side, is a safe 10 percent slope, and has pull-off/tie-down areas. New site lights were added by the existing restroom and at the ramp for night time boating and fishing. The divisions of Watercraft and Wildlife also provided grant funding for this project.

The Terrace Park extension project on the Little Miami Scenic Trail provided for the addition of 2.65-miles of asphalt trail corridor between the Village of Milford and Avoca Park. At the same time, the Hamilton County Park District paved another 1.9 miles of trail from Avoca Park, south to the Little Miami Golf Center in the Village of Newtown. Ultimately, the goal is to extend the Little Miami Scenic Trail to the Cincinnati Riverfront, allowing trail users to travel uninterrupted along nearly 90 miles through five counties.

**EXAMPLES OF NATUREWORKS/  
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS**

The following summary is a sampling of projects constructed in 2006 with estimated total project costs including design and construction dollars.

PARK	PROJECT	COST
Blue Rock	Sewer Rehabilitation	\$ 303,400
Buck Creek	Launch Ramp	\$ 1,984,700
Buckeye Lake	Fairfield Beach Parking Lot	\$ 50,000
Buckeye Lake	Water Well Abandonment	\$ 3,000
Burr Oak	Wastewater Dechlorination	\$ 5,000
Burr Oak	Asbestos Waterline Removal	\$ 149,000
Burr Oak	ADA Restroom in Lodge	\$ 100,000
Cleveland Lakefront	Lift Stations Replacement	\$ 511,000
Cleveland Lakefront	Wildwood Marina Dock Repairs	\$ 8,300
Cowan Lake	Lake Drain Rehabilitation	\$ 10,000
Deer Creek	Harding Ramp Replacement	\$ 810,000
Deer Creek	Lodge Kitchen Improvements	\$ 10,000
Dillon	Wastewater Plant Roof Repair	\$ 9,700
Dillon	Dillon/County Water Connection	\$ 170,000
Forked Run	Water Booster Station	\$ 18,000
Hocking Hills	Three trail bridges	\$ 12,000
Hocking Hills	Wastewater Improvements	\$ 466,300
Lake Alma	Village Water System Connection	\$ 5,000
South Bass Island	Temp. Water Treatment Improv.	\$ 25,000
Lake Loramie	Lake Drain Rehabilitation	\$ 25,000
Little Miami	Terrace Park Extension	\$ 1,123,000
Little Miami	Emergency Sinkhole Repair	\$ 26,800
Malabar Farm	Visitor Education Center	\$ 1,400,000
Maumee Bay	Golf Course Pump Station	\$ 15,600
Muskingum River	Lock 3 Stabilization	\$ 55,000
Salt Fork	Sugar Tree Marina UST	\$ 10,000
Salt Fork	Dam Gate Rehabilitation	\$ 1,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$ 7,307,300</b>

The new Visitor Education Center at Malabar Farm is a 6,500-square foot building with a detached aviary, wind turbine and solar panels. The building’s design incorporates green technologies, including wind, solar, and geothermal energy systems; recycled plastic lumber and carpet, tile and ceiling panels made from recycled materials; and water-saving low flow toilets, low-energy double pane windows and super insulation with structural insulated panels. The center will house permanent administrative offices and the park’s gift shop in addition to displays, special exhibits and library materials celebrating the literary and agricultural achievements of Pulitzer Prize-winning author and conservationist Louis Bromfield. The Malabar Farm Foundation provided \$500,000 in funding assistance for the project.

**Capital Improvement Projects**

Several renovation and improvement projects were undertaken using capital funding sources other than NatureWorks.

At South Bass Island, temporary water treatment improvements were undertaken to provide water service to campers and day use customers after the park discontinued use of its water wells. Wastewater dechlorination systems were incorporated in the existing infrastructure at Hueston Woods and Burr Oak. An asbestos wastewater pipe was replaced at Burr Oak, and the system was partially rerouted. At Blue Rock, the entire wastewater infrastructure was redesigned and replaced. As our parks mature, these massive infrastructure replacements are occurring much more frequently as systems reach their life expectancy.

In addition to the Terrace Park extension, the Little Miami Scenic Trail received needed improvements including repaving of a section north of Milford, and repair of a sinkhole that appeared on the trail without warning.

The kitchen in the resort lodge at Deer Creek was refurbished for safety as the electrical system was completely reworked, new electrical feeds were put in place, and the fire suppression system was enhanced.

**Project Design**

Design work continued on Phase 2 of the Lake White dam rehabilitation. This complex and extensive dam rehabilitation has been approached in phases, and the next phase will be to apply roller compacted cement to the face of the dam. This is necessary to prevent overtopping damage during the next extreme storm event.

Design planning and investigation continued for a full assessment of the Burr Oak lodge facility for accessibility needs within the building, including vertical circulation, public restrooms, guest rooms, and swimming pool.

Design work was undertaken for marina improvements and enhancements at Delaware, Paint Creek and Shawnee. In addition, planning work began for improvements to two launch ramps at Mosquito Lake. The feasibility of building a marina, and considerations for siting a marina, were studied at Caesar Creek.

Planning and development continued for the marina at Middle Bass Island. The existing marina basin is composed of two sub-basins, separated by a peninsula with wetland and upland areas. The proposed renovation would entail excavation of both of the existing basins, removal of the 6.65-acre peninsula, and installation of new docks and infrastructure.

Planning and design continued for water and wastewater improvements, including rehabilitation of wastewater treatment plants at Lake Hope and Kelleys Island; design of a new elevated water tank at Hueston Woods; and upgrades to existing elevated water tanks at Harrison Lake and Indian Lake.

A number of additional projects were under active design, with anticipated design completion or construction in 2007. They are:

- ☛ Mary Jane Thurston: Marina & Dock Improvements
- ☛ Caesar Creek: North Pool Project
- ☛ Cleveland Lakefront: Gordon Boat Ramp
- ☛ Mosquito Lake: SR88 Launch Ramp
- ☛ Pymatuning: Cottage Beach and Birch Launch Ramps
- ☛ Punderson: Wastewater Line Replacement
- ☛ Lake Loramie: Restrooms and Dump Station
- ☛ Grand Lake St. Marys: Campground Waterline Replacement
- ☛ Kiser Lake: Dump Station

**Roadway Maintenance and Striping Program**

Major projects completed through the Cooperative Roadway Maintenance Program with ODOT include Phase 1 roadway resurfacing at Punderson; resurfacing at Hocking Hills, Malabar, Mohican, Maumee Bay, Tar Hollow and Barkcamp; and culvert replacement at Van Buren. Expenditures on these project totaled \$3,765,708. Through this program a total of 1,564 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 \$44,627.

**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 fund.

PARK	PROJECT	COST
Burr Oak	Convection oven	\$ 8,698
Geneva Marina	Channel Dredging	\$ 125,000
Hueston Woods	Kitchen renovation	\$ 88,220
Hueston Woods	Lodge exterior painting	\$ 30,349
Maumee Bay	Cottage exterior painting	\$ 119,818
Maumee Bay	Tennis court renovation	\$ 144,773
Maumee Bay	Dredging	\$ 149,000
Maumee Bay	Guest room renovations	\$ 157,465
Maumee Bay	Corridor baseboards/ADA ramp	\$ 19,746
Maumee Bay	Lodge heating loop	\$ 129,221
Mohican	Key Card Installation	\$ 19,395
Mohican	Dumpster compactor/CO detectors	\$ 16,141
Mohican	Replace boilers	\$ 69,824
Punderson	Cottage painting	\$ 47,250
Punderson	Ceiling repair/wallcovering/bathroom	\$ 44,131
Punderson	Kitchen equipment	\$ 29,608
Salt Fork	Lodge balcony decking/windows/carpet	\$ 51,198
Salt Fork	Cottage furnishings	\$ 20,070
Salt Fork	Roof replacement	\$ 68,641
Salt Fork	Chiller motor/power unit	\$ 31,785
Salt Fork	Indoor Pool/restroom remodeling	\$ 42,473
Salt Fork	Digital feeds/misc. electrical	\$ 32,055
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,444,861</b>

Deer Creek Launch ramp



### In-House Construction Initiatives

Statewide, more than 150 construction projects, including 16 emergency projects, were completed with in-house labor and equipment. The types of projects accomplished included utility upgrades, trail improvements, campground upgrades, dock and launch ramp improvements, wetland enhancement projects, beach and golf course enhancements and continued support for special events such as the Ohio Heritage Days at Malabar Farm.

### Accessibility Improvements

Accessibility design standards are incorporated into all new and rehabilitated park structures in compliance with Americans with Disabilities Act guidelines. The rehabilitated launch ramp at Deer Creek includes an accessible boarding ramp along with four accessible parking spaces at the top of the ramp.

- At Burr Oak's resort lodge, an accessible public restroom was enlarged as part of an ongoing project to provide additional ADA services. Planning is underway to incorporate an elevator into the lodge.
- At Malabar Farm, the new visitor education center incorporates many accessible elements. The gift shop, display areas and restrooms are fully accessible, and the outdoor pathways connecting the visitor center and the new aviary also accommodate guests in wheelchairs.

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 collective mileage on the division's fleet, which numbers 590 vehicles, continued to climb with an average of 102,800 miles on each vehicle. However, the number of additional miles driven during the year decreased 10 percent from the previous year, and a total of 59 vehicles were purchased, including 21 used vehicles and 38 new vehicles. The number of new vehicles purchased was more than three times the number of new vehicles acquired in any previous year since 2000. An additional 15 used vehicles were acquired from the Division of Watercraft at no charge. Recent trends in leasing of equipment and deferred replacement of aging equipment began to improve with increased equipment allocations and ownership approaching 100 percent.

### In-House Products and Services

At Portage Lakes and Rocky Fork, in-house efforts continued 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. An example of the effectiveness of this in-house program is the replacement of 92 dock fingers and walkways at Salt Fork's Sugartree Marina, which was accomplished by the Portage Lakes dock team at an estimated savings of \$500,000 over the cost of hiring a contractor.

The vinyl graphics sign shop at Dillon continued to produce several thousand signs as requested by individual parks, and to provide uniform signage through the park system for statewide initiatives such as beach safety practices, control of the emerald ash borer, storage tank warning signs, etc.

Barkcamp established a new operation that produces routed, professional quality entrance signs for the parks. The attractive signs lend a uniform look to park entrances and create a positive impression for visitors. The Barkcamp entrance sign shop produced the first prototype in August, and has prioritized the most heavily used park facilities for the first signs.



Park entrance sign

# Fiscal Management



Ohio State Parks expended \$87.5 million in fiscal year 2006, including \$27.3 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). The GRF is providing 64.5 to 64.6 percent of funding of which \$18.5 to \$21 million is earmarked for debt reduction. In FY07 the GRF allocation increased by \$4.4 million. This increase can be attributed to debt service and the increase in GRF operating that was allocated to address the elimination of the Parks Pride Pass proposal.

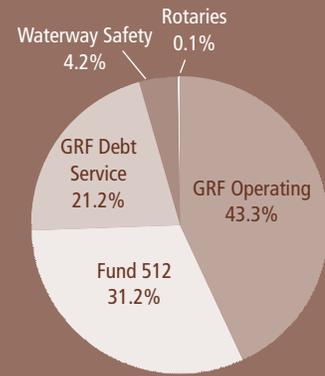
The second largest source of operating funding is fees and charges generated by the state parks and deposited into Fund 512. This fund accounts for approximately 31.2 percent of the total budget in both FY 06 and FY07. Revenue in fund 512 has been declining with only minimal growth being anticipated for the next two years. The division projected cash shortages in the account; therefore, in FY06 spending was reduced. As a result of this action, the division was able to restore cash reserve balances in fund 512 to alleviate any cash flow issues. The differences in the figures for FY06 expended and FY07 budgeted are a result of these temporary spending reductions.

Approximately 4 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 06 and the total appropriation for FY 07 are indicated in the following charts:

**FUNDING**

FUNDING SOURCE	FY '06 EXPENDED	FY '07 BUDGETED
GRF Operating	\$ 37,873,978 43.3%	\$ 39,874,841 42.3%
Fund 512 Fees & Charges	\$ 27,260,694 31.2%	\$ 29,390,528 31.2%
GRF Debt Service	\$ 18,521,462 21.2%	\$ 20,962,800 22.3%
Waterway Safety	\$ 3,705,264 4.2%	\$ 3,792,343 4 %
Rotaries	\$ 128,923 0.1%	\$ 159,644 0.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 87,490,321</b>	<b>\$ 94,180,156</b>



**Revenue**

Ohio State Parks generated \$26,636,546 in revenue, a four percent decrease over 2005 revenue. All revenue generated by state parks is deposited into Fund 512.

The revenues received in calendar years 2005 and 2006 were as follows:

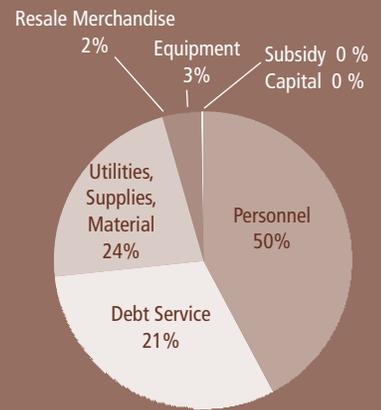
The revenues received in calendar year 2005 were as follows:

REVENUE CATEGORY	CY 2006	CY 2005	PERCENT CHANGE
Camping	\$ 9,871,561	\$ 9,903,697	0 %
Self-Operated Retail	\$ 3,791,065	\$ 3,682,227	3 %
Cottage Rentals	\$ 3,100,194	\$ 2,930,072	6 %
Concession Agreements	\$ 2,702,753	\$ 3,313,786	-18 %
Dock Permits	\$ 2,623,570	\$ 2,715,674	-3 %
Golf Greens Fees	\$ 1,651,533	\$ 1,705,942	-3 %
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,038,569	\$ 1,372,907	-24 %
Getaway Rentals	\$ 595,933	\$ 515,950	16 %
State Agency Transfers	\$ 499,487	\$ 74,046	575 %
Group Lodge Rentals	\$ 214,678	\$ 209,845	2 %
Grants	\$ 126,956	\$ 545,392	-77 %
Royalties & Easements	\$ 103,293	\$ 106,095	-3 %
Donations	\$ 80,330	\$ 530,577	-85 %
Sales Assets	\$ 73,060	\$ 14,080	419 %
Land Rentals	\$ 51,193	\$ 8,167	527 %
Laundromats	\$ 44,498	\$ 43,770	2 %
Pools & Lockers	\$ 28,435	\$ 26,569	7 %
Fines & Penalties	\$ 23,483	\$ 31,612	-26 %
Duck Blinds	\$ 15,955	\$ 15,135	5 %
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$27,745,543</b>	<b>\$26,636,546</b>	<b>-4 %</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 '06 EXPENDED		FY '07 BUDGETED	
Personnel	\$43,344,082	50%	\$ 46,521,113	49%
Utilities/Supplies/Material	\$ 20,773,880	24%	\$ 22,845,813	25%
Debt Service	\$ 18,521,462	21%	\$ 20,962,800	22%
Equipment	\$ 2,635,005	3%	\$ 1,746,010	2%
Resale Merchandise	\$ 1,818,642	2%	\$ 1,938,396	2%
Capital	\$ 384,750	0%	\$ 153,524	0%
Subsidy	\$ 12,500	0%	\$ 12,500	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 87,490,321</b>		<b>\$ 94,180,156</b>	



**Concession Agreements**

Fifty-nine concession facilities were operated under leases, contracts or short-term agreements. A contract was executed with ARAMARK Sports and Entertainment Services, Inc., for operation of the Deer Creek lodge and conference center.

**FUNDING INITIATIVES**

**ODOT Repair Funds**

In FY06 and FY07 the Ohio Department of Transportation transferred money to the division for the purposes of maintaining state park roads. In FY06 \$361,438 was transferred to the division. In FY07 \$350,159 was transferred. With the money, the division has been able to make major strides in maintaining, repairing and improving the many miles of roads in state park areas.

**State Park License Plate**

In its second year, sales of the Ohio State Parks license plate increased significantly to a total of 811 plates. The Ohio State Parks license plates cost consumers an additional \$25 over the usual plate fee, \$15 of which is earmarked for state park interpretive and educational programs and displays.



## 2007 Goals

- Strengthen hospitality management by expanding training for front-line employees in techniques for providing exceptional customer service.
- Enhance customers' experiences and promote stable funding by providing support for the new Ohio State Parks Legacy Foundation and continuing to work closely with the individual park friends groups, and the statewide association, Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks, along with numerous other stakeholder groups.
- Improve employee satisfaction by implementing the employee satisfaction strategies developed by the in-house Priorities for Improvement (PFI) teams convened to address the PFIs identified by the Leadership Factor.
- Enhance the quality of our workforce by increasing our overall workforce diversity, and increase diversity in leadership by hiring at least two minority Managers-in-Training.
- Expand our resource management planning and practices by completing natural resource management plans for at least six additional parks.
- Support continuous improvement of the centralized reservation and point-of-sale system, as well as the successful Maumee Bay Resort Lodge and Conference Center operation, by carefully preparing bid packages for these major contracts that are due to expire.
- Encourage employee development and regionalization by completing three major renovations of aging park buildings using Parks Maintenance Trades personnel.
- Improve efficiency and cost savings by rehabilitating two marinas using the in-house dock construction teams, and completing ten new park entrance signs using the in-house sign shop.
- Embrace new technology to enhance operations and customer service by piloting a tee-time reservation program through the centralized reservation system at one state park golf course, and evaluate its success.
- Broaden the scope of technology currently being utilized by providing Wi-Fi service in five additional campgrounds as an added amenity for our customers.
- Improve performance measurement and accountability by implementing a system for tracking progress, establishing benchmarks, and evaluating performance measures for strategic goals.

# Statistical Abstract

Ohio State Park System 2006

## GENERAL PARK

# State Parks	74
Total Acreage	174,215 <sup>1</sup>
Acreage -- Land	107,810
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	50,401,847
# 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
# Felony Arrests	204
# Citations	6,070
# Visitor Assists	30,513
# Park Residences	83
# Dining Lodges/Restaurants	3

## CAMPGROUNDS

# Campgrounds	87
# Campsites	9,016
# Full Service Sites	204
# Electric Sites	6,454
# Non-electric Sites	2,358
# General Group Areas	61
# No-fee, Non-group Primitive Sites	79
# Horse Camps	14
# Horse Camp Sites	321
# Showerhouses	114
# Amphitheaters	51
# Camp Store/Commissaries	44
# Campsites Rented	517,057
Campground Occupancy (244 nights)	23.1% <sup>2</sup>

## GETAWAY RENTALS

# Rent-A-Camp Sites	24
% Rent-A-Camp Occupancy (184 nights)	26.1%
# Rent-A-RV Sites	6
% Rent-A-RV Occupancy (184 nights)	50.9%
# Rent-A-Tepee Sites	7
% Rent-A-Tepee Occupancy (184 nights)	23.5%
# Rent-A-Yurt Sites	12
% Rent-A-Yurt Occupancy (184 nights)	53.7%
# Cabents	4
% Cabent Occupancy (184 nights)	14.8%
# Camper Cabins	43
% Camper Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	62.1%
# Cedar Cabins	23
% Cedar Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	62.1%
# Conestoga Cabins	15
% Conestoga Cabins Occupancy (184 nights)	32.9%

## RESORT LODGES & CONCESSION COTTAGES

# Resort Lodges	9
# Resort Lodge Rooms	818
# Lodge Room Nights Rented	140,332
% Lodge Occupancy	47.0%
# Restaurants in Resort Lodges	9
# Concession Cottages	221

# Cottage Nights Rented	35,425
% Cottage Occupancy	43.9%

## STATE OPERATED COTTAGES

# State Operated Cottages	297
# Cottage Nights Rented	39,970
% Cottage Occupancy	36.9%

## GOLF COURSES

# Golf Courses	6
# Golf Rounds	118,613

## BOAT RAMPS/MARINAS/DOCKS

# Boat Ramps	188
# Boater Occasions	7,401,619
# 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	4,072,123
# Beach Concessions	21

## GROUP FACILITIES

# Overnight Group Facilities	6
# Overnight Group Facility Users	14,291
# Beds in Group Facilities	309
# Day-use Group Lodges	13
# Day-use Group Lodge Users	229,178

## VISITOR/NATURE CENTERS

# Visitor/Nature Centers	36
# Visitor/Nature Center Visitor Occasions	1,171,720

## PICNIC AREAS

# Picnic Areas	463
# Picnic Area Visitor Occasions	7,488,488
# Picnic Shelters -- Total	177
# Reservable Picnic Shelters	117

## OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

# Swimming Pools	19
# Tennis Courts	16
# Basketball Courts	81
# Volleyball Courts	98
# Miniature Golf Courses	15
# Disc Golf Courses	6
# Playgrounds	181
# Parks with Bike Rental Operations	21
# Trails - Total	394
Total Miles of Trails	1,167
# Multi-Use Trails	134
# Hiking Only Trails	215
# Mountain Bike Only Trails	23
# 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	5

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

<sup>2</sup> Includes Horse Camp Sites, and excludes 157 volunteer Camper Host sites.

# Map of Regional Park Units

