

A child wearing a bright yellow hooded jacket and dark pants is walking away from the viewer on a wooden boardwalk. The boardwalk is surrounded by a dense forest of trees with light-colored foliage, possibly autumn leaves. The scene is captured in a soft, painterly style with a warm, golden-brown color palette. The child is holding a long, thin stick or pole.

2013
OHIO
STATEWIDE
COMPREHENSIVE
OUTDOOR
RECREATION
PLAN



JOHN R. KASICH
GOVERNOR
STATE OF OHIO

March 7, 2014

Michael Reynolds, Regional Director
National Park Service
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

Dear Mr. Reynolds:

Spending time outdoors and staying active is important for quality of life. Ohioans are fortunate to have so many parks, forests, wildlife areas, waterways, trails, and other public recreation spaces in which to exercise and relax.

Outdoor recreation provides more benefits than just better health and greater happiness. Physically active adults are more productive and engaged in their communities, and children do better in school when they have the opportunity to play outdoors and spend time in a natural setting.

When Ohioans and out-of-state visitors pursue outdoor hobbies like fishing, hunting, birding, boating, golfing, hiking and trail riding, it's not just good for their well-being; it's also good for our economy.

This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan is a tool for our resource managers to make wise choices for providing the new and improved facilities that Ohioans want, and that will attract visitors to our great state to experience our great outdoors. I enthusiastically approve this Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and certify that ample opportunity for public participation has taken place during plan development.

Sincerely,

John R. Kasich
Governor

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Unless otherwise indicated, photos are from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

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PURPOSE

The 2013 Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) has been prepared to guide outdoor recreation land acquisitions, facility development, programming and management in the state of Ohio for a four-year period planning period. It is the ninth in a series of comprehensive plans that represent the state of Ohio's commitment to continuous outdoor recreation systems planning. The 2013 Ohio SCORP satisfies the requirements of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 (P.L. 88-578), which requires each state to have an approved SCORP on file with the U.S. Department of the Interior's National Park Service to participate in the LWCF cost-sharing funding program. The 2013 Ohio SCORP will be effective for the planning period from 2014-2019.

The primary goal of the 2013 Ohio SCORP is to provide a contemporary assessment of outdoor recreation in Ohio and to recommend ways in which public, private and independent agencies might strive to meet identified needs within the constraints of the state's social, economic and natural resources. The 2013 SCORP is the most comprehensive source of data on regional and statewide outdoor recreation in Ohio, and can serve as a valuable tool for decision making for a variety of providers. It is not a site specific document, nor does it attempt to make recommendations on every issue facing Ohio's outdoor recreation. The SCORP does identify existing resources and systems, outdoor recreation participation patterns and trends, issues and problems, and recommended solutions to these problems. However, additional local and regional research and planning are strongly recommended to complement information contained in the SCORP.

LEGAL AUTHORIZATION

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) is authorized by ORC 1541.03(F) as the state agency responsible for the development of Ohio's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program.

Introduction

ASSESSING NEEDS, PREFERENCES AND BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

A number of issues and trends that are affecting the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities in Ohio are described in the 2013 SCORP. These were identified through a public participation process that included a series of input discussion groups, survey research, an internal workgroup and significant input from an advisory group of outdoor recreation stakeholders. The 2013 SCORP implementation recommendations are offered to assist public, private, and independent agencies. Together, these agencies comprise Ohio's outdoor recreation delivery system in providing highly valuable outdoor recreation opportunities.

A regional approach was used to acquire input for the 2013 Ohio SCORP from park professionals and others closely associated with outdoor recreation in Ohio, either through outdoor recreation field management, public office, association with a constituency or user group, or another similar connection. Two focus groups were held in each of five delineated regions of Ohio, and a statewide focus group was held to garner feedback from state park managers. For purposes of planning, the regions are identified as Northeast, Northwest, Central, Southeast and Southwest. Delineation of the five SCORP-planning regions closely correlates with the tourism regions established by Ohio's state tourism agency, TourismOhio.

An on-line public survey was conducted to gather data on Ohioans' outdoor recreation participation, preferences and needs (*See Appendices A and B*). The survey was hosted on the ODNR website, featured on the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association website, and disseminated broadly through social media and TourismOhio's "Discover Ohio" e-newsletter. Special emphasis was placed on identifying barriers to participation in various recreational activities, gauging interest in new activities, and identifying emerging activities.

Comparing the focus group feedback from the perspective of outdoor recreation providers with the recent survey feedback from outdoor recreation consumers and the public feedback collected for Ohio's previous SCORP, interesting trends and patterns emerge (*See Appendix C*). Enlightened by this information, outdoor recreation providers can better focus on offering the facilities and programs that the public really wants, removing barriers to public participation in outdoor recreation, and remaining relevant in the lives of Ohioans.

TRENDS & PRIORITIES

The use of federal Land and Water Conservation Fund monies will be aligned with the current findings of the 2013 SCORP planning process. General priorities and trends, summarized below, were derived from analysis of these findings, and are closely related to the statewide issues identified on pages 91-99. Ohio's Open Project Selection Process (the process used by ODNR to make financial assistance decisions) will be informed by these trends and priorities, and as priorities change or trends evolve, the process will be adjusted. Of course, every statewide issue identified in this plan cannot be addressed through the use of LWCF funds.

Ohioans participate in a wide range of activities that require a variety of facilities and resource settings. The 2013 statewide survey results show that Ohioans are fairly satisfied overall with outdoor recreation in the state, although satisfaction levels have declined somewhat for several popular outdoor recreation activities. Aging infrastructure and ongoing economic challenges in Ohio will continue to test recreation providers' resourcefulness in their efforts to provide quality outdoor recreation opportunities to Ohioans and Ohio visitors.

Ohioans value their excellent federal, state, county, metro, city and community park systems, and free admission and access to most park facilities is a hallmark of Ohio's commitment to quality of life through outdoor recreation and experiences in nature. However, innovative managers should consider the revenue enhancement potential of additional services such as rental facilities, rental equipment and special offerings.

BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION

The single greatest barrier to Ohioans' participation in outdoor recreation across all types of activities and user demographics is a lack of free time, due to job responsibilities, busy family schedules and other obligations. While recreation providers cannot create free time for busy constituents, they can make outdoor recreation more convenient

by offering close-to-home facilities, scheduling programs and events around work and school hours, and offering fitness facilities for parents in close proximity to playgrounds or sports fields used by their children.

Some outdoor recreation activities require equipment that can be costly and require special accommodations for transportation, off-season storage or other logistical considerations. Lack of equipment prevented nearly one-third of interested survey respondents from boating, and more than one-half of interested survey respondents from enjoying motorized trails. Equipment was also a factor for more than a third of survey respondents interested in wildlife-related activities including fishing and hunting, and outdoor skills. Lack of equipment held back one-fourth or more of survey respondents interested in horseback riding or mountain biking, winter sports, and camping.

Lack of information about available facilities and programs is a significant barrier for nearly half of survey respondents interested in nature based recreation activities, and one in four who would like to participate in outdoor skilled activities such as archery, shooting sports, climbing and geocaching, as well as a variety of outdoor recreation activities such as skateboarding, dog parks, paintball, remote control aircraft, BMX biking, community gardening, scenic driving or touring historic farms or buildings.

The perception that facilities are too far away or unavailable was mentioned by about one in six survey respondents interested in motorized trails, swimming, multiple-use trails, and outdoor skills activities such as climbing and rappelling, bouldering, geocaching or orienteering, archery and shooting sports. A lack of available facilities was a deterrent mentioned by about one-fifth of survey respondents interested in motorized trails, swimming, outdoor skills activities, and outdoor recreation activities such as skateboarding, BMX biking, paintball, parcours, dog parks, kite flying or remote control aircraft.

DIVERSE NEEDS OF OHIOANS

Guidelines issued by the United States Access Board for national parks and other outdoor areas developed by the federal government became mandatory effective November 25, 2013. The guidelines are part of the Architectural Barriers Act Accessibility Standards, and address access to trails, picnic and camping areas, viewing areas, beach access routes and other components of outdoor developed areas on federal sites when newly built or altered. The United States Access Board intends to develop guidelines for non-federal outdoor sites covered by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) through a subsequent rulemaking.

Outdoor recreation providers in Ohio have made progress in providing accessible hiking trails, restrooms, fishing piers, boat launch ramps, picnic shelters, campsites and playgrounds. Focus group participants noted that, in addition to providing facilities tailored to physically challenged Ohioans of all ages, recreation providers should also consider special offerings for injured veterans. When accommodating older Ohioans, providers should be aware of the differing needs of urban and rural seniors, and the wide range of fitness levels and recreational interests among physically active seniors and less active seniors.

As Ohio becomes an even more ethnically diverse state, park systems will need to ramp up outreach efforts and should consider adapting existing programs and facilities to also accommodate the needs of immigrant communities. Examples noted by focus group participants include pick-up soccer games outside of regular league play, community gardens devoted to growing foods used in ethnic cuisines, and development of cricket pitches for casual and club play.

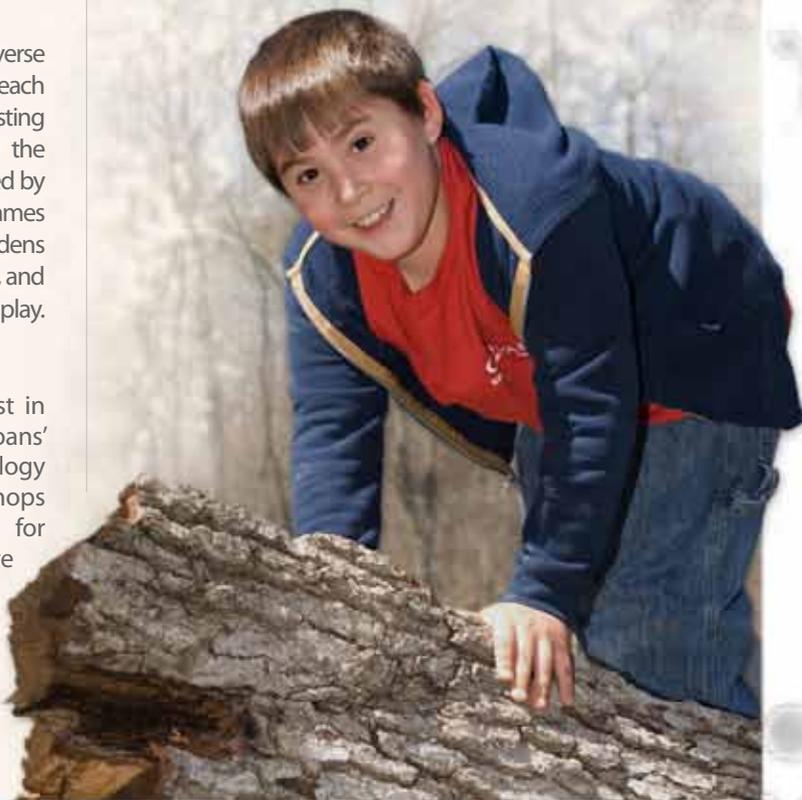
EXPERIENCES IN NATURE

Public input reveals a resurgence of interest in nature shaping a promising trend in Ohioans' outdoor recreation preferences. Ecology programs and "green" themed workshops are well attended, and designated areas for creeking and self-directed nature play are very popular. Demand is high for children's summer camps that offer a mix of outdoor skill activities with recreation, crafts and nature programs in a park setting.

Adults utilize outdoor areas as a backdrop for individual meditation and reflection, as well as classes in disciplines such as yoga and tai chi. There is enthusiasm across generations for hummingbird and butterfly programs, and birding is popular as a self-directed activity as well as a program theme.

An emerging trend is "nature play areas" that offer self-directed outdoor play in an outdoor environment designed to capitalize on a park's natural assets. Attractions may include trees for climbing, fallen logs to walk across, boulders to scramble over, areas to dig in the mud and stream segments for exploration. This concept encourages children and accompanying adults to connect with nature "off the trail" while addressing parental concerns for safety, park systems needs for nature program venues, and resource protection issues.

Several park districts and state parks in Ohio partner with local observatories or astronomical associations to provide stargazing programs and meteor shower parties. In 2011, Geauga Park District's Observatory Park received the silver tier Dark Sky Park certification, making it one of only nine designated Dark Sky Parks in the U.S.



FIELD & COURT SPORTS

Playing and practice fields and courts provided by park systems serve as important community assets. Youth leagues teach children valuable lessons about teamwork, and youth and adult leagues alike promote healthy physical activity and community cohesiveness. Many park systems partner with local schools to provide facilities for baseball, football, soccer, lacrosse and tennis teams.

Providing venues for field and court sports also offers opportunities for revenue generation for park systems and municipalities. Adding supplemental parking and support facilities including concessions, restrooms and scoreboards may be a sound investment for sports field complexes with sufficient capacity to host tournaments for recreation leagues, club and travel teams.

In areas where traditional field and court sports, such as tennis, are waning in popularity, innovative recreation providers have modified and repurposed existing tennis courts for alternative activities including street hockey, street soccer, mini tennis, pickleball (played with a solid paddle and a perforated ball on one-third of a court) and a variation of dodgeball played in a "gaga pit."

HEALTHY OUTDOOR LIFESTYLES ACROSS GENERATIONS

The Millennial Generation, currently in their teens and twenties, is likely to integrate technology into their outdoor recreation experiences. This group seeks out high adventure and extreme sports, and their preferences are shaping trends in bicycling, skateboarding, and climbing.

A high level of involvement with their children is a hallmark of Generation X, currently in their thirties and forties, who seek family friendly recreation opportunities. Focus group participants noted that families are increasingly enjoying outdoor recreation together, and seeking out recreation opportunities suited to multiple generations.

The physically active Baby Boomers, currently in their fifties and sixties, seek diverse opportunities for outdoor recreation ranging from meditative exercise in a scenic setting, to birding and nature study, to vigorous hikes and paddling for fun and fitness.

HERITAGE SITES, EVENTS & PROGRAMS

Touring historic farms and buildings is the fifth most popular outdoor recreation activity with survey respondents, behind multi-use trails, scenic driving, picnicking and wildlife observation. Heritage based activities hold multi-generational appeal for young families, empty nester adults and grandparents accompanied by grandchildren.

Some park systems are fortunate to feature pioneer log cabins, frontier cemeteries, barns or other historic structures that attract visitors and serve as venues for interpretive programs. Many more of Ohio's parks and outdoor recreation sites are located near native American sites and mounds, pioneer structures, War of 1812 forts and battlegrounds, historic canal remnants, presidential sites, historic covered bridges or Underground Railroad landmarks. Working with local convention and visitor bureaus, historical societies, museum operators and volunteer docents, park managers can tap these local and regional assets to create and promote a concept of heritage corridors. Visitors can experience heritage corridors through a combination of site tours, static interpretive displays, interpretive programs, re-enactments, living history programs, and driving tours of relevant historic markers. Guided tours could be offered as part of parks programming, or self-guided packages could be developed, including a brochure, web site, or multi-media presentation.

*Visitors enjoy wagon rides at ►
Malabar Farm State Park Heritage Days*

LAND ACQUISITION

Ohioans recognize that a sufficient land base is essential for high quality nature-based outdoor recreation experiences. Large blocks of well-vegetated undeveloped land are needed to provide these recreational experiences, maintain sufficient wildlife habitat, allow for storm water management and serve as a buffer for watershed protection. There is also an interest in preservation of greenspace on the margins of rural areas where development is expected.

Land purchases and easements are needed to create additional trails, improve access to existing trails and provide trail connectivity. Likewise, land is needed to improve park connectivity and to provide safer access to park entrances for pedestrians and bicyclists. In some areas, more land and accompanying development funding are also needed to provide more of the types of facilities that are currently filled to capacity, such as shelter houses, dog parks, and play and practice fields for soccer and similar sports.

MAINTENANCE & REHABILITATION

Maintaining and rehabilitating existing facilities is a high priority for park visitors as well as recreation providers. Many park systems struggle with sufficient funding and manpower to operate and care for facilities. Ohioans prefer that today's limited resources be used for upkeep of existing facilities versus construction of new. Park visitors will tolerate older infrastructure, provided the facilities are kept clean and appear to be safe.

Nevertheless, park systems are challenged with aging infrastructure that has exceeded its design life, is too costly to repair or too limited to keep up with contemporary demands. Pressing facility needs include permanent flush restrooms, parking areas with security lighting, directional and informational signage, picnic shelters, increased capacity along with features to enhance accessibility for spectators at sports facilities, more campsites configured to accommodate large recreational vehicles, boat launch and marina facilities, and more transient docks on Lake Erie.



MOTORIZED RECREATION

Motorized trail riding opportunities on public lands are currently limited to state and national forest lands, with the majority located in southern Ohio. Ohio's foremost motorized trail provider, the Wayne National Forest (WNF), reports a 56% decline in WNF trail permit sales from 2004 to 2012 (21,196 to 9,211). This trend may be attributed to factors such as the economy, high cost of gasoline and fees, as well as dissatisfaction with available trail features, prompting trail users to abandon the sport or seek private or out-of-state providers.

Existing motorized trails are often visited by families who ride ATVs together and enjoy nearby recreation opportunities as a family activity. Trail users express a need for wider trails to accommodate today's broader vehicles, and more challenges and obstacles to add novelty. Trail riders would also like to see other outdoor recreation activities offered nearby, along with camping opportunities.

Survey respondents indicate an interest in off-road Jeep trails and single track off-road motorcycle trails in addition to existing motorized trails. Funds for development and maintenance of motorized trails on state lands are available through the registration based State Recreational Vehicle Fund (SRVF). Funding is also available for motorized trails through the Recreational Trails Program (RTP); political subdivisions and non-profits are eligible RTP applicants. Previously disturbed areas might be well suited to these developments, and careful planning can minimize user conflict and environmental damage while providing desired opportunities.



NICHE RECREATION & EMERGING ACTIVITIES

Demand is increasing for adventure activities including zip lines and canopy tours, ropes courses, obstacle courses, climbing walls, bouldering and rappelling. Regional adventure parks that combine these activities at a single location, developed in partnership with multiple jurisdictions, may be the most feasible and cost effective way to provide this suite of experiences.

In some regions, demand for some competitive activities such as disc golf, paintball, dodgeball, ultimate Frisbee and kickball is leveling off. Recreation providers should always gauge public interest before expanding these offerings. However, because they require relatively little infrastructure and can be developed with assistance from user groups, these activities are relatively easy and inexpensive to provide where there is unmet need.

While a segment of the recreating public remains enthusiastic about fun and fitness challenges such as 5k and 10k fun runs and walks, focus group participants note increased interest in longer endurance events and novel or extreme events such as mud runs, obstacle courses, zombie tag races and polar bear plunges. Fitness boot camps are a popular new trend, including a family friendly multi-generational version that allows parents and children to improve their fitness together.

Many park systems have accommodated dog owners with fenced dog parks and accompanying dog swim areas, as well as pet-centered events and walks. Demand for these opportunities remains steady, especially near urban areas. Existing facilities could be further improved with the addition of agility equipment, gravel surfaces on beaches, and pet-centered programs.



◀ *Social media helps extend public outreach through campaigns and events like insta hikes at Mohican State Park*

Although some park systems are experiencing declining participation in some organized and regularly scheduled activities such as adult sports leagues, the facilities for these activities are still attractive to casual users. Despite busy lives and a general reluctance to commit to regular participation on a team, many adults are very interested in enjoying outdoor recreation with others as their schedules permit. "Meet-up groups" who gather at park facilities for various activities provide the opportunity for these adults to enjoy hiking, paddling, field and court sports, and other activities at their convenience. Recreation providers should be mindful of this phenomenon when considering facility needs and scheduling.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & REPUTATION MANAGEMENT

Social media has rapidly escalated the exchange of information between customers and service providers (including government entities), generating increased exposure for outdoor recreation providers. Park visitors are sharing their own experiences in real time through Facebook, Twitter and other social media. Rating websites such as Trip Advisor have become commonplace. Both compliments and complaints are dispersed immediately to broad audiences of park users and potential users.

With the rapid pace of information availability comes heightened expectation that recreation providers will be responsive and timely in addressing complaints. Providers are also expected to participate in social media in a two-way conversation with the public, and continually refresh content to keep friends and fans engaged. To maximize awareness of facilities and events, recreation providers must

also have ample and up-to-date information in a variety of formats including print, traditional websites, mobile applications and others.

When social media was first introduced, early adopters gained an edge in public outreach and reputation management; failure to participate was a missed opportunity. Today, a strong social media presence is essential to any public outreach effort and failure to engage could have serious consequences. To add to the challenge, the landscape of social media outlets is continually shifting with new formats being introduced and adopted by different demographic groups. While Facebook is currently the social medium of choice with the Gen X demographic, potential park visitors under age 30 are moving on to new formats, such as instant messaging, Instagram and twitter as their preferred way to communicate.



*Trails for motorized recreation are available in four ►
Ohio State Forests and in the Wayne National Forest*

SPECIAL EVENTS

Special events are a powerful tool to boost park visitation, garner community support and goodwill, and enhance revenues. Special events not only attract people to local parks, they also have the potential to draw overnight visitors from other regions of the state, or from out-of-state.

Parks provide ideal venues for community events, including festivals, farmers' markets, movies on inflatable screens, and fun and fitness runs. Festivals enhanced with entertainment, food trucks and attractions such as portable climbing walls and inflatables are especially popular and offer revenue generating opportunities via fundraising and vendor fees.

Shelter houses and picnic pavilions often serve as staging areas for park sponsored special events and private gatherings, and are filled to capacity. Permanent facilities such as amphitheaters and shelter houses with electrical hookups, combined with portable infrastructure such as tents, bleachers and trailers with stages, are essential for successful park based events that cater to large crowds.

TOURISM & ECONOMIC IMPACT

Ohio's parks, wildlife areas and nature preserves are among the state's most important assets for tourism. Ohio's scenic lakes and forests are an attraction in themselves, and they also provide the backdrop for activities that travelers enjoy while they visit. The Ohio State Park system is an integral component of the Ohio economy, sustaining 4,505 jobs. Visitors to Ohio's state parks spent \$229 million in 2011, generating business sales of \$349 million, directly and indirectly. In addition, overnight state park visitation generated \$47 million in tax revenue in 2011.

Outdoor recreation providers should be mindful that their facilities and programs give travelers a reason to visit Ohio and to spend the night, the weekend, or an entire vacation. Historically, few park districts in

Ohio besides the state parks have provided camping or overnight facility rentals. Survey feedback indicates that there is unmet demand for self-contained units, such as "Conestoga" cabins or yurts, which would offer comfortable overnight stays in or near parks. Even if they do not provide overnight facilities, recreation providers can leverage their assets to encourage longer stays by partnering with local hotels, bed and breakfasts, campgrounds or rental cabins to provide and promote packages of activities and programs offering "things to do" while visiting the area.

TRAILS

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Statewide Trail User Survey conducted in 2009 (*See Appendix D*) indicated that one or more members of more than half (51%) of Ohio households used an Ohio trail in the past 12 months.

Focus group and on-line survey feedback confirms that multiple-use trails are by far the most popular outdoor recreation facilities with Ohioans, and trail amenities, more trails close to home, signage along trails and better trail connectivity rank among Ohioans' highest priorities for outdoor recreation improvements. Partnership projects to develop trail corridors that cross multiple jurisdictions, such as the eagerly anticipated Ohio to Erie Trail linking Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland, can breathe new life and bring new customers into the mom and pop businesses in quaint "trail towns" along the way.

In some areas of the state, trails are heavily utilized by bicyclists for transportation as well as leisure time recreation and adventure cycling opportunities. In addition to traditional bicycling on dedicated or multiple-use trails, cyclists are seeking challenges with specially adapted bikes and infrastructure including alpine trails, bike polo, off-road biking, and cyclo-cross. The latter is a variation of bicycle racing consisting of numerous short laps on an obstacle course. The riders often need to quickly dismount, navigate the obstacle and remount.

VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteers are increasingly important to park districts as a source of program assistance, labor for special projects and routine upkeep, invasive species removal, fundraising, and in-kind services for grant matches. Focus groups in each region of the state counted volunteers or friends groups among their important funding sources.

Park system volunteers may be local retired couples or individuals who want to give back to their favorite parks, service organizations, scout groups, families, members of user groups or conservation organizations, or students seeking extra credit or service credit. A growing trend of “voluntourism” brings volunteers from outside the local area, who have adopted volunteering while traveling as a rewarding lifestyle choice.

WATER-BASED RECREATION

Swimming ranks among the most popular outdoor recreation activities among Ohioans. Ohio’s excellent Lake Erie beaches and scores of sand beaches on inland lakes are a major attraction for summer tourists and local families. Trendy swimming pool complexes with water features are heavily used, and many provide food concessions, offer picnic facilities and host events that add to their appeal and enhance their revenue generating potential. Although many traditional swimming pools continue to be operated successfully by park systems and municipalities, others struggle with declining attendance and costly maintenance, and some have closed. For communities with limited resources and unmet needs for swimming opportunities, splash pads and spray parks are an affordable alternative to a pool facility.

Paddle sports are increasingly popular with Ohioans, and improved access for kayaks and canoes on Ohio waterways ranks high among the most pressing needs identified by outdoor recreation participants and providers. The Ohio Water Trails team led by the ODNR Division of Watercraft, along with representatives from the League of Ohio Sportsmen, National Park Service and the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, work to promote awareness of kayak and canoe access by developing designated water trails. The number of designated water trails has tripled since 2008, with the addition of the Great Miami River, Mad River, Mahoning River, Mohican River, Stillwater River and Vermilion-Lorain water trails.

Swimming ranks among the most popular activities with Ohioans, and paddlesports are increasingly popular – the number of designated water trails has tripled since 2008.



OHIO'S RESOURCES

STATE CHARACTERISTICS

Natural borders form Ohio's northern and southern boundaries. The northern portion of the state is bordered by Lake Erie and the Ohio River forms the state's southern and southeastern boundary. Ohio's political boundaries are Indiana to the west, Kentucky and West Virginia to the south and southeast, Pennsylvania to the east and Michigan and Canada to the north.

The total land area in Ohio is 41,265 square miles or 26,409,909 acres, ranking it 35th among the 50 states in land area. Approximately 6% of the land in the state is devoted to residential land uses, 48% to agriculture, 33% is forested, and roughly 1% is covered by wetlands or is barren (See Table 1).

TABLE 1: OHIO LAND COVER

	ACRES	SQUARE MILES	PERCENTAGE
Forest	9,476,495	14,807	36%
Water	260,788	407	1%
Other	16,672,626	26,051	63%
Ohio Total	26,409,909	41,265	100%

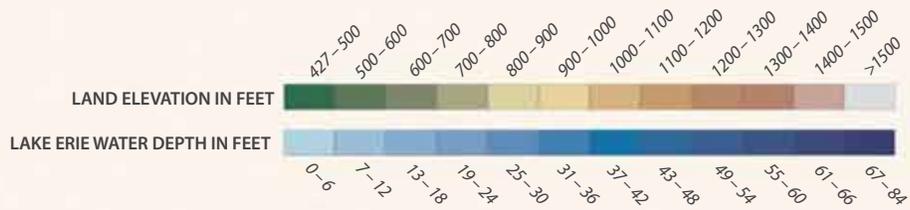
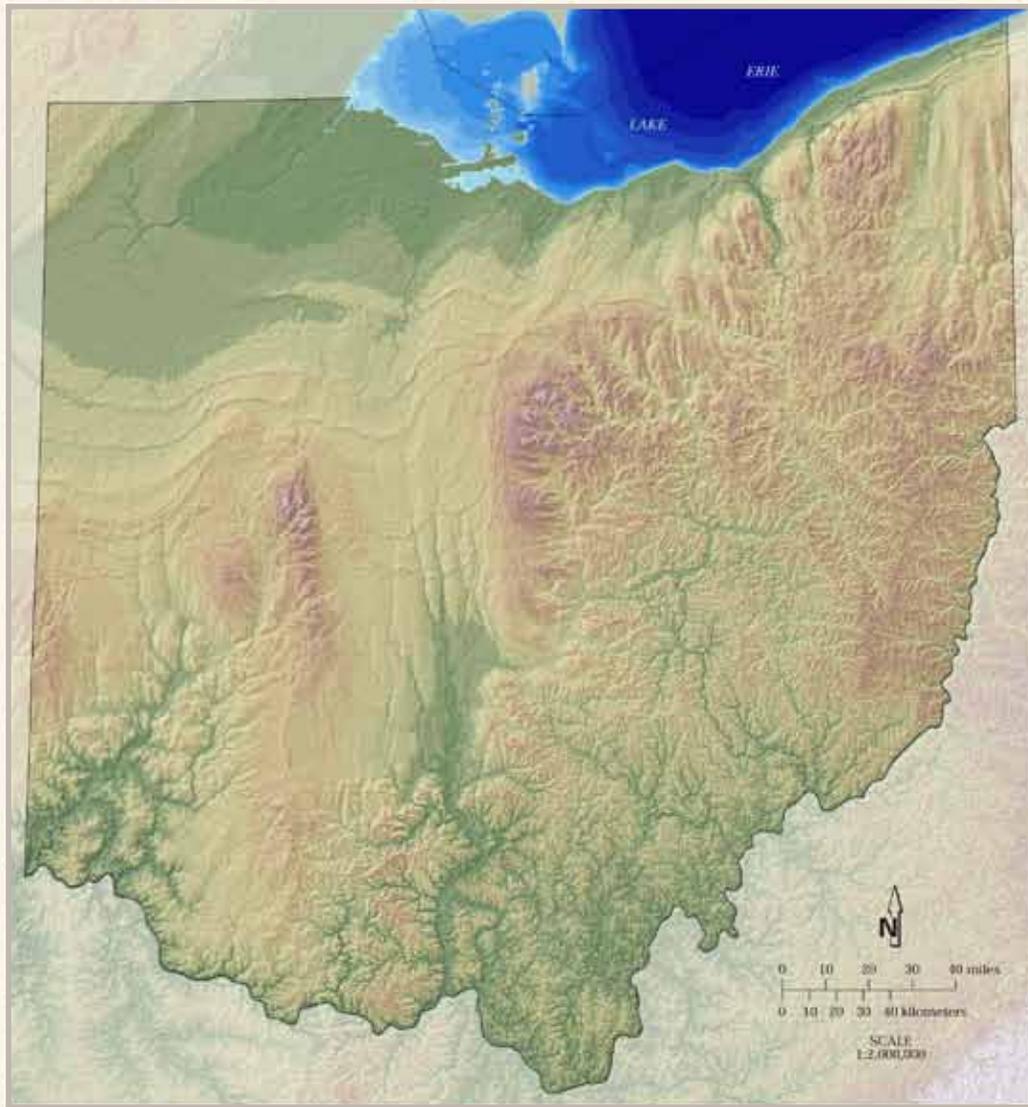
Information from Ohio EPA, Ohio Statewide Land Cover Classification

TOPOGRAPHY

Ohio's landscape offers varied terrain for the recreation seeker. The state is characterized by rolling hills in the west and level plain in central Ohio. A large portion of northwest Ohio was once home to a massive swamp that covered thousands of square miles and several counties. Known as the Great Black Swamp, the land was drained over several decades to make it suitable for farming and habitation. Today, remnants of the swamp are the marshes along the southwestern shore of Lake Erie, as well as the flat, rich farmland soil that covers much of the region.

Southern Ohio has deep, undulating hills, becoming more extreme in the southeast corner of the state. The rugged topography of this southeastern unglaciated plateau has high scenic interest. Throughout the state, stream and river valleys are popular recreation destinations. The banks of the Ohio River drop to the state's lowest elevation, about 433 feet above sea level, at the junction of the Ohio and Miami rivers in Hamilton County. The highest elevation in Ohio is Campbell Hill, 1,549 feet above sea level, located in Logan County. (See Figure 1).

FIGURE 1: SHADED ELEVATION MAP OF OHIO



Ohio Division of Geological Survey, 2002 (2003), Shaded Elevation Map of Ohio – earth-tone version:
Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey Map MG-1

WATER RESOURCES

Ohio has approximately 3,906 square miles of surface water. This includes 3,579 square miles (or 2,290,480 acres) of Lake Erie surface water. This 312-mile long shoreline is a significant recreational resource for Ohioans and tourists.

The inland lakes comprise the other 327 square miles of surface water and there are approximately 61,500 miles of inland rivers and streams. (See Table 2).

TABLE 2: OHIO'S WATER RESOURCES

AREA	RESOURCES
Lake Erie	2,290,480 water acres, 312 miles of shoreline
Ohio River	91,300 water acres, 451 miles of shoreline
Sandusky Bay	36,000 water acres
State Wild & Scenic Rivers	14 river systems, 824 miles (<i>approximate</i>)
Inland Lakes	148,411 surface water acres (> 5 acres)
Small Lakes & Farm Ponds	60,000 surface water acres (< 5 acres)
Inland Rivers & Streams	61,500 miles

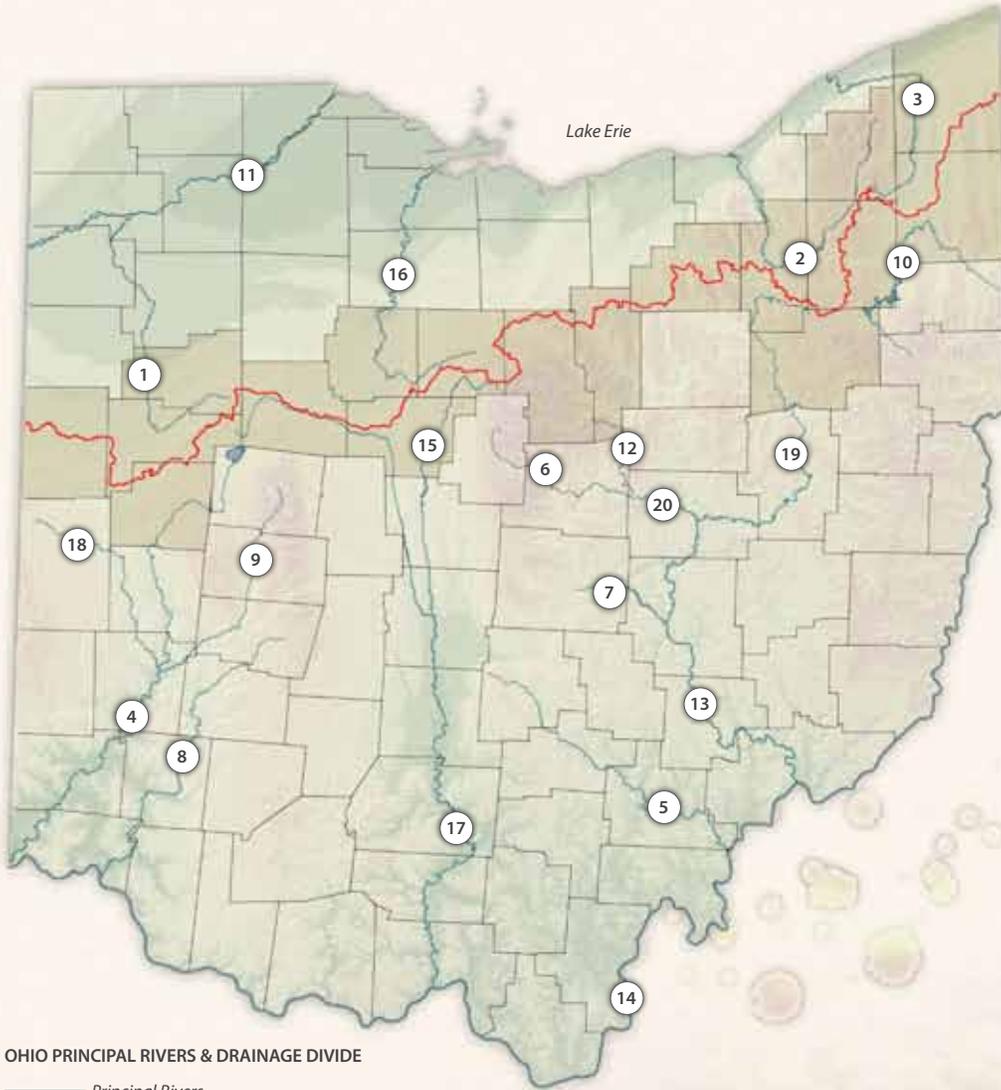
Being located on one of the five Great Lakes, Lake Erie, Ohio waters are part of the largest freshwater system in the world. Approximately one-fourth of Ohio's surface water drains northward to Lake Erie.

Major streams in the Lake Erie watershed are the Auglaize, Maumee, Sandusky, Cuyahoga, and Grand Rivers. The southern three-fourths of Ohio is in the Ohio River watershed with the major streams being the Mahoning, Muskingum, Hocking, Scioto, and the Little Miami and Great Miami rivers. A small portion of west central Ohio drains westward into Indiana's Wabash River Basin (See Figure 2).



◀ Ohio water resources provide opportunity for numerous water-based recreation activities including boating and fishing

FIGURE 2: OHIO PRINCIPAL RIVERS & DRAINAGE DIVIDE



OHIO PRINCIPAL RIVERS & DRAINAGE DIVIDE

— Principal Rivers
 — Lake Erie/Ohio River Drainage Divide

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Auglaize River | 11. Maumee River |
| 2. Cuyahoga River | 12. Mohican River |
| 3. Grand River | 13. Muskingum River |
| 4. Great Miami River | 14. Ohio River |
| 5. Hocking River | 15. Olentangy River |
| 6. Kokosing River | 16. Sandusky River |
| 7. Licking River | 17. Scioto River |
| 8. Little Miami River | 18. Stillwater River |
| 9. Mad River | 19. Tuscarawas River |
| 10. Mahoning River | 20. Walhonding River |



WATERSHED ISSUES

Recreational activities are directly affected by the quality of water in an area. Fishing, nature watching, watersports and hunting all rely on clean water either for the recreator or for the plants and animals that depend on clean water for existence. Many communities in Ohio are recognizing the importance of considering the entire natural watershed system in their attempts to improve water quality. This whole - system approach is called watershed management, and it requires a great deal of information and cooperation from a variety of sources to be effective.

A watershed is the area of land from which surface water drains into a common outlet, such as a river, lake or wetland. Depending on its size and location, a watershed can contain one or many of the following features: streams, ditches, ponds, lakes and/or wetlands. These natural features are the highlight of many of Ohio's great parks and protecting them should be a priority. There are steps that communities can take to become responsible stewards of their watersheds, such as developing a watershed plan.

More than 50 watershed plans have been endorsed by ODNR and the Ohio EPA, covering nearly one-third of the state. These plans thoroughly describe watershed conditions, including the quality of streams and wetlands, and define problems impairing these water resources. Built on a partnership of watershed

residents, organizations, businesses, local government and others, these plans include additional critical elements such as goals for restoration and protection, and implementation measures.

To support watershed planning and implementation, ODNR in partnership with Ohio EPA, offers Watershed Coordinator Grants. These grants allow local entities to hire watershed coordinators to facilitate planning or actions on behalf of local watershed partnerships. Fifty watershed coordinator grants have been awarded. See the ODNR website, soilandwater.ohiodnr.gov/water-conservation/watersheds for more information.

Developing a watershed action plan helps communities accurately identify pollutants and pollution sources so that appropriate solutions can be formulated. As the quality of the water resource at any point in a stream is the product of all natural and human activities in the drainage area above that point, there often is not a simple fix. To positively affect water quality, all sources of potential pollutants need to be identified and evaluated based on their relative pollution contribution. Recreation providers should support programs and initiatives like these that work to improve Ohio's recreation resources.



◀ *Recreational activities like fishing, nature watching, and watersports are directly affected by water quality. The Ohio Clean Lakes initiative is a collaborative effort to address increasingly frequent harmful algal blooms in the western basin of Lake Erie.*

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

The presence of naturally occurring cyanobacteria in Ohio's lakes became a statewide concern in 2009 when test results from a National Lake Survey by the EPA indicated that blooms of these organisms, also referred to as blue-green algae, were producing liver toxins in concentrations above the World Health Organization's threshold for human exposure in recreational waters. Officials from ODNR, Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Health collaborated to develop a state strategy for responding to these harmful algal blooms. The strategy includes sampling methods for detecting toxins and a protocol for issuing advisories to the recreating public who may come into contact with the blooms and their toxins. The strategy is intended as a tool for use by all public and private lake managers, although compliance with the strategy is mandatory for all state operated swimming beaches. Since the strategy was adopted, dozens of beaches at inland lakes as well as Lake Erie beaches have been sampled for toxins, and advisories have been issued at 20 locations.

The Ohio Clean Lakes Initiative was launched in 2012 as a collaborative effort between ODNR, the Ohio EPA and the Ohio Department of Agriculture to implement measures to address the increasingly frequent and severe harmful algal blooms in the western basin of Lake Erie. In early 2012, the agency directors released their Agriculture Nutrients and Water Quality Work Group report containing recommendations for improving Ohio's waterways while maintaining the integrity of the region's agricultural industry. Since then the Ohio Clean Lakes Initiative has reached out to educate farmers and other interested parties on agricultural nutrient management and stewardship, and advocated for \$3 million in projects in the Western Lake Erie Basin to help address the agricultural nutrient issue.



CLIMATE

Ohio's distinctive seasons provide opportunities for a full range of recreation experiences. Ohio is in the cooler part of the temperate zone, and the state's location west of the Appalachian Mountains makes the climate essentially continental in nature, characterized by moderate extremes of temperature and moisture. Nevertheless, there is considerable variation of climate from one part of Ohio to another. Summers are moderately warm and humid, with temperatures rarely exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit. Winters are cold, with an average of about five days of subzero weather. Spring and autumn offer some of the finest weather along with spectacular spring wildflower displays and vibrant fall foliage.

Variations in temperature across the state reflect differences in latitude and topography. The land varies greatly in roughness and elevation throughout the state, producing differences in temperature and moisture during certain times of the year. Lake Erie, on Ohio's north coast, delays spring and prolongs autumn in the lake area. The mass of warmed lake water keeps the northern shore of Ohio slightly warmer in the fall and winter. This phenomenon also will produce large amounts of snow on the northeast shores of Ohio and is referred to as 'lake effect' snow. The prevailing northwest winds blow across warm Lake Erie, picking up moisture and when this mass hits the frigid shore of northeastern Ohio it dumps moisture laden air in the form of snow. The large, cold mass of frozen Lake Erie also will keep the northern coast of Ohio cooler in the spring. This moderating effect largely accounts for the concentrations of vineyards, orchards, nurseries and truck farming along the lakeshore. The average yearly temperature for the state ranges from 49 degrees in the northeast to 55 degrees in the extreme south. The statewide average annual temperature is 52 degrees.

Ohio's average annual precipitation is approximately 38 inches, slightly above the national average. Moisture, in the form of rain, is moderately extensive and well distributed; long dry or wet spells are infrequent. Average annual rainfall varies significantly across the state. The northwest corner of the state receives 31 to 35 inches of rainfall. The driest area of Ohio is the western lakeshore, which normally receives less than 30 inches. A band across the midsection of the state receives 36 to 40 inches of rainfall, on average. The southwest, southeast and extreme northeast portions of the state receive the greatest amount of annual rainfall with an average of 40 to 44 inches. Pockets in Geauga County in northeast Ohio, and Brown and Adams counties in southwest Ohio receive the most rainfall, with annual averages above 44 inches.

Climate data based on records from 1931 to 1980 indicate that June and July are the wettest months with nearly four inches of precipitation each, and October and February tend to be the driest with a state average over two inches of precipitation each. However, weather patterns may disrupt these norms and result in wetter or drier weather. Such variability is a particular challenge to those who enjoy and provide weather dependent outdoor recreation activities.

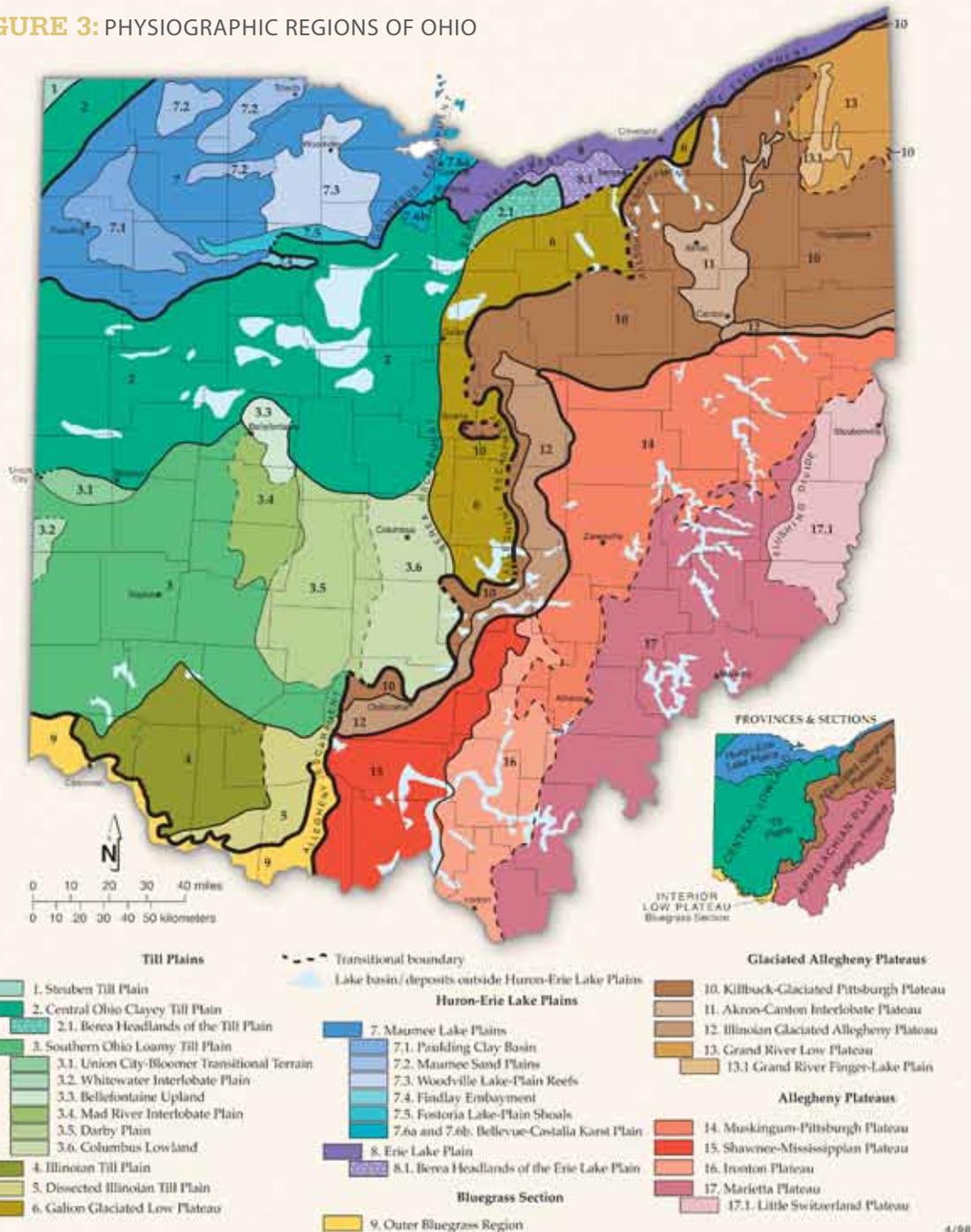
Winters are usually mild in Ohio and most regions receive only a moderate amount of snowfall. Although the statewide average is 27 inches, annual snowfall in the northwest counties ranges to 40 inches, and less than 20 inches of snow falls per year in the southern portion of the state along the Ohio River. There is a small area (Gauga and Ashtabula counties) affected by Lake Erie that typically receives 70 to 100 inches of snow a year.

FLORA & FAUNA

Ohio's rich and varied landscape harbors abundant and diverse flora and fauna. The state's five physiographic regions are influenced by bedrock geology and the impacts of successive

glaciers. Each region features its own geologic profile that, in turn, gives rise to distinct communities of plants and animals (See Figure 3).

FIGURE 3: PHYSIOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF OHIO



Ohio Division of Geological Survey, 1998. Physiographic Regions of Ohio: Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Geological Survey

Ohio has a diversity of natural plant communities including relict bogs, fens and prairies, extensive marsh and riverine communities, smaller beach and cliff communities and very extensive forest communities.

More than 8.5 million acres, or about 31% of land area in Ohio, is forested. About 87% of Ohio's forests are owned by private woodland owners. Ohio's forests are composed of 96% hardwood trees in primarily beech-maple, oak-hickory and mixed wet-woodland communities.

Of the approximately 3,000 species of plants known to occur in the wild in Ohio, about 75% are native or they occurred here the time of substantial European settlement. The other 25%, more than 700 species, are not native to Ohio, having been introduced from other states or countries. Some of these plant species are considered to be invasive. Without natural controls, non-native, invasive plants are able to spread quickly, crowd out native plants, and disrupt long established patterns of adaptations that are critical to healthy ecosystems.

Some of the most pervasive non-native invasive plants include bush honeysuckles (Amur, Morrow and Tatarian), buckthorn (glossy and common), garlic mustard, purple loosestrife, common reed grass, reed canary grass, autumn and Russian olive, multiflora rose, Japanese honeysuckle, narrow-leaved cattail, Canada thistle and tree-of-heaven.

Six Ohio plants are included on the federal list of endangered and threatened species. Running buffalo clover, *Trifolium stoloniferum*, is federally endangered. Northern monkshood, *Aconitum noveboracense*, Lakeside daisy, *Hymenoxys herbacea*, Small whorled pogonia, *Isotria medeoloides*, Prairie fringed orchid, *Platanthera leucophaea*, and Virginia spiraea, *Spiraea virginiana*, are federally threatened species. Native Ohio plant considered to be rare include 242 species on the state endangered list, 161 species on the state threatened list, and 112 species listed as potentially threatened. No valid records exist for 96 native Ohio plant species, which are presumed extirpated.

Ohio's fish and wildlife resources include an estimated 56 species of mammals, 200 species of breeding birds, 84 species and subspecies of amphibians and reptiles, 170 species of fish, 100 species of mollusks and species of crustaceans.

Ohio's two most popular game species, white-tailed deer and wild turkey, are found in forested habitats in all of Ohio's 88 counties. Nearly 219,000 deer were harvested during the fall 2012-winter 2013 hunting season. The fall 2012 and spring 2013 turkey harvests numbered 19,754 birds. Game fish in Ohio waters include walleye, large and smallmouth bass, muskellunge, saugeye, white bass, perch, bluegill, crappie, steelhead and rainbow trout, salmon, and channel catfish. Approximately 1.5 million anglers fish each year in Ohio, on both Lake Erie and inland waterways.

◀ *Lakeside daisies can be seen at the Lakeside Daisy (Colleen "Casey" Taylor and Ruth E. Fiscus) State Nature Preserve*



An invasive animal species, the feral swine, is an increasing threat to Ohio's woodland habitats. Feral swine have established breeding populations in at least twelve Ohio counties, primarily in southeast Ohio. Feral swine harbor diseases and parasites that threaten native wildlife, and they out-compete native wildlife for food resources. In addition, the feral swine's rooting and wallowing behaviors disrupt large patches of soil and degrade water quality.

Although 120 wildlife and fish species are currently classified as state endangered species, several species that have been listed are making a comeback in Ohio. The bald eagle is no longer considered endangered or threatened in Ohio, and an estimated 210 nesting pairs are now found along waterways in 62 Ohio counties from Lake Erie to the Ohio River. The osprey has also been de-listed, along with two fish species, the bluebreast darter and rosieside dace. Five species that were previously listed as endangered have been upgraded to threatened status in 2012, including the bobcat, Lake Erie watersnake, trumpeter swan, blue sucker and mountain madtom. The yellow bellied sapsucker improved its status from endangered to "species of concern." Species upgraded from threatened to "special interest" include the dark-eyed junco, yellow-crowned night heron, hermit thrush and least flycatcher.

One bird, the upland sandpiper, was added to the state endangered list in 2012, along with two fish, the Iowa darter and the gilt darter. The Eastern harvest mouse was recently added to the threatened list. One mammal, the Southern

red-backed vole, has been newly listed as extirpated from the state. A total of 369 species in major taxa are listed in the various state classifications (See Table 3).

Ohio animals and birds that appear on the federal endangered species list include the Indiana bat, Kirtland's warbler and piping plover, along with several insects and mollusks (See Table 4).

Funding for endangered species and non-game animal conservation programs, as well as nature preserve acquisition and control of invasive plant species on preserves, is provided through state income tax check off and specialty license plate programs. Sales of the Ohio Wildlife Legacy Stamp provide additional funding for conservation. Federal funds for endangered species and wildlife diversity efforts are also provided through the State Wildlife Grant Program, which targets species with greatest conservation need. The Lake Erie watersnake recovery efforts are an excellent example of the power of federal, state and local partnerships to bring a species back to abundance.

Species upgraded from threatened to "special interest" include the dark-eyed junco, yellow-crowned night heron, hermit thrush and least flycatcher.



TABLE 3: SPECIES CLASSIFIED AS ENDANGERED, THREATENED, OF CONCERN, SPECIAL INTEREST, EXTIRPATED OR EXTINCT IN OHIO

TAXON	ENDANGERED	THREATENED	CONCERN	SPECIAL INTEREST	EXTIRPATED	EXTINCT
Mammals	4	2	19	1	10	0
Birds	14	5	14	33	5	2
Reptiles	4	4	11	0	0	0
Amphibians	5	1	2	0	0	0
Fishes	20	13	9	0	8	2
Mollusks	24	4	8	0	11	6
Crayfishes	0	2	3	0	0	0
Isopods	2	1	0	0	0	0
Psuedoscorpions	1	0	0	0	0	0
Dragonflies	13	3	1	0	0	0
Damselflies	3	3	0	0	0	0
Caddisflies	3	6	3	0	0	0
Mayflies	2	0	1	0	0	0
Midges	1	3	1	0	0	0
Crickets	0	0	1	0	0	0
Butterflies	8	1	2	1	1	0
Moths	14	4	22	11	0	0
Beetles	2	2	6	0	0	1
TOTAL	120	54	103	46	35	11



Ohio species that are a part of the federal list of endangered and threatened species include the Kirtland's warbler and the Karner blue butterfly. ▶

TABLE 4: FEDERAL ENDANGERED & THREATENED ANIMAL SPECIES IN OHIO


STATUS	LISTING NAME	Mammals
E	Indiana Bat (<i>Myotis sodalis</i>)	
PE	Northern long eared bat, (<i>Myotis septentrionalis</i>)	

STATUS	LISTING NAME	Birds
E	Kirtland's warbler (<i>Dendroica kirtlandii</i>)	
E	Piping plover (<i>Charadrius melodus</i>)	

STATUS	LISTING NAME	Fish
E	Madtom, Scioto (<i>Noturus trautmani</i>)	

STATUS	LISTING NAME	Reptiles
T	Copperbelly watersnake (<i>Nerodia erythrogaster neglecta</i>)	

STATUS	LISTING NAME	Insects
E	American burying beetle (<i>Nicrophorus americanus</i>)	
E	Hine's emerald dragonfly (<i>Samatochlora hineana</i>)	
E	Karner blue butterfly (<i>Lycaeides melissa samuelis</i>)	
E	Mitchell's satyr (<i>Neonympha mitchellii mitchellii</i>)	

STATUS	LISTING NAME	Mollusks
E	Purple catspaw (<i>Epioblasma obliquata obliquata</i>)	
E	White catspaw (<i>Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua</i>)	
E	Clubshell (<i>Pleurobema clava</i>)	
E	Fanshell (<i>Cyprogenia stegaria</i>)	
E	Pink mucket (<i>Lampsilis abrupta</i>)	
E	Northern riffleshell (<i>Epioblasma torulosa rangiana</i>)	
E	Ring pink (<i>Obovaria retusa</i>)	
T	Rabbitsfoot (<i>Quadrula cylindrical cylindrical</i>)	

E = Endangered T = Threatened PE = Proposed Endangered

SUBSURFACE ENERGY RESOURCES

The Marcellus and Utica Shale region that extends across New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, portions of Kentucky and Tennessee is now also in play in eastern and southeastern Ohio. Energy resource deposits sit between 7,000 and 12,000 feet below ground. Both are important geologic formations because they hold large reserves of natural gas. Researchers estimate the Marcellus Shale alone could contain as much as 363 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, enough to satisfy U.S. energy demands for about 14 years.

Because the Marcellus Shale is much thinner on its western edge, Ohio is experiencing far less Marcellus shale drilling than other states. However, as much of Ohio sits over the Utica Shale formation, there are significant increases in numbers of approved drilling permits for this formation; 1,024 Utica Shale permits have been approved as of mid-December 2013 (See *Figure 4*). Experts predict this formation holds large natural gas reserves and potentially oil. Natural gas is extracted from the shale through a two-step process of horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing. Production wells are drilled thousands of feet downward and then gradually angled out horizontally through the shale deposit to maximize capture of natural gas.

These activities have real significance for local outdoor recreation providers in Ohio's eastern counties as well as large public land holding agencies such as the ODNR. Property values are rapidly increasing in affected counties; sub-surface land rights have become vastly more important in new real estate transactions as well as existing land holding. Subsurface rights are carefully ascertained and customarily obtained in all new acquisitions of state lands via donation, transfer or purchase. Furthermore, the financial incentive for park providers to host energy exploration within existing parkland can be quite substantial, while the cost of parkland acquisition steadily increases.

A need for new product transport infrastructure accompanies this energy exploration boom. Additional pipelines are being installed across the state, potentially affecting public lands and the public trust, and necessitating careful and thorough negotiations between land holding agencies and private sector companies. As a result, innovative state policies, standards and BMPs are being developed to protect public access to outdoor recreation, view sheds, habitat for flora and fauna and other valuable natural resources.

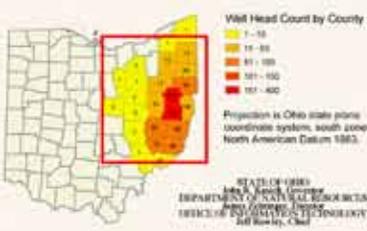
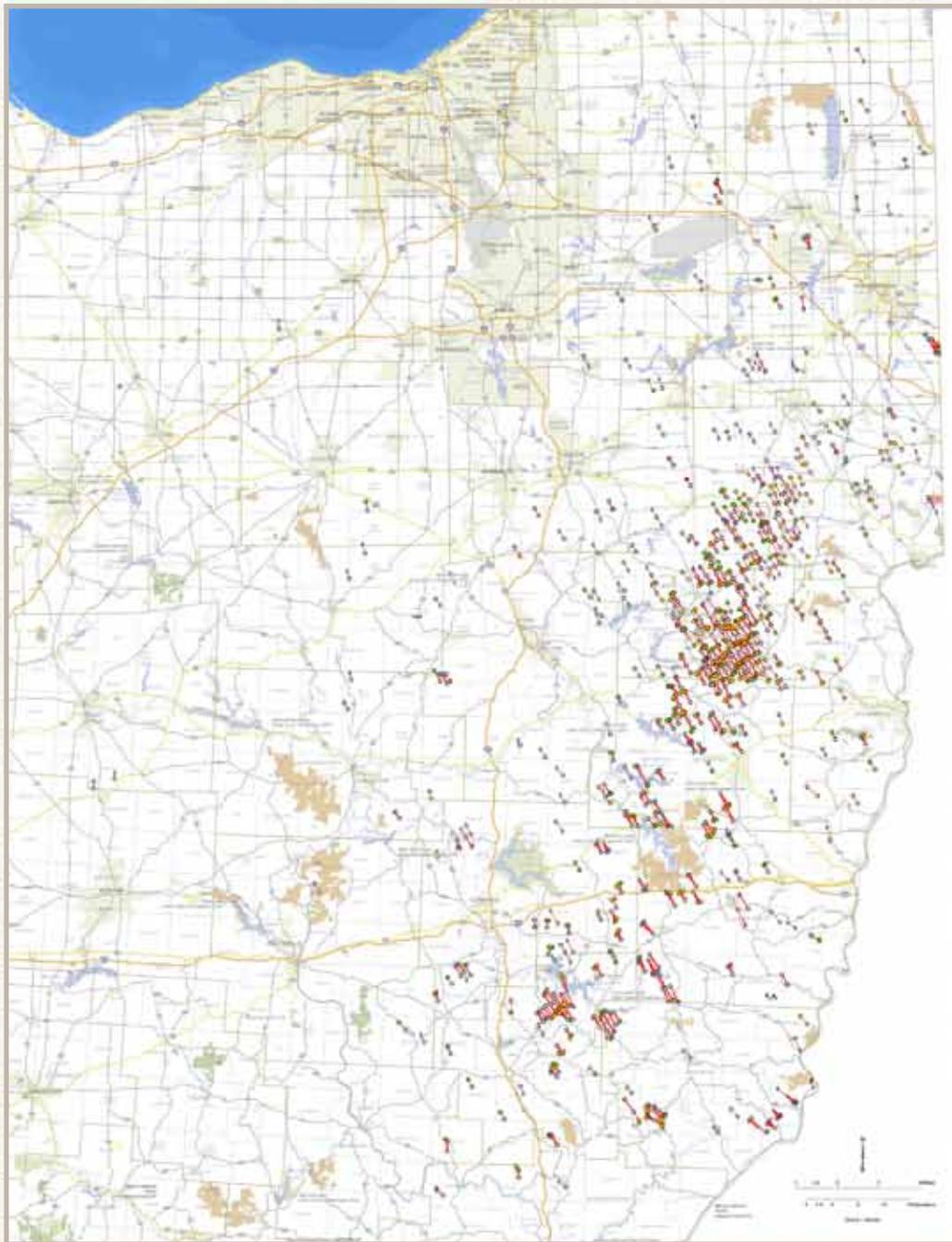
TABLE 5: HORIZONTAL WELL ACTIVITY STATUS AT END OF SATURDAY 2/1/2014

FORMATION	PERMITTED	DRILLED	PRODUCING
Marcellus	34	19	8
Utica/Point Pleasant	1,074*	707**	300

* One Utica-Permitted well is not mapped due to well length \geq 15,000 feet

** One Utica-Drilled well is not mapped due to well length \geq 15,000 feet

FIGURE 4: HORIZONTAL OIL & GAS WELLS IN THE UTICA/PT. PLEASANT & MARCELLUS FORMATIONS IN OHIO (2/1/2014)



- Utica/Pt. Pleasant Well Heads
 - Marcellus Well Heads
 - Horizontal Wellbores
- ODNR Lands**
- Division of Forestry
 - Department
 - Division of Parks
 - Division of Watercraft
 - Division of Wildlife
 - Natural Areas and Preserves

- Utica/Pt. Pleasant Bottom Hole**
- PERMITTED (Permitted, Not Drilled, Cancelled)
 - DRILLED (Drilling, Well Drilled)
 - PRODUCING (Producing, Plugged Back)
 - INACTIVE (Drilled Inactive, Shut in)
 - PLUGGED (Lost Hole)
 - PLUGGED (Dry and Abandoned)
 - PLUGGED (Plugged and Abandoned)
- Marcellus Bottom Hole**
- PERMITTED (Permitted, Not Drilled, Cancelled)
 - DRILLED (Drilling, Well Drilled)
 - PRODUCING (Producing, Plugged Back)
 - Inactive

Government Resources for Outdoor Recreation

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

There are four federal agencies in Ohio that own and manage property for outdoor recreation purposes. They are the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service within the U.S. Department of the Interior, the U.S. Forest Service within the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers within the U.S. Department of Defense. The Federal Highway Administration within the U.S. Department of Transportation provides funding assistance for recreational trail development and enhancement.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service

The National Park Service (NPS) was created by Congress in 1916 as an agency of the Department of the Interior for the purpose of establishing and managing a National Park System. The NPS manages natural, historical and recreational resources of national significance.

In Ohio, the primary role of the NPS is management of 11 Park Service units: Charles Young Buffalo Soldiers National Monument, Cuyahoga Valley National Park, David Berger National Memorial, Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park (NHP), Fallen Timbers Battlefield and Fort Miamis National Historic Site (NHS), First Ladies NHS, Hopewell Culture NHP, James A. Garfield NHS, Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, and William Howard Taft NHS (See Figure 5). Some of the units are relatively small historic sites focused on historic structures and cultural history while others offer abundant recreational amenities and connections to other opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Cuyahoga Valley National Park (CVNP) is the largest of the NPS sites with more than 30,000 acres that are spread along a 22-mile corridor of

the Cuyahoga River and the remains of the Ohio & Erie Canal. CVNP is a prime example of the NPS's commitment to the concept of bringing parks closer to the people. Located in Ohio's highly urbanized northeast, visitor facilities at CVNP contain a variety of historical, cultural and recreational attractions for the citizens of Ohio and its visitors. It is also located within the Ohio & Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor that provides for further connections to surrounding communities by way of 100 miles of the Ohio & Erie Towpath Trail. Natural Heritage Corridors/ Areas are a park concept that encompasses a mix of public and private lands, buildings, resources and communities. The designated areas are eligible for limited assistance through the U.S. Department of the Interior. The intent of the designation is to help local entities protect and use historic, cultural and recreational resources for community benefit while raising regional and natural awareness of their unique importance.

Hopewell Culture and Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historic Parks feature trails and other outdoor recreation opportunities. The 1,200 acre Hopewell Culture NHP consists of five geographically separate archeological sites, some of which feature trails and other recreational opportunities such as birdwatching and hiking. Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP is made up of several sites, some managed by the NPS and others by partners. Through its partnership with Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP facilitates access to Huffman Prairie where about a mile of trail is provided. Additional connections are being made to the Dayton Metropolitan Area through Five Rivers Metroparks.

Blue Hen Falls is just one of the waterfalls that can be enjoyed at Cuyahoga Valley National Park. ►

The NPS also manages the North Country National Scenic Trail in association with the North Country Trail Association. The trail aims to connect scenic, natural, historical and cultural features in seven states from New York to North Dakota through the states that border Canada. In Ohio, the trail is planned to follow long segments of the Buckeye Trail.

Another major responsibility of the NPS is the administration of the Land and Water Conservation Fund program (LWCF). The LWCF is the most significant federal funding program affecting the provision of public outdoor recreation opportunities in Ohio. The program was created in 1965 to help finance federal recreation land acquisition, state comprehensive recreation planning and state and local outdoor

FIGURE 5: NATIONAL PARKS, OTTAWA NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE & WAYNE NATIONAL FOREST



recreation land acquisition and development. Initially the funds were derived from three sources of revenue: proceeds from the sales of surplus federal real property, motorboat fuel taxes and fees for recreation use of federal lands. In 1968 it was determined that the funding level was below expectations and Outer Continental Shelf mineral leasing receipts were utilized. In 2006 the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act provided for the sharing of leasing revenues with Gulf producing states and the LWCF for coastal restoration projects.

LWCF monies are allocated to states and, through the states, to their political subdivisions on a 50% cost reimbursement basis. Since the fund's inception in 1965 more than \$150 million of federal funds have been apportioned to the state of Ohio for more than 1,400 projects for outdoor recreation acquisition and development projects. More than 51,705 acres of outdoor recreation land have been acquired in Ohio with LWCF assistance.

The NPS is responsible for administering the Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery Program (UPARR), enacted in 1978 (P.L. 95-625) in recognition of the severe deficiencies of urban recreation facilities in the United States. UPARR encourages local governments to rehabilitate existing recreation facilities, demonstrate innovative programs and plan for overall revitalization of community recreation systems. When funding is appropriated by Congress, grants are available to eligible jurisdictions under three program categories: rehabilitation, innovation and planning. Local governments are eligible for assistance under UPARR grants to restore facilities which have fallen into disuse or disrepair; to encourage innovations in recreation programming; to stimulate and support local commitments to recreation system recovery and maintenance; and to improve the management and delivery of recreation services to urban residents. Unfortunately, UPARR has not been funded since 2002.



Another significant program that is administered by the NPS is the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. RTCA implements the natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation mission of the NPS in communities across America. Currently there are approximately 80 conservation and recreation planning professionals around the country available to assist communities and organizations in developing projects and implementing goals. Assistance includes building partnerships to achieve community-set goals, assessing resources, developing concept plans, engaging public participation and identifying potential sources of funding. By working side-by-side with grassroots groups and local governments in communities throughout the county, the NPS is providing technical assistance for developing a nationwide system of parks, open spaces, rivers and trails. On the ground successes have brought greater visibility to the RTCA program. A few recent RTCA highlights in Ohio include: assisting officials in a nine-county area of Cincinnati to develop a system of interconnected trails for recreation and transportation; planning a water trail along the length of the Cuyahoga River; and helping to re-establish the Ohio Trails Partnership to collaborate on a statewide trails user group forum.

Ohio has also been the beneficiary of the Federal Lands to Parks Program. Since its inception, Ohio agencies have been able to acquire more than 2,000 acres through this program. The state and local agencies managing these properties provide a variety of outdoor recreation opportunities throughout the state. A total of 36 surplus land sites in Ohio have received assistance, including the U.S. Coast Guard Marblehead Lighthouse (ODNR), a former Voice of America relay station (Metro Parks of Butler County) and the Portland Lock and Dam River Access (ODNR).

◀ *Visitors can enjoy views of Lake Erie from the Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial and the Marblehead Lighthouse*

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), along with the states and territories, share the responsibility for the conservation and management of fish and wildlife resources. The USFWS manages an extensive system of 540 national wildlife refuges encompassing more than 95 million acres. The USFWS also conducts fish and wildlife research; coordinates and administers grants and technical assistance programs to states, universities and other federal agencies; and reviews federal or federally assisted water development projects and their impact on fish and wildlife.

The USFWS maintains three national wildlife refuges in Ohio; they are part of the Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge complex. (See Figure 5). All are located along the western basin of Lake Erie. The three refuges total nearly 9,000 acres. The West Sister Island Wildlife Refuge is also a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, the only area in this system in the State of Ohio.

Two important funding programs for fish and wildlife conservation are also administered by the USFWS. The Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, commonly referred to as the Pittman-Robertson Act, provides funds to ODNR's Division of Wildlife



for uses such as acquisition and improvement of wildlife habitat, introduction of wildlife into suitable habitat, wildlife research, surveys and inventories of wildlife problems, acquisition and development of access facilities for public use, and hunter education programs, including construction and operation of public target ranges. Funding for implementing the program is obtained from an 11% excise tax on sporting arms, ammunition, bows, arrows and their parts and accessories, and a 10% tax on pistols and revolvers. Monies are apportioned based on a formula that factors in state population, the number of paid hunting license holders and geographic size. States can receive up to 75% federal reimbursement for approved conservation projects.

The Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration Act, commonly referred to as the Dingell-Johnson Act, is also administered by the USFWS. The Dingell-Johnson Act was amended in 1984 (Wallop Breaux amendment) to earmark a percentage of marine gas tax for various boating improvements. This program provides funds to the state fish and wildlife and boating agencies managing recreational fisheries. It provides for aquatic education, wetlands restoration, boat safety, clean vessel sanitation devices (pump-outs) and a non-trailerable boat program. The latter two programs are administered by the ODNR Division of Watercraft. Projects include acquisition and improvement of sport fish habitat, stocking of fish, research into fishery resource problems, surveys and inventories of sport fish populations, and acquisition and development of access facilities for public use. States can receive up to 75% federal reimbursement for approved projects.

Program funds are obtained from a 10% excise tax on sport fishing tackle and a 3% excise tax on fish finders and electric trolling motors, import duties on fishing tackle, yachts and pleasure craft, interest on account, and a portion of motorboat fuel tax revenues and small engine fuel taxes. Each state's share is based 60% on the number of licensed sport anglers and 40% on the land and water area of the state.

The West Sister Island Wildlife Refuge ► is also a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System, the only area in this system in the State of Ohio – and provides habitat for species such as the Black-crowned night heron.



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

United States Forest Service

The U. S. Forest Service (USFS) is responsible for managing 155 national forests and 20 national grasslands totaling almost 193 million acres. The mission of the USFS is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. The agency manages 193 million acres of public land, provides assistance to state and private landowners, and maintains the largest forestry research organization in the world. Public lands the USFS manages contribute more than \$13 billion to the economy each year through visitor spending alone. Those same lands provide 20% of the nation's clean water supply, a value estimated at \$7.2 billion per year. The agency has either a direct or indirect role in stewardship of about 80% of the 850 million forested acres within the U.S., of which 100 million acres are urban forests where most Americans live.

An equally important goal of the USFS is to provide visitors with a quality recreational experience through enhanced facilities and services. The 2005 Consolidated Appropriations Act (PL 108-447), which includes the ten-year Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (REA) permits federal land management agencies, such as the USFS, to continue investing in America's recreation future by charging fees at campgrounds, trails, rental cabins and other recreation areas on federal lands. Approximately 95% of these recreation fees are retained on the forest from which they are collected. Recreation fees are a small but critical part of the overall funding sources needed to operate and maintain recreation sites and trails to standard. Congressional appropriations still represent the largest category of funding. However, grant funding from other federal and state agencies and in-kind support from volunteers and partnerships

with non-profit or non-governmental organizations are also important resources needed to be able to respond to the increasing and changing recreation demands on national forest lands.

The USFS manages over 241,000 acres of Wayne National Forest (Wayne NF) in southeastern Ohio, the state's only national forest (See Figure 5). The Wayne NF is comprised of three administrative units (Athens, Marietta, and Ironton) and provides numerous opportunities for developed, dispersed and backcountry recreation experience. The Wayne NF receives over 535,000 visits annually. Some of the more popular recreation activities that attract visitors to the Wayne NF include off-road vehicle riding (largest designated motorized trail system in Ohio), hunting, hiking, picnicking, camping, horseback riding, mountain biking, fishing, gathering forest products, canoeing and wildlife/nature viewing, just to name a few. The Wayne NF offers two 100-acre lakes, more than 100 fishing ponds, 11 developed campgrounds, five group picnic shelters, two boat launches, a swim area, and over 360 miles of multiple use trails. For more information, visit www.fs.usda.gov/main/wayne/home.



THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

The United States Army Corps of Engineers

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers assists the state in the planning and development of Ohio's water resources. In doing so, the Corps coordinates with many other federal, state and local agencies in the development of water related recreation facilities.

Throughout Ohio, the Corps has constructed many multi-purpose reservoirs and lock and dam structures that have greatly enhanced water-based recreation opportunities in Ohio. (See Figure 6). The primary purposes for these construction activities are flood control, navigation, hydropower, water supply, environmental and outdoor recreation, and fish

and wildlife. The Corps finances construction projects that create reservoirs available for recreation use in Ohio. Generally, after a dam project is completed, the Corps will continue to operate and maintain the dam site and reservoir impoundment area, but will lease adjacent land areas to various public recreation agencies. Many of Ohio's state parks and wildlife areas are located on such lands and utilize these cooperative use agreements. ODNR leases approximately 95,000 acres from the Corps. Additionally, the Corps has contributed significantly to the Ohio River's recreation potential with the construction, operation, and maintenance of a system of navigational locks and dams. The Corps has provided boat-launch ramps, fishing access and picnic facilities at nearly all of the lock and dam sites.

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

The Federal Highway Administration administers the Transportation Enhancement Program (TE) and the Recreational Trail Program (RTP) in partnership with the states. The TE Program provides funds for projects that enhance the transportation experience by improving the cultural, historic, aesthetic and environmental aspects of transportation infrastructure. Primary project categories are historic and archaeological, scenic and environmental, and bicycle and pedestrian.

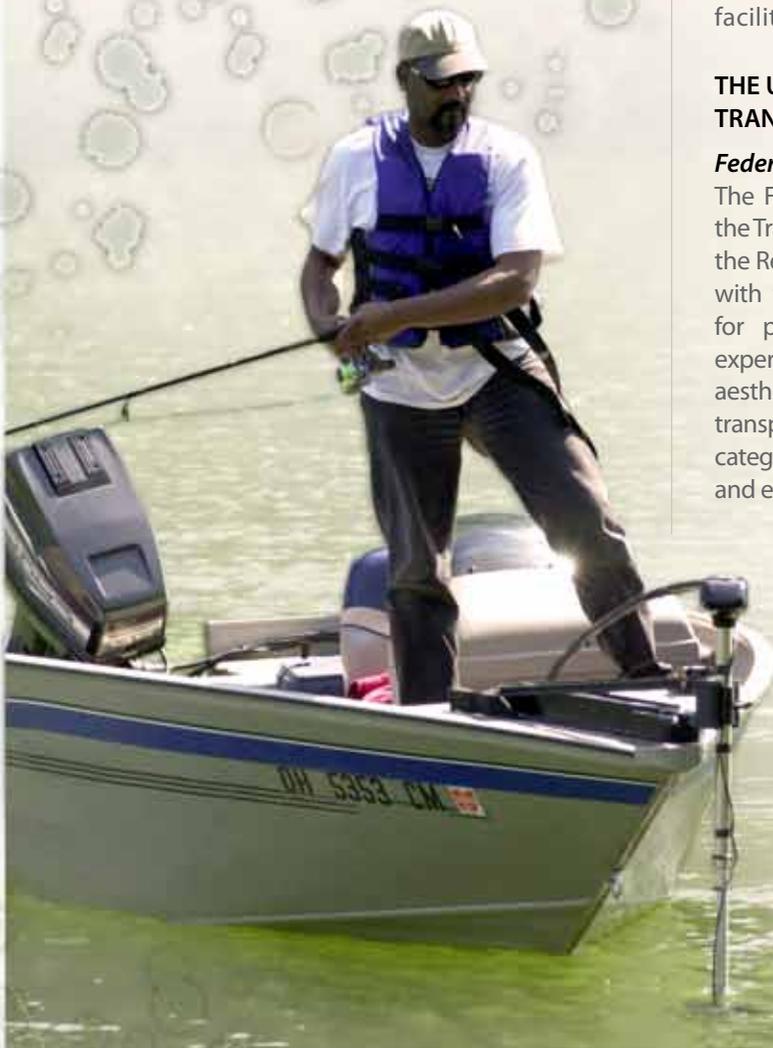


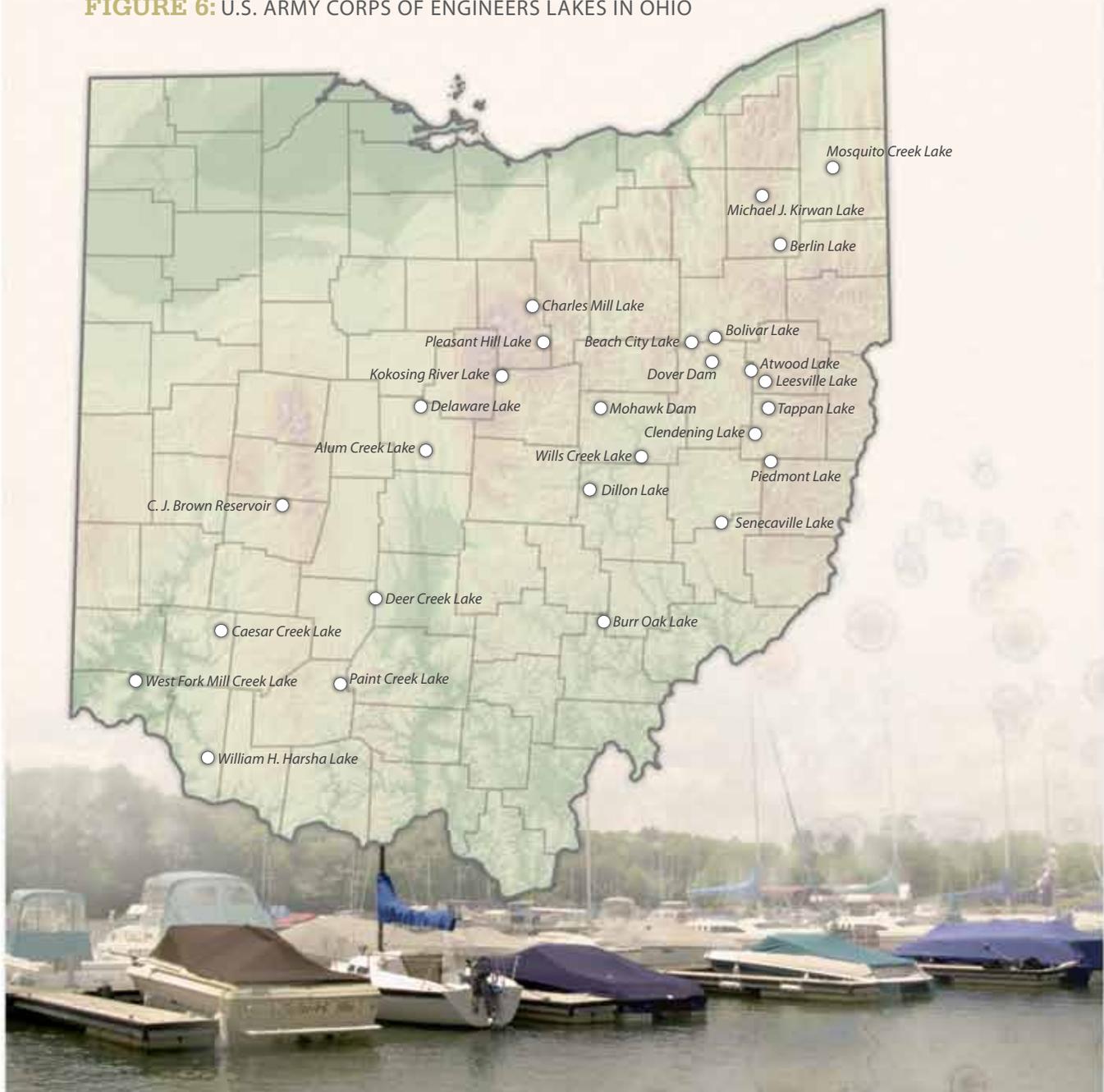
photo: ODNR

◀ Visitors can enjoy fishing and other water related activities at Alum Creek State Park

The RTP was established by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century and reauthorized in 2005 through SAFETEA-LU. The funding amount allocated to the RTP is derived from a formula based on a percentage of the fuel that is used for off-road recreational use (snowmobiles, all-terrain vehicles, off-road motorcycles, and off-

road light trucks). RTP funds can be used for a wide variety of recreational trail projects including trail maintenance and construction, acquisition of land for trails, trail equipment, and trailhead and trailside facilities. For additional information on the RTP, see the description of ODNR's Office of Real Estate.

FIGURE 6: U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS LAKES IN OHIO



STATE GOVERNMENT RESOURCES

The State of Ohio, primarily through its Department of Natural Resources, is the largest provider of outdoor recreation and open space in the state. State parks, forests, wildlife areas, nature preserves, scenic rivers, canal lands and historic sites provide millions of acres of land and water, thousands of facilities, and a variety of programs to help meet the outdoor recreation needs of Ohio's citizens.

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) was created by legislative action in 1949 "to formulate and execute a long-term comprehensive plan and program for the development and wise use of the natural resources of the state...that increased recreation opportunities and advantages be made available to the people of Ohio and her visitors..."

As the leading agency in providing outdoor recreation services in Ohio, ODNR's major emphasis is on satisfying statewide and/or regional recreation needs that are beyond the scope of local governments and the private sector.

ODNR helps satisfy Ohio's recreation needs via recreation land management, planning, research, and through the administration of financial and technical assistance programs to political subdivisions and the private sector. Specific divisions within ODNR manage and administer a variety of programs and lands designed to help meet the outdoor recreation needs of Ohioans and its visitors.

Division of Parks and Recreation

ODNR's Division of Parks and Recreation manages the most visible and popular areas available for public recreation, with a system of 74 state parks in 59 counties encompassing more than 174,000 acres and over 1,000 miles of trails (See Figure 7). The state parks attract more than 50 million visits each year. Ohio State Parks' focus is on customer service with special emphasis on employee helpfulness, special events, and nature programs. The mission of the Ohio State Parks is to enhance the quality of life through exceptional outdoor recreational experiences and sound resource management.

Through land acquisition, management, and development of recreation facilities, the state parks provide recreation opportunities while helping conserve natural and scenic resources with statewide significance.



◀ *Recreational opportunities can be found throughout the year at Ohio State Parks*



Overnight facilities within the state park system include nine resort lodges, 515 rental cottages, 56 family campgrounds offering more than 9,000 campsites, and 16 horseman's camps with 373 sites. Day use facilities include 75 beaches, 456 picnic areas, six championship golf courses,

more than 440 trails for hiking, mountain biking or horseback riding. Hunting and fishing opportunities are available in Ohio State Parks, as well as winter activities, including cross-country skiing, sledding, ice skating, snowmobiling, and ice boating.

FIGURE 7: OHIO STATE PARKS



Division of Forestry

ODNR's Division of Forestry is responsible for the operation and maintenance of Ohio's 21 state forests encompassing nearly 200,000 acres. (See *Figure 8*). The mission of the Division of Forestry is to promote and apply management for the sustainable use and protection of Ohio's private and public forest lands. The state forest system is managed under a multiple-use concept to provide timber, backcountry recreation opportunities, wildlife habitat, resources for education and research, and protection of soils, watersheds, aesthetics and other environmental qualities. The division also provides technical assistance to private landowners, municipalities, and forest industries on harvesting and the utilization of forests for wildlife, watershed, and soil protection.

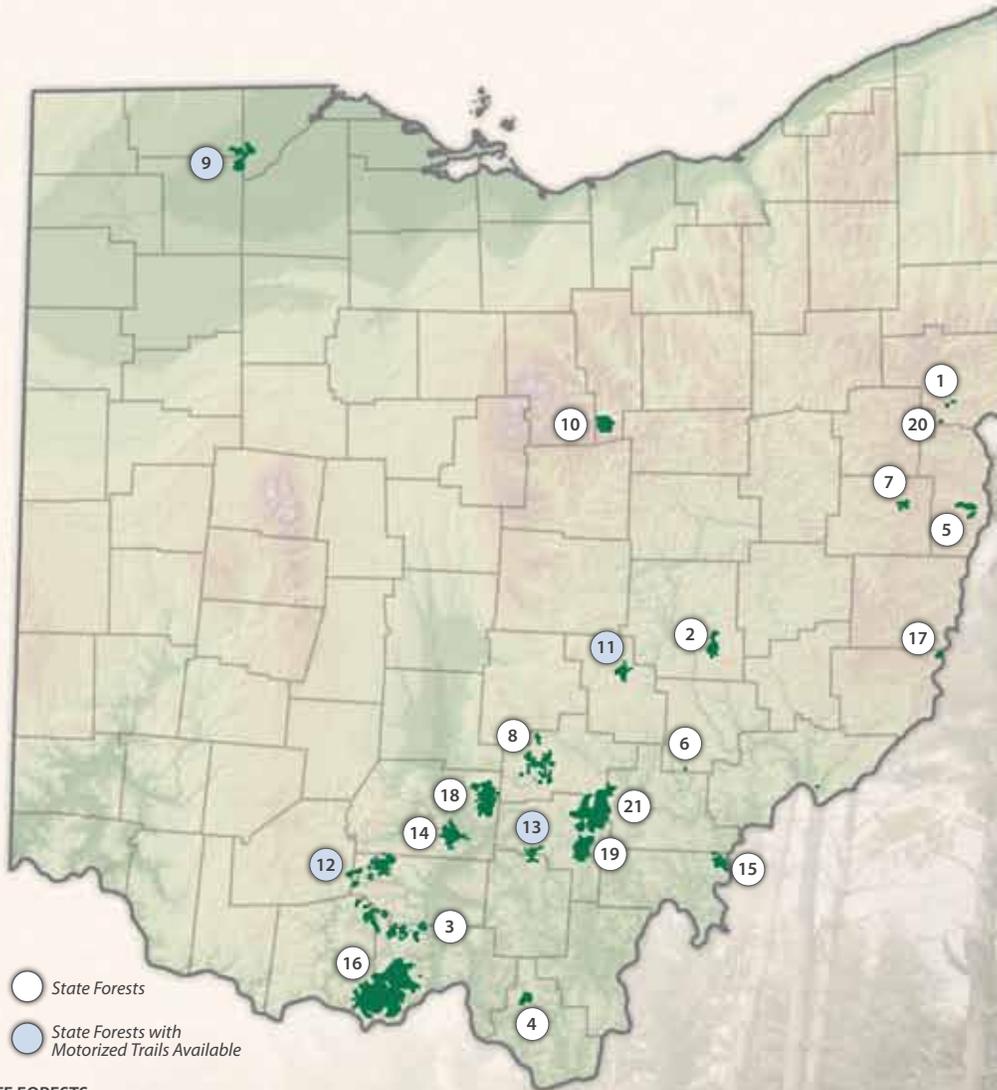
State forests support numerous outdoor recreation opportunities. Visitors to state forests can enjoy more than 350 miles of backcountry bridle trails, more than 80 miles of backpacking trails, 50 miles of mountain bike trails, many day-use hiking trails, as well as camping, hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing, and gathering. The Division of Forestry is the sole provider of designated motorized, trail-riding areas on state lands for off-road all-purpose vehicle (APV) and motorcycle riding. Maumee State Forest and Mohican-Memorial State Forest also have designated trails for snowmobiles. In addition, the Division of Forestry manages the only state designated wilderness area at Shawnee State Forest in southern Ohio.



◀ *Recreational opportunities for hiking, backpacking, camping, horseback riding, and APV and snowmobile access are available at many state forests*



FIGURE 8: OHIO STATE FORESTS



STATE FORESTS

- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Beaver Creek SF | 12. Pike SF |
| 2. Blue Rock SF | 13. Richland Furnace SF |
| 3. Brush Creek SF | 14. Scioto Trail SF |
| 4. Dean SF | 15. Shade River SF |
| 5. Fernwood SF | 16. Shawnee SF |
| 6. Gifford SF | 17. Sunfish Creek SF |
| 7. Harrison SF | 18. Tar Hollow SF |
| 8. Hocking SF | 19. Vinton Furnace SF |
| 9. Maumee SF | 20. Yellow Creek SF |
| 10. Mohican-Memorial SF | 21. Zaleski SF |
| 11. Perry SF | |

Division of Wildlife

ODNR's Division of Wildlife is responsible for the protection, propagation, conservation, and management of Ohio's fish and wildlife resources. The division manages or cooperates in managing more than three-quarters of a million acres of diverse wildlife lands throughout the state, plus more than 2.25 million acres of water (See Figure 9). The division implements numerous programs to improve wildlife diversity and human enjoyment of wildlife resources, including a nongame and endangered species program, enforcement of Ohio's wildlife laws and regulations, and hunter safety, trapper education and public information programs.

The Wildlife Management Section conducts research, sets harvest limits, issues hunting licenses to provide control of consumptive wildlife use, and implements programs for habitat manipulation, hunting and species management. The section also offers habitat management assistance to private landowners,

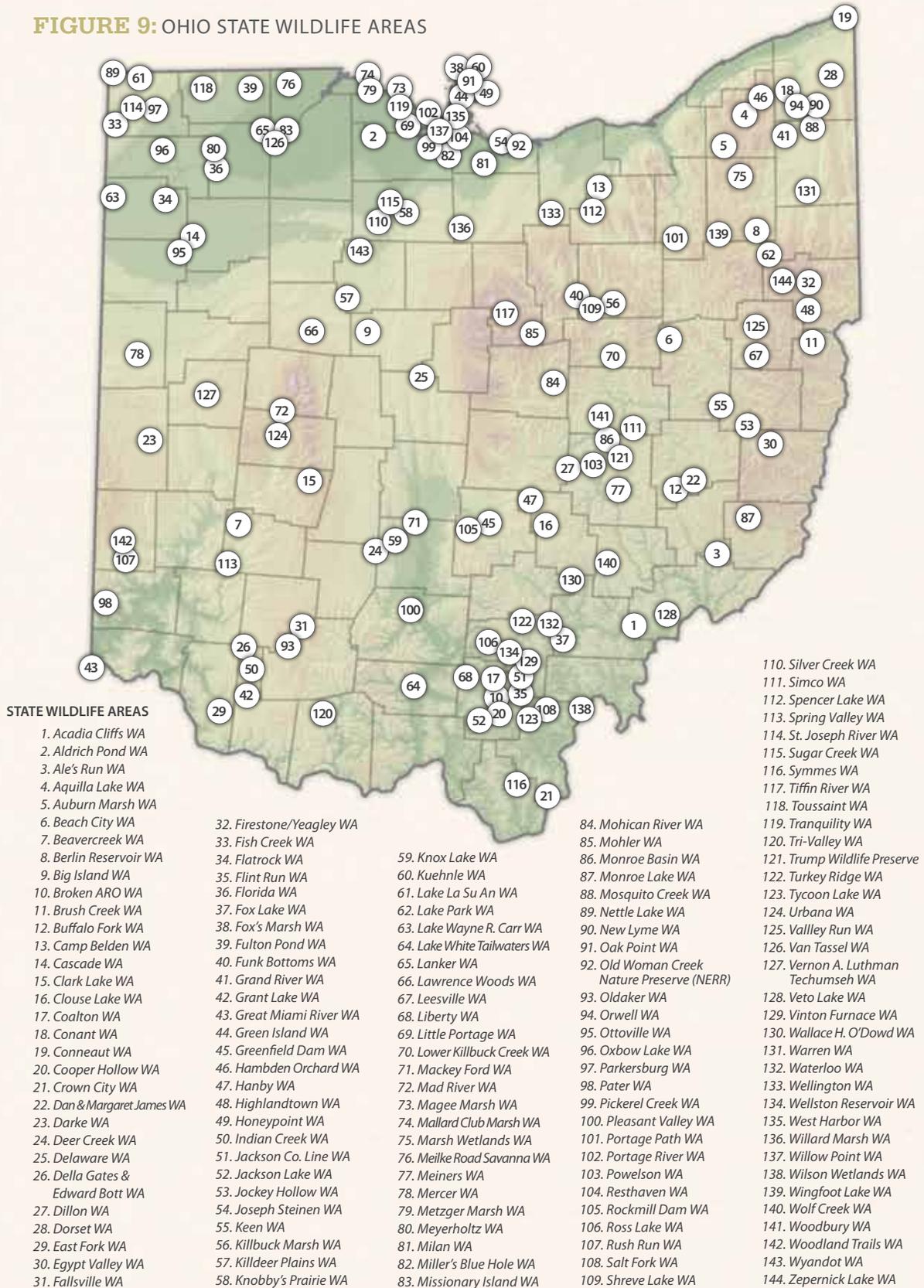
and helps control hunting pressure and trespass problems on private lands available for hunting.

The Fish Management Section is responsible for the fisheries of Ohio's inland water areas, 61,500 miles of streams and 2,290,000 acres of Lake Erie. The section conducts research, monitors fish populations, develops programs to eliminate undesirable species, and operates hatcheries in order to stock many of Ohio's lakes and streams with a variety of game fish species. Water area management programs include improvement of spawning habitat, installation of fish attractors, and the review of newly designed reservoirs to ensure their suitability for fish management. In addition, the section maintains angler use facilities at access areas, and offers public education.

◀ *Ohio is home to a diverse wildlife population and open to a variety of wildlife-based activities including hunting and fishing*



FIGURE 9: OHIO STATE WILDLIFE AREAS



Division of Natural Areas & Preserves

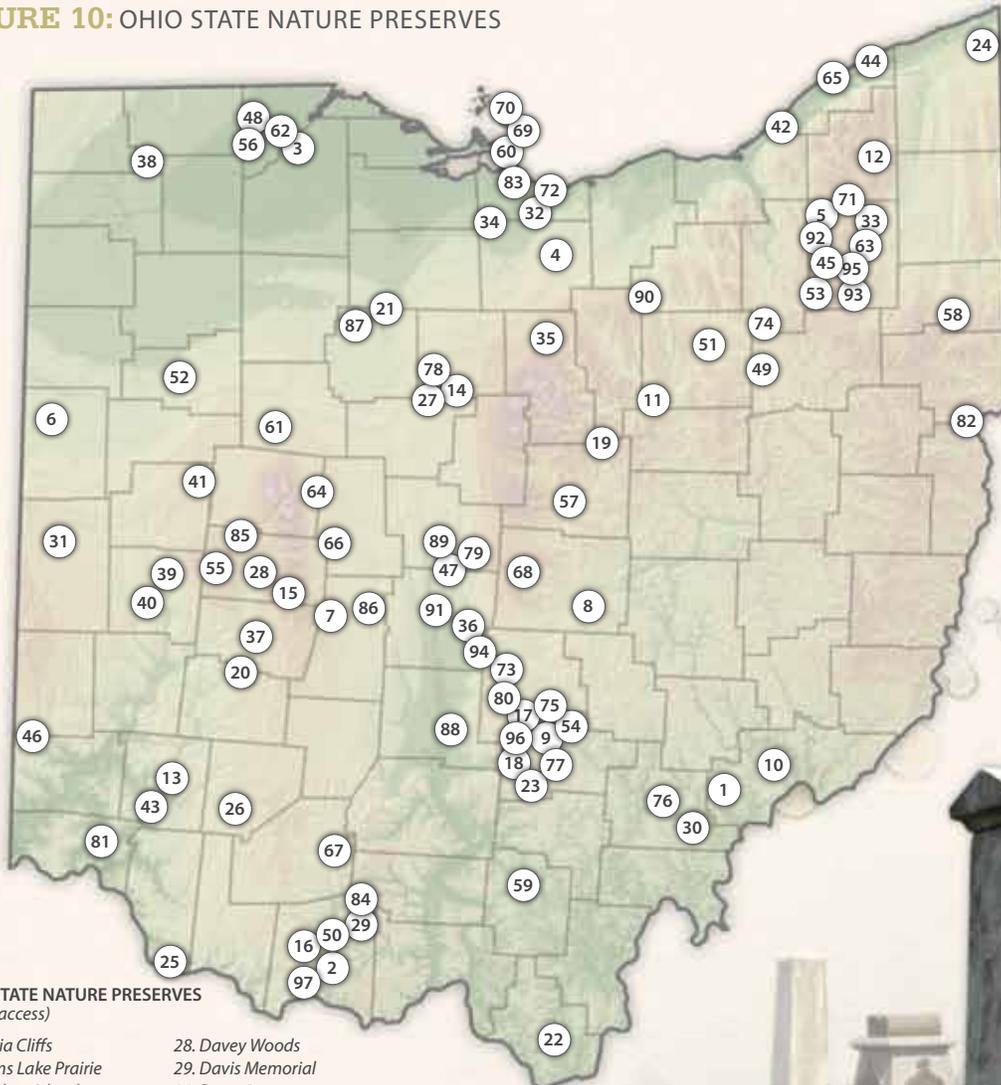
ODNR's Division of Natural Areas & Preserves is authorized to acquire, dedicate and accept donations of public and privately owned lands as nature preserves. The division administers a statewide system of 136 nature preserves encompassing more than 28,000 acres of land, and assists with management of additional acreage owned by other public and private landholders (See Figure 10). Preserves vary in size from less than an acre to thousands of acres set aside because of their ecological or geological significance. Preserves are best suited for research, education and low-impact activities, such as nature study, photography, hiking and bird watching.

Currently, 97 preserves are open to the public, while 42 preserves that are fragile sites not suited to general use are restricted to visitation by permit only. A combination of monitoring and management helps ensure the preservation of the features for which preserves are established. The division coordinates an array of statewide research, inventorying, and ecological management projects such as prescribed burning, manual cutting, and removal of non-native species. Visitors to Ohio's state nature preserves will find a variety of facilities to enhance their visit. Trail systems, boardwalks, observation decks, benches, bridges and staircases enable visitors to see unique environments while protecting the fragile plant and natural communities found within preserves.

State Nature Preserves like Smith and Bigelow pioneer cemeteries provide opportunities to view rare plant species like Salmon royal catchfly. ▶



FIGURE 10: OHIO STATE NATURE PRESERVES



OHIO STATE NATURE PRESERVES
(public access)

- | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Acadia Cliffs | 28. Davey Woods | 55. Kiser Lake Wetlands | 79. Seymour Woods |
| 2. Adams Lake Prairie | 29. Davis Memorial | 56. Kitty Todd | 80. Shallenberger |
| 3. Audubon Islands | 30. Desonier | 57. Knox Woods | 81. Sharon Woods Gorge |
| 4. Augusta-Anne Olsen | 31. Drew Woods | 58. Kyle Woods | 82. Sheepskin Hollow |
| 5. Aurora Sanctuary | 32. Dupont Marsh | 59. Lake Katherine | 83. Sheldon Marsh |
| 6. Baker Woods | 33. Eagle Creek | 60. Lakeside Daisy | 84. Shoemaker |
| 7. Bigelow Cemetery | 34. Erie Sand Barrens | 61. Lawrence Woods | 85. Sieuenthaler Esker |
| 8. Blackhand Gorge | 35. Fowler Woods | 62. Lou Campbell | 86. Smith Cemetery |
| 9. Boch Hollow | 36. Gahanna Woods | 63. Marsh Wetlands | 87. Springville Marsh |
| 10. Boord | 37. Gallagher Fen | 64. McCracken Fen | 88. Stage's Pond |
| 11. Brown's Lake Bog | 38. Goll Woods | 65. Mentor Marsh | 89. Stratford Woods |
| 12. Burton Wetlands | 39. Goode Prairie | 66. Milford Prairie | 90. Swamp Cottonwood |
| 13. Caesar Creek Gorge | 40. Greenville Falls | 67. Miller Sanctuary | 91. Thomas |
| 14. Carmean Woods | 41. Gross Woods | 68. Morris Woods | 92. Tinkers Creek |
| 15. Cedar Bog | 42. Hach Otis | 69. North Pond | 93. Triangle Lake Bog |
| 16. Chapparral | 43. Halls Creek Woods | 70. North Shore Alvar | 94. Tucker |
| 17. Christmas Rocks | 44. Headlands Dunes | 71. Novak | 95. Tummonds |
| 18. Clear Creek | 45. Herrick Fen | 72. Old Woman Creek | 96. Wahkeena |
| 19. Clear Fork George | 46. Hueston Woods | 73. Pickerington Ponds | 97. Whipple |
| 20. Clifton Gorge | 47. Hutchins | 74. Portage Lakes Wetlands | |
| 21. Collier | 48. Irwin Prairie | 75. Rhododendron Cove | |
| 22. Compass Plant Prairie | 49. Jackson Bog | 76. Riddle | |
| 23. Conkles Hollow | 50. Johnson Ridge | 77. Rockbridge | |
| 24. Conneaut Swamp | 51. Johnson Woods | 78. Sears Woods | |
| 25. Crooked Run | 52. Kendrick Woods | | |
| 26. Culberson | 53. Kent Bog | | |
| 27. Daughmer Bur Oak | 54. Kessler Swamp | | |



Division of Watercraft

ODNR's Division of Watercraft supports recreational boating opportunities through programs, services, law enforcement and facilities for a safe boating experience. The division has 11 field offices with an additional five remote offices to carry out programs on a local level. Mandated responsibilities include administering the Ohio Boating Safety Program, watercraft registration and titling program, aids to navigation on certain waters, litter and sanitation programs for watercraft, recreational boating access, and management and preservation of state scenic rivers. More than 435,000 registered boats in Ohio ranked the state ninth in the nation in 2012.

The Division of Watercraft also is responsible for administration of the Waterways Safety Fund which provides monies for construction or improvement of public facilities for recreational boating on the state's navigable waters. The fund also enables the state to obtain federal matching funds for the establishment of harbors of refuge. The sources of funds for the Waterways Safety Fund are the Ohio Marine Fuel Tax and the fees collected by the Division of Watercraft for boating registration.

In addition to providing funds for boating capital improvements, the Waterways Safety Fund is used to provide navigational aids, the equipping and patrolling of waterways, educational grants to political subdivisions and to fund the dredging of state park lakes.

The Division of Watercraft administers several additional grant programs to assist Ohio's boaters. They include the Boating Infrastructure Grant Program, providing transient mooring facilities; the Recreational Harbor Evaluation Program, to dredge near public boating facilities; and the Clean Vessel Act Grant Program, providing construction and renovation of waste reception facilities for recreational vessels.

In the past several years the division has focused a heightened emphasis on homeland security. Reservoirs, bridges, security zones, restricted areas near dams, power plants and commercial port operations areas (especially those that involve military, cruise line, or petroleum facilities) are patrolled and monitored for anything that looks suspicious or out of the ordinary.

The Scenic Rivers Act (Ohio Revised Code Section 1547.81) provides for the protection of Ohio's remaining high-quality streams that hold exceptional water conservation, scenic, historic, fish and wildlife, or outdoor recreation value. To date, segments of 14 river systems have been designated under the act. Of these, Conneaut Creek, Grand River and Little Beaver Creek are designated wild and scenic. The Ashtabula River, Chagrin River, Big and Little Darby Creeks, Kokosing River, Little Miami River, Mohican River, Olentangy River, Sandusky River, and Upper Cuyahoga River have received the state scenic river designation. The Maumee River, along with the Stillwater River and Greenville Creek system are designated scenic and recreational. (See Figure 11).

Recreational boating opportunities can be found along many Ohio lakes and waterways including scenic rivers like the Kokosing River and Big Darby Creek.

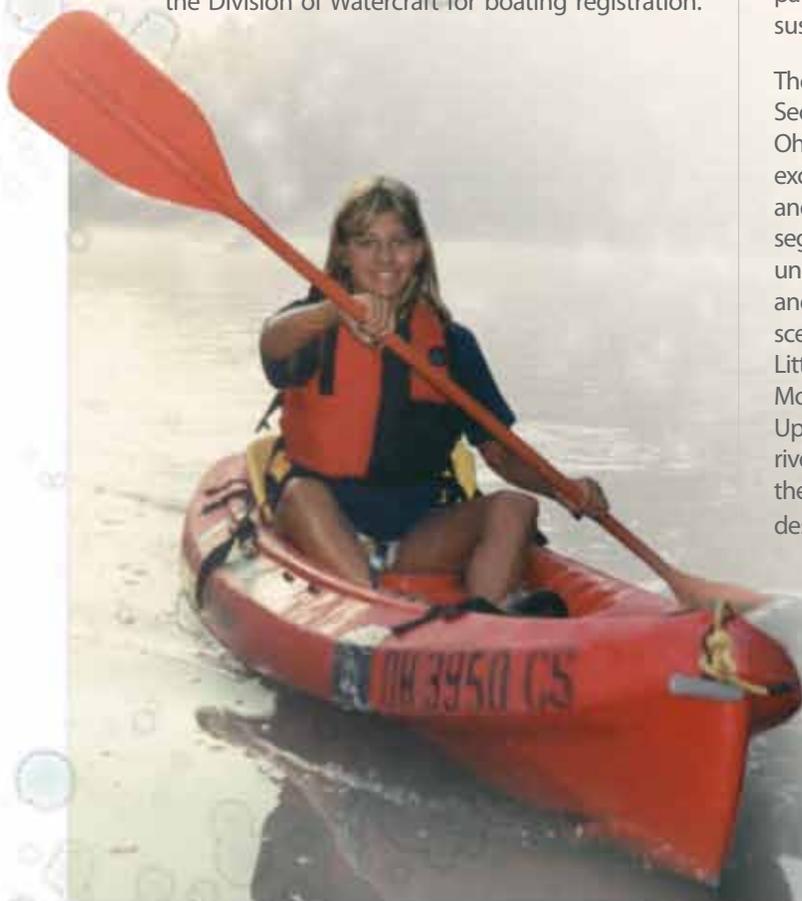
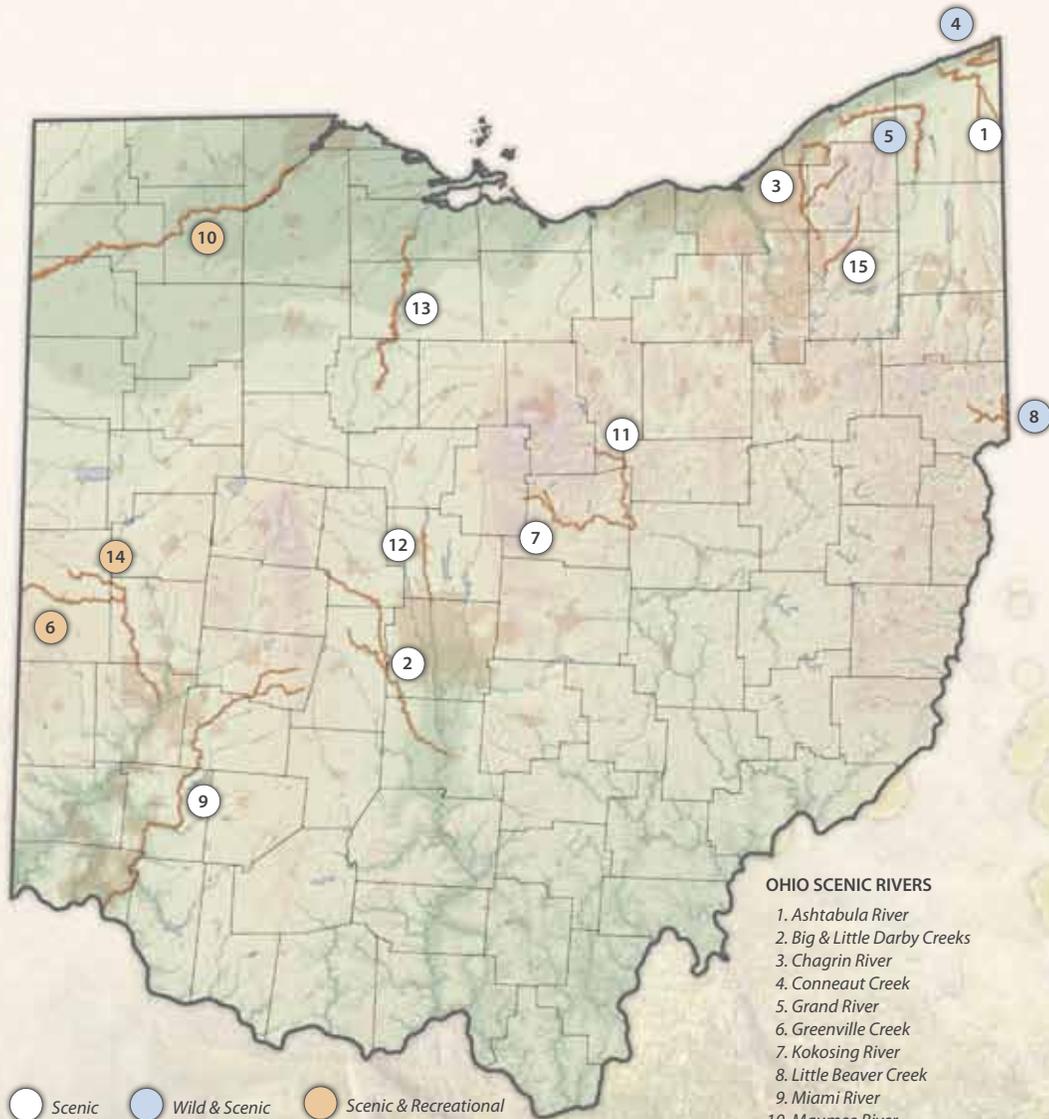


FIGURE 11: OHIO STATE SCENIC RIVERS



OHIO SCENIC RIVERS

1. Ashtabula River
2. Big & Little Darby Creeks
3. Chagrin River
4. Conneaut Creek
5. Grand River
6. Greenville Creek
7. Kokosing River
8. Little Beaver Creek
9. Miami River
10. Maumee River
11. Mohican River
12. Olentangy River
13. Sandusky River
14. Stillwater River
15. Upper Cuyahoga River

Office of Real Estate

ODNR's Office of Real Estate provides grants administration, environmental review coordination, and real estate functions on behalf of ODNR. While the office does not directly provide outdoor recreation opportunities, it is responsible for the administration of various recreation acquisition and development grant programs. These grant programs include the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), as well as the Ohio NatureWorks program and the Clean Ohio Trails Fund.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act provides up to 50% reimbursement assistance to the states and their political subdivisions (townships, joint recreation districts, municipalities, park districts, counties, and conservancy districts), for acquiring and/or developing public outdoor recreation areas. The NatureWorks program provides up to 75% reimbursement assistance to eligible political subdivisions (townships, joint recreation districts, municipalities, park districts, counties and conservancy districts), for acquiring and/or developing public recreation areas.

In consultation with the State Recreational Trails Advisory Board, the RTP provides up to 80% of eligible project costs for maintenance and restoration of existing trails, development/rehabilitation of trailside/trailhead facilities, purchase/lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment, construction of new trails, and acquisition of easements or property for trails.

The Office of Real Estate administers the Clean Ohio Trails Fund grant program in consultation with the Clean Ohio Trails Fund Advisory Board. The fund provides up to 75% of eligible project costs for the construction and development of recreational trails, and the purchase of land or interests in land for recreational trails.

Canal Lands

Ohio's historic canals, including the Ohio & Erie Canal in eastern Ohio and the Miami & Erie Canal in western Ohio, bisect the state and impact multiple jurisdictions. The watered section of the Miami & Erie Canal is approximately 57 miles from Delphos south to Piqua. The watered section of the Ohio & Erie Canal is 10 miles from downtown Akron south to Barberton. The remaining section along the Ohio & Erie Canal is part of the federally designated Ohio & Erie Canal National Heritage Corridor from Cleveland to New Philadelphia.

Canal lands are owned by many entities, including ODNR. The watered sections, associated feeder reservoirs and former towpaths provide numerous opportunities for recreational users. Local park districts and communities have successfully partnered with ODNR for the preservation and development of canal lands.

Office of Coastal Management

ODNR's Office of Coastal Management works to develop, restore, enhance and ensure the wise use of the land and water resources of Ohio's north-coast area. Special attention is given to natural, cultural, historic and aesthetic values; agricultural, recreational, energy and economic needs; and national interests. To help achieve these goals, the office annually provides approximately \$1 million in grants for the preservation and protection of the coastal region. The goal of these grants is to enable communities to plan and implement actions that will enhance public access to Lake Erie, mitigate hazards, protect and restore natural resources, foster sustainable coastal development and increase recreational opportunities. Grants are awarded to local governments, area-wide agencies (including state, county and regional planning agencies),

colleges, universities, school districts, park and conservancy districts, port authorities and non-profit organizations.

An example of a project that has benefited from a Coastal Management Assistance Grant is the City of Euclid Fishing Pier. This 2011 award supported the replacement of an existing pier built in the 1970s. The new pier is approximately 240 feet long, meets ADA requirements, and is designed to better accommodate fishing and public access. This project is the first phase of implementation of the Euclid Waterfront Improvements plan adopted by the City in 2009.

Over a dozen communities have benefited from recreation-related public access projects funded through Coastal Management Assistance Grants. Additionally, numerous communities and groups have been awarded grants for feasibility studies to increase public access and recreation opportunities along Lake Erie. The Office of Coastal Management also administers the federal Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program, which is used by

local public entities to acquire ecologically significant coastal property for protection and the enhancement of public access to Lake Erie and lands within its watershed.

Ohio Historical Society

The Ohio Historical Society (OHS), one of the largest statewide historical organizations in the United States, manages and maintains an extensive system of state historical, archeological and natural history sites that provide numerous opportunities for Ohioans to enjoy the cultural and historic heritage of the state. (See www.ohiohistory.org for more information). The 60 sites in this system encompassing more than 3,600 acres are some of the most significant tourist attractions in the state. (See Figure 12).

To help preserve state historic places, the OHS is authorized under Section 149.3 of the Ohio Revised Code to provide advisory and technical assistance in the preservation and restoration of historic and archeological sites; to devise uniform criteria for the designation of historical and archeological sites and to assist in the application of the criteria; to inventory significant designated

Visitors take a trip along remnants ►
of the Ohio & Erie Canal



and undesignated sites; keep a registry of all designated sites within the state; and to contract with owners to control the use of designated property. The Ohio Historic Preservation Office housed within the OHS provides a comprehensive on-line mapping system of Ohio's cultural resources that includes locations of National Register of Historic Places sites, National Register Historic Districts, the Ohio Historic Inventory, the Ohio Archaeological Inventory and data on previously surveyed areas.

The Ohio Historic Preservation Office also administers the state's responsibilities under the National Historic Preservation Act. Each year, 10% of the annual matching grant awarded through the National Park Service for Ohio Historic Preservation Office operations is set aside for 60/40 matching subgrants to local governments that participate in the CLG program. These program grants may be used for identifying and recording historic properties in the community; development of design guidelines and preservation plans; public outreach including website development and workshops for homeowners and contractors; collaborative projects among CLGs addressing common preservation issues; training for commission members and staff; nominations to the National Register of Historic Places and feasibility studies for reuse of listed or eligible buildings; rehabilitation or restoration projects for National

Register-listed properties, or development of drawings and specifications for rehabilitation; and establishment of re-grant programs for properties in the National Register historic district. Matching share funds may be from state funds, city or county appropriations, private funds of an organization or individual, donated equipment and volunteer services. Community Development Block Grant funds also may be used as match under this program. The law defines historic preservation to include the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects.

The History Fund, a new grant program introduced in 2011, supports local history, pre-history and historic preservation projects. This grant program is made possible entirely by donations of tax refunds that Ohioans make to the OHS through the tax check-off box on state income tax returns. Eligible applicants include units of local government, public libraries, educational institutions and Ohio-based nonprofit organizations in good standing. Private individuals, for-profit businesses and entities, and the OHS are not eligible for the grants, although organizations operating OHS sites under site management agreements are eligible to apply under their own names. Functions and fiscal responsibilities assigned to OHS under site management agreements, however, are not eligible for grants from the History Fund.



Eligible projects fall into one of three grant categories: bricks & mortar, organizational development or programs & collections. History Fund grants are competitive and require matching funds, goods and/or services from recipients. Experts from history-related organizations across Ohio review the applications and make grant recommendations. The deadline for applications is subject to change, but is generally in September. Grant awards are announced at the OHS Statehood Day legislative advocacy event in late February or early March the following year. The History Fund application process is entirely online, and the grant application and guidelines are available at www.ohiohistory.org/historyfund.

The OHS is also charged with the responsibility to encourage and promote the organization and development of county and local historical societies. The Society's Local History Office (LHO) provides technical assistance to more than 800 local historical organizations and public partners in cooperation with the Ohio Local History Alliance. The LHO collaborates with local communities in the marking of sites of historical and archeological significance by administering the Ohio Historical Markers program. The LHO also administers the grant-supported Ohio History Service AmeriCorps Program and coordinates the state's commemoration of 150th anniversary of the Civil War (2011-2015). (See www.ohiocivilwar150.org).

FIGURE 12: OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUMS & HISTORIC SITES



Ohio Development Services Agency

The Ohio Development Services Agency offers programs that help Ohio's most vulnerable citizens and supports community development activities. When public resources are used, the Development Services Agency will ensure that individuals, businesses and communities fulfill their promises of job creation, capital investment or community development and enrichment. The agency is committed to continuous improvement and providing exceptional customer service through its programs and services.

One of the missions of the Development Services Agency is the promotion of Ohio's travel and tourism industry. TourismOhio offers a variety of services to help promote businesses, events and attractions in Ohio, including outdoor recreation. In addition to providing a database and website that serves as a clearinghouse for recreation opportunities and tourist attractions across the

state, TourismOhio oversees the toll free tourism hotline, 1-800-BUCKEYE. TourismOhio supports the tourism industry in Ohio through marketing, advertising and public relations partnership opportunities and research. The office is currently working to develop a new strategic marketing plan with the help of an experienced advisory board, to better promote Ohio's many travel experiences.

All business sectors of the Ohio economy benefit from tourism activity directly or indirectly. Visitor spending of \$26.3 billion generated \$40 billion in total business sales in 2011 as tourism dollars flowed through the Ohio economy. Including indirect and induced impacts, tourism in Ohio generated \$2.7 billion in state and local taxes and \$2.6 billion in federal taxes last year. Tourism in Ohio sustains 440,000 jobs, or 8.7% of total employment in Ohio, with associated income of \$10.5 billion for Ohioans.

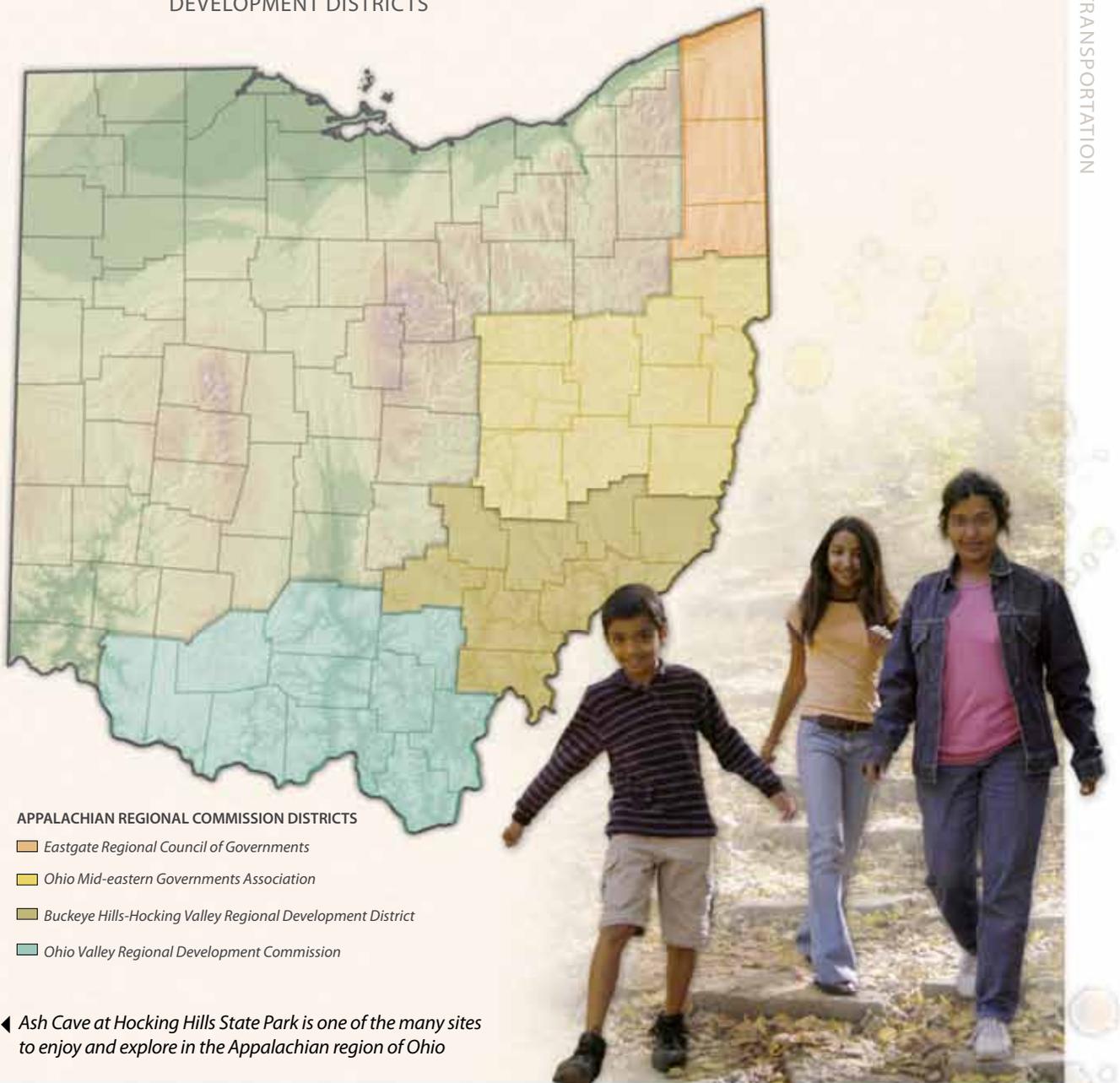


The Governor's Office of Appalachia serves as an advocate for the 32-county Appalachian region of Ohio and partners with organizations, agencies, and individuals to improve the quality of life for all citizens living in the region. (See Figure 13). The Governor's Office of Appalachia also works on behalf of the Appalachian Regional Commission in Washington, D.C. to promote the region's assets and to support local, regional, state and federal initiatives.

Ohio Department of Transportation

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) has various responsibilities for maintenance operations and capital improvement activities on Ohio's highway system. Ohio has the tenth largest roadway system in the United States and maintains the fifth largest traffic volume, fourth largest truck traffic volume and second largest bridge inventory in the nation. Ohio

FIGURE 13: APPALACHIAN REGIONAL COMMISSION LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS



also ranks in the top 10 nationally for transit ridership, number of transit miles traveled and number of transit vehicles operating in the state. Additionally, Ohio has 164 airports, nearly 3,700 miles of bikeways and 5,800 miles of railroad tracks with nearly 6,400 railroad crossings.

Ohio is proud to offer diverse opportunities for travel and over the years, ODOT has funded many non-motorized projects. The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) was authorized under Section 1122 of the federal "Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)" and is codified at 23 U.S.C. sections 213(b), and 101(a)(29). Section 1122 of MAP-21 provides for the reservation of funds apportioned to a state under section 104(b) of title 23 to carry out the TAP. Per 23 U.S.C. 213(a), the national total reserved for the TAP is equal to 2% of the total amount authorized from the Highway Account of the Highway Trust Fund for Federal-aid highways each fiscal year.

The TAP provides a yearly funding cycle for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, community improvement activities, and environmental mitigation; recreational trail program projects; and safe routes to school projects. Information on ODOT's TAP program can be found at: www.dot.state.oh.us/Divisions/Planning/LocalPrograms/Pages/TransportationAlternatives.aspx.

ODOT also administers Ohio's Scenic Byway Program. The intent of this program is to preserve, enhance and protect the state's intrinsic resources for visitors and residents of the state by designation of highway, roads and streets as scenic byway corridors. Through partnerships with communities, organizations and government agencies efforts are coordinated to promote travel, recreation and to enhance and provide stewardship for the features that distinguish the designated byways. These collaborative efforts help establish a balance between conservation and land use that heightens the experience of traveling designated byways while improving the communities quality of life. Ohio currently offers 27 Scenic Byways, five of which are nationally designated (See Figure 14). Additional byway information can be found at: www.dot.state.oh.us/OhioByways/Pages/Program.aspx.



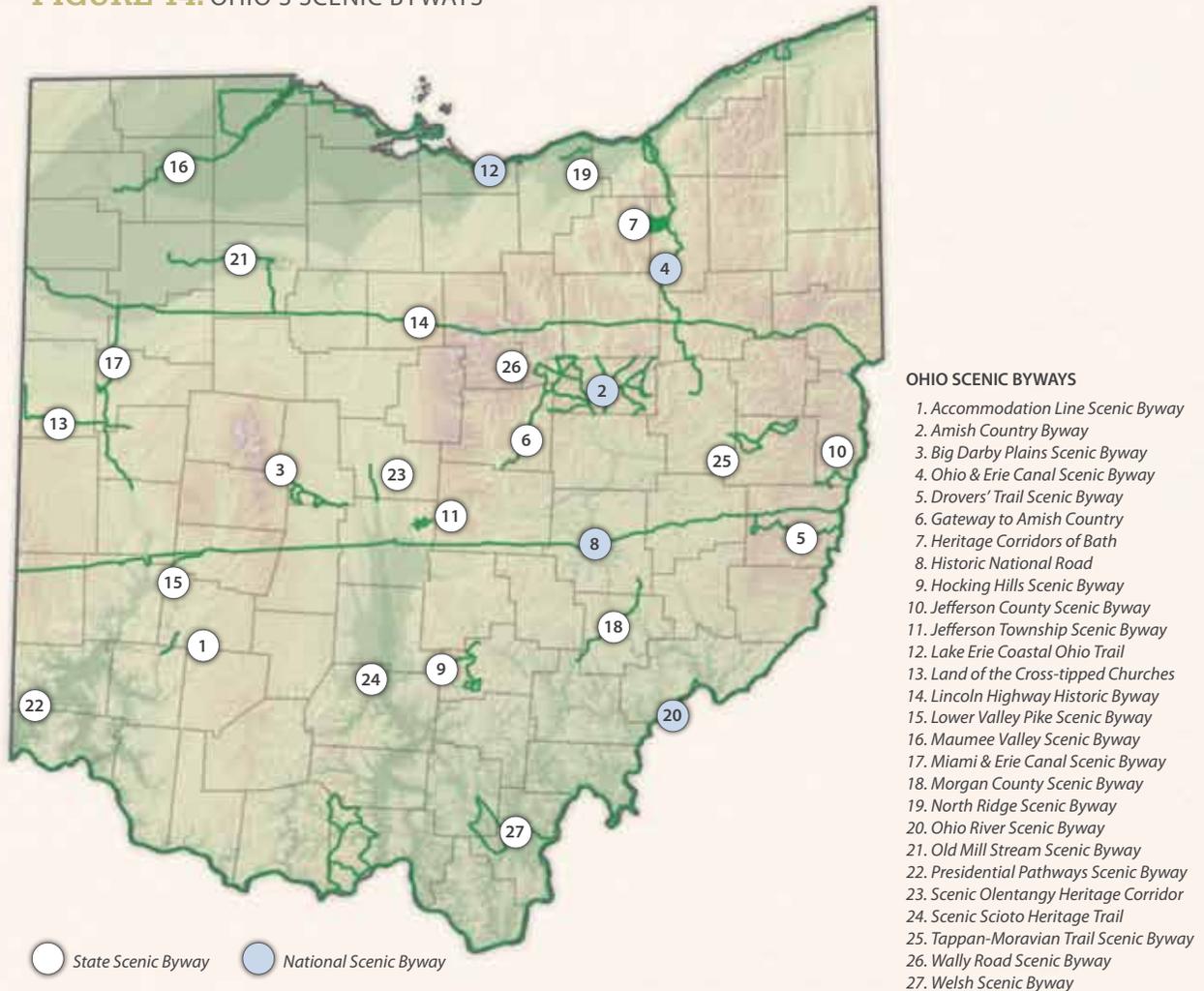
◀ *Shawnee State Park is just one of numerous stops along the Ohio River Scenic Byway.*

Ohio Public Works Commission

The Ohio Public Works Commission administers the Green Space Conservation Program which is one of the four Clean Ohio Fund programs. Funds are available for political subdivisions and nonprofit organizations to acquire open spaces and protect and enhance riparian corridors. Grant recipients agree to maintain the properties in perpetuity so that they can be enjoyed and cherished for generations to come.

To apply for Clean Ohio Conservation funds the applicant must work through its local Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC). There are 19 NRACs that are responsible for approving projects to send to the commission. NRACs are comprised of 11 members that consist of a diverse group, including local district public works integrating committee members, soil and water conservation districts, local governments,

FIGURE 14: OHIO'S SCENIC BYWAYS



environmental groups, parks, agriculture, and business. Each NRAC evaluates and scores applications using a locally developed methodology, approved by the Public Works Commission, based on criteria listed in Chapter 164 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Special emphasis is given to projects that:

- Protect habitat for rare, threatened or endangered species
- Preserve high quality wetlands and other scarce natural resources
- Preserve streamside forests, natural stream channels, functioning floodplains and other natural features of Ohio's waterways
- Support comprehensive open space planning
- Secure easements to protect stream corridors, which may be planted with trees or vegetation to help reduce erosion and fertilizer/pesticide runoff
- Enhance eco-tourism and economic development related to outdoor recreation in economically challenged areas
- Provide pedestrian or bicycle passageways between natural areas and preserves
- Reduce or eliminate nonnative, invasive plant and animal species
- Provide safe areas for fishing, hunting and trapping in a manner that provides a balanced ecosystem

After evaluating and scoring the projects, each NRAC creates a list of high priority projects that are submitted to the Ohio Public Works Commission to be funded. District allocations are based on the decennial U.S. census. The amount available statewide depends on the appropriation authority granted by the Ohio General Assembly.

SPECIAL DISTRICT RESOURCES

Conservancy Districts

Conservancy Districts are independent political subdivisions of the State of Ohio governed by Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Chapter 6101. Purposes for which conservancy districts are formed include flood protection, regulating stream channels, collecting and processing wastewater, providing for irrigation, arresting erosion, and providing water supplies, as well as offering recreational resources. Ohio Revised Code Section 6101.25 describes how conservancy districts may provide improvements and services to recreation.

Of the 57 conservancy districts created since 1915, 20 are currently active. The Miami and Muskingum conservancy districts are the major recreation-providing conservancy districts serving regional needs.

The Miami Valley in southwest Ohio features a nearly 300-mile network of paved, separate, shared-use trail. A sizeable portion of the trail in the Great Miami River Watershed is on property the Miami Conservancy District (MCD) maintains for flood protection purposes. The district has partnered with local communities and park districts, resulting in dozens of miles of connected trail in five adjoining counties. The district itself maintains almost half of the Great Miami River Bikeway, connecting the cities MCD protects from flooding: Piqua, Troy, Tipp City, Dayton, Moraine, West Carrollton, Miamisburg, and Franklin, Middletown and Hamilton. The Mad River, Stillwater River, and Wolf Creek bikeways are additional spokes of the trail network that involve MCD maintenance and/or land stewardship. Local trails also mesh with regional trail systems, including the North Country Trail and the Buckeye Trail. The Buckeye Trail's Troy section begins within MCD's Huffman Dam retarding basin and ends north of Piqua. Trail users appreciate 50 miles of well-maintained off-road trail.

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) is the largest conservancy district in Ohio, encompassing 54,000 acres of land and water in Eastern Ohio. The MWCD was organized in 1933 to develop and implement a plan to reduce flooding and conserve water for beneficial public uses in the Muskingum River Watershed, the largest wholly contained watershed in Ohio. Since their construction, the 16 reservoirs and dams in the MWCD region have been credited for saving an estimated \$10.7 billion worth of potential property damage from flooding, as well as providing popular outdoor recreational opportunities

that bolster the region's economy. A significant portion of the reservoirs are managed by the MWCD and the dams are managed for flood-risk management by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The MWCD offers free public boat launch ramps at 10 lakes, thousands of campsites as well as various cabin styles, five lake parks with swimming beaches and special events. The MWCD recently completed a master plan for its recreational facilities that will include enhancements and upgrades driven by customer input and demand.

Local and regional trail systems including the Great Miami Bikeway, North Country Trail, and Buckeye Trail connect communities in the state providing hundreds of miles of trails for recreation



Park Districts

Ohio's park districts have a cooperative relationship with other outdoor recreation agencies in the state. Ohio currently has more than 60 park districts (established under Chapter 1545 of the Ohio Revised Code) that manage more than 100,000 acres of land and water. (See Tables 6 and 7). Besides contributing to the total amount of open space preserved, park districts supplement the services provided by city park and recreation agencies and those of state and federal governments by providing large expanses of open space closer to cities than most state and federal lands. Recreation opportunities provided by park districts vary according to regional needs and individual park district philosophy, but virtually all park districts offer a variety of recreation opportunities.

Educating the public about Ohio's natural environment is an important goal of Ohio's park districts. Most park districts have outdoor

education and nature interpretation programs available to the public. Nature centers, staffed by trained naturalists, and offering a variety of programs such as nature walks and science workshops are typical of the educational programs offered by park districts.

Many park district areas were established in semi-rural locations a few decades ago and are now surrounded by housing, industry and shopping centers, but continue to serve as natural area parks. As Ohio continues to urbanize, more open space is needed to provide recreation opportunities close to centers of population. A growing demand for activities related to nature and open space has already placed increased pressure on existing parks. The future will hold major challenges for Ohio's park districts as they pursue their goals of preserving our natural heritage while providing outdoor recreation and educational opportunities for Ohioans.

TABLE 6: OHIO TOWNSHIP PARK DISTRICTS

PARK DISTRICT	
1.	Anderson Township Park District
2.	Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Park District
3.	Boardman Township Park District
4.	Centerville-Washington Park District

◀ *Outdoor education and nature interpretation programs play an important role in park districts' efforts to educate the public about Ohio's natural environment*



TABLE 7: COUNTY PARK DISTRICTS IN OHIO

PARK DISTRICT	
1.	Ashland County Park District
2.	Ashtabula County Metro Parks
3.	Metro Parks of Butler County
4.	Carroll County Park District
5.	Clark County Park District
6.	Clermont County Park District
7.	Cleveland Metroparks
8.	Clinton County Park District
9.	Columbiana County Park District
10.	Columbus & Franklin County Metroparks
11.	Coshocton Park District
12.	Crawford Park District
13.	Darke County Park District
14.	Defiance County Park District
15.	Preservation Parks of Delaware County
16.	Erie Metroparks
17.	Fairfield County Parks
18.	Five Rivers Metroparks
19.	Friendship Park District
20.	Geauga Park District
21.	Greene County Parks & Trails
22.	Guernsey County Park District
23.	Great Parks of Hamilton County
24.	Hancock Park District
25.	Hardin County Veterans Memorial Park
26.	Henry County Park District
27.	Heritage Trails Park District
28.	Holmes County Park District
29.	Huron County Park District
30.	Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District

PARK DISTRICT	
31.	Knox County Park District
32.	Lake Metroparks
33.	Licking Park District
34.	Lorain County Metroparks District
35.	Madison County Park District
36.	Marion County Park District
37.	Medina County Park District
38.	Meigs County Park District
39.	Miami County Park District
40.	Mill Creek Park District
41.	Monroe County Park District
42.	Muskingum Valley Park District
43.	The Olander Park System
44.	O. O. McIntyre Park District
45.	Paulding County Park District
46.	Pickaway County Park District
47.	Portage Park District
48.	Preble County Park District
49.	Richland County Park District
50.	Ross County Park District
51.	Sandusky County Park District
52.	Seneca County Park District
53.	Shelby County Park District
54.	Stark County Park District
55.	Metroparks Serving Summit County
56.	Metroparks of the Toledo Area
57.	Trumbull County Metropark District
58.	Van Wert County Park District
59.	Warren County Park District
60.	Wayne County Park District
61.	Wood County Park District

Information for tables six and seven provided by the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association

Joint Recreation Districts

Joint Recreation Districts are collaborations between neighboring entities to build recreation facilities such as trails, baseball fields, and playgrounds. Ohio Revised Code chapter 755 provides the legal framework for these districts, which qualifies them to receive governmental funds for the construction of recreational facilities. Bringing together and uniting participating communities, and in many cases, school districts, increases access to many available opportunities, thus making these districts very attractive (See Table 8).

Local Governments

Local government agencies provide the backbone of public recreation opportunities in Ohio. Cities, villages, counties, townships, and school districts all provide numerous recreation facilities and programs. Although there are often distinctive differences among these governments in their approach to providing recreation opportunities, the primary role of the local level of government is to provide close-to-home facilities for the numerous recreation needs of its citizens. Many municipalities in Ohio have comprehensive recreation delivery systems that provide a wide range of facilities and programs for their citizens. County and township governments can be expected to play a greater role in the provision of open space and recreation facilities and programs as more people move into rural areas and demand recreation services.

Private & Non-Profit Organizations

The private sector makes a significant contribution to the delivery of recreation services in Ohio. The private sector in Ohio manages recreation lands, conducts courses that teach recreation skills, provides concessions and other comfort services or amenities on many public lands, and produces the equipment that enables people to enjoy all kinds of recreation activities. Generally, although some variation and overlap does

occur, two broad groups are included in the category that manages recreation land: the private-for-profit enterprise and the non-profit or charitable organization.

Private-for-profit recreation enterprises in Ohio represent a large investment and make a major contribution to the state's recreation system. Specifically, this group provides many specialized recreation facilities and supportive services including campgrounds, ski areas, marinas, canoe liveries and golf courses. This group also provides numerous swimming pools, fishing lakes, riding stables and shooting preserves.

There also are a number of private recreation areas in Ohio that are controlled by industry, but available for public use. Of particular importance are the large land areas, primarily in southeastern Ohio, which are provided by power, timber and coal companies. These areas offer a variety of recreation opportunities including hunting, fishing, hiking, picnicking and camping.

Private, non-profit organizations in Ohio also play a major role in the state's recreation delivery system. User groups, charitable organizations, conservation/preservation groups, and quasi-public organizations can all be placed into this category. These organizations conduct a wide range of recreation related programs and activities. Some examples of programs and activities that non-profit organizations participate in include land acquisition and preservation, lobbying, advocacy, interpretive education, skill training and safety, planning, coordination, activity information, and financial and technical assistance programs. Zoos and wildlife preserves are other examples of non-profit recreation/conservation agencies in Ohio. The Wilds, for example, is located on nearly 10,000 acres in southeastern Ohio and provides educational and interpretive services as well as wildlife viewing and picnicking areas

since opening in 1991. Other significant non-profit agencies operating in Ohio include Boy and Girl Scouts of America. They both operate a number of camps that provide different types of outdoor recreation experiences.

Another example of a not-for profit recreation organization is Recreation Unlimited, located on 165 acres in Delaware County. This organization's primary role is to serve physically and mentally challenged individuals. In addition to providing recreation for this specific group, Recreation Unlimited frequently provides its services to others not related to the intended group.

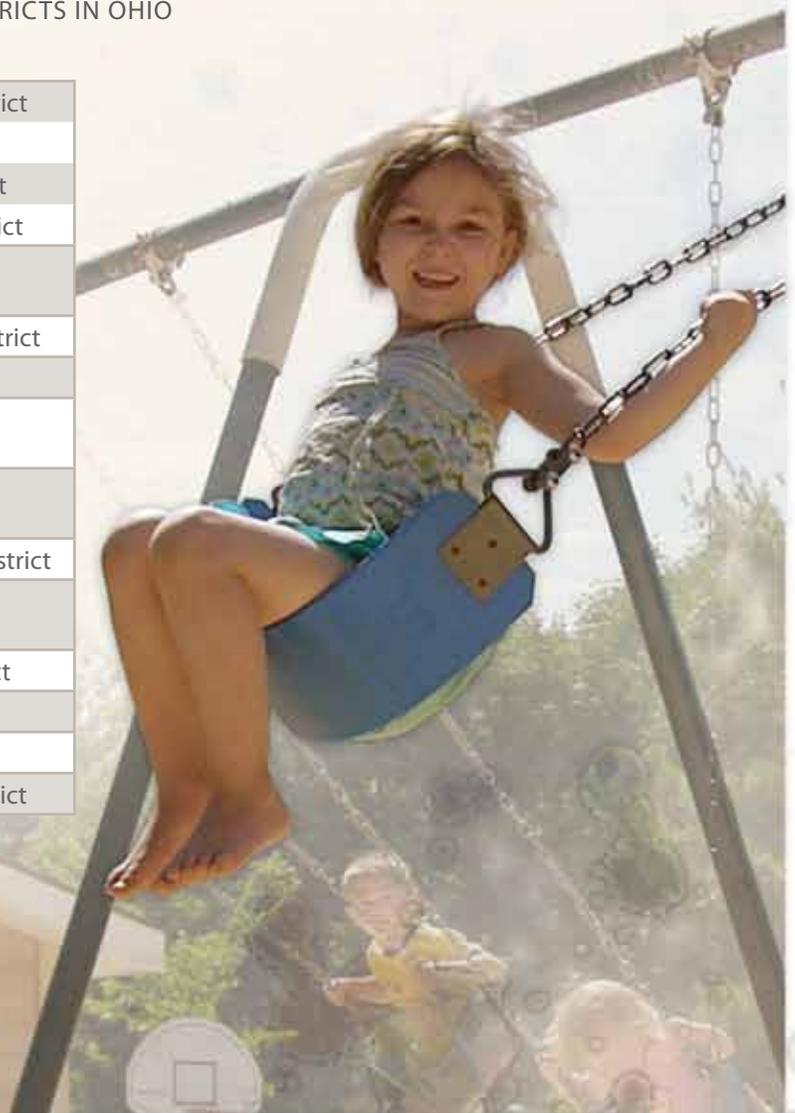
The Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) is a non-profit, public interest organization representing more than 1,300 professionals and citizen board members involved in providing leisure facilities and opportunities to all Ohioans as well as the tourists who visit our state each year. OPRA strives to promote parks and recreation services for all Ohioans along with sound stewardship of Ohio's natural resources. OPRA also works to implement a legislative program for the advancement of park, recreation, leisure services and natural resource management and enhance the knowledge and skills of those working in the field of parks, recreation, leisure services and natural resource management.

TABLE 8: JOINT RECREATION DISTRICTS IN OHIO

PARK DISTRICT	
1.	Bellefontaine Joint Recreation District
2.	Canton Joint Recreation District
3.	Cardington Joint Recreation District
4.	Franklin Park Joint Recreation District
5.	Franklin Township Joint Recreation District
6.	Fredericktown Joint Recreation District
7.	Granville Recreation District
8.	Lawrence Township Joint Recreation District
9.	Malta / Connellsville Joint Recreation District
10.	National Trail Parks & Recreation District
11.	New Albany -Plain Local Joint Parks District
12.	Orwell Area Joint Recreation District
13.	Sylvania Recreation Corporation
14.	Union City Joint Recreation District
15.	West Geauga Joint Recreation District

*Information provided by the
Ohio Parks and Recreation Association*

*Joint Recreation Districts are collaborations
between neighboring entities to build
recreation facilities such as playgrounds*



Public Participation

SOURCES OF PUBLIC INPUT

The SCORP planning process was supported by the following public participation framework:

- 11 SCORP focus groups
- SCORP Advisory Group
- On-line Outdoor Recreation Participation and Satisfaction Survey

Information and insight gathered through these public input techniques provided the basis for identification of current issues, trends, priorities, strategies and recommendations that are contained within this SCORP document.

SCORP Advisory Group

The SCORP Advisory Group was comprised of a group of outdoor recreation professionals who participated in an advisory capacity during the SCORP planning process. This group included representatives of two metroparks, coastal Ohio tourism, an urban parks and recreation department, the National Park Service, the

USDA Forest Service Wayne National Forest, and the ODNR Divisions of Parks and Recreation, Watercraft, Wildlife and Forestry. The group met and also corresponded through email. Guidance and feedback offered during the planning process included interpretation of focus group input and survey feedback and review of the draft SCORP 2013 document.

SCORP Focus Groups

ODNR hosted 11 regional input focus groups around Ohio during 2013. Through these groups ODNR heard from more than 60 recreation professionals, public office holders and recreation enthusiasts regarding outdoor recreation participation, trends and current issues in Ohio. Focus group participants were asked a series of questions related to outdoor recreation trends and issues. Commentary from these focus group events was combined into five regional summary reports. (See pages 58-73).

On-line Survey

An on-line survey of Ohioans' outdoor recreation participation and preferences was hosted on the Ohio Department of Natural Resources website for a five-week period, from September 13 to October 21, 2013. The survey was promoted through website features on the ODNR and Ohio State Parks websites, and the Ohio Parks and Recreation Association (OPRA) website. A link to the survey was e-mailed directly to 196,500 subscribers to TourismOhio's "Discover Ohio" E-newsletter. In addition, the survey was the subject of an article in the travel section of the Cleveland Plain Dealer, and featured in the Youngstown Business Journal. A total of 7,376 survey responses were received.



Disc golf courses are available at various state and local park locations ▶

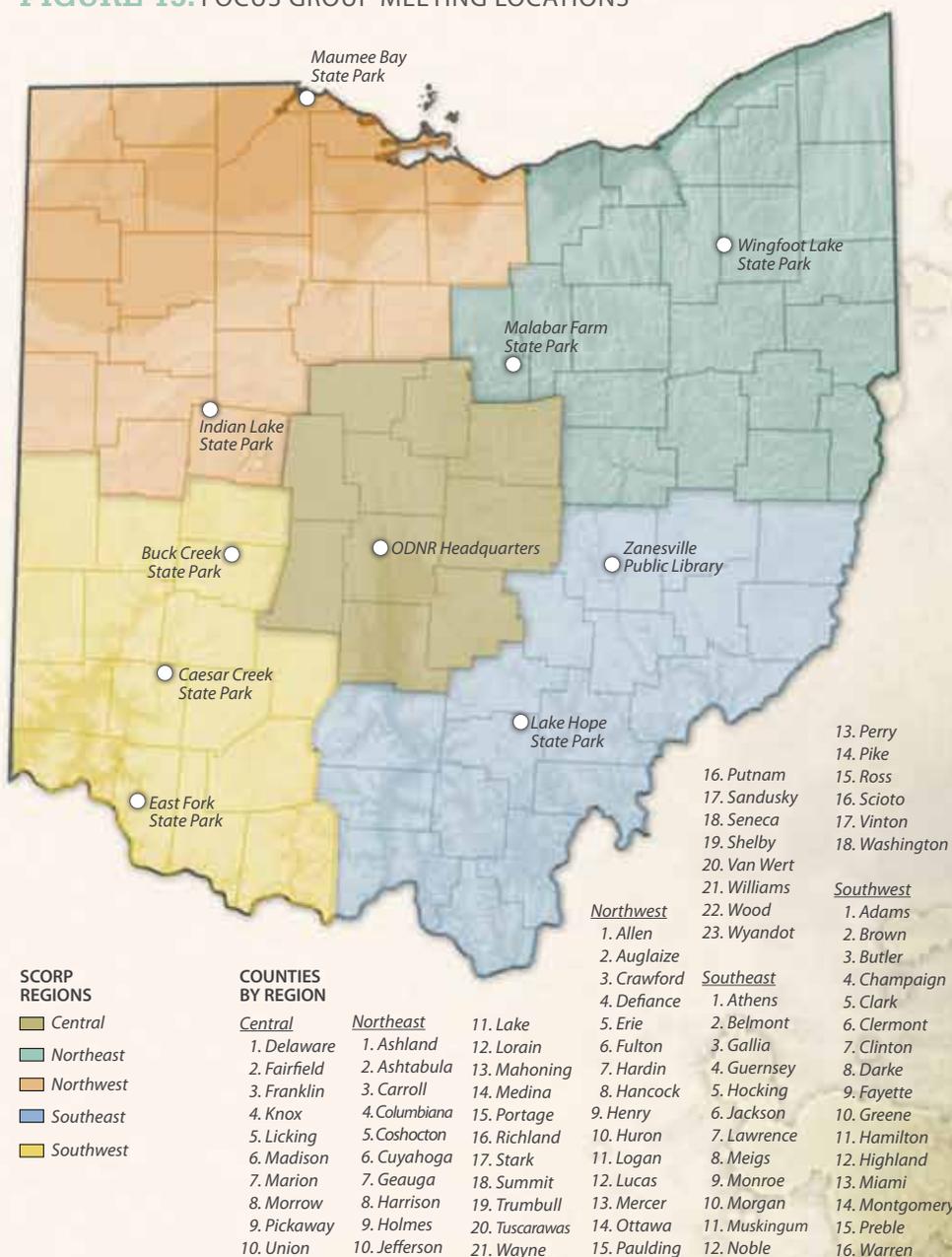
FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

A total of 11 focus group meetings were held at various locations around the state in March and April 2013. In order to ensure adequate regional representation, two meetings were held at separate locations within each of the state's geographic regions – central Ohio, northwest Ohio, northeast Ohio, southwest Ohio,

and southeast Ohio. The eleventh meeting was held with state park managers from across Ohio. (See Figure 15).

Commentary from these focus group meetings has been combined into five regional summary reports (See pages 58-73).

FIGURE 15: FOCUS GROUP MEETING LOCATIONS





FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Central Ohio Focus Groups

Focus group participants cite the following as emerging activities, either newly introduced or gaining in popularity:

FIELD & COURT SPORTS

- bocce ball
- cricket
- gaga pit*
- lacrosse
- soccer
- pickleball



SWIMMING

- events at pools, water slides, spray parks

GOLF

- disc golf



TRAIL USE

- Multi-use paved trails: bicycling, regional trail systems

NATURE BASED

- creeking
- green ecology programs
- nature play
- nature preserve visits
- meditation areas



WILDLIFE RELATED

- birding, butterfly/hummingbird programs

OTHER FACILITIES

- NEOS electronic game stations**
- WiFi in public outdoor spaces



OTHER RECREATION

- Cycling: alpine trails, bike polo, cyclo-cross, off-road biking, racing biking
- Dog parks, dog walking
- Events: food trucks, farm/harvest festivals, farmers markets, inflatables play equipment, outdoor movies on inflatable screens

OUTDOOR SKILLS

- archery
- bouldering
- climbing wall
- geocaching



- Gardening: backyard gardening programs, community gardening, rain gardens, urban farming
- Fitness: fitness bootcamp, obstacle events
- Skateboarding: longboards, skatable furniture, skate parks
- Summer camps

*A variation of dodgeball played in an enclosure

**These electronic playgrounds generate lights and/or sounds that require participants to move quickly and accurately to touch the component generating the light or sound

Activities on the Increase

Focus group participants in central Ohio identified bicycling as a primary activity of interest in their region. They noted that trails supporting this activity are heavily utilized for transportation as well as recreation, and completion of the Ohio to Erie Trail linking Cincinnati, Columbus and Cleveland is eagerly anticipated. Various bicycling events in the region, from long endurance rides to fun and social scavenger hunts, are filled to capacity. In addition to traditional bicycling on dedicated or multiple-use trails, cyclists in central Ohio

are seeking challenges with specially adapted bikes and infrastructure including alpine trails, bike polo, off-road biking, cyclo-cross and racing tracks.

Skate parks in the region remain popular, and new trends prompted by skateboarders seeking novel experiences include installations of skatable furniture, and facilities for downhill or slalom racing on specially adapted longboards. Field and court sports in central Ohio are also trending toward more novel offerings, such as

gaga pits and pickleball courts, as well as sports with an international flavor, like bocce ball, cricket, lacrosse and soccer. Demand continues for disc golf courses, which host casual play in addition to tournaments.

More park visitors are seeking nature based experiences for themselves and their children. Guided visits to local nature preserves, ecology programs and “green” themed workshops are well attended, and designated areas for creeking and self-directed nature play are very popular. Demand is high for children’s summer camps that offer a mix of outdoor skill activities with recreation, crafts and nature programs in a park setting. Adults utilize outdoor areas as a backdrop for individual meditation and reflection, as well as classes in disciplines such as yoga and tai chi. There is enthusiasm across generations for hummingbird and butterfly programs, and birding is popular as a self-directed activity as well as a program theme.

Urban dwellers are embracing all types of gardening opportunities in their parks, such as community garden plots, urban farming, backyard gardening programs, establishment of butterfly and hummingbird habitats, and creation of rain gardens. Farmer’s markets, farm and harvest festivals are very well attended in central Ohio.

Active outdoor exploring, such as geocaching, is increasing. Archery programs draw visitors to parks and outdoor events, and permanent and temporary archery ranges in parks and other outdoor settings are heavily used. Variations on climbing, including bouldering and night climbing on climbing walls, are popular with teens and young adults.

Fitness boot camps are a popular new trend in central Ohio. One variation is a family friendly multi-generational boot camp that allows parents and children to improve their fitness together. Obstacle events, such as mud runs, combine fun and fitness to appeal to a broad audience.

Events held at swimming pools are increasingly popular, and new swimming pool complexes with water features are filled to capacity. Traditional pools have replaced part of their infrastructure to accommodate visitor preferences and reduce costs. For example, spray parks have replaced baby pools as a more sanitary and lower maintenance alternative. Diving boards have been removed and diving wells have been outfitted with slides to provide a water feature with wider appeal.

The resurgence of interest in nature experiences coexists with a trend to bring technology outdoors. Playgrounds in central Ohio parks equipped with NEOS electronic play systems are constantly busy, and WiFi offerings at parks encourage visitation and longer stays, especially in lower income areas. Large crowds gather to watch movies projected onto inflatable outdoor screens.

Special events are increasingly popular, especially when they are enhanced with food trucks and attractions such as portable climbing walls and inflatables. Dog parks, dog walking and opportunities for recreation with pets are also increasingly popular.

Activities in Decline

Some traditional field and court sports, including baseball, tennis and sand volleyball, are decreasing in popularity in central Ohio. Tennis courts in some areas have been modified and are being used for alternative activities including street hockey, soccer and mini tennis.

Although endurance races are increasingly popular, shorter running events such as 5K runs are dropping in participation and being replaced by other fitness competitions or bicycling events. Paved multi-use trails are busier than ever with pedestrian and bicycle traffic, but rollerblading is decreasing in popularity.

While parks visits for legitimate recreational uses are increasing, the phenomenon of “cruising” (driving through parks without a purpose or destination, with potential for illicit activity) is declining.

Demographic Trends

Schools in central Ohio are increasingly partnering with their local park systems to take advantage of park facilities for sports programs and environmental education.

Central Ohio focus group participants noted that families are increasingly enjoying outdoor recreation together, and seeking out recreation opportunities suited to multiple generations. Parents of adolescent children are also seeking safe adventures in local parks for their “tweens” that enable them to exercise independence and enjoy wholesome activities in a secure environment without close parental supervision.

Senior centers remain very busy, and traditional and innovative programs for this demographic are in high demand. Younger seniors are seeking out more active and physically challenging recreation opportunities and fitness programs tailored to their needs.

Central Ohio focus group participants observe that the Millennial Generation, currently in their teens and twenties, are seeking out higher adventure and more extreme sports. Their preferences are shaping the trends in bicycling, skateboarding and climbing.

Across generations, there is greater awareness of environmental issues and greater interest in “green” activities and programs presented by outdoor recreation providers.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Central Ohio focus group participants identified a lack of free time and busy family schedules as a common barrier to outdoor recreation. Some potential park visitors may also be unaware of the facilities and programs that are offered, despite public information and marketing efforts. Adverse weather may keep people home even if they are aware and interested in particular programs, events or facilities.

A lack of transportation to parks is a barrier for some potential visitors, and the costs of sporting equipment or the fees charged at fee-based facilities may be a deterrent for potential visitors with modest incomes.

Public health and safety concerns may also be a deterrent to park visitation. Insufficient security coverage, or the perception of insufficient security, prevents some people from using their parks. Visitors avoid some parks or park areas because of a lack of modern flush restroom facilities. Growing populations of Canada geese are increasingly becoming a nuisance in park areas, as their droppings spoil lakeshores and sidewalks, and their aggressive behavior during nesting season intimidates visitors.

Pressing Needs

Funding for construction, as well as land purchases and easements, is needed to create additional trails, improve access to existing trails and provide trail connectivity. Likewise, land is needed to improve park connectivity and to provide safer access to park entrances for pedestrians and bicyclists.

Land and development funding are also needed to provide more of the types of facilities that are now filled to capacity, such as shelter houses, dog parks, and play and practice fields for soccer and similar sports. Additional tracts of well-vegetated undeveloped land that would remain in an undeveloped state are needed to provide greenspace, wildlife habitat, passive recreation opportunities and storm water management areas.

Small improvements such as upgrades to outdoor park furniture, and better bike path signage could be made for a relatively low cost with a large benefit in terms of first impressions and functionality of popular facilities. Accessible playgrounds are needed, and modifications should be made to restrooms to provide ADA access.

A multi-faceted approach, including better lighting and heightened security, is needed to deter vandalism, curb gang activity and provide a sense of safety for visitors to central Ohio parks. Programs and information reinforcing dog park and dog walking etiquette are needed to prevent potential conflicts among park users.

Special programs and outreach are needed to better serve central Ohio's growing immigrant communities. Orientation programs are needed to promote park facilities and services to newly arrived immigrants. Garden plots for growing vegetables that are dietary staples would be an asset to immigrant communities. Pick-up soccer games or mobile soccer groups that would better suit some communities than more formal park leagues could also be offered.

Recreational trends in Central Ohio include trail use, biking, dog parks, events and festivals, and backyard gardening coupled with butterfly and hummingbird programs





FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Northeast Ohio Focus Groups

Focus group participants cite the following as emerging activities, either newly introduced or gaining in popularity:

<p>BOATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kayaking • water trails 	<p>CAMPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primitive camping • backpacking 	<p>FIELD & COURT SPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bocce ball • beach volleyball • soccer • youth baseball 	<p>GOLF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disc golf 	<p>NATURE BASED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nature centers • natural areas
<p>OTHER FACILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picnic shelters 	<p>OUTDOOR SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • archery • orienteering • outdoor skills programs 	<p>TRAIL USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use paved trails: bicycling, walking, dog walking • Unpaved trails: trail running, hiking, mountain biking 	<p>WILDLIFE RELATED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • birding • fly fishing 	<p>OTHER RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adventure cycling • dog walking • family activities with toddlers • Fitness: events with kayaking and running, fun runs and theme runs, endurance runs • remote control aircraft

Activities on the Increase

Park professionals in the northeast region report increasing interest in trail running, in addition to robust participation in fitness events, themed runs and endurance runs. Mountain biking trails are heavily used, and regional trails and bicycle routes support an uptick in adventure cycling trips. Multiple-use trails are in high demand, as walking, hiking and bicycling remain popular in northeast Ohio, and increasing numbers of park users are utilizing the trails for dog walking.

Large numbers of northeast Ohioans are not only taking advantage of facilities for outdoor skills such as archery, they are also attending programs where instruction and equipment are

provided. Birding is a popular pastime in natural areas within parks, and bird observation in created habitats is also popular with less mobile Ohioans. Northeast Ohio's wealth of rivers provides opportunities for fly fishing, kayaking and paddling along water trails. The resurgence of interest in wilderness experiences is reflected in more demand for primitive camping and backpacking opportunities.

More park visitors in northeast Ohio are spending leisure time enjoying rounds of disc golf, sand volleyball, bocce ball, outdoor drama and music programs. Nature centers remain busy, and kid friendly activities and programs suitable for

families with young children are also growing in popularity. Dog parks and skate parks are in demand in some areas. Open spaces are increasingly being used by remote control aircraft enthusiasts.

Facilities that are filled to capacity in northeast Ohio include soccer fields and picnic shelters, in addition to multi-use trails.

Activities in Decline

Northeast Ohio park managers noted that some traditional facilities are declining in use, including tennis courts, baseball diamonds, traditional playgrounds, swimming pools and swimming beaches at lakes.

Trends that appear to have run their course in northeast Ohio include paintball, ultimate Frisbee, skateboarding, dodgeball, kickball and kite flying. Parcours and cross-country skiing have been displaced by other fitness options.

Some park managers noted a decline in family fishing, although sport fishing remains popular. Likewise, park managers in some areas have observed declines in golf, horseback riding and skateboarding, while others find that these activities are still in demand.

Demographic Trends

Northeast Ohio focus group participants noted that more seniors are using parks in the region. Many of these seniors are seeking passive recreation opportunities, although fitness programs tailored to older adults, including yoga, tai chi, walking and water aerobics, are increasing in popularity.

Trail use is taking on a social aspect as more families are utilizing bike trails together, and more teens are gathering at walking paths and multi-use trails.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Focus group participants cited busy schedules and lack of discretionary time as a major barrier to outdoor recreation for potential park users in northeast Ohio. Weather, which could include inclement conditions as well as a lack of snow, was also noted as a barrier beyond the control of park managers.

Distance to outlying recreation facilities is recognized as a deterrent, especially for urban populations who lack transportation, and potential trail users who must drive several miles to trailheads to enjoy walking or biking. Some facilities that are conveniently located but heavily used for league play or lessons may not be available for more casual users.

Some barriers are merely perceived, and may be related to misconceptions about outdoor recreation. Potential park users may stay away because they perceive the outdoors as dangerous and may harbor fears of falling victim to crime in public areas such as parks. Some potential users dislike strenuous activity, and do not believe parks offer opportunities for them. Some adults who were not exposed to outdoor recreation experiences as children do not, in turn, pass along outdoor recreation as a family tradition. These children and their parents may lack the skills and interest in unstructured outdoor play and self-directed recreation. As a result, younger generations may not value recreation opportunities, they may take public parks for granted, and they are not as likely to respond to appeals for donations for facilities or programs.

Pressing Needs

Northeast Ohio focus group participants identified construction of more multi-use trails, trail connectivity, and development of regional trail systems as pressing needs in their communities. Other infrastructure needs identified by the groups include flush restrooms and more shelter houses. Some of the focus group participants mentioned that effective strategies to prevent vandalism are also needed.

The northeast Ohio outdoor recreation professionals noted that their park systems need more funding for facilities and operations, and any new land purchases would be welcome only if there is funding provided for development and maintenance.

◀ *Recreational trends in Northeast Ohio include birding, dog parks, canoeing and kayaking, camping and backpacking*





FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Northwest Ohio Focus Groups

Focus group participants cite the following as emerging activities, either newly introduced or gaining in popularity:

BOATING

- kayaking
- canoeing



CAMPING

- one-stop offering outdoor adventure activities such as hunting, fishing, and zip line



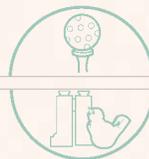
FIELD & COURT SPORTS

- flag football
- indoor basketball



GOLF

- disc golf



OTHER FACILITIES

- picnic shelters
- shelters for events
- shelters at water features
- dog friendly areas
- play equipment in neighborhood parks
- heritage sites



OUTDOOR SKILLS

- archery
- geocaching



SWIMMING

- pools with zero entry
- water features



TRAIL USE

- Multi-use paved trails: bicycling, walking,
- Unpaved trails: horseback riding



WILDLIFE RELATED

- birding
- fishing tournaments



OTHER RECREATION

- Fitness: outdoor fitness center, walking track, healthy lifestyle programs (walk with a doc), running events
- outdoor music concerts
- volunteer river clean-ups
- outreach to parents and schools
- summer camps



Activities on the Increase

Focus group participants in northwest Ohio noted strong interest in a variety of fitness opportunities, from outdoor fitness centers and walking tracks to "Walking with a Doc" programs and running events. Improved or paved trails are in high demand, and unpaved trails are utilized for special interests including trail running, mountain biking and horseback riding.

Park professionals in northwest Ohio see tremendous potential in developing a "one stop shop" for outdoor adventure that would include camping and a combination of traditional outdoor activities such as hunting and fishing with novel offerings such as zip lines. Archery,

geocaching and birding are growing in popularity, and fishing tournaments continue to be very well attended. Canoeing and kayaking are increasingly popular, and volunteers are highly motivated to assist with river clean-ups.

Picnic shelters are filled to capacity in northwest Ohio, and there is increasing need for shelters as staging areas for events. Outdoor music programs are very well attended, and parks provide the ideal venue for music enthusiasts to gather outdoors on summer evenings. Heritage sites, such as pioneer log cabins, are hubs for popular interpretive programs.

Families with young children are seeking out neighborhood parks with playground equipment. Summer camp programs for kids are in demand. Communities are interested in new pool complexes with zero entry swimming areas and water features, preferably with shelters available nearby. Recreation with pets is increasing, and dog friendly areas are in demand.

Activities in Decline

Although interest in flag football remains high, demand for other adult sports leagues provided by park systems is decreasing as more churches and other organizations provide leagues and other activities for their members. Tennis courts are also falling into disuse as adults seek out other fitness opportunities. Some resourceful park managers are converting these courts for use as skate parks or street hockey venues. Although picnic shelters are heavily used for events and gatherings, casual picnicking is on the decline.

School field trips have been reduced for a number of reasons, including school budgets and busy schedules. However, teachers are no less interested in bolstering their curricula with environmental education. As a result, park staff are increasingly providing off-site programs and other outreach services to schools as well as parents.

Demographic Trends

Focus group participants in northwest Ohio see a trend toward more active lifestyles across generations. Middle aged adults are seeking out active recreation for themselves, and adults who are grandparents want opportunities to

enjoy activities with their grandchildren. Senior adults are interested in indoor pools with aquatic exercise programs.

High schools are increasingly relying on park system trails for the cross-country teams, which is boosting the overall popularity of trail running and cultivating a new generation of park users who may continue to pursue this activity into adulthood.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

The northwest Ohio focus group participants find that busy schedules and a lack of discretionary time prevent some potential park users from engaging in outdoor recreation. High gas prices may also be a deterrent to potential visitors traveling to outdoor recreation sites and motorized trails. Some focus group participants noted that registration requirements for all-terrain vehicles may prevent some potential trail users from choosing public motorized trails in Ohio.

Contrary to the active lifestyle trend, there appears to be counter trend away from adults and families committing to active outdoor lifestyles, and a counter trend among some children who prefer indoor play on electronic devices. Focus group participants expressed concern about the influence of popular role models who reinforce sedentary behavior, and media hype that instills fear of severe weather and hazards in the outdoors. Perceptions of the outdoors as dirty or dangerous may also keep some potential park visitors at home.

Pressing Needs

Development of trails is a major concern for the northwest Ohio focus group participants, including more improved trails and connectivity among trails, more motorized and snowmobile trails, and wider motorized trails that can accommodate side-by-side vehicles. More land is needed to provide more motorized and non-motorized trails, and to provide trail connectivity along the Lake Erie coast.

Needs of families identified by focus group participants include integration of technology into parks and play areas to engage children, accessible playground equipment, and zero entry pools with water features.

Other pressing needs for northwest Ohioans include safe places to exercise and more recreational offerings close to home. More land is needed for the development of sports fields, and soccer fields in particular.

Facility needs include permanent flush restrooms, parking areas with security lighting, features to enhance accessibility for spectators at existing and new sports facilities, more campsites configured to accommodate large recreational vehicles, and more transient docks on Lake Erie.

Park system needs include funding to develop the existing land base, funding for maintenance and renovation, and more staff.

Recreational trends in Northwest Ohio include ► trail use, hiking, walking and fitness programs, geocaching, and outdoor skills such as fishing





FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Southeast Ohio Focus Groups

Focus group participants cite the following as emerging activities, either newly introduced or gaining in popularity:

<p>BOATING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • kayaking • water trails 	<p>CAMPING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • primitive camping 	<p>FIELD & COURT SPORTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • youth soccer • adult soccer 	<p>GOLF</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disc golf 	<p>OTHER FACILITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • picnic shelters • dog parks • zip lines • canopy tours
<p>OUTDOOR SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • archery • bouldering • geocaching 	<p>SWIMMING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • spray parks • splash pads 	<p>TRAIL USE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use paved trails: bicycling • Unpaved trail use: hiking, trail running, mountain biking 	<p>OTHER RECREATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • events & festivals • Fitness: triathalons, endurance events, obstacle courses • sightseeing tours 	

Activities on the Increase

Southeast Ohio focus group participants report heavy trail use in their region, including mountain biking, hiking and trail running on unpaved trails, as well as bicycling on paved multi-use trails. Triathlons and endurance races, many of which utilize unpaved trails, are increasingly popular.

Other trends in southeast Ohio include a high level of interest in outdoor skill and adventure activities such as archery, bouldering, disc golf, geocaching, obstacle courses, zip lines and canopy tours. Kayaking and paddling on water trails are increasingly popular activities on southeast Ohio waterways. Electric campsites in developed campgrounds in the region are filled to capacity, and there is growing demand for primitive camping opportunities.

Both youth and adult soccer leagues are experiencing heavy participation in southeast Ohio, and more schools are relying on their local park systems to provide facilities for student athletic programs. As a result, playing fields, as well as baseball diamonds, are filled to capacity.

Traditional municipal swimming pools remain busy in the region, and new swimming opportunities such as spray parks and splash pads are in demand. Dog parks are also highly desired by southeast Ohio residents. Focus group participants also noted that picnic shelters are filled to capacity, and more are needed.

Southeast Ohio's exceptional natural scenery is a valuable tourism asset that is increasingly tapped as an attraction for sightseeing tours, as well as a backdrop for a variety of festivals and special events.

Activities in Decline

Ohio's foremost motorized trail provider, the Wayne National Forest, has experienced a decline in requests for riding permits, from 21,000 in 1997 to 9,000 in 2012. This trend does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest in the sport, but may be attributed to various factors including the high costs of gasoline and fees, as well as dissatisfaction with available public offerings, prompting potential trail users to seek out private or out-of-state providers.

The southeast Ohio focus group participants have noted waning interest in adult softball programs as well as court sports played on outdoor facilities including outdoor volleyball and tennis courts. Although basketball remains popular on indoor courts, outdoor basketball courts are seldom used. Paved areas adapted for roller hockey are no longer being used.

Lake swimming is declining in the region, due in part to concerns about water quality and the lack of lifeguards.

Demographic Trends

Southeast Ohio focus group participants noted local enthusiasm for the general societal trend toward healthy lifestyles, which is a likely driver of increased trail use and participation in fitness activities and events. Motorized trails are being visited by families who ride ATVs together and enjoy nearby recreation opportunities as a family activity. Pet owners are utilizing parks more frequently for dog walking.

Another apparent trend is use of local facilities and offerings, with recreation facilities near university towns populated primarily by college students, while other facilities are visited mostly by seniors who live nearby. The phenomenon of staycations, where families spend the night at home but visit local parks and tourist attractions for day visits in lieu of traveling to distant vacation destinations, has become increasingly popular in this region in light of high gasoline prices and the slow economy.

All available overnight facilities including campgrounds are much busier in some areas as out-of-state oil and gas workers are seeking lodgings in the Utica shale region.

Barriers to Outdoor Recreation

Busy schedules and competing activities prevent many families in southeast Ohio from engaging in outdoor recreation as frequently as they might. In some cases, the desired recreational facilities do not exist in the local area, or have been damaged or destroyed by violent storms. In the case of desired overnight facilities, including cabins and full-service campsites, there are too few units available in the region. Some potential visitors with high expectations for amenities, such as WiFi and flush toilets at campgrounds, may pass up rustic public offerings in the region for other locations with the desired amenities.

Some of the southeast Ohio focus group participants believe that a lack of awareness among potential users of their facilities and programs is preventing greater visitation and participation. Sustained high gas prices could be a deterrent to travel to the region, and may also be dampening participation in gas consumptive activities such as ATV riding on motorized trails.

Insufficient funding for infrastructure and operations, compounded by the lack of flat land for development in some areas, prevent some park systems from providing the facilities and programs local citizens want.

Pressing Needs

Trails are a key need in southeast Ohio, including more mountain biking trails with additional challenges, more paved multi-use trails, wider motorized trails with more challenges for ATV riders, interpretive signage along all types of trails and connectivity to trailheads. Land is needed to provide the desired trail connectivity. Development of the Ohio to Erie Canal corridor as a trail system is also an opportunity that should be addressed.

More nature based recreation opportunities, including accessible nature trails, environmental play areas for children, and expanded nature and heritage based interpretive programs are needed in this area. There is insufficient hunting access on the existing undeveloped public land base. Large blocks of undeveloped land are needed to provide these recreational experiences, as well as to serve as a buffer for watershed protection.

Staging and launch areas are needed, especially on the Hocking and Little Muskingum Rivers, to accommodate the growing numbers of kayakers and other paddlers attracted to the region's scenic waterways and water trails. Boaters on the region's lakes would benefit by the addition of accessible boat docks.

Additional sports facilities, particularly soccer fields, baseball diamonds and public golf courses, are needed for the region. Flat land, which is at a premium in this region of hilly terrain, is essential for development of these facilities.

Playgrounds are needed, especially with accessible play equipment. Existing and new swimming pools must be equipped with lifts to provide handicapped access. Programs are needed to provide transportation for economically disadvantaged residents to the region's existing recreational complexes and natural areas.

Much of the infrastructure in this region dates back to the 1930s and 40s, and is in need of upgrades. Park systems need assistance to make improvements and stay current with maintenance, address problems caused by vandalism, and adopt effective programs to prevent vandalism.



◀ *Recreational trends in Southeast Ohio include canoeing and kayaking, mountain biking, and trail use for hiking and walking*



FOCUS GROUP SUMMARY REPORT: Southwest Ohio Focus Groups

Focus group participants cite the following as emerging activities, either newly introduced or gaining in popularity:

BOATING

- kayaking
- stand-up paddleboarding
- power boating (Ohio River)



CAMPING

- camping with amenities
- campouts
- primitive camping



FIELD & COURT SPORTS

- lacrosse
- pickleball
- outdoor soccer
- indoor soccer
- youth sports leagues



NATURE BASED

- nature play
- nature programs



OTHER FACILITIES

- dog parks
- picnic shelters for events and gatherings



OUTDOOR SKILLS

- archery
- geocaching
- rope courses

SWIMMING

- spray parks
- splash pads

TRAIL USE

- Motorized trails: ATV riding
- Multi-use paved trails: bicycling
- Unpaved trail use: hiking, trail running, mountain biking

OTHER RECREATION

- zip lines and canopy tours
- Fitness: fitness programs for adults, running events

- Gardening: public gardens and programs, beekeeping

Activities on the Increase

Focus group participants in southwest Ohio identified trails as a primary recreational asset in their region, and an area experiencing growth. Rural residents who enjoy walking for leisure and fitness are seeking out public paths and trails, as traffic increases on the country roads near their homes. The Little Miami Trail corridor is heavily used and embraced by volunteers who help to maintain and improve it. Equestrians utilize bridle trails as well as multiple use trails for horseback riding. Park users are especially interested in a variety of cycling opportunities including paved paths, mountain biking trails and cyclo-cross courses. Motorized trails are very popular with ATV riders.

Youth sports programs, especially soccer and lacrosse, remain popular and facilities are often

filled to capacity. Fitness programs for adults are in high demand, and there is a high level of participation in running events and cycling events.

Southwest Ohioans living in urban areas are embracing nature experiences including gardening and beekeeping, primitive camping, unstructured nature play as well as nature programs offered by park systems. Programs offered through schools and organizations such as 4-H are prompting more youngsters to pursue archery as a leisure activity. Adventure activities and physical challenges such as disc golf, geocaching, ropes courses, zip lines and canopy tours have been introduced in the region and are very popular. Campgrounds in the region are very busy and campouts are particularly well attended.

Southwest Ohio offers diverse waterways and a variety of boating opportunities, all of which remain very popular including power boating on the Ohio River, kayaking on streams, and stand-up paddle boarding on lakes.

Picnic shelters are filled to capacity, especially for organized groups and community events. Splash pads and spray parks are a popular, affordable alternative to maintaining traditional lap pools or building new pool complexes. There is increasing demand for dog friendly facilities and dog parks.

Activities in Decline

Declining activities and underutilized facilities mentioned by the recreation providers in southwest Ohio include lake swimming, traditional lap pools, canoeing, paintball, sand volleyball courts and tennis courts. Some tennis courts have been repurposed to provide skate parks, while others have been subdivided to accommodate a new activity, pickleball, played with a solid paddle and a perforated ball on a court about one third the size of a tennis court. With its smaller court and reduced speed, this sport is less strenuous than tennis and better suited to some seniors.

Demographic Trends

The southwest Ohio focus group participants have observed more families enjoying outdoor pursuits together, particularly geocaching, kayaking and mountain biking. While these and other fee-free activities remain strong, demand for various fee-based programs has declined in southwest Ohio, likely due to the economic downturn. Attendance by low income visitors also appears to have declined. The economic climate has also resulted in an increase in staycations, where families eschew destination vacations and leisure travel in favor of activities and attractions close to home.

With fewer resources available for traditional school outings and field trips to parks, schools have requested more visits to their campuses by naturalists and other park personnel.

Volunteerism is on the rise, and emerging as a service opportunity for organizations, particularly church groups. Parks in southwest Ohio report more youth volunteers, as well as more volunteering families and long-term volunteers whose involvement with the parks is part of their lifestyle.

Barriers

Park professionals in southwest Ohio are aware of several barriers to the public's participation in outdoor recreation in their area. In some areas, the available facilities are too far from potential users' homes or too crowded, or the activities those potential users want are not available. Busy lifestyles and competition from other events and activities keep some area residents from choosing local parks for outdoor recreation. Some visitors cannot gain physical access to some facilities, and personal finances keep others from traveling to enjoy their parks.

In some instances, potential users are not aware of facilities and programs local parks offer. They may lack access to sources of information on park offerings. Park systems find it a challenge to provide information and have a presence across all of the media now available.

Pressing Needs

Facilities most needed by park systems in southwest Ohio include hiking trails and walking paths, soccer fields, indoor options for year-round access, spray parks, swimming pool complexes with water features, neighborhood parks and dog parks. Supporting infrastructure needs include flush restrooms and signage on bike trails to alert bikers to area attractions. Programming needs include adult fitness and wellness programs.

Park system professionals cited more funding for operations and maintenance of existing facilities as pressing needs. Controlling invasive species was also mentioned as a pressing need in the region.

With regard to land acquisition, the southwest Ohio park managers believe that land purchases should focus on riparian corridors, small parcels near urban centers, and undeveloped land on the margins of rural areas to be held in reserve as those areas are eventually developed. Land acquisition for development of campgrounds was also recommended. The southwest Ohio managers also stressed that new land acquisitions should be accompanied by additional funding to maintain or develop new areas.

Special populations of concern in this region include aging Ohioans, injured veterans, and youth. Recommended actions include upgrades of existing facilities to meet ADA guidelines; accommodation of the differing needs of urban and rural seniors; and multi-faceted outreach to provide information and promote facilities and programs to all demographics through a mix of traditional print and Web-based formats along with social media and emerging formats.

Recreational trends in Southwest Ohio include ► trail use, mountain biking, APV, walking, hiking, and horseback riding

ONLINE OHIO OUTDOOR RECREATION SURVEY RESULTS

Feedback from the recreating public was solicited through an on-line survey. The survey was hosted on the ODNR website, with links provided from the OPRA website and from TourismOhio's *Discover Ohio* e-newsletter.

The survey instrument consisted of 51 questions related to outdoor recreation participation, most important activities, priorities for development or improvement, satisfaction with outdoor recreation experiences, and the survey respondents' personal demographics (See Appendix A). Survey results are summarized on pages 74 – 90 (See Appendix B for survey data).



INTRODUCTION

What county do you live in?

• 6,724 responses; 652 skipped

The largest percentage of survey respondents resides in Franklin County (9.77%), followed by Cuyahoga County (8.95%), Summit County (4.63%), Montgomery County (4.22%), Stark County (3.84%), Hamilton County (3.51%), Lake County (2.93%) and Lucas County (2.87%). This distribution of survey respondents corresponds fairly closely to the distribution of Ohio's population (according to the 2010 U.S. census) when compared by rank as well as by overall percentage of the population (See Table 9).

Regional representation corresponds even more closely, with 12.00% of survey respondents from northwest Ohio (compared to 12.59% of Ohio population), 38.10% of survey respondents from northeast Ohio (compared to 38.56% of Ohio population), 20.32% of survey respondents from central Ohio (compared to 17.72% of Ohio population), 20.70% of survey respondents from southwest Ohio (compared to 24.64% of Ohio population), and 8.88% of survey respondents from southeast Ohio (compared to 6.49% of Ohio population).

TABLE 9: 2010 CENSUS DATA, OHIO POPULATION, SCORP SURVEY RESULTS

MOST POPULOUS OHIO COUNTIES	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION	RANK	RESPONDENT'S COUNTY OF RESIDENCE	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS
Cuyahoga	11.10	1	Franklin	9.77
Franklin	10.08	2	Cuyahoga	8.95
Hamilton	6.96	3	Summit	4.63
Summit	4.70	4	Montgomery	4.22
Montgomery	4.64	5	Stark	3.84
Lucas	3.83	6	Hamilton	3.51
Stark	3.27	7	Lake	2.93
Butler	3.19	8	Lucas	2.87

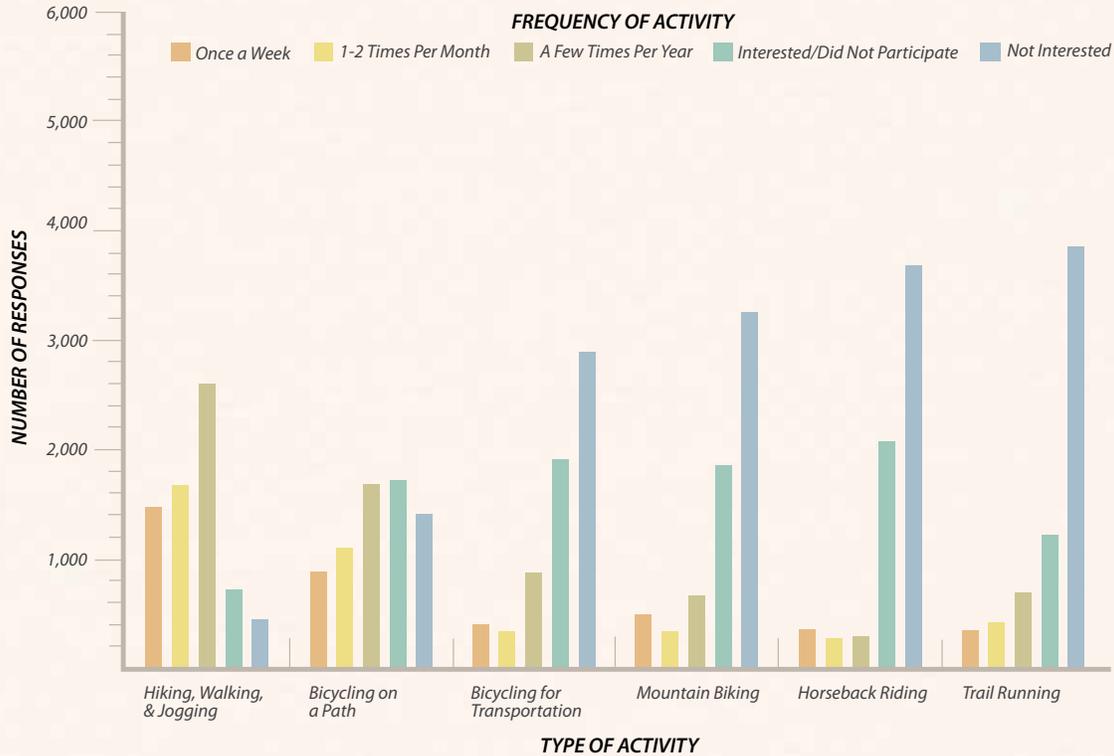
OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION

In this section of the survey, several specific activities were listed under each of 13 categories: trail use activities, motorized trail use, wildlife related activities, boating, swimming, field or court sports, outdoor sports and fitness (variations of golf), outdoor skills, outdoor recreation, outdoor leisure, nature based recreation, camping and winter sports.

Survey respondents were asked to select one of the following choices to describe the frequency with which they participated in each of the activities during the past year: one or more times per week, once or twice a month, a few times during the year, interested but did not participate this year, not interested.

If the survey respondent selected "interested but did not participate this year" for any of the activities, they were asked to select from several reasons why they did not participate, including the following: no facilities for this activity are available, facilities for this activity are too far away, don't have information about where facilities are offered, the activity costs too much, too busy with other obligations, no one to go with, don't have transportation, health problems, don't have the skills, don't have the equipment, facilities are too crowded, facilities seem unsafe, facilities seem poorly maintained, user conflicts at these facilities, weather didn't permit it.

TRAIL USE ACTIVITIES
• 7,298 responses, 78 skipped



How often do you participate in ...

TRAIL USE ACTIVITIES

• 7,298 responses, 78 skipped

Hiking, walking or jogging on a nature trail is the most popular trail use, with 21.24% of respondents reporting weekly use, and 45.97% of respondents reporting this type of trail use at least a few times a month. A total of 82.88% of survey respondents use a trail for hiking, walking or jogging at least a few times during the year.

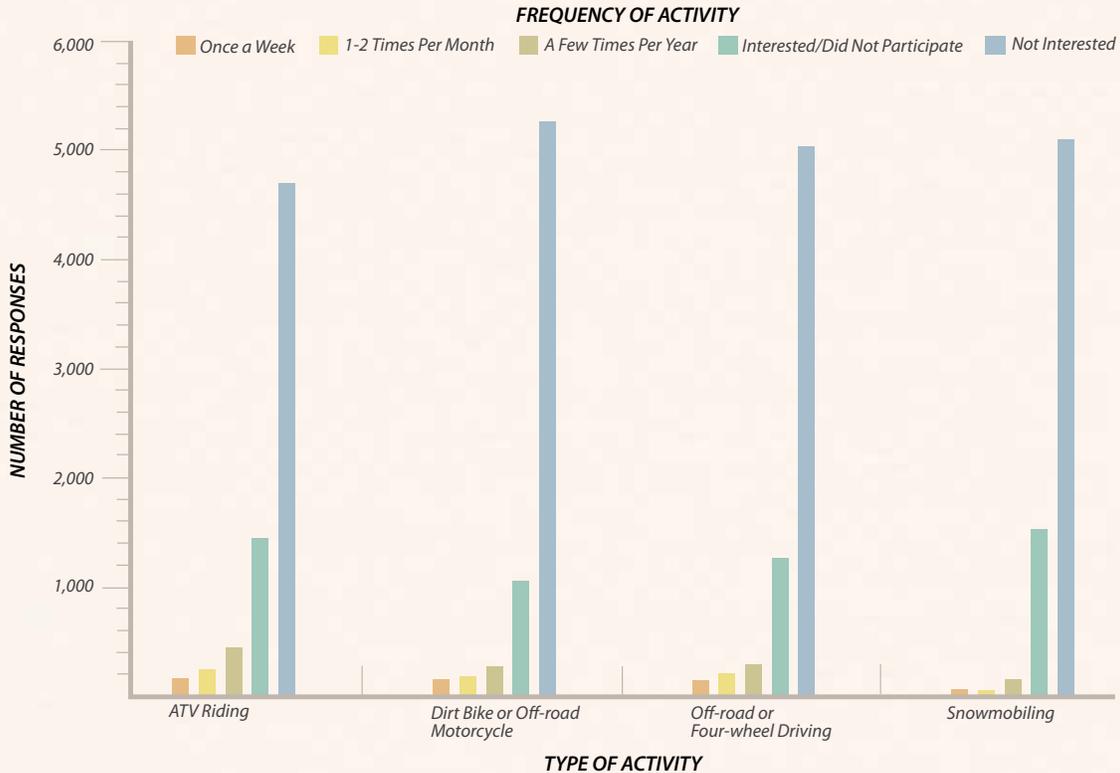
Bicycling for fun was the second most reported trail use, with 29.14% of respondents reporting that they use a trail for bicycling at least a few times a month. 54.01% of survey respondents indicated that they bicycle on trails at least a few times per year.

Interested but did not participate: 4,736 responses, 2,640 skipped. Of the survey respondents who indicated they are interested but did not participate in the past year, the trail activity most often selected was horseback riding (30.56%) followed closely by bicycling for transportation (30.12%). The reason cited most frequently was “too busy with other obligations” (47.66%) followed by “don’t have the equipment” (31.10%). A total of 26.74% responded that “no facilities for this activity are available” (11.09%) or “facilities for this activity are too far away” (15.65%). 14.67% responded “don’t have information about where facilities are offered”.



MOTORIZED TRAIL USE ACTIVITIES

• 7,061 responses, 315 skipped



ATV riding was the most popular motorized trail use, with 2.56% of respondents reporting weekly use, and 5.84% of respondents reporting this type of motorized trail use at least a few times a month. A total of 11.97% of survey respondents used a motorized trail for ATV riding at least a few times during the year.

Even more survey respondents, 20.45%, indicated that they are interested in ATV riding on a motorized trail, but have not done so during the past year. Although snowmobiling was the motorized trail activity participated in least often by survey respondents with just 3.00% using a trail for snowmobiling during the year, it was also the motorized trail activity that the highest percentage of survey respondents reported that they are interested in, but did not do in the past year (22.36%).

Interested but did not participate: 2,896 responses, 4,480 skipped. Of the survey respondents who indicated they are interested but did not participate in a motorized trail activity in the past year, the reason cited most frequently was “don’t have the equipment” (56.11%). “Don’t have information about where facilities are offered” (20.30%) and “too busy with other obligations” (19.58%) were mentioned by about one-fifth of survey respondents interested but unable to enjoy motorized trails in the past year. A total of 38.81% responded that “no facilities for this activity are available” (19.92%) or “facilities for this activity are too far away” (18.89%).

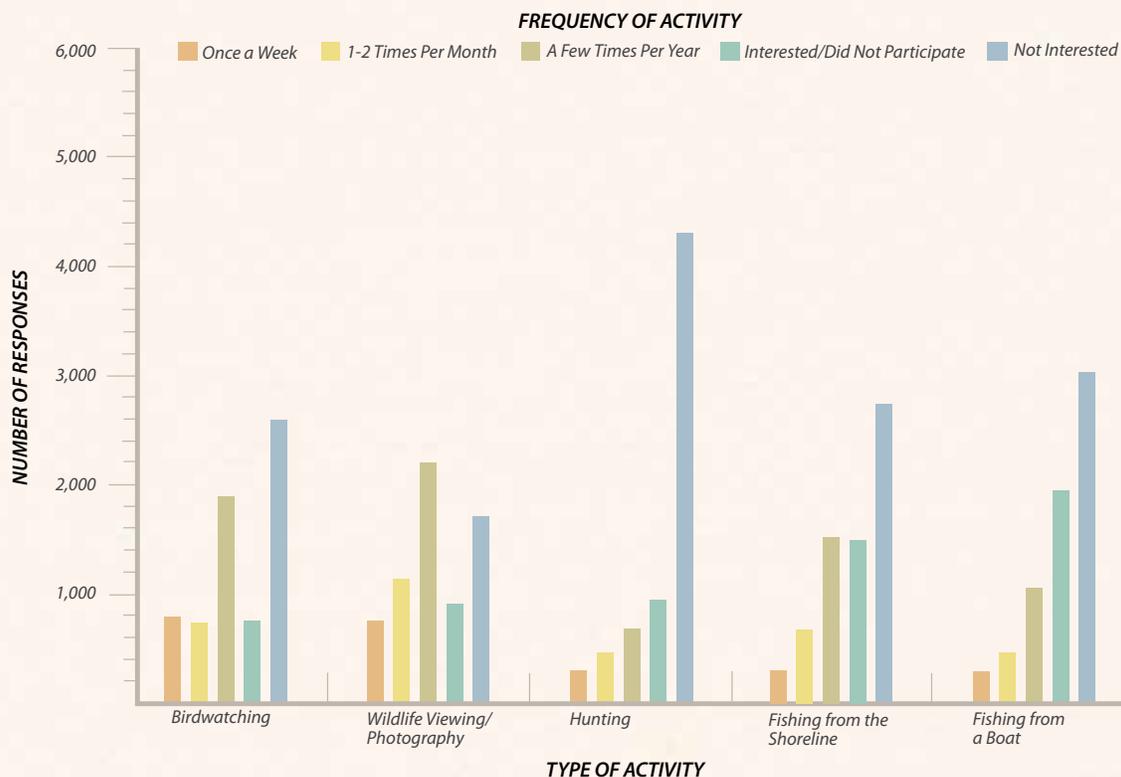
WILDLIFE RELATED ACTIVITIES

• 7,004 responses, 372 skipped



77

WILDLIFE RELATED ACTIVITIES



Wildlife viewing or photography is the most popular wildlife related activity, with 28.38% of survey respondents reporting this type of activity at least a few times a month, and 61.01% of respondents enjoying wildlife viewing or photography at least a few times during the year. Birdwatching is also popular, with 22.83% of survey respondents going birding at least a few times a month, and about half (50.14%) going birding at least a few times during the year.

Shoreline fishing is slightly more popular than fishing from a boat, with 37.50% of survey respondents participating in shoreline fishing at least a few times during the year, and 26.41% reporting that they fished from a boat. However, fishing from a boat is the wildlife related activity that the highest percentage of survey respondents reported that they are interested in, but did not participate in, over the past year (28.97%).

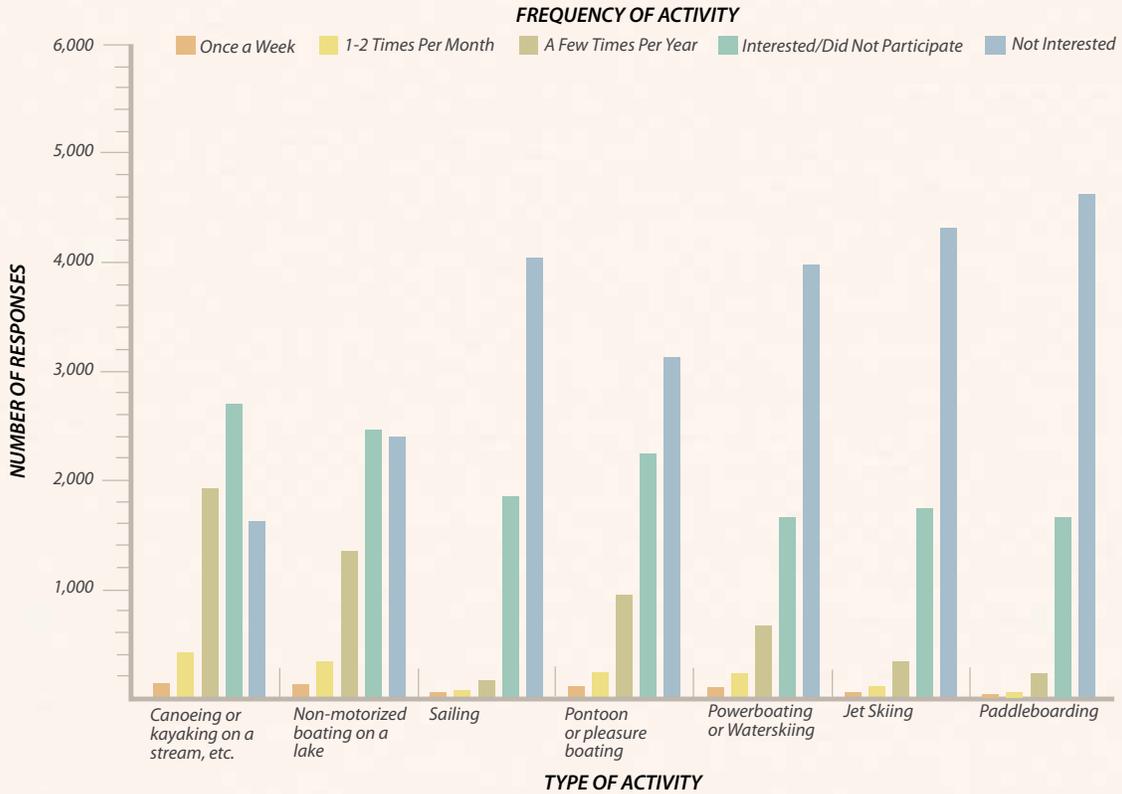
Interested but did not participate: 3,199 responses, 4,177 skipped. Of the survey respondents who indicated they are interested but did not participate in wildlife related activities, more than half cited the reason “too busy with other obligations” (53.42%). The second most common reason was “don’t have the equipment” (39.42%).





BOATING

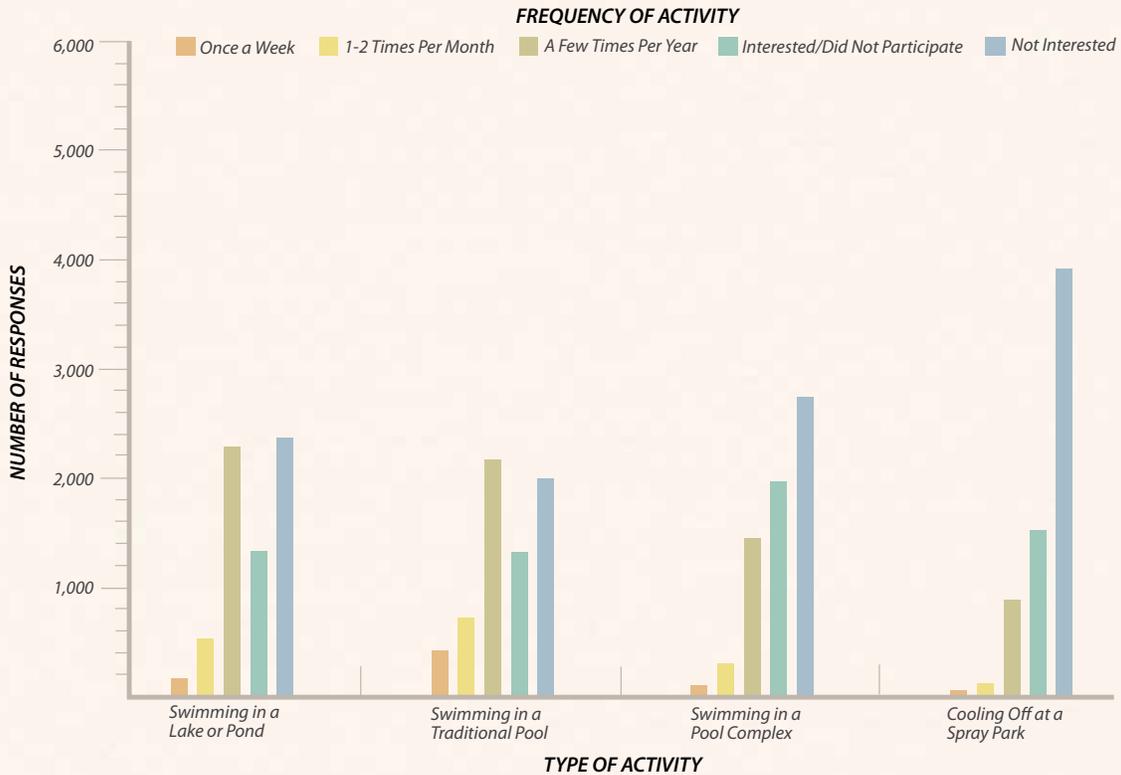
• 6,900 responses, 476 skipped



Canoeing or kayaking on a stream, river or water trail is the most popular boating activity, with 36.68% of survey respondents reporting this type of activity at least a few times during the year. Paddling or other non-motorized boating on a lake or pond was enjoyed by more than one-fourth of survey respondents (27.35%) at least a few times during the year.

Although small percentages of survey respondents participated in sailing (4.16%) or paddle boarding (4.06%), about one-fourth expressed an interest even though they did not participate in sailing (28.07%) or paddle boarding (25.09%).

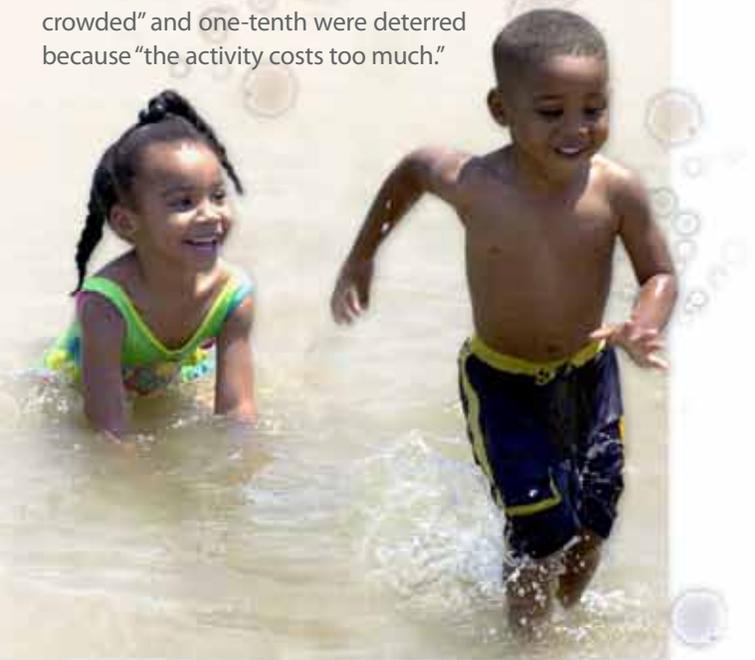
Interested but did not participate: 4,515 responses, 2,861 skipped. Across all boating categories, about one-fourth to two-thirds of survey respondents indicated that they are interested in boating even if they did not participate over the past year for a variety of reasons. Of the survey respondents who are interested but did not participate, nearly two-thirds (62.72%) were unable because they “don’t have the equipment.” The second most common reason was “too busy with other obligations (39.65%).” “The activity costs too much” (18.69%) was also a significant deterrent to boating activities. Just over 12% of respondents “don’t have information about where facilities are offered.”



Half of the survey respondents (50.20%) reported swimming in a traditional outdoor pool at a least a few times during the year, and a smaller percentage (44.28%) swam in a lake on at least a few occasions. A little more than 28% of survey respondents visited an outdoor pool complex with water features, and even more, 30.09%, indicated that they are interested in swimming at an outdoor pool complex but did not do so in the past year.

Interested but did not participate: 3,006 responses, 4,370 skipped. Of the survey respondents who indicated they are interested but did not participate in outdoor swimming, nearly half (48.27%) did not engage in this activity over the past year because they were “too busy with other obligations.” More than one-third (36.16%) did not go swimming outdoors because “facilities for this activity are too far away” (18.40%) or “no facilities for this activity are available” (17.76%)

“Lack of information about where facilities are offered” prevented 16.20% of interested survey respondents from outdoor swimming activities, one-tenth noted that “facilities are too crowded” and one-tenth were deterred because “the activity costs too much.”





FIELD OR COURT SPORTS

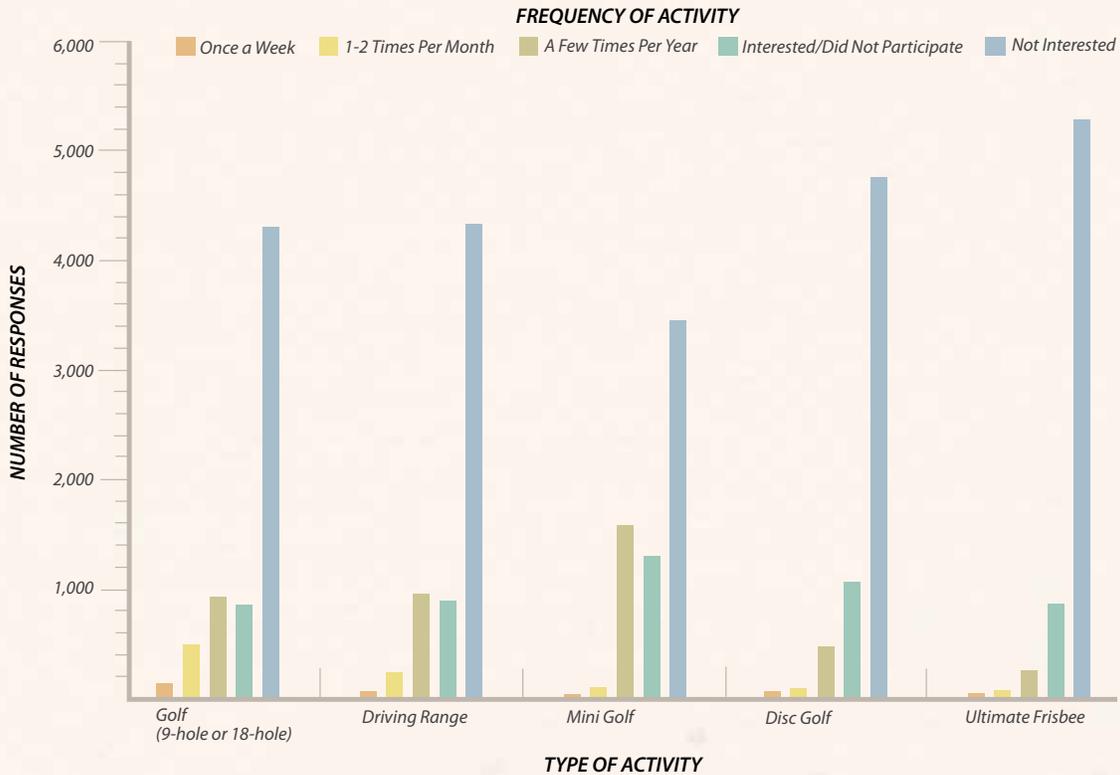
• 6,621 responses, 755 skipped



Baseball and softball, which 13.87% of survey respondents participated in at least a few times during the year, ranked highest among the outdoor field and court sports. Outdoor basketball ranked second with 11.41% of survey respondents participating at least a few times during the year, and about one-tenth participated in outdoor soccer (9.84%), tennis (9.62%) or volleyball (9.40%).

As a category, outdoor court and field sports are not a heavily utilized recreational opportunity among the survey respondents. Nearly three-fourths of survey respondents indicated they are not interested in baseball and softball (73.28%) or outdoor/sand volleyball (74.27%), and more than three-fourths do not participate in outdoor tennis (75.95%), outdoor basketball (78.77%), outdoor soccer (82.01%) or lacrosse (93.24%).

Interested but did not participate: 2,061 responses, 5,315 skipped. In the case of three of the outdoor field and court sports, volleyball, tennis and lacrosse, the percentage of survey respondents who claim that they are interested but did not participate during the past year was about 5% or more higher than the percentage of survey respondents who actually participated during the year. The primary reason given for not participating was “too busy with other obligations” (53.28%), and 18.97% did not pursue this interest because they have “no one to go with.” More than 15% of respondents with an interest in outdoor sports stayed home because they “don’t have the equipment” (15.91%) or are experiencing “health problems” that would prevent their participation (15.67%).



Among the four variations of golf listed in this category, mini golf was the most popular activity among respondents, with more than one-fourth (26.58%) participating at least a few times during the year, and an additional 20.34% indicating that they are interested in this activity but did not participate in the past year. More than one-fifth (21.38%) of survey respondents played a round of golf (9- or 18-holes) at least a few times during the year, and nearly one-fifth (19.01%) practiced golfing skills at a driving range. While about one in ten (9.78%) survey respondents played disc golf, 16.56% indicated that they were interested in disc golf but did not play during the past year. Disc golf was more popular than Ultimate Frisbee.

Interested but did not participate: 2,505 responses, 4,871 skipped. Of the survey respondents who indicated they are interested but did not participate in this category, which includes golfing activities, the most common reason was “too busy with other obligations” (54.17%). Nearly 18%

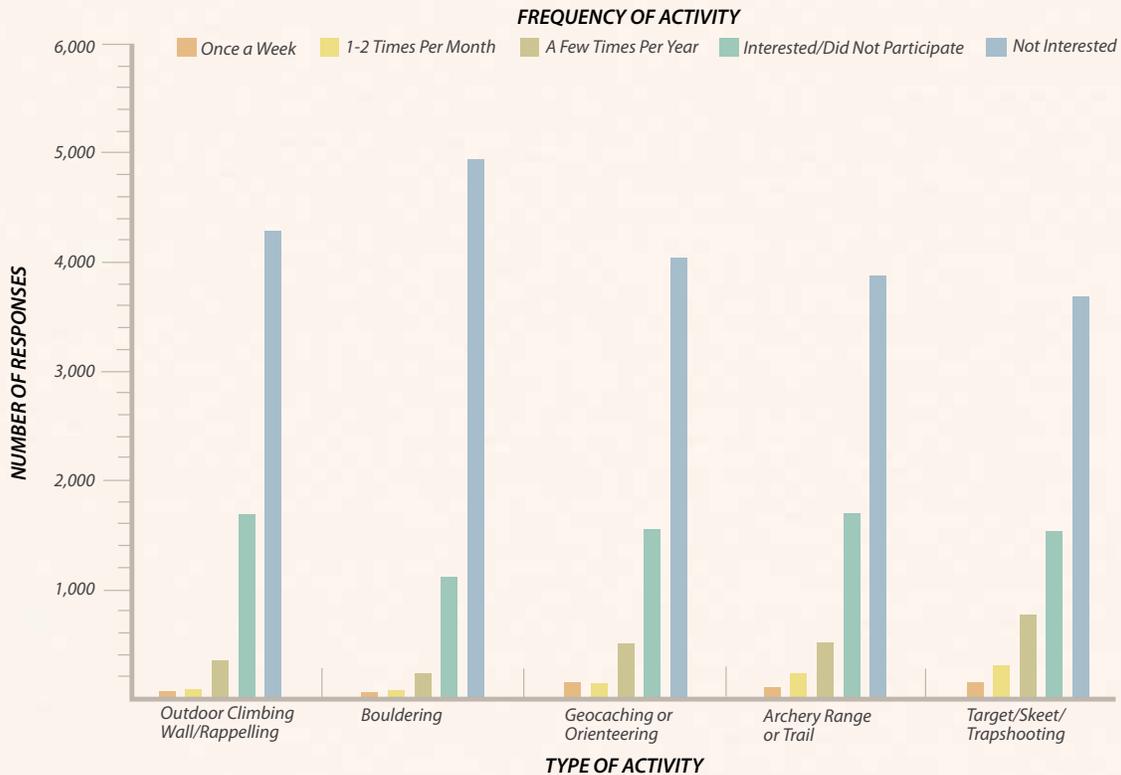
were deterred because they “don’t have the equipment” (17.80%) or “don’t have information about where facilities are offered” (17.49%). Nearly 15% did not pursue variations on golf or disc golf because they have “no one to go with” (14.13%).





OUTDOOR SKILLS

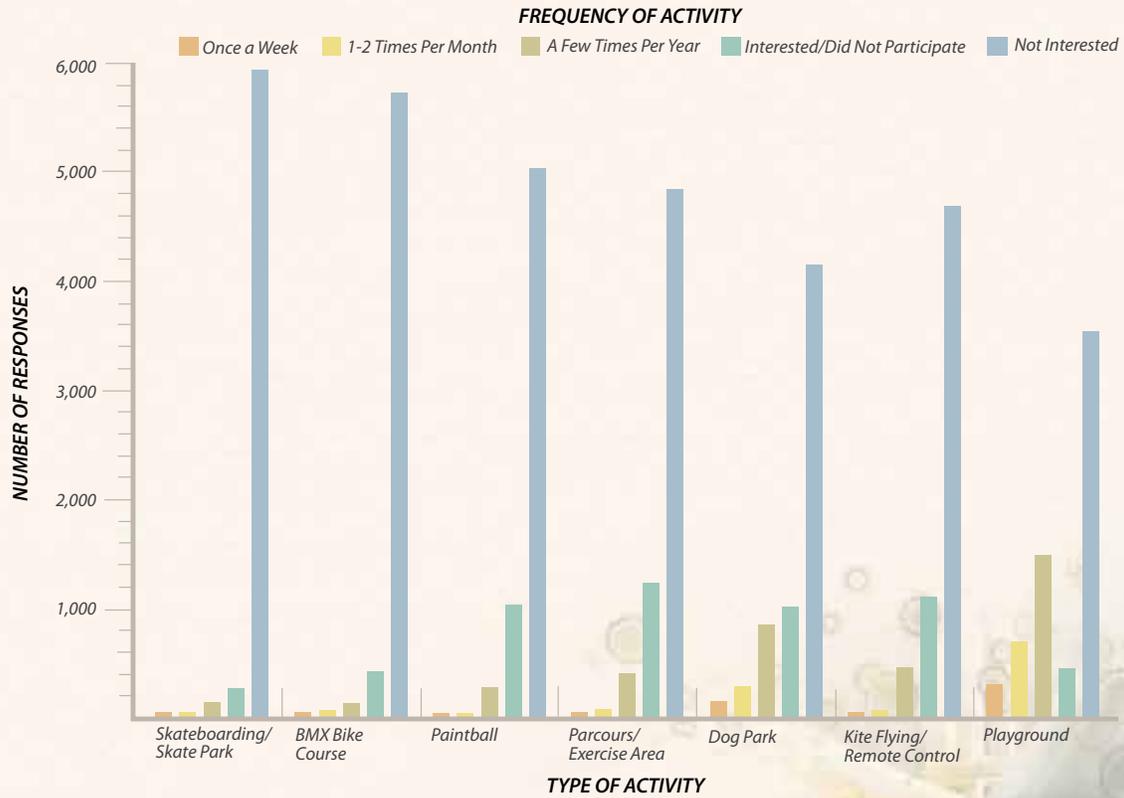
• 6,560 responses, 816 skipped



Although actual participation in this category is relatively small overall, a higher percentage of survey respondents indicated that they are interested but did not participate in each of the activities included in the category. Among the various outdoor skill activities included in this category, shooting sports, including target, skeet and trap shooting, were the most popular with 18.79% of survey respondents participating at least a few times during the year, and 23.70% expressing an interest even though they did not participate. Nearly 13% of survey respondents reported that they engaged in archery at an outdoor archery range or trail at least a few times during the year (12.53%), and twice as many (26.55%) said they were interested but did not participate. Although 12.62% of survey respondents pursued their hobby of geocaching or orienteering at least a few times during the year, nearly one-fourth (24.57%) indicated they are interested in geocaching but did not participate.

Fewer than one in ten survey respondents tried rappelling or an outdoor climbing wall (7.53%), but more than one in four (26.13%) indicated they are interested even though they did not participate. Fewer than one in twenty respondents (4.57%) tried bouldering, but 17.69% expressed an interest.

Interested but did not participate: 3,361 responses, 4,015 skipped. Although “busy with other obligations” (37.52%) was the most frequently given reason by survey respondents who are interested in outdoor skill activities but did not participate in them, almost as many survey respondents did not participate because they “don’t have the equipment” (36.83%) or “don’t have information about where facilities are offered” (31.21%). Almost one-fifth of the survey respondents with an interest in these activities did not participate because they “don’t have the skills” (19.55%), and a total of 31% did not participate because “no facilities for this activity are available” (17.02%) or “facilities for this activity are too far away” (14.85%).



The most popular activity in this category is playing at a playground in a park, which 38.20% of survey respondents reported doing at least a few times during the year. Nearly one-fifth of survey respondents (19.53%) spent time at a dog park with their family pet at least a few times during the year.

Interested but did not participate: 2,627 responses, 4,749 skipped. “Too busy with other obligations” was the reason given most often by survey respondents who were interested but did not participate in this category of activities (37.99%), but more than one in four did not participate because they “don’t have information” about where the activities are offered (26.80%), or “don’t have the equipment” (26.76%). A total of 33.69% of interested respondents did not engage in these activities because “no facilities for this activity are available” (20.14%) or “facilities for this activity are too far away” (13.55%).





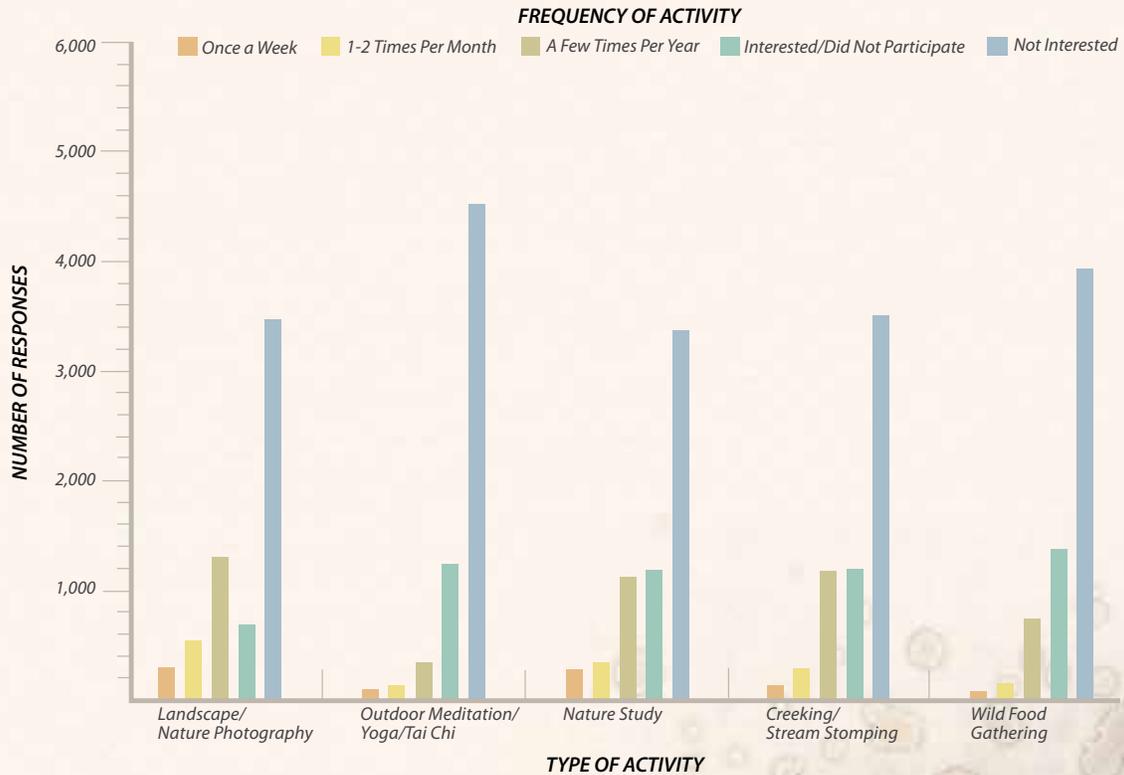
OUTDOOR LEISURE

• 6,588 responses, 788 skipped



Some 80% of survey respondents reported that they took a scenic drive through a park at least once in the past year (80.20%). Two-thirds of the survey respondents enjoyed a picnic over the past year (66.11%), and more than half (57.21%) attended a special gathering at a picnic shelter. More than half of the survey respondents (59.29%) toured an historic farm or building at least once during the year, and one-fifth expressed an interest in taking such a tour even though they had not done so during the past year (20.74%).

Interested but did not participate: 2,533 responses, 4,843 skipped. More than half (59.61%) of the survey respondents who were interested but did not participate in this category of activities cited “too busy with other things” as a reason. “Don’t have information” was mentioned by over one-fourth of the non-participating survey respondents (26.61%) who expressed an interest in these outdoor leisure activities.



One-third of survey respondents (34.20%) pursued their interest in nature photography at least a few times during the year. More than one-fourth of survey respondents reported engaging in nature study (27.70%) or creeking (25.75%).

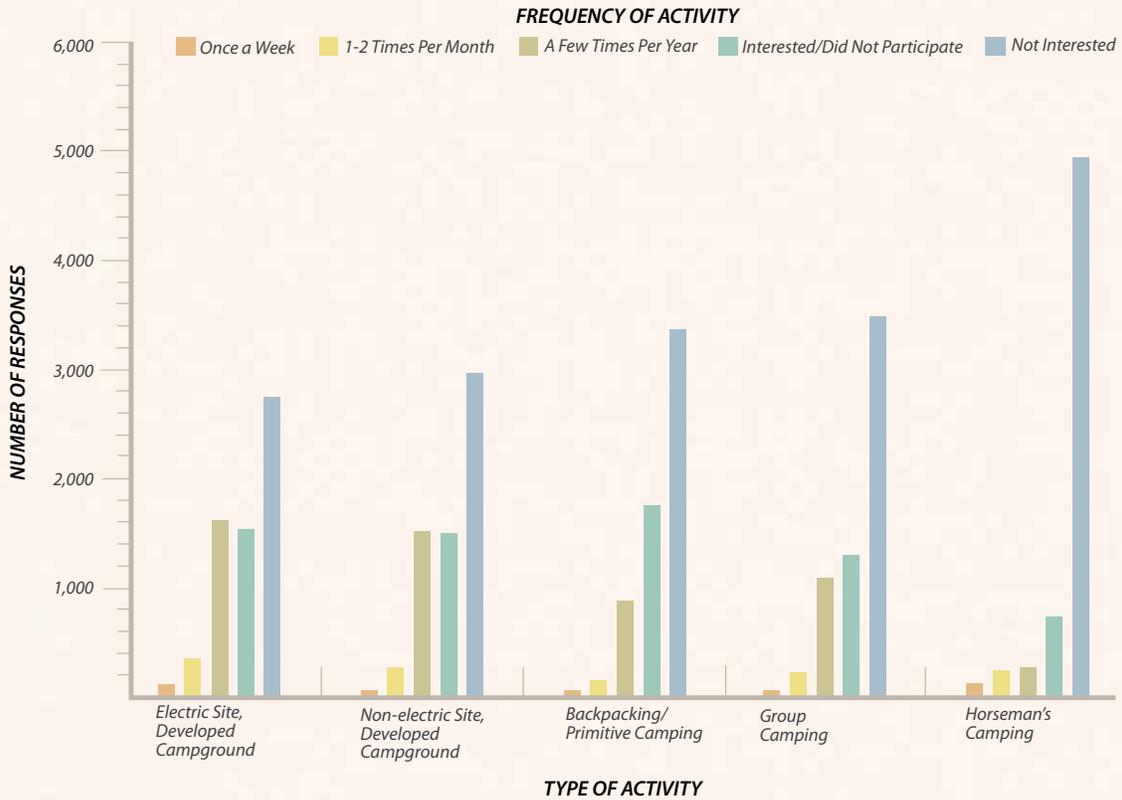
Interested but did not participate: 2,440 responses, 4,936 skipped. “Don’t have information” was the greatest deterrent to survey respondents who are interested in this category of activities, with 43.36% unable to participate for lack of knowledge about available opportunities. The perception that nature based activities require specific skills was a significant factor for survey respondents, with more than 17% of those who expressed an interest but did not participate claiming that they “don’t have the skills” to enjoy these activities (17.25%).





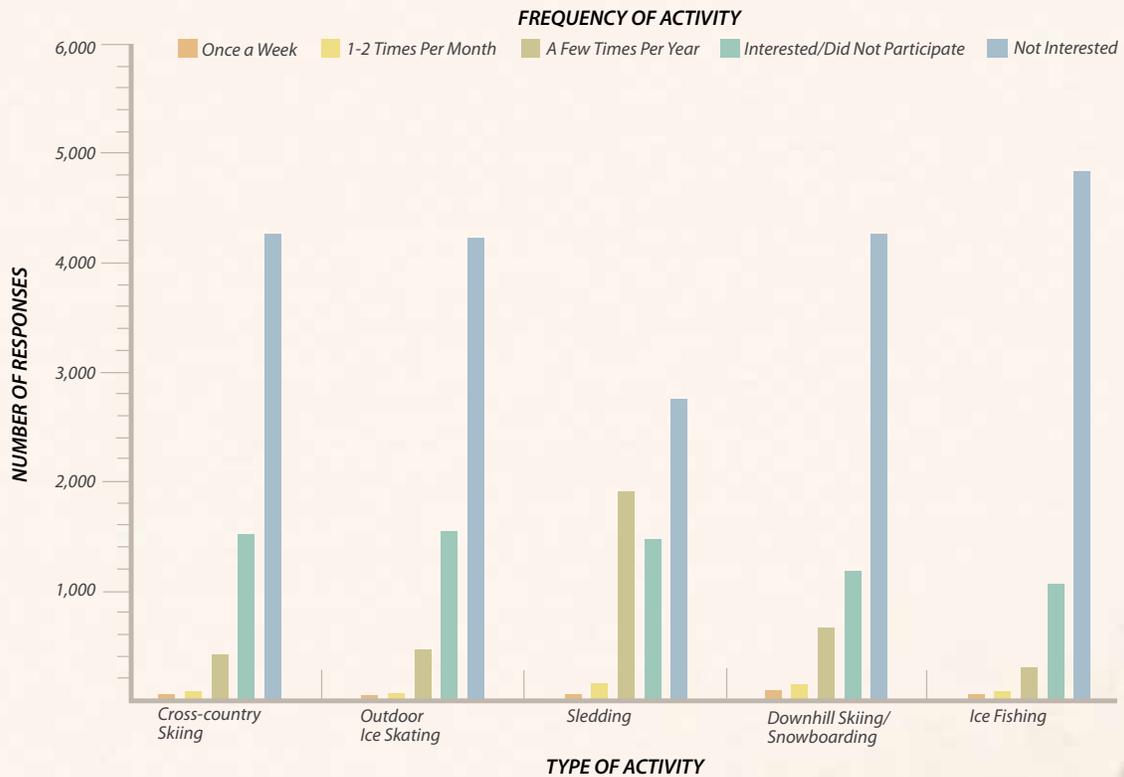
CAMPING

• 6,487 responses, 889 skipped



More than 30% of survey respondents (32.67%) went camping on an electric campsite in a developed campground at least once during the past year, and 28% camped on a non-electric site in a developed campground (28.67%). More than one-fifth (21.90%) of survey respondents camped with a group. A smaller percentage of the survey respondents went backpacking (17.85%). Although the smallest percentage of survey respondents in this category camped with their horse as part of an equestrian outing (9.00%), they camped most frequently, with 19% enjoying horseman's camping weekly, and 57% going horseman's camping at least a few times per month.

Interested but did not participate: 2,780 responses, 4,596 skipped. More than half (57.12%) of the survey respondents who were interested in camping but did not go on a camping trip during the past year stayed home because they were "too busy with other things." More than 15% of those who would like to camp but did not, reported that they "don't have information" about camping opportunities (15.47%), and nearly 15% were deterred because they had "no one to go with" (14.78%).



Sledding was the most popular winter sport among the survey respondents, with one-third (33.23%) going sledding at least a few times during the season. About 13% of survey respondents reported going downhill skiing or snowboarding in Ohio at least once during the season (13.53%).

Interested but did not participate: 2,976 responses, 4,400 skipped. About one-third of the survey respondents who claimed an interest in winter sports but did not participate in the past year were held back because they were “too busy with other things” (34.11%). More than 22% did not engage in winter sports despite their interest because they “don’t have information” about available opportunities (22.12%), and about one-fifth (19.12%) were unable to because of the weather.



OUTDOOR RECREATION PREFERENCES, PRESSING NEEDS AND NEW ACTIVITIES

In this section of the survey, numerous activities were listed along with a blank box labeled “other” where survey respondents could write in an activity not listed. Survey respondents were asked to select up to three of the activities listed.

What types of outdoor recreation opportunities are the most important to you?

• 6,425 responses, 951 skipped

When asked to select the three most important outdoor recreation opportunities from a list of 20 possibilities, more than half of the survey respondents (57.25%) selected multiple-use trails for hiking, walking or bicycling. About 30% of survey respondents chose camping areas among the three most important recreation opportunities, and 20% selected nature based recreation. Other high ranking responses include fishing access (19.60%), birding/wildlife recreation areas (18.24%), and cabins or other overnight facilities near parks (18.52%).

What do you believe are the most pressing needs for outdoor recreation opportunities?

• 6,222 responses, 1,154 skipped

The three highest ranking responses regarding the most pressing needs for outdoor recreation opportunities are related to trails. One-third (33.67%) of survey respondents chose better trail connectivity among the top three most pressing need for outdoor recreation opportunities, and 30% of survey respondents selected more multiple-use trails. More than one-fourth (26.02%) of survey respondents included “restrooms and water fountains at trails” in their top three most pressing needs. Other high ranking responses include more nature programs (17.31%), flush restrooms (16.99%) and cabins or other overnight facilities near parks (15.32%).

What new activities would you like to see offered, or existing activities expanded?

• 5,874 responses, 1,502 skipped

When asked about their top three preferences for new or expanded activities in their area, nearly one-third of survey respondents chose hiking/walking paths (32.82%). Canoeing or kayaking facilities were identified by 26.76% of survey respondents as a top choice. Multiple-use local trails were selected by 21.55% of the survey respondents, and multiple-use regional trails were chosen by 20.85% of the survey respondents. Other high-ranking activities include cabins or other overnight facilities (20.82%), and full-facility campsites (19.41%).

EVENTS

In this section of the survey, several types of outdoor programs and special events were listed. For each type of event, survey respondents were asked to select one of the following choices to describe how far they would be willing to travel to attend the event: more than 50 miles, 20 to 50 miles, 5 to 19 miles, less than 5 miles, would not attend.

What programs or special events would you attend at a public park or recreation area?

• 6,082 responses, 1,294 skipped

Overall, the events that survey respondents would most likely attend at a park include a farmers market (80.91%), a festival with games, vendors, etc. (76.75%), an outdoor concert or play (74.33%), a nature program or hike (71.73%), a living history program or reenactment (62.70%), an outdoor skills workshop (61.16%), an arts and crafts show (61.14%), a campout (58.84%) or a birding program or hike (50.60%).

Events for which the largest percentage of survey respondents would travel an hour more include campouts (22.27%), festivals (13.73%) and living history or historical reenactments (12.24%). These trips of 50 miles or more are considered potential overnight trips by tourism industry professionals.

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVEMENTS

• 5,886 responses, 1,490 skipped

When asked to prioritize the following list of outdoor recreation improvements, survey respondents ranked them as follows. The overall rankings are based on the three highest and the three lowest priority ratings by survey respondents:

1. Focus on maintenance of existing facilities at state parks and forests (57% of survey respondents selected this among their top three priorities/ 16% selected this among their bottom three priorities).
2. Develop additional facilities at existing state parks and forests (45% top three/ 17% bottom three).
3. Purchase land for passive, quiet nature based recreation opportunities (38% top three/ 25% bottom three).
4. Improve access to other Ohio lakes and rivers (32% top three/ 25% bottom three).
5. Purchase land for active and sport based recreation (31% top three/ 38% bottom three).
6. Improve public access to Lake Erie (30% top three/ 37% bottom three).
7. Improve outdoor recreation opportunities in urban areas (25% top three/ 44% bottom three).
8. Improve public access to the Ohio River (22% top three / 44% bottom three).
9. Improve access to outdoor recreation for disabled/elderly (18% top three/51% bottom three).

Across all categories of outdoor recreation activities, multiple use trails were used most frequently and by the greatest percentage of survey respondents



OVERNIGHT TRAVEL

In this section of the survey, several popular outdoor recreation activities were listed, along with a blank box labeled “other” where survey respondents could write in an activity not listed. Survey respondents were asked to select all of the activities they participate in while traveling.

What activities did you travel for or participate in while traveling?

• 4,814 responses, 2,562 skipped

When asked what type of outdoor recreation activities they participate in while traveling, or what outdoor recreation activities they travel for, 46.32% of survey respondents selected hiking. About one fourth of survey respondents mix travel and birding or wildlife watching (25.49%), fishing (25.47%), or beach visiting or lake swimming (24.80%). More than one-fifth of survey respondents (22.79%) claim that they travel for outdoor events, such as festivals, reenactments, etc.

How long did you stay?

• 4,891 responses, 2,485 skipped

Nearly two-thirds of survey respondents reported that the majority of their trips combining travel and outdoor recreation (61.89%) lasted two or three nights. About one-fourth (25.15%) were for just one night, and the remainder (12.96%) were for a week or more.

Where did you stay?

• 4,862 responses, 2,514 skipped

More than half of survey respondents (52.24%) camped in a campground with their own equipment when traveling for outdoor recreation. More than one-third (35.60%) stayed in a hotel. More than one-fourth (26.59%) stayed with family or friends, and more than one-fifth (23.57%) stayed in a rented cabin or other vacation rental.

SATISFACTION

In this section of the survey, 20 popular outdoor recreation activities were listed. Survey respondents were asked to select one of the following choices that best describes their satisfaction with their experiences regarding each of the listed activities in which they participated in the past year: very satisfied, satisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, dissatisfied, not applicable.

How satisfied were you with your outdoor recreation experiences in Ohio in the past year?

• 6,414, responses, 962 skipped

When asked about their satisfaction with outdoor recreation experiences, the greatest percentage of survey respondents who participated in the activity indicated that they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with:

- Multi-use trails-hiking/walking/biking (83.47%)
- Picnic areas (71.71%)
- Birding/wildlife observation areas (70.91%)
- Playgrounds at a park (69.23%)
- Nature based recreation (67.47%)

A relatively high percentage of survey respondents indicated they were “dissatisfied” with the following activities, although nearly half of survey respondents who participated in the activity were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”:

- Swimming beaches (11.97% dissatisfied/45.08% satisfied or very satisfied)
- Bicycle routes for transportation (10.60% dissatisfied/48.36% satisfied or very satisfied)

Relatively high percentages of survey respondents who participated in the following activities indicated they were “dissatisfied” and relatively low percentages indicated they were “satisfied” or “very satisfied”:

- Motorized trails on public lands (11.08% dissatisfied/26.49% satisfied or very satisfied)
- Archery/shooting sports (7.66% dissatisfied/33.51% satisfied or very satisfied)
- Winter sport areas (7.56% dissatisfied/37.38% satisfied or very satisfied)

2013 STATEWIDE ISSUES & RECOMMENDED STRATEGIES

ISSUE: Recreational Resource Protection

Strengths/opportunities:

Healthy forests, streams and lakes are essential to provide the backdrop for some of Ohio's most popular outdoor recreation activities including trail use, wildlife related activities, swimming, boating and scenic drives.

Weaknesses/threats:

Threats to Ohio's woodland environments include invasive plant species and insect pests such as the emerald ash borer, gypsy moth and Asian longhorn beetle. Threats to Ohio's water resources include harmful algal blooms, Asian carp and zebra mussels.

Recommendations:

- Encourage local efforts to protect riparian corridors through conservation practices and land purchases.
- Promote watershed protection through conservation easements, educating private landowners about conservation practices, and participation in the Ohio Clean Lakes Initiative.
- Cooperate with multi-agency efforts to contain threats posed by plant, insect and aquatic animal threats.
- Include environmental stewardship in nature programs and special events, such as invasive plant pulls, tree planting, creek exploration, litter pick-ups, etc.

ISSUE: Recreational Resource Use

Strengths/opportunities:

Ohio provides diverse and numerous opportunities for outdoor recreation across the state. Outdoor recreation participants' concerns with user conflicts and overcrowding (with the exception of swimming) at outdoor recreation facilities have declined. Wise management of recreation facilities and segregation of potentially conflicting activities appears to be effective.

Weaknesses/threats:

Many park systems struggle with maintaining older facilities and keeping nature trails in good condition. Vandalism of park facilities and security for visitors were noted as concerns by focus group participants across the state.

Recommendations:

- Enhance safety and security at outdoor recreation sites through improvements such as security lighting and appropriate trail surfacing.
- In areas where personal security or vandalism is a problem, recruit the community's assistance through a Park Watch group or similar program for reporting incidents.
- Avoid potential user conflicts by offering special facilities for niche activities, separating incompatible activities or providing buffers.
- Allow over-utilized natural areas to rest periodically by restricting public access or dedicating them temporarily to a less intensive use.

ISSUE: Recreational Resource Financing***Strengths/opportunities:***

Many outdoor recreation providers have been successful in securing grants for facility improvements. The most utilized grants according to the focus group participants are Natureworks, Clean Ohio Fund, Recreational Trails Program and the Land and Water Conservation Fund grants. Public sentiment in favor of parks and recreation funding remains strong.

Weaknesses/threats:

Sources of operational funding for many recreation providers, such as tax levies and general revenue funding, have decreased or become less reliable. Some focus group participants believe their historic financing structures are no longer sustainable in the changing economic climate.

Recommendations:

- Donations, fundraising by friends groups, corporate sponsorships and partnerships and in-kind services provided by community organizations and user groups are potentially successful mechanisms for marshaling resources for projects.
- Equipment rentals, skill building workshops and programs, shelter rentals and overnight facilities near parks are all in demand, according to the on-line survey findings, and all have potential to generate additional revenues.
- Public awareness campaigns can educate voters, local businesses and community organizations who may not realize the financial challenges faced by recreation providers, and can help ensure that parks and outdoor recreation facilities are not taken for granted.

ISSUE: Partnerships and Planning***Strengths/opportunities:***

Recreation planning not only provides direction within an organization, it also serves as a vehicle to solicit feedback from stakeholders and communicate goals to potential partners. Focus groups in each region identified partnerships among their successful funding mechanisms, and provided compelling examples of successes. Partnerships and cooperative relationships are essential to achieving goals such as trail connectivity, which require cooperation among multiple jurisdictions.

Weaknesses/threats:

Collecting public input and planning can be intimidating and place a burden on staff who are already stretched thin with other obligations.

Recommendations:

- Grant evaluators should consider assigning extra points to proposals that feature partnerships.
- Planners should avoid environmentally sensitive areas when siting facilities that are potentially destructive or resource intensive.
- Plans that include the addition of new facilities should also incorporate outreach to user groups to help maintain them.
- Facilities that are falling into disuse should be modified and re-purposed, if feasible, to accommodate new or emerging activities.
- Recreation providers should share practices and continue to develop partnerships based on successful models, such as providing playing and practice fields for school sports programs, trails for cross-country teams, or wellness walks in cooperation with local health care providers.

ISSUE: Facility Maintenance & Rehabilitation

Strengths/opportunities:

The public seems to understand that aging infrastructure is a challenge for many park systems, and despite infrastructure challenges, very few survey respondents claim that they are “dissatisfied” with their outdoor recreation experiences at various facilities.

Weaknesses/threats:

“Focus on maintenance of existing facilities at state parks and forests” was listed as the top priority for improvements by survey respondents. Outdoor recreation professionals in each of the eleven focus groups identified aspects of facility maintenance and rehabilitation among their most pressing needs.

Recommendations:

- Although the public expresses little dissatisfaction with the current condition of Ohio’s aging park infrastructure, the average lake visitor is likely unaware of the real and pressing need for expensive dam repairs, and even replacement, at a number of Ohio State Park lakes. ODNR owns over 100 dams, 56 of which are Class One dams. Many of these dams are approaching, or have already passed their design life. A few were constructed in the early 1800s, creating lakes that feed Ohio’s canal system. Canal transportation was short lived, but canal lakes are still very important recreational resources. 1800s dams, making recreation possible on lakes like Buckeye Lake, Portage Lakes and Indian Lake, are arguably some of Ohio’s most important and critical aging infrastructure. Though extremely costly and potentially disruptive to nearby residents, certain canal lake dams, as well as other relatively newer dams, are very much in need of repair or even replacement.
- Recreation providers should continue to exchange ideas and share best practices for the benefit of all.

Equipment rentals, skill building workshops and programs near parks are in demand and have potential to generate additional revenues. ▶

- Grant evaluators should give upgrades and renovations to existing facilities, rather than construction of new facilities, preference for funding, provided that grant requestors can demonstrate that these are facilities the public wants.
- Renovation projects should incorporate elements of sustainable design, energy efficiency, and low-maintenance materials.
- Recreation providers should utilize volunteer labor for routine maintenance, and organize “blitz” days for periodic needs, such as painting, landscaping, etc. for groups, organizations and individuals interested in service projects.
- Recreation providers should consider partnering with similar providers in their region, or with other entities to share resources including equipment and labor.



ISSUE: Trail Corridors***Strengths/opportunities:***

Across all categories of outdoor recreation activities, multiple use trails were used most frequently and by the greatest percentage of survey respondents, and were also identified as the most important outdoor recreation facility, and the top preference for new or expanded outdoor recreation opportunities. Survey respondents also reported the highest level of satisfaction with their outdoor recreation experiences on multi-use trails.

Weaknesses/threats:

Park professionals who participated in the eleven focus groups most frequently identified “trail connectivity” as a pressing need for outdoor recreation improvements in their area, and trail connectivity was selected as a pressing need by the greatest percentage of survey respondents. When asked about their needs for purchasing additional public land, the park professionals most frequently identified land for trails, trail access and trail connectors. When presented with a variety of trail improvements for increased spending, the largest number of respondents to the 2009 statewide trails users survey chose “restrooms and fountains along trails” for increased funding, followed by “construction of alternative transportation routes.” After “time constraints” and “work”, the most frequently cited reason for not using trails more often was “trail needs to be closer.”

Recommendations:

- Considering the overwhelming popularity and importance of trails to the public, recreation providers should continue to form regional coalitions to review their trail offerings and explore opportunities for creating trail connectors.
- Any new trail development projects should focus on connectivity to existing trail systems in the area, if feasible.
- Grant evaluators should continue to give preference for funding to trail development projects that include connectivity to existing trail systems in the area.
- Trail development projects should also include conveniences for users, including restrooms, drinking water, adequate parking and security lighting.
- With regard to motorized trails, projects should focus on widening and providing obstacles or other challenges for riders on existing trails, and offering additional recreation facilities in the area to enhance the overall experience.

ISSUE: Water-based Recreation**Strengths/opportunities:**

After trail use, picnicking and wildlife activities, swimming and boating were the most popular activities with survey respondents. In addition, “canoeing/ kayaking facilities” ranked second among the new or expanded facilities requested by survey respondents. Focus groups in each region identified kayaking as a highly popular and growing activity, and in a few of the focus groups, stand-up paddleboarding was identified as an emerging activity with high potential for growth. Canoe and kayak registrations by the ODNR Division of Watercraft increased more than 77% between 2003 and 2012. More than 62% of survey respondents who indicated that they are interested in boating, but did not participate, cited “don’t have equipment” as the reason.

Weaknesses/threats:

Although swimming is very popular with survey respondents, less than half of those who used beaches were satisfied or very satisfied with their experience, and 12% were dissatisfied. With regard to facilities for canoeing and kayaking, less than half of survey respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with paddling access, and 5% were dissatisfied. Lack of available facilities in the area, or distance to facilities, was a significant barrier to one in six of those who wanted to swim, but did not.

Recommendations:

- Recreation providers should survey swimmers in their area to gauge satisfaction with available facilities, and determine the reasons for dissatisfaction.

Recreational providers should ► consider offering equipment rentals to introduce potential boaters to kayaking, sailing, or paddleboarding.

- The State Water Trails program has been a very successful tool for integrating various recreational activities along a river corridor, and should be broadly promoted to the general public as well as recreational user groups, and expanded, as feasible.
- Because lack of equipment is a primary deterrent for non-boaters who have an interest, recreation providers should consider offering equipment rentals and/or providing fee-based programs with equipment provided to introduce potential boaters to kayaking, sailing, or paddleboarding.
- Additional or improved facilities for paddling access, including launching and parking, should be prioritized on rivers that are designated water trails, and on navigable stretches of waterways along existing multi-use trail corridors.
- In areas where there is high unmet demand for swimming pools but resources are limited, recreation providers should consider adding splash pads or spray parks as a lower cost alternative.



ISSUE: Land Acquisition***Strengths/opportunities:***

Survey respondents identified “purchase land for passive, quiet nature based recreation opportunities” as the third highest priority for improvement of outdoor recreation opportunities. Focus group participants cited a need for additional public land for specific purposes such as trails and trail connectors, motorized trail development, sports fields and dog parks. Several participants noted that additional undeveloped land is needed for green space, watershed protection, storm water management, and along riparian corridors to serve as a buffer for stream water quality.

Weaknesses/threats:

Many park systems are challenged with great needs for funding to maintain and operate existing facilities. In several focus groups, participants assert that any new land acquired must be accompanied by additional funding to maintain or develop it.

Recommendations:

- Additional land purchases should be encouraged but approached with the recognition that additional funding will be needed to provide even a minimal amount of development and caretaking.
- Where land purchases are needed for regional or multi-jurisdictional projects such as trail connectors, the participating agencies should work cooperatively to leverage funding.
- Grant evaluators should give preference for funding to land acquisition proposals that are based on partnerships or provide multiple benefits.

ISSUE: Public Awareness and Outreach***Strengths/opportunities:***

Websites are a powerful tool for government entities and other recreation providers, and many are embracing tools such as social media to help broaden their outreach and create a dialogue with park users and non-users. More than 23% of the on-line survey respondents indicated that they became aware of the survey through social media.

Weaknesses/threats:

Participants in the majority of focus groups cited lack of awareness of facilities and programs as a barrier to outdoor recreation, and they identified public outreach across media as a pressing need in their respective regions. “Don’t have information about where facilities are offered” was a very significant deterrent to survey respondents interested in nature based activities, cited by nearly half of those who did not participate. Other categories of activities where lack of information was frequently cited include outdoor skills activities, outdoor recreation, outdoor leisure activities, winter sports and motorized trails.

Recommendations:

- Recreation providers should take advantage of opportunities offered by agencies and organizations with a regional or statewide reach, such as Tourism Ohio and OPRA, to list facilities and offerings on websites and in publications.
- Recreation providers should also partner with local convention and visitors bureaus, chambers of commerce and local tourist attractions to cross-market facilities and programs across all media formats.
- Recreation providers who are not currently participating in social media should prioritize establishing a social media presence, with assistance from volunteers or staff with an interest.
- Recreation providers should consider providing off-site programs at schools, libraries, service organization meetings, or other venues where they have an opportunity to engage the general public.

ISSUE: Wildlife-based & Nature-based Recreation**Strengths/opportunities:**

After trail use and picnicking, wildlife related activities are among the most popular activities with survey respondents. Wildlife viewing and photography were enjoyed at least once in the past year by more than 55% of all survey respondents, and fishing access ranked fourth among the most important recreation opportunities for survey respondents. Nature based recreation ranks third, behind trails and camping, as the most important recreation opportunity for survey respondents, and “more nature programs” ranks fourth among pressing needs identified by survey respondents. When asked about overnight travel and outdoor recreation activities, one-fourth of survey respondents listed fishing, birding or wildlife watching among the activities they pursue while traveling, or that they travel in order to pursue.

Weaknesses/threats:

While satisfaction with birding and wildlife observation areas is high and dissatisfaction very low, satisfaction with hunting areas is rather low and 5% of survey respondents said they were dissatisfied with their experience at hunting areas. Survey respondents are even more dissatisfied with the available opportunities for shooting sports and archery.

Wildlife related activities, including nature programs, are among the most popular with survey respondents.

Recommendations:

- To provide more hunting opportunities at areas that offer sufficient land base and habitat to support healthy populations of wildlife, but do not typically offer hunting, recreation providers may want to consider opening areas to special hunts for a limited time to a limited number of hunters.
- Recreation providers should consider developing archery ranges or trails in underserved areas, and partnering with archery clubs, equipment manufacturers, or the Division of Wildlife to provide archery programs with equipment supplied or available to rent.
- In areas where it is determined that shooting sports opportunities, including skeet and trap shooting, are not keeping up with demand, recreation providers should consider partnering with local conservation clubs to provide facilities that serve the region.
- Nature programs that combine elements of environmental stewardship and nature appreciation with more active outdoor skills such as archery, geocaching, orienteering, paddle sports or mountain biking can appeal to multiple constituencies.



ISSUE: Visitor Recruitment & Retention***Strengths/opportunities:***

Even during difficult economic times, park systems report steady or increasing attendance as Ohioans seek relaxation and recreation in the outdoors. In addition, many park systems have very loyal visitors, volunteer groups and friends organizations. The single greatest barrier to outdoor recreation participation among survey respondents is a lack of time due to obligations, not disinterest. "Don't have equipment" was also a significant barrier to survey respondents who are interested, but did not participate in wildlife related activities, boating, outdoor skills activities, motorized trail use, camping and winter sports.

Weaknesses/threats:

Participants in three focus groups noted that outdoor recreation is not being passed to the next generation as a family tradition, and some park professionals have observed that people engage in less self-directed recreation and outdoor play. For some outdoor activities, participation with a companion or team is an essential or enriching part of the experience. "No one to go with" was a deterrent to more than one in seven survey respondents who were interested, but did not participate in field and court sports, camping, hiking, or golf activities.

Recommendations:

- Recreation providers should offer playgrounds and running tracks or other outdoor exercise facilities near sports fields so parent can entertain younger children or exercise while their older children practice.
- Recreation providers should consider offering WiFi in outdoor spaces in areas where cell phone reception is spotty, so park visitors can stay connected to work or social contacts while enjoying park facilities.
- Recreation providers should consider offering opportunities for overnight stays or partnering with local hotels or B & Bs to provide special activities and transportation to their parks.
- Recreation providers should consider offering casual, non-league "pick up" games for adults or single-day or weekend family tournaments on existing sports courts or fields. Providers should also accommodate "meet up groups" of adults in their area who are too busy to join a team and play on a regular basis.
- Recreation providers should consider providing special programs for single adults to meet others with similar interests and engage in other outdoor recreation pursuits as a group.
- Recreation providers should consider offering or partnering to offer rental equipment and/or classes or workshops with gear provided to better satisfy demand for activities such as horseback riding, birding, boating, geocaching, archery, climbing or rappelling, camping, motorized trail riding or skiing.

ISSUE: Appealing to Youth**Strengths/opportunities:**

When asked about demographic trends, focus group participants in each region of the state noted that they see more families recreating together. Focus group participants also noted that their playing and practice fields for sports such as soccer are filled to capacity with youth leagues. A number of national initiatives to encourage active lifestyles for youth remain vibrant and popular.

Weaknesses/threats:

Participants in several of the focus groups expressed concern that a tradition of outdoor recreation and park use is not being passed through families, and may be stalled with the current generation of parents. Focus groups in each region identified special facilities or programs for youth, such as playing fields for organized sports, spray parks, accessible playgrounds and technology-based recreation, among their pressing needs.

Recommendations:

- Park systems that provide playing and practice fields for youth sports should consider reaching out during play and practice periods while families are present to promote upcoming events or use of other facilities the park provides.
- Parks should consider hosting tournaments, or pick-up games outside of the regular seasons to encourage park use for greater time periods.
- Recreation providers should consider providing “safe” opportunities and programs for “tweens” and teenagers to enjoy outdoor recreation independent of their parents.

Recreation providers should consider providing “safe” opportunities and programs for “tweens” and teenagers to enjoy outdoor recreation independent of their parents. ►

- More park systems should consider offering nature play areas to provide an inviting place for children to engage in self-directed play and exploration in a natural environment.
- Recreation providers should review their methods of providing information about facilities and programs, and offer text messages or other emerging social media formats to communicate directly with youth.
- Park managers should consider partnering with local schools to provide park facilities for physical education classes, or volunteer opportunities in the parks for service credit for National Honor Society or other programs.



The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) along with Ducks Unlimited, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA), Natural Resources Conservation Service, ODNR Office of Coastal Management, ODNR Division of Wildlife, Lake Erie Commission, The Nature Conservancy, Cleveland Metroparks, Cleveland Natural History Museum, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Ohio Dept. of Transportation completed an Ohio update to the National Wetlands Inventory in November 2009.

The inventory, used in tandem with the Ohio Wetland Restoration and Mitigation Strategy Blueprint, provides access to precise wetland data and sound strategies for protection. The location for accessing the information is available online at www.fws.gov/wetlands/.

National Wetlands Inventory

The goal of the inventory is to provide Ohioans with current geographically referenced information on the status, extent, characteristics and functions of wetland, riparian, deepwater and related aquatic habitats in priority areas in order to promote the understanding and conservation of these resources. The state of Ohio has approximately 880,556 acres of wetlands categorized in the following habitat types: forested wetland (305,347 acres), shrub/scrub wetlands (82,994 acres), emergent wetlands (100,347 acres), aquatic bed (2,131 acres), ponds (133,470 acres), lakes (158,208 acres) and other (98,056 acres). From the period 1975-1990 to 2006-2007, there was a net gain of 96,086 wetlands in the state with an increased acreage of 100,189 acres.

History

The USFWS originally established the National Wetlands Inventory to develop and provide resource managers with information on the location, extent and types of wetlands and deepwater habitats. When it began, the principal focus of the inventory was to produce maps of wetlands in priority areas for the protection and management of fish and wildlife resources.

Categories

The Ohio EPA's regulatory program for wetlands is found in the wetland antidegradation rule. The wetland antidegradation rule categorizes wetlands based on their function, sensitivity to disturbance, rarity, and irreplaceability. It scales the strictness of avoidance, minimization, and mitigation to a wetland's category. Three categories were established:

- Category 1: Wetlands with minimal wetland function and/or integrity.
- Category 2: Wetlands with moderate wetland function and/or integrity.
- Category 3: Wetlands with superior wetland function and/or integrity.

This information and more on the Ohio EPA's wetland assessment program can be found at www.epa.gov/type/wetlands/assessment/oh1.cfm.

Ohio has approximately 880,556 acres of wetlands – the National Wetlands Inventory along with the Mitigation Strategy Blueprint will work to identify priority wetlands for acquisition and protection ►

Prioritizing wetland types

Ohio is part of the Upper Mississippi River and Great Lakes Region Joint Venture (UMRGLR JV) which is a regional-scale, self-directed partnership involving government agencies, tribes, and several non-governmental organizations working together on bird habitat conservation. The UMRGLR JV created decision-support maps to target regional marsh and wetland conservation efforts for birds during the breeding and non-breeding periods. The JV also provides conservation objectives expressed as target acres by wetland type for Ohio. The priorities for wetland restoration and protection are shallow, semi-permanent marsh and mudflat/moist soil areas.

Goals

Together the National Wetlands Inventory, the Mitigation Strategy Blueprint, and the UMRGLR JV represent a multifaceted approach for identifying priority wetlands for acquisition and protection throughout the state. The following three goals will be accomplished through this approach:

- I. Updating of maps in areas of the state that have experienced substantial developmental pressure.
- II. Analyzing changes and trends to wetlands and other aquatic habitats at ecosystem, regional or local levels.
- III. The ability to better identify threats and risks to important wetland and aquatic habitats in order to promote sound decision making.

Summary

New strategic mapping will identify patterns of change in aquatic habitats and locate threatened wetlands. Using this mapping, grassroots organizations and conservation partners will have modern tools to address wetland conservation in Ohio. Once these new tools are in use, information will be available through a variety of formats, making communication of findings more efficient. To learn more about wetlands, visit www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/401/ecology.aspx



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ONLINE RESOURCES

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www.development.ohio.gov
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- Ohio Historical Society
www.ohiohistory.org
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