

ANNUAL REPORT

OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

2024
FISCAL YEAR

GREAT COUNCIL STATE PARK

FROM DIRECTOR MARY MERTZ

In 2024, ODNR celebrates a significant milestone—75 years of dedicated and exemplary stewardship, preservation, outdoor recreation, and enhancement of the natural beauty and resources of Ohio.

This anniversary coincided with another momentous event: the total solar eclipse. On April 8, ODNR laid out the perfect setting for more than 150,000 people at state parks, wildlife areas, nature preserves, and forests. These visitors were surrounded by nature as they experienced this once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon.

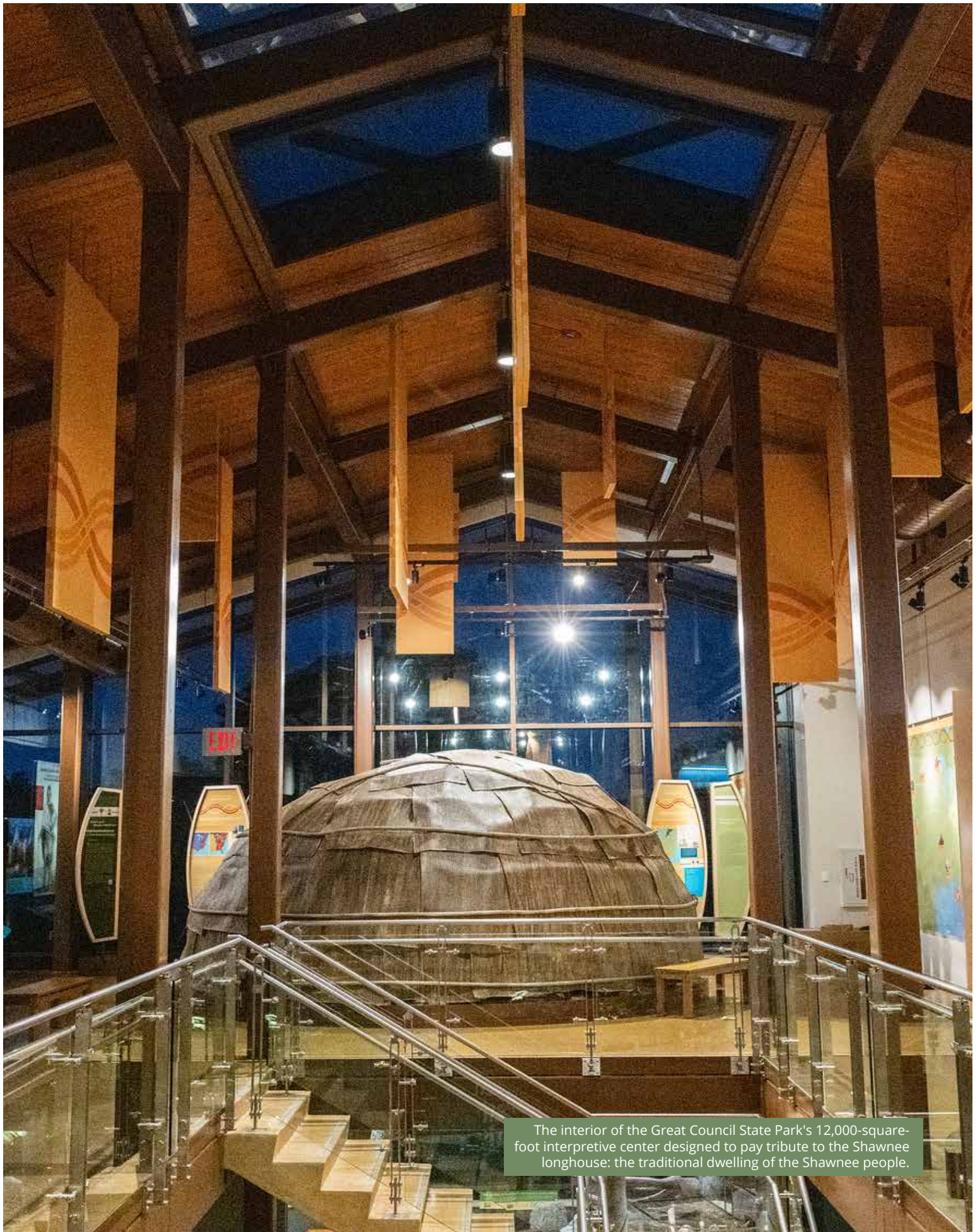
The total solar eclipse was a testament to ODNR's overall mission to preserve Ohio's natural wonders and expand opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors. This mission is a large undertaking as Ohio's diverse landscape unfolds with breathtaking forests, picturesque waterways, striking geological formations, and abundant wildlife. These natural wonders are not only vital contributors to Ohio's economy but also invite recreation through endless outdoor adventures, enriching the lives of Ohioans. ODNR has evolved and expanded since its creation in 1949, but its mission has remained unchanged: ensuring a balance between wise use and protection of Ohio's natural resources for the benefit of all.

In June 2024, ODNR proudly opened Great Council State Park. The opening of Ohio's 76th state park represents a significant investment in honoring the state's history. The park has been in the works since 2019, when Governor Mike DeWine expressed his desire to pay tribute to a stretch of land along U.S. Route 68 where "Old Chillicothe," a lively Shawnee town, once stood. The park's main attraction is a 12,000-square-foot interpretive center designed to pay tribute to the Shawnee longhouse: the traditional dwelling of the Shawnee people. Behind the interpretive center is a beautiful prairie with trails, one of which ends with a view of the Little Miami River. The opening of the park was a huge success as there were many attendees including members from three federally recognized Shawnee tribes. These tribes also played a strong role throughout the park's creation as we wanted to ensure accuracy and authenticity in the park's architecture and literature. Great Council State Park serves as a learning tool that can take visitors into the past, inspiring an appreciation for Ohio's history through interactive exhibits, a living stream, and educational activities. The park reminds visitors of the power of community, the importance of conservation, and the ongoing legacy of those who came before us. In celebrating ODNR's 75th anniversary, we are reflecting on its legacy of preservation and protection. This legacy, encompassing the preservation of Ohio's natural and cultural heritage, is perfectly embodied by Great Council State Park.



Governor Mike DeWine visits Great Council State Park, Ohio's 76th state park.

In addition to a new state park, The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves recognized three new nature preserves, bringing the state to a total of 147. These include Blue Creek



The interior of the Great Council State Park's 12,000-square-foot interpretive center designed to pay tribute to the Shawnee longhouse: the traditional dwelling of the Shawnee people.

Limestone Glade in Lucas County, Bison Hollow in Hocking and Vinton Counties, and Little Beaver Creek in Columbiana County, which is owned and managed by the division. The protection of Little Beaver Creek is especially important as it safeguards rare plant species and sensitive aquatic life while also providing long-term protection for an important Ohio Scenic River.

Another immense success occurred in April when Governor DeWine announced the trumpeter swan had been removed from Ohio's list of threatened species. These beautiful creatures were once entirely absent from the state until they were reintroduced in 1996; since then, their populations have steadily grown. Trumpeter swans have surpassed the Division of Wildlife's management goals for the species, indicating that populations are now sustainable. While the Ohio Wildlife Council's vote to delist trumpeter swans marks a significant breakthrough in the conservation of the species, the Division of Wildlife will continue monitoring and management efforts to further increase habitats and populations.



The Friendship Park project in Jefferson County

This year, the Division of Mineral Resources Management received a national award from the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement for outstanding reclamation efforts. The award-winning Friendship Park Highwall Project in Jefferson County was part of the division's Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program. AMLER allocates federal

funding for projects that reclaim abandoned mine lands while promoting community and economic development.

The Friendship Park project involved reclaiming 2,700 linear feet of hazardous highwalls—steep, exposed cliffs from Ohio's pre-reclamation mining era. Not only did this project make formerly mined lands safe, but it also breathed new life to the region, opening new opportunities to hike, bike, and enjoy the great outdoors. The AMLER program continues to have great success in restoring old mine lands for the benefit of the public.

The Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management has continued its amazing work with the Orphan Well Program. This program is incredibly important for the protection of public health and safety, natural resources conservation, and the development of oil and gas resources in Ohio. The program uses drones to locate and later plug improperly abandoned oil and natural gas wells. This year the program has plugged 323 orphan wells—nearly doubling the number of orphan wells plugged in FY23.

ODNR continued Governor DeWine's commitment to statewide projects aimed at updating and improving the lodges at Ohio State Parks. Renovations were completed at Deer Creek, Hueston Woods, Shawnee, and Mohican state park lodges. Across the four lodges, a total of 348 rooms were renovated, along with crucial capital improvements to the facilities. This is in addition to the work accomplished in previous years, including renovated guest rooms at Punderson Manor Lodge and the construction of the new Hocking Hills State Park Lodge.



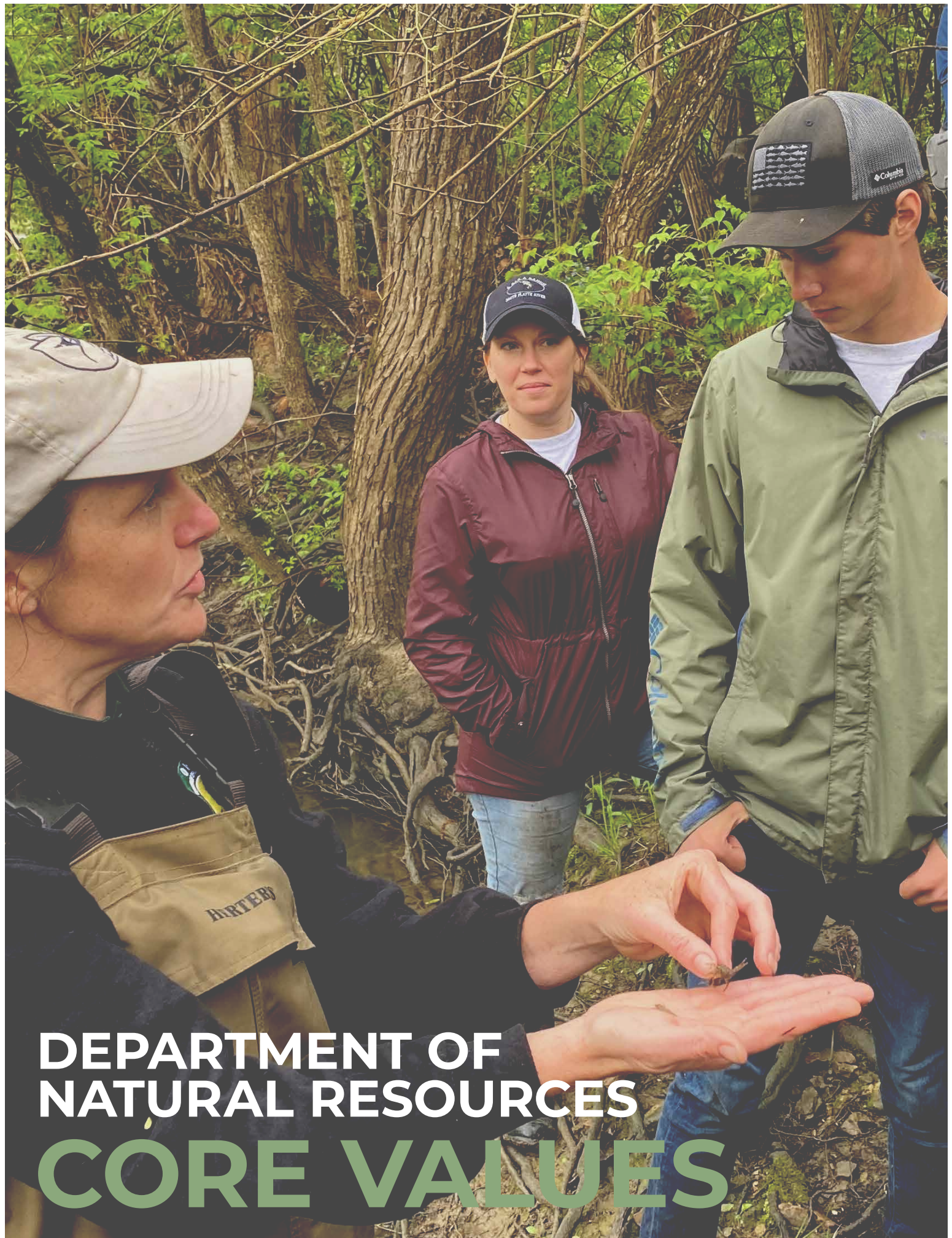
These lodges serve as a gateway to the great outdoors in Ohio by offering a comfortable and beautiful place to stay as well as direct access to outdoor recreation such as boating, hiking, and birding. Improving lodges at parks will continue to be our priority in the future as it is our goal to provide visitors with the most up-to-date and enjoyable vacation lodgings across Ohio's wonderful state park system.

For the past five years, ODNR has played an important role in Governor DeWine's H2Ohio initiative which works to provide clean, accessible water for Ohioans and to ensure the long-term health of our lakes and waterways. ODNR is focused on restoring and creating wetlands, which naturally improve water quality by trapping, filtering, and removing excess nutrients and other pollutants in surface water. Additionally, ODNR promotes the use of forested buffers to improve water quality in surface water and fish and wildlife habitat. This year we initiated 49 new projects and created 5,993 acres of wetlands and associated habitat restoration. To date, we have completed 98 projects with an additional 85 in progress, totaling an impressive 16,276 acres dedicated to wetlands and habitat restoration. Through these initiatives, ODNR is significantly advancing sustainable water management efforts and working to preserve Ohio's rich biodiversity.

This past year has exemplified ODNR's commitment to the mission that began 75 years ago. From the addition of a new state park to delisting a once-endangered species, the department has shown its unwavering devotion to environmental stewardship, preservation, and protection. Working collaboratively with our divisions and offices has been instrumental in achieving these milestones and advancing our efforts, as highlighted in the following pages. With a remarkable 75-year legacy of achievement and preservation behind us, ODNR must move boldly into the future to safeguard these resources for the next 75 years and beyond.

Sincerely,

Mary Mertz
Mary Mertz, Director



DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
CORE VALUES

1

DO THE RIGHT THING, THE RIGHT WAY

We must set the standard for ethics and integrity. Cutting corners and doing the wrong thing is never worth it. Essential to maintaining public trust is never compromising on character and following the rules and processes to achieve our mission.

2

PROMOTE SCIENCE-BASED STEWARDSHIP

Conservation and responsible, sustainable use of our state resources requires action and education based in science. We must stay up to date on the latest research, constantly question, and use data to guide our decisions and actions.

3

IF IT'S WORTH DOING, IT'S WORTH DOING NOW

Urgency is a compulsion to get things done in a timely, yet thoughtful manner. Ideas are great, but don't mean much if we do nothing with them. We act on good ideas! Every project and every initiative needs motivation and dedication to get it across the finish line. Imagine what is possible and make it happen!

4

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customers (internal and external) don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. If a customer reaches you, you own it. Public trust is earned through responsiveness.

5

COMMIT TO GREAT COMMUNICATION

Moving from good to great communication requires knowledge and understanding of what we do and why, in addition to really listening to your audience to appreciate their motives and concerns. The message is not about the messenger; it is about meeting the needs of those you are communicating with.

6

EMBRACE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Actively promote and encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion of all individuals, both internally and externally. This must be reflective in our workforce and evident in the opportunities and programs we deliver to the public.

MINERAL RESOURCES



Mining activities at Melvin Stone located in Greene County (permit number IM-2052).

The Division of Mineral Resources Management is charged with regulating coal and industrial mineral mining in Ohio while also protecting the public, miners, and the environment. The division's mission is to provide for the safe and environmentally sound development and restoration of mineral and fossil fuel extraction sites.

MINERALS BY THE NUMBERS



2,371
ACRES OF
MINE LAND
RECLAIMED



24
ABANDONED
MINE LAND
PROJECTS
COMPLETED



549
MINE SAFETY
INSPECTIONS



2,984
TOTAL COAL
AND INDUSTRIAL
MINERAL SITE
INSPECTIONS



5,096
MINERS
TRAINED
IN HEALTH
& SAFETY
PROGRAMS



17
MINE
SUBSIDENCE
SINKHOLES
STABILIZED



\$10M
AWARDED
TO 6 AMLR
PROJECTS

THE DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

continued steadily providing safety, regulatory, and reclamation programs in FY24. A highlight of the year was a national award from the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement for exemplary reclamation work at the Friendship Park Highwall Project in Jefferson County. The project began in the fall of 2020 and involved the reclamation of 2,700 linear feet of unsafe highwalls. Not only did this work make the area safer, but it provided for new recreational opportunities for the park, promoted biodiversity, and provided long-term economic benefits to the park district and local community.

REGULATION & SAFETY

The Field Inspection and Enforcement program aims to safeguard the well-being of Ohioans and preserve resources through diligent enforcement of active laws regulating active mining operations. In FY24, the division inspected a combined 2,984 coal and industrial mineral operations.

The division's Mine Safety Program is focused on promoting safe mining practices which includes conducting safety audits and other inspections as well as providing safety education to miners in First Aid, CPR, and other certification programs. In FY24, the division conducted 549 mine safety inspections and trained 5,096 miners.



Taggart's Wetland Project in Tuscarawas County, funded by H2Ohio, passively treats AMD entering the Huff Run Watershed.

ABANDONED MINE LAND PROGRAM

The division administers abandoned mine land programs with both state and federal funding. These programs aim to address properties with the highest priority problems resulting from coal mining that occurred prior to enactment of today's stricter reclamation requirements. Both programs are funded by severance taxes levied on coal mining.

The Abandoned Mine Land Program also received over \$60 million from these grant programs:

- **Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act:** \$46 million to restore legacy abandoned mine impacts in Ohio
- **AML Economic Revitalization Funding:** \$11.7 million for AML and economic development projects
- **H2Ohio:** \$3 million for treatment and abatement of Acid Mine Drainage

There were 24 AML projects completed in FY24 including 17 stabilizations of mine subsidence sinkholes and the closure of six mine portals. The division's regulatory program also reclaimed 2,371 acres of mine land.

The division's AMLER program provides awards with funding from the federal Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement for projects which support local investment opportunities that provide for sustainable long-term rehabilitation of coalfield economies. In FY24, the division awarded \$10 million in AMLER funds to six projects:

- Airport hangar, Akron
- Park and trail projects, Jackson and New Philadelphia
- RV park, Wellston
- Public boat dock repairs and improvements, Zanesville
- Reclamation, park improvements, triplexes, day care and workforce development (Survivor Advocacy Outreach Program)





Willowbrook Tipple Project in Coshocton County demolished a dangerous dilapidated 3-story coal processing building and 4 other small structures.

OIL & GAS RESOURCES

A tall oil and gas drilling rig stands against a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The rig's derrick is a complex lattice of metal, with a prominent red section near the top. The background shows a flat, open landscape with some distant structures and a fence line in the lower right corner.

The Division of Oil and Gas Resources Management regulates Ohio's oil and natural gas industry by protecting Ohioans and the environment while ensuring that the state's natural resources are managed and developed responsibly.

OIL & GAS BY THE NUMBERS



25k
SITE
INSPECTIONS
COMPLETED



323
ORPHAN WELLS
PLUGGED



298
DRILLING
PERMITS ISSUED



282
PLUG PERMITS
ISSUED



537
RADIOLOGICAL
ASSESSMENTS
PERFORMED



1,714
COMPLIANCE
NOTICES AND
ENFORCEMENT
ACTIONS



32
WELL PAD
PERMITS ISSUED

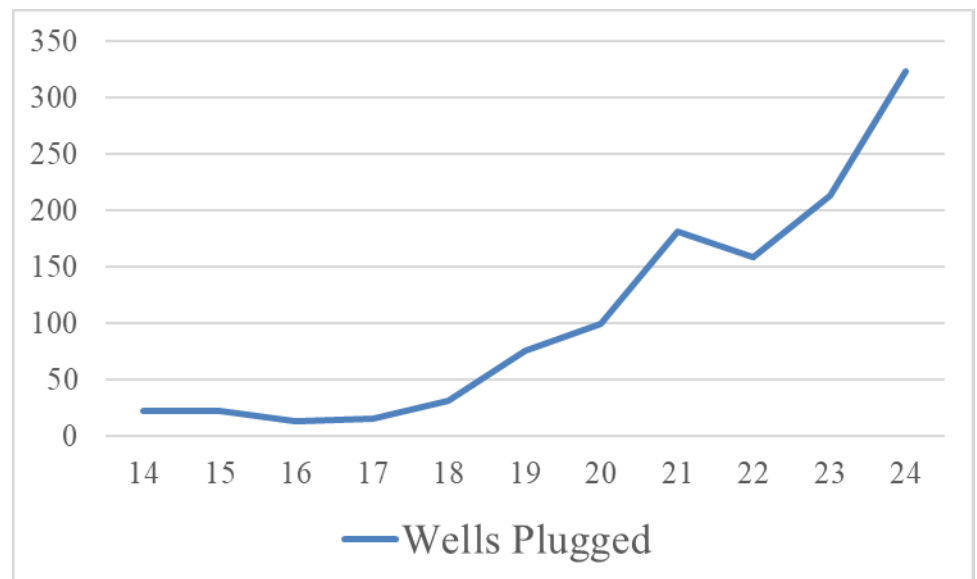


2
WASTE FACILITY
PERMITS ISSUED

THE DIVISION OF OIL AND GAS RESOURCES MANAGEMENT continued to ramp up its program to plug orphan wells, nearly doubling the number completed in FY23 which had been a 22 percent increase over FY22. In FY24, the division also completed 6.6 percent more site inspections and 29 percent more radiological assessments than the previous year. As for the oil and gas industry in Ohio, gas production remained steady while oil production set a record for total oil production at 29,427,583 barrels.

PLUGGING ORPHAN WELLS

The Orphan Well Program plugs improperly abandoned oil and natural gas wells. Proper plugging of orphan wells is necessary to protect public health and safety, conserve natural resources, and allow the efficient development of Ohio's oil and gas resources. This past year, the Division plugged 176 orphan wells – a 22% increase over the previous year.



REGULATORY PROGRAM

Through inspection and regulation, the division carries out its mission to oversee the oil and natural gas industry for the protection of all Ohioans and our environment while ensuring the state's abundant natural resources are managed properly. In FY24, the division conducted 25,572 site inspections, 537 radiological assessments, and issued an overall 614 permits, mostly for drilling and plugging. The division also issued 1,714 compliance notices and enforcement actions.

COASTAL RESOURCES

**The Office of Coastal Management
protects and restores the resources
of Ohio's Lake Erie coastline and
watershed.**



Wendy Park Construction

COASTAL BY THE NUMBERS



29

PERMITS ISSUED FOR SHORE STRUCTURES, INCLUDING TEMPORARY



33

SUBMERGED LANDS LEASE ACTIONS AUTHORIZED



\$410,000+

IN COASTAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS AWARDED



3,500

CUBIC YARDS OF SAND PLACED ALONG LAKE ERIE



188

REQUESTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ADDRESSED



\$258,000

OF SUBMERGED LANDS LEASE RENT PAYMENTS DISBURSED TO COMMUNITIES



8,000

PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH OLD WOMAN CREEK VISITORS CENTER AND OUTREACH EVENTS



2,000+

HOURS OF WORK COMPLETED BY OWC VOLUNTEERS



1,100

WATER SAMPLES ANALYZED AT OLD WOMAN CREEK



242K

WATER QUALITY & WEATHER DATA POINTS COLLECTED BY SENSORS AT OLD WOMAN CREEK

COASTAL MANAGEMENT had one of the most exciting moments early on in FY24 when 105 acres of habitat was preserved along the Chagrin River. The team worked with Western Reserve Land Conservancy and the City of Willoughby for the Chagrin River Floodplain Land Conservation Project, which was awarded \$1.7 million for the acquisition and preservation of the land. The conservation project is located along the Chagrin River, directly across from the City of Willoughby's Daniels Park. The acquisition, located approximately four miles upstream from Lake Erie, is part of a larger initiative to protect the Chagrin River to benefit urban coastal communities and contributes to a growing conservation corridor.

Another highlight for the year was the unveiling of two new public access resources:

- Lake Erie Public Access Map Viewer, a full upgrade of the mapping interface with up-to-date public access and recreational information.
- Lake Erie Public Access StoryMap, a user-friendly way to explore Lake Erie's public access sites by county and includes dynamic location maps, text narratives, and photos.

REGULATORY PROGRAM

The office's regulatory program provides oversight to various activities along Lake Erie including structure permits, coastal erosion area permits, salvage permits, and leases for structures or fills that extend beyond the natural shoreline of Lake Erie, including Sandusky Bay and Maumee Bay. In FY24, this activity was consistent with the previous year.

COASTAL MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE GRANTS

In addition to the Chagrin River Floodplain project, the division also received a \$500,000 Bipartisan Infrastructure Low Capacity award from NOAA for Central Lake Erie Basin Watershed Restoration and Conservation efforts, and \$150,000 from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to assess nature-based solutions to stabilize and enhance habitats along 2,000 feet of publicly accessible shoreline at Geneva State Park.

The division also issued \$410,000 in Coastal Management Assistance Grants for four public projects along the Lake Erie Coast in Huron, Lorain, Willoughby, and Cleveland.

OLD WOMAN CREEK NATIONAL ESTUARINE RESEARCH RESERVE

Located in Huron on the south-central shore of Lake Erie, Old Woman Creek is one of Ohio's few remaining examples of a natural estuary. The research reserve is managed as a cooperative partnership between the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and ODNR. Meanwhile, the preserve is managed by ODNR's Division of Natural Areas and Preserves.



EDUCATION

The reserve's visitor center saw over 5,000 people walk through its doors and education staff hosted 127 outreach events to over 3,000 people. These programs included topics like wetlands, watersheds, and Great Lakes coastal ecosystems. Students were able to participate in hands-on learning with activities like water quality monitoring, wildlife monitoring, ecology field sessions, and wildlife encounters.

In FY24, volunteers provided more than 2,000 hours of work within the reserve and their associated friends group. This effort is an important part of the reserve's research and educational outreach work through assisting in the processing water quality samples, removal of invasive species, aiding in youth and community paddling trips, and collection monitoring data within the Citizen Science Species Monitoring Program.

RESEARCH

- Over 1,100 water samples were analyzed by the OWC Analytical Laboratory to assess the role of wetlands in improving water quality.
- 23 institutions were engaged in research at Old Woman Creek National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- Over 172,000 water quality and 70,000 weather data points were measured by long-term sensors deployed within the Old Woman Creek State Nature Preserve.
- 2 new water quality monitoring stations were established in Old Woman Creek and Lake Erie, bringing the total number of long-term monitoring sites up to 6 for water quality and 2 for weather.
- 12 storm events were captured for high frequency water quality sampling to better understand how storms influence nutrient loading into Lake Erie.
- 6 interns and volunteers were trained in laboratory and field sampling practices that are broadly applicable to environmental science careers.

STEWARDSHIP

- Coordinated the removal of over 13,000 rosettes of invasive European Frog-bit from the Old Woman Creek estuary.
- 65 volunteers spent a total of 254 hours engaged in stewardship activities at OWC.
- 40 acres were managed for invasive species removal within OWC Reserve boundaries.
- 31 sites were sampled over 8 months to evaluate the water quality of four local watersheds.
- Developed a new restoration plan to guide future stewardship at the Reserve.



TRAINING

The Coastal Training Program hosted 27 training events for approximately 900 people and provided 127 outreach events to over 3,000 people. The program also coordinated its second offering of the Ohio Nature-Based Shoreline Training Program with the Ohio Coastal Management Program. This training takes place every two years, with the intent of training more practitioners in the Lake Erie Watershed and increasing the number of publicly visible nature-based shorelines along the Ohio coastline.

This year's training involved 55 practitioners who not only received valuable classroom learning on physical, ecological, and regulatory considerations of natural shoreline projects along Ohio's Lake Erie coast but got a hands-on experience installing a nature-based shoreline project at Wendy Park in Cleveland.

GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

A vibrant, prehistoric-themed illustration. In the center, a large, pinkish-red dinosaur with a long, segmented tail is depicted. To its right, a long, blue, segmented worm-like creature is visible. In the foreground, a red beetle is shown on a rock. The background is filled with lush green ferns and a dense forest of tall, thin trees. The overall scene is set in a natural, outdoor environment.

As the state's oldest natural resources agency, the Division of Geological Survey provides geologic information and services needed for responsible management of Ohio's natural resources. The data is important in part because the topography and chemistry of Ohio's rocks and soils help dictate what plants and animals live and thrive here.

GEOLOGY BY THE NUMBERS

 **20,576**
WATER WELL
RECORDS
DOCUMENTED

 **9,927**
WATER WELL
RECORDS
DOCUMENTED


 **1,700**
GEOLOGIC INQUIRES
ANSWERED

 **17,345**
PEOPLE REACHED
THROUGH 89 EVENTS

 **1.3k+**
NEW ITEMS ADDED
TO THE GEOLOGIC
LIBRARY CATALOG

 **36**
NEW SCIENTIFIC
REPORTS, MAPS,
ARTICLES, OR
EDUCATIONAL
PUBLICATIONS

 **7**
NEW SEISMIC
STATIONS
ESTABLISHED

 **247**
SQ. MILES OF NEW
SURVEY DATA ON
LAKE ERIE COAST

THE DIVISION OF GEOLOGICAL SURVEY continued to expand outreach efforts with the community. It added another 1,300 items to the online geologic library catalog which was launched in FY23. The division also reached 3 percent more people through events in FY24 over FY23, grew its social media network by more than 2,000 followers, and provided 37,000 handouts and maps to the public. A geological research highlight was the 247 miles of new survey data the division provided on Lake Erie in FY24 and the addition of seven new seismic stations.

NEW GROUNDWATER OBSERVATION WELL NETWORK WEB-APPLICATION

The division released a new web-based application to help users monitor groundwater resources throughout Ohio. The software, called AQUARIUS, gives users the ability to view and download the division's extensive collection of groundwater data from Ohio's Groundwater Observation Well Network. The new interface includes a statewide interactive map showing the locations of the wells, data charts and tables for each well (including real-time monitoring for 17 sites), and information about the history of the network.

LIFE IN ANCIENT OHIO POSTER SERIES

The new Life in Ancient Ohio posters help bring to life part of Ohio's natural history and serve as a valuable tool for science educators. These posters depict a span of about 450 million years of time and visually tell Ohio's geologic story while emphasizing the division's commitment to educating the citizens of Ohio. The seven posters are based on specific rock units and notable fossil localities in Ohio. Each illustration is a snapshot in geologic time and features environments, life forms, and rock types that represent the period.

ADDITIONAL SEISMIC STATIONS ADDED TO OHIOSEIS NETWORK

The Ohio Seismic Network (OhioSeis) program completed installation of seven new seismic stations. The locations were chosen to fill gaps in the OhioSeis earthquake detection network. Stations were placed in northeast Ohio, which has seen a recent uptick in earthquake detections and in southwestern Ohio to help locate earthquakes occurring deep underground near the Ohio and Kentucky border.

WATER RESOURCES



Blue Rock Dam

The Division of Water Resources ensures the wise management of Ohio's water resources and infrastructure through three primary programs: Dam Safety, Floodplain Management, and Water Inventory and Planning.

WATER BY THE NUMBERS



296
DAM SAFETY
INSPECTIONS



26
DAM
EMERGENCY
ACTION PLANS
APPROVED



27
DAM REPAIR
PROJECTS
APPROVED



\$508k
IN FEDERAL
GRANTS FOR
FLOODPLAIN
MANAGEMENT



600+
RESPONSES
TO TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE
REQUESTS

In FY24, **WATER RESOURCES** began an exciting and much needed study to forecast water needs over the next three decades. The need for this data is great as Ohio continues to lead in economic development and industrial growth with large projects like the \$20 billion Intel computer chip plants being built in Licking County. The division also provided disaster response in three communities due to severe storms and tornados in March 2024.

DAM SAFETY PROGRAM

The core purpose of the Ohio Dam Safety Program is to ensure human life, health, and property are protected from dam failures. Dams and levees provide the citizens of Ohio with essential benefits such as water supply, flood control, recreation, and irrigation.

The program currently regulates 1,367 dams in Ohio. In FY24, there were nearly 300 dam inspections and staff responded to four emergency situations at dams.

WATER INVENTORY & PLANNING

The Water Inventory and Planning Program aims to ensure Ohioans have a safe and abundant supply of water. The program does so by regulating and tracking water withdrawals throughout the state. In FY24, the division collected water withdrawal reports from over 2,100 active facilities and processed 32 new water withdrawal registration forms.

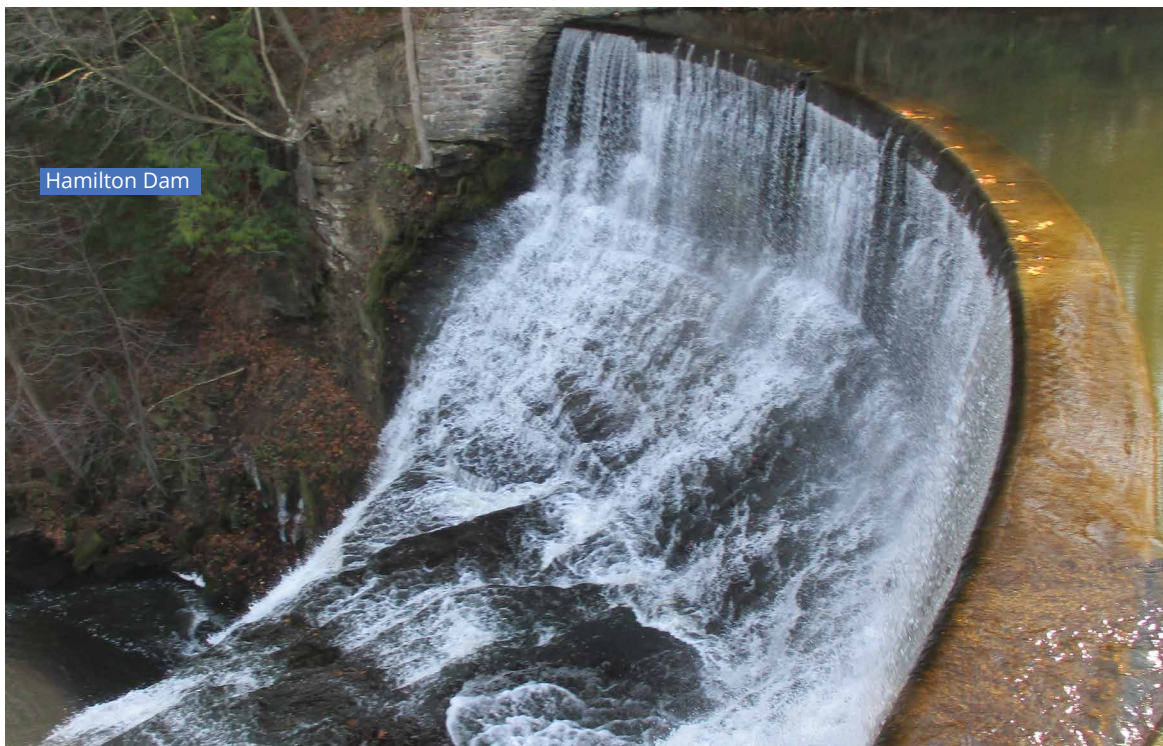
As Ohio becomes a leader in economic/industrial growth, the program has partnered with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency to proactively forecast water needs over the next 30 years. The comprehensive water study will look specifically at the central Ohio region and examine water availability and demand, project future demand, provide regionalization recommendations, explore water reuse opportunities, and provide assistance when siting locations for high-capacity users.

FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

The Floodplain Management Program assists nearly 200 communities with federal flood hazard mapping and risk data and helps them adopt compliant flood damage regulations. This is important because properly managed floodplains can increase property values and expand recreational opportunities, while reducing direct and indirect costs associated with flood hazards, erosion, and stormwater; improving groundwater recharge and water quality; and providing valuable wildlife habitat. In FY24, the program did this in a variety of ways including by awarding over \$500,000 in federal funding, answering over 600 requests for technical assistance and presenting 13 times on various aspects of floodplain management.

The program also serves as the state repository for flood data; coordinates efforts of federal, state, and local agencies involved in flood loss reduction programs; and, as Ohio's coordinator of the National Flood Insurance Program, assists communities in gaining and maintaining eligibility for participation in the NFIP for the benefit of residents and business owners.

In FY24, the program also provided disaster response and assistance to Logan County, and its' specific communities Russells Point and Lakeview after the March 14 severe weather and tornado event. The program coordinated substantial damage assessment inspections with the Ohio Building Officials Association and continues to collaborate with FEMA to aid communities with recovery.





ENGINEERING SERVICES

The Division of Engineering provides professional and technical engineering and related support required by ODNR to help plan, implement, and manage capital improvement programs, construction and renovation projects, and coordinate road and facility maintenance.

Maumee Bay Boardwalk



Great Council State Park Ribbon Cutting

ODNR continues to be able to make historic investments into properties, meaning the Division of Engineering is staying very busy. As FY24 came to a close, the biggest project coming in at \$17.4 million—Great Council State Park—celebrated its grand opening. Located in Xenia, it's the state's newest park and one of the most unique properties for its celebration of Ohio's Native American and pioneer past. The park features a 12,000 square-foot interpretive center which was modeled after historic Shawnee longhouses.

While not as dazzling to some, but just as important, the division also continued to oversee typical projects including trail/path/paving projects at Little Miami Scenic Trail, including the new O'Bannon Bridge in Loveland, and Maumee Bay State Park Boardwalk; roadway projects at Ash Cave, Hueston Woods, and Cedar Falls; electrical projects at Dillon, John Bryan, and Caesar Creek state parks; and restroom projects at Mohican, Mosquito Lake, Fox Island, and John Bryan state parks.

ENGINEERING BY THE NUMBERS



\$110.7
MILLION IN
IMPROVEMENTS



2
MARINA AND
BOATING ACCESS
PROJECTS



5
DAM/SPILLWAY
PROJECTS
COMPLETED



44
COMPLETED
PROJECTS



3
STATE PARK LODGE
PROJECTS

MANAGING FORESTS

A close-up photograph of several green leaves. One leaf in the center-right shows a large, dark, irregular hole, likely from an insect. A small, green caterpillar is visible on the right edge of this leaf. Other leaves show smaller holes and brown spots, suggesting pest activity or disease.

The Division of Forestry promotes and applies management for the sustainable use and protection of Ohio's private and public forest lands. It maintains 24 state forests covering over 200 thousand acres. Priorities include creating recreational opportunities, improving the health of all forests, and protecting against wildfires, littering, and other threats.

FORESTRY BY THE NUMBERS



762,362
TREES PLANTED



250
ACRES OF WOODLAND ADDED
TO THE STATE FOREST SYSTEM



65,499
PRIVATE ACRES MANAGED
WITH ASSISTANCE FROM SERVICE FORESTERS



\$549k+
APPROVED GRANT FUNDING
FOR RURAL FIRE DEPARTMENTS



\$2.1M
TREES TO TEXTBOOKS FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO
LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND 16 SCHOOL DISTRICTS



348
YOUTH AND ADULT OUTREACH
PROGRAMS REACHED 14,450 INDIVIDUALS



1,900+
HOURS OF URBAN FORESTRY EDUCATION
PROVIDED TO OHIO'S COMMUNITIES



233
CERTIFIED TREE CITY USAS



\$450k+
AWARDED TO 21 OHIO COMMUNITIES &
ORGANIZATIONS FOR TREE PLANTING



5,870
EASTERN HEMLOCK TREES PROTECTED FROM
HEMLOCK WOOLLY ADELGID



\$5.5M
IRA URBAN FORESTRY GRANTS AWARDED TO 31
COMMUNITIES AND 5 NONPROFITS

In FY24, the **DIVISION OF FORESTRY** saw increases in almost every area and had an exciting year with the opening of the Buckeye State Tree Nursery, tree plantings in all 88 counties for ODNr's 75th anniversary, and more than \$5 million awarded through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Urban Forestry Grant Program. This is the single largest pass-through grant ever administered by the Division of Forestry.

BUCKEYE STATE TREE NURSERY

The Division of Forestry began operations at the newly established Buckeye State Tree Nursery in Zanesville. The nursery will address a region-wide shortage of quality seedlings for conservation projects, and it will help build a better supply of genetically suitable seedlings for planting in Ohio. Operations at the nursery will lead to faster production times, extended distribution, and high-quality seedlings suitable for Ohio's environment.

With a focus on forest restoration across Ohio, grown species will be based on factors like regional suitability and tree benefits with emphasis on hard-mast producing species that are beneficial for multiple landowner purposes, including soil stability, timber, wildlife, and aesthetics.

75TH ANNIVERSARY TREE PLANTINGS

In celebration of ODNr's 75th anniversary, the Division of Forestry planted commemorative trees in all 88 counties in Ohio. Trees were planted across the state throughout March and April, culminating in 16 tree plantings on Arbor Day. As these trees grow, they will be reminders of the benefits all Ohio trees provide. Trees are vital to our ecosystem and our way of life here in Ohio. They protect our air, our soil, and our water. They provide habitat for our wildlife and produce wood products we need for our homes and daily lives. Trees are beneficial in urban and forested areas alike. In cities, these trees lower temperatures, reduce noise, prevent water runoff, absorb pollutants, and improve the urban aesthetic – benefiting Ohioans' mental and physical health.

URBAN FORESTRY GRANTS

In 2023, the division was awarded grant funding for 36 projects totaling \$5,499,581 for urban forestry programs across Ohio through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Urban Forestry Grant Program. Eligible program projects are focused on developing emerging and established non-profit urban forestry programs, with an emphasis on expanding tree canopy in underserved communities. These IRA grant funds have been provided to the division by the USDA Forest Service. The funding from this cycle of IRA grants is a portion of \$9 million from the IRA that has been allocated to Ohio for forestry.

FOREST HEALTH AND INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

The Division of Forestry conducts statewide surveys and monitoring of insects and diseases that threaten Ohio's trees and forests. In 2024, the Forest Health Program increased efforts to identify healthy ash trees that might have natural tolerance or resistance to the invasive insect, emerald ash borer. These trees are referred to as "lingering ash." Lingered ash were discovered in several areas of the state and will be studied and potentially included in a breeding program to restore ash to Ohio's forests. A new potential forest pest, the elm zigzag sawfly, was discovered in Ohio in 2024. Efforts are underway to learn about this new invasive species. In 2024, other forest health work continued, including survey for beech leaf disease, treatments conducted on state lands for oak wilt and hemlock woolly adelgid, as well as treatment and removal of invasive plants.

WILDFIRE PREVENTION & PRESCRIBED FIRES

The Division of Forestry provides protection from wildfires in Ohio communities and supported 85 grant-funded projects this year, totaling more than \$549,372 to aid rural fire departments, communities, and non-profits in the fire protection region.

The Division of Forestry also facilitated prescribed burning on 1,059 acres of forestland this year. Prescribed fires benefit forests by reducing the risk of destructive wildfires, promoting the growth of native plants, and improving habitat for wildlife.

Through a USDA Forest Service grant for wildfire prevention and education, the division facilitated the installation of two Smokey Bear Murals at Northwest Middle School in Scioto County and at Western Elementary School in Pike County. Designed and painted by Pam Kellough, a Chillicothe, Ohio, artist, these murals will serve to raise wildfire awareness and prevention in two Ohio counties that experience above-average wildfire occurrence.



Trees to Textbooks check presentation at Vinton Local School District.

TREES TO TEXTBOOKS

This year, the division distributed more than \$2.1 million in Trees to Textbooks funds to 16 rural school districts and their local governments. Funding for the program comes from sustainable timber harvests on Ohio's state forests. Since the Trees to Textbooks program started in 1999, more than \$39 million has been shared with Ohio school districts and local governments.

NATURAL AREAS & PRESERVES

A photograph of a wooden boardwalk and bench in a lush forest. The boardwalk is made of wooden planks and leads into a dense forest. A wooden bench is positioned on the boardwalk. The forest is filled with tall trees and dense foliage, with sunlight filtering through the leaves. The overall scene is peaceful and natural.

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves seeks to preserve Ohio's unique natural heritage by protecting and restoring our finest land and water resources for future generations. The division protects some of the best remaining examples of Ohio's rich ecological history.



Stage's Pond State Nature Preserve

NATURAL AREAS BY THE NUMBERS



950

ACRES ADDED TO STATE
PRESERVES & SCENIC
RIVER SYSTEMS



3

NEW STATE
NATURE PRESERVES



7,590

STAFF HOURS SPENT
CONTROLLING
INVASIVE SPECIES



2,784

ACRES TREATED FOR
INVASIVE SPECIES



11,000

ATTENDEES FOR DNAP
PROGRAMS (CALENDAR
YEAR 2024)



405

STREAM QUALITY
MONITORING (SQM)
ASSESSMENTS ON
DESIGNATED
SCENIC RIVERS



2

NEW OLD GROWTH
FORESTS RECOGNIZED



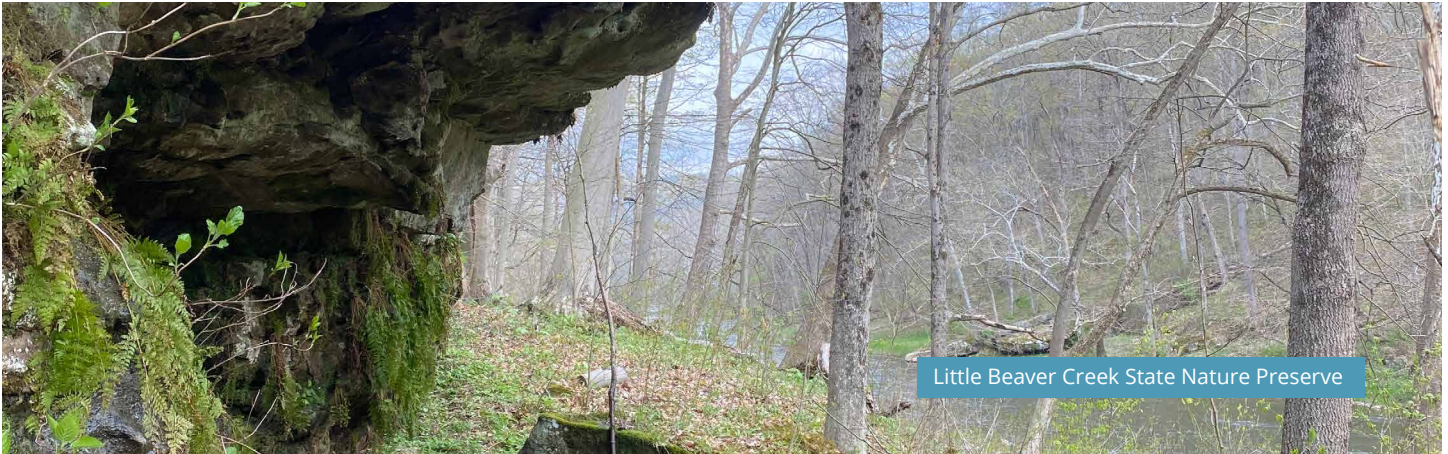
800

TREES PLANTED AT
BLACKHAND GORGE

A feather in the cap for the **DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES** in FY24 was the induction of portions of two state nature preserves – Stage’s Pond and Hach Otis – into the national Old-Growth Forest Network. The network’s goal is to identify mature forests across the county. In Ohio, 14 of the 30 old-growth remnants recognized by the network are in state nature preserves.

The division’s Scenic Rivers Program celebrated 50-year anniversaries for four of its rivers in FY24: Olentangy Scenic River; Little Beaver Creek State and National Wild and Scenic River; Grand Wild and Scenic River; Upper Cuyahoga Scenic River. In early FY25, Maumee Scenic River also will celebrate 50 years.

The division’s botanical staff had an amazing year of rare plant discoveries across the state, finding several endangered rarities in Wayne National Forest with the assistance of a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Topping the list of exciting finds included a new native species to Ohio, Maryland meadow beauty. Additionally, division botanists found new populations for 10 state-endangered species, four of which had only one extant population in the state.



AREAS PROTECTED

In FY24, the division added three new preserves, bringing the state total to 147:

- Blue Creek Limestone Glade, 11.31 acres, Lucas County. The site is owned and managed by Metroparks Toledo.
- Bison Hollow, 374.5 acres, Hocking and Vinton counties. This is the first dedicated preserve in Vinton County. The site is owned and managed by Appalachia Ohio Alliance.
- Little Beaver Creek, 102.307 acres, Columbiana County. This preserve is comprised of existing property, owned and managed by the division, that was dedicated as a state nature preserve on March 1, 2024. This is the second dedicated preserve along the Little Beaver Creek State and National Wild and Scenic River.



Blue Creek Limestone Glade

LAND PROTECTION

The division continues to work with landowners and partners to identify and protect Ohio's finest land and water resources. In FY24, the division added nearly 500 acres to the state preserve and scenic river systems using a combination of funds including from the tax checkoff program and H2Ohio Rivers Initiative funds.

- Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve, 1 acre, Jackson County.
- Eagle Creek State Nature Preserve, 43.215 acres, contiguous to the preserve in Portage County.
- Beaverkettle Farm, 34.718 acres, adjacent to Little Beaver Creek State Nature Preserve in Columbiana County.
- Galehouse Scenic River site, 146.649 acres, adjacent to the Mohican State Scenic River in Knox County.
- William "Bud" Hill, 54.873 acres, along the Ashtabula River in Ashtabula County. This is the first acquisition along the Ashtabula River; features nearly a mile of river corridor with high-quality wetlands and a mature hemlock-hardwood forest. A nearly 2-mile trail is under development which will enable visitors to traverse the rim of a high bluff before winding down to the heavily wooded floodplain. The finished trail will provide spectacular views of the river, a spring-fed waterfall, and extensive vernal pools.
- FSHG Group, 216 acres, along the Ashtabula River Scenic River in Ashtabula County.

DAM CONSTRUCTION PROJECT COMPLETED

Major renovations to the Lake Katharine dam at Lake Katharine State Nature Preserve were completed in FY24. The construction project included new lake drain valves to replace the non-functional original valves and the structure was improved to safeguard against overtopping failure. These improvements constituted the first substantial repairs since the dam was built in the 1940s.

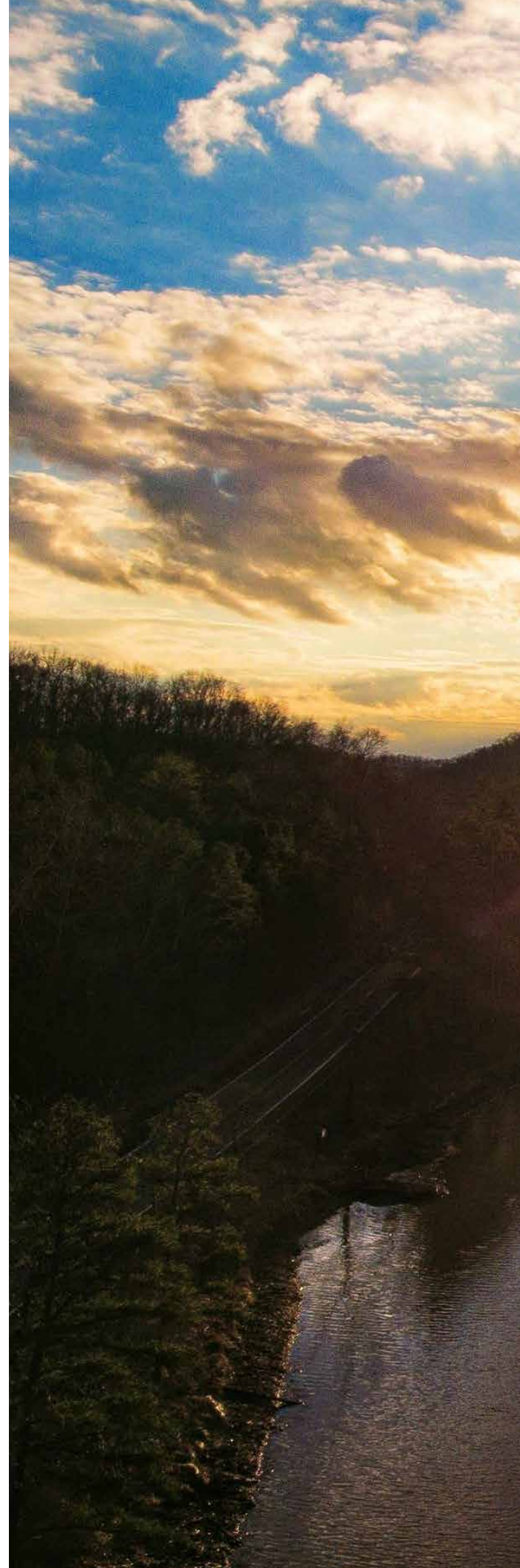
CONNECTING VISITORS WITH UNIQUE ECOSYSTEMS

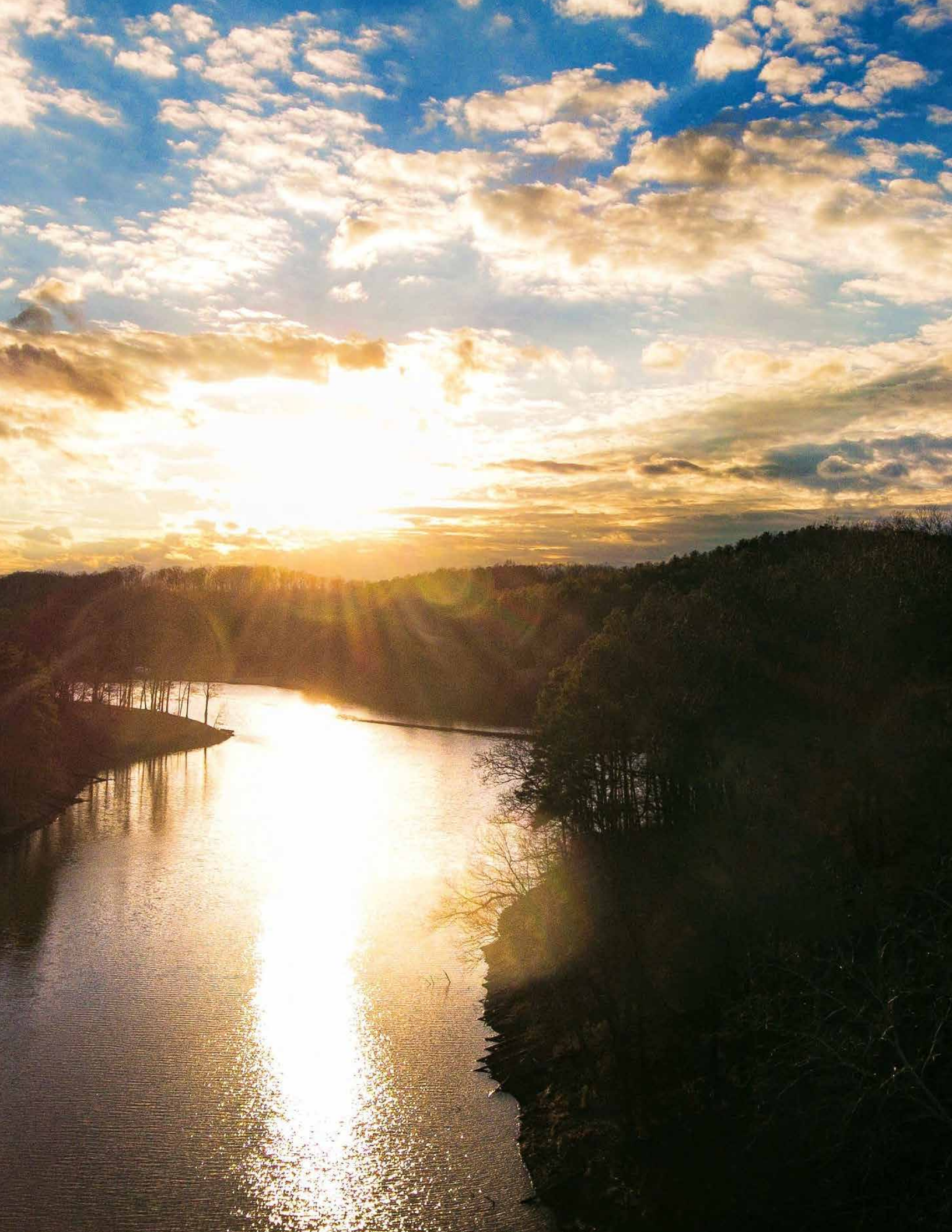
Improving visitor experience is ongoing as the division continues to develop and install new interpretive signage at preserves across the state. In FY24, new signs were installed at Clifton Gorge, Miller Nature Sanctuary, Rockbridge, and Stage's Pond state nature preserves as well as the Natural Areas display at the Ohio State Fair.

INTERPRETIVE PROGRAMMING AND STREAM MONITORING

Outdoor education for adults and youth, like ecology trips, wildflower tours, and outdoor classroom activities, remains a top priority for staff. The division's Ohio Scenic Rivers Program's Stream Quality Monitoring project engages with thousands of students annually and several hundred volunteers annually. Stream quality monitoring and river related programs reach thousands of students each year.

In March 2024, the division hosted its third biennial Ohio Rivers Symposium which drew more than 350 participants. The day-long event featured nine speakers from a variety of organizations including The Ohio State University, ODNR, Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, and local watershed and park districts. Presentations reflected the symposium's theme which focused on the connectivity between surface water and groundwater. The next Ohio Rivers Symposium will be held in March 2026.





REAL ESTATE AND LAND MANAGEMENT

The Office of Real Estate and Land Management provides real estate services and solutions to ODNR's landholding and natural resource-based programs and canal programs (over 240,000 acres managed lands and over 610,000 acres owned lands). The office also provides real estate, environmental, land surveying, historical preservation, and recreational grant services for the general public.

REALM BY THE NUMBERS



1,606

ENVIRONMENTAL
REVIEWS
COMPLETED



\$26.5M

IN STATE FUNDS FOR
LOCAL COMMUNITY
PARKS, RECREATION,
AND CONSERVATION
PROJECTS
DISTRIBUTED



140

REAL ESTATE
TRANSACTIONS



\$17M

IN STATE AND
FEDERAL GRANT
FUNDS AWARDED TO
104 PROJECTS



14

ACQUISITIONS
COMPLETED



1,285+

ACRES OF PUBLIC
LANDS ADDED

REAL ESTATE

The Real Estate Section provides services related to departmental acquisitions, land sales, leases, and licenses, and assists with the management of Ohio's historic canal waterways and lands. For FY24, the Real Estate Section completed 140 real estate transactions including 14 acquisitions which added 1,825.07 acres of new public lands at a cost of \$6.57 million.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Born in 2020, this program has become the vanguard of preserving and protecting ODNR's historic structures and sites, igniting a renewed passion for history across the state. Projects include the expansion of the online virtual museum, the Cardinal Collection, continuing to support the Division of Parks and Watercraft with the creation of Great Council State Park, continuing the statewide historic marker program for ODNR's properties, and developing the upcoming "Heritage of Freedom" Trails project along with the Division of Parks and Watercraft. Staff also developed the CCC pocket museum opened at Camp Hocking at the very end of FY24.

The Historical Resources program meticulously researched, wrote, and installed 24 historical markers across the state in FY24. These markers serve as reminder of Ohio's rich history, offering a glimpse into the past and inviting visitors to explore the stories that have been forgotten.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The office conducted 1,606 Environmental Reviews on public and private projects and 30 technical assistance visits at project sites, and wetland and stream restoration sites. The reviews are a top priority to ensure compliance with all environmental regulations while improving and protecting water quality, streams, wetlands and habitat for threatened plants and animals.

RECREATIONAL GRANTS

The Recreational Grants Section distributes state and federal grant funds to communities for improvements and better access to recreational lands and facilities, such as land acquisition, trails and trail heads, parks, water parks, nature centers, playgrounds, equipment, public parking, and restroom areas. In FY24, the office distributed nearly \$17 million through 104 grants across four programs. The office also processed over \$26.5 million in Recreational Grants for capital improvement projects to local community parks, recreation, and conservation projects as approved by the legislature.

In FY24, the Recreational Grants Section was also able to complete Ohio's 2024-2028 SCORP report, which is used to help plan recreational development across the state.

DIVISION OF WILDLIFE



White-Tailed Deer

The Division of Wildlife works to conserve and improve fish and wildlife resources and their habitats for sustainable use and appreciation by all. Efforts since 1873 have led to outstanding fishing, hunting, trapping, birding, and wildlife viewing in the Buckeye State.

WILDLIFE BY THE NUMBERS



900

TRUMPETER SWANS
ESTIMATED



1,124

ACRES ADDED TO
WILDLIFE AREAS



900+

NESTING PAIRS OF
BALD EAGLES



13

NEW WILDLIFE
OFFICERS HIRED



41M

FISH STOCKED



412

SANDHILL CRANES
COUNTED IN 26
COUNTIES



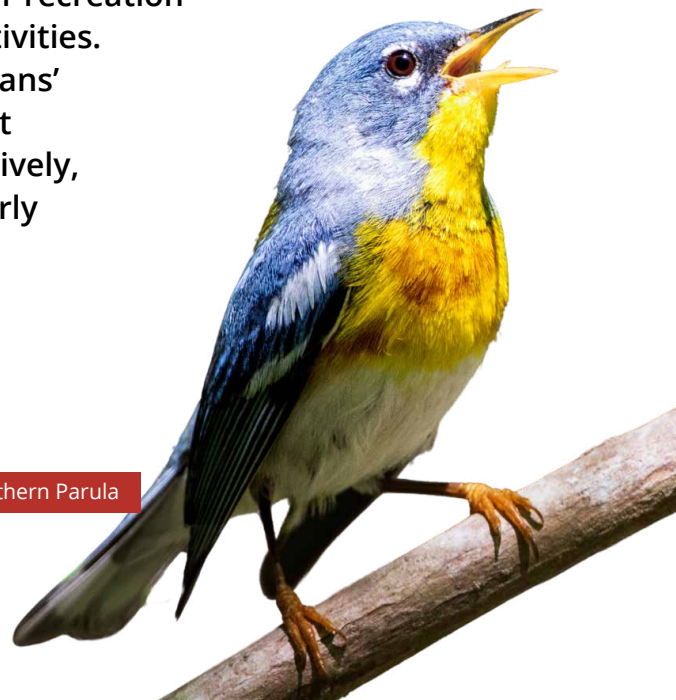
214K

DEER CHECKED

The **DIVISION OF WILDLIFE** had an exciting year which included the trumpeter swan being removed from Ohio's threatened species list, stocking the Cuyahoga River for the first time, and monitoring that shows the sandhill crane population is continuing to be strengthened in several areas of the state.

Wildlife also received a report on a study it requested which determined wildlife-based recreation contributed nearly \$12.5 billion to Ohio's economy in 2022. The study surveyed Ohio residents to gauge their participation in outdoor recreation and the economic impact of those activities. The survey primarily focused on Ohioans' involvement in hunting, fishing, target shooting, and wildlife viewing. Collectively, the four study activities provided nearly 80,000 jobs in Ohio and \$4 billion in income, plus \$1.1 billion in local and state taxes, as well as more than \$600 million in federal taxes. The report was compiled by the Wildlife Management Institute, Responsive Management, and Southwick Associates.

Northern Parula



STEELHEAD IN THE CUYAHOGA

The Cuyahoga River was stocked with steelhead for the first time in April 2024 thanks to improved water quality, habitat, excellent public access, and a strong interest by Ohio steelhead anglers. The Division of Wildlife has stocked steelhead in Lake Erie tributaries for more than 40 years, with 450,000 yearlings stocked annually. In 2024, the Cuyahoga River was stocked with 60,000 yearlings, which makes it the seventh Lake Erie tributary planned for annual stocking. Steelhead fishing generates more than \$5 million to local lakeshore economies in northeast Ohio, with multiple retail stores catering primarily to steelhead and fly fishing.

TRUMPETER SWAN DELISTED

In April 2024, the Ohio Wildlife Council voted to remove the trumpeter swan from the state's threatened species list. The delisting culminates a 28-year effort by the Division of Wildlife to restore the population in Ohio. The population experienced severe declines throughout North America in the 1700s and 1800s because of unregulated harvest and wetland habitat loss. They were extirpated from Ohio as early as the 1700s.

Following aquatic habitat improvements and successful reintroductions in other Midwest states, the Division of Wildlife began a trumpeter swan reintroduction program in 1996 by collecting swan eggs from an established population at the Minto Flats State Game Refuge in central Alaska. The eggs were placed in incubators and flown to Ohio, where the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo and The Wilds of the Columbus Zoo partnered to help care for the eggs, raise the young trumpeters, and release them in appropriate habitats. Ohio's trumpeter swan population today stands at nearly 900, with swans nesting in 26 different counties.



Trumpeter Swan

13 NEW WILDLIFE OFFICERS

The Division of Wildlife hired 13 new Wildlife Officers with statewide authority to enforce wildlife regulations and protect state lands, waterways, and property. The officers completed seven months of conservation and law enforcement training, which included wildlife and fisheries management, communication skills, vehicle operations, and advanced firearms and self-defense. The hiring of additional wildlife officers is a critical step in ensuring the safety of Ohioans and the protection of the state's fish and wildlife resources. Wildlife officers enforce hunting and fishing regulations, educate the public about wildlife conservation, and respond to emergencies. They also work to protect state lands and waterways from illegal activities, such as poaching and littering.



EXPANDING WILDLIFE AREAS

Purchases were completed to expand Simco Wildlife Area in Coshocton County, Moxley Wildlife Area in Erie County, and Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area in Holmes and Wayne counties. Simco Wildlife Area added 844 acres, doubling its size. Simco Wildlife Area is composed mainly of woodlands, hosting wildlife species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, and squirrels. At Moxley Wildlife Area, 110 acres of valuable wetland habitat, known as Tower Marsh, was purchased from Ducks Unlimited. With the new purchase, Moxley Wildlife Area now protects 400 acres of wetlands along Sandusky Bay. Further wetland habitat will be protected at Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, where 170 acres was purchased from West Creek Conservancy. Conservation of these wetlands contributes to Governor DeWine's H2Ohio project goal of improving the state's water quality using natural infrastructure with wetland restoration.

SANDHILL CRANE MONITORING

Observers reported 412 sandhill cranes in Ohio during the volunteer-driven 2024 Midwest Crane Count in April. The count was coordinated by the Division of Wildlife, International Crane Foundation, and Ohio Bird Conservation Initiative. Cranes were observed in 26 counties. The counties with the most sightings were Wayne (106), Lucas (56), and Geauga (48). Killbuck Marsh and Funk Bottoms wildlife areas in Wayne County are preferred nesting locations for sandhills. These regal birds were once extirpated from Ohio. They returned to Wayne County in 1987 to breed and have been slowly expanding since. They are still listed as threatened in Ohio.

41 MILLION FISH STOCKED

The Division of Wildlife stocked 40.8 million fish of 11 species in Ohio waters in 2023. Fish were stocked during spring, summer, and fall at 239 locations statewide. These annual fish stockings play an important role in providing excellent fishing for Ohio's 1.7 million anglers. The Division of Wildlife operates six state fish hatcheries that raise sport fish for stocking in Ohio waters, enhancing recreational opportunities for anglers. Ohio's hatcheries raise saugeye, walleye, yellow perch, rainbow trout, steelhead trout, brown trout, muskellunge, hybrid-striped bass, blue catfish, channel catfish, and bluegill. Ohio's state fish hatcheries are open to the public and offer activities such as birding, hiking, and archery. Each location hosts an open house every spring.

OUTREACH EVENTS

The Division of Wildlife conducts many outreach events every year. Among those conducted in FY24 was on Veterans Day when the Division of Wildlife welcomed veterans to visit and shoot for free at one of Ohio's premier public shooting ranges. The event served as a thank you to all veterans for their service. Division of Wildlife public shooting ranges provide comfortable, safe places to hone skills with rifles, shotguns, handguns, and archery equipment.

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine once again joined the Division of Wildlife in May 2024 to celebrate Bird Ohio Day at Magee Marsh Wildlife Area. The unique blend of wetlands, lake, and forested beach ridge habitat at Magee Marsh is a tremendous asset to wildlife. Birding is a top attraction at Magee Marsh, but the area is also excellent for hunting, fishing, trapping, and many other outdoor activities. Visitors can bird along a variety of trails, including the well-known boardwalk. The recently renovated Magee Marsh Visitor Center allows guests to learn about the region's conservation history, waterfowl hunting, bird migration, and much more through interactive displays and exhibits.





Northern Cardinal

STATE PARKS & WATERCRAFT

The Division of Parks and Watercraft serves as the state's primary provider of outdoor recreational experiences, with 76 state parks located in 59 counties. Our mission is to provide exceptional outdoor recreational and boating opportunities by balancing outstanding customer service, education, and protection and conservation of Ohio's state parks and waterways.

PARKS & WATERCRAFT BY THE NUMBERS



1.1 MILLION
OVERNIGHT VISITORS



9k
OHIO BOATERS EDUCATION
COURSES TAKEN



\$6.4B
ANNUAL ECONOMIC
IMPACT OF RECREATIONAL
BOATING IN OHIO



649,490
WATERCRAFT REGISTRATIONS



200k+
VISITORS PARTICIPATED IN
NATURALIST PROGRAMMING



43
CONSERVE OHIO-CERTIFIED
STATE PARKS



9
STATE PARK LODGES ADDED
HIGH-SPEED BROADBAND
INTERNET ACCESS

The **DIVISION OF PARKS AND WATERCRAFT** had a phenomenal year that included the opening of a new state park and the reopening of two highly-visited centers as part of unprecedented reinvestment into infrastructure.

The new park, lodges, campgrounds, shower house facilities, camp stores and more were the focus of nearly \$106 million of improvements in FY24. Lodge room upgrades and updated health and safety features accounted for \$36.1 million. The division celebrated these impressive new features with a series of open houses, welcoming the public to enjoy the inviting spaces.

The fiscal year came to a close on a high note with one of those celebrations for the openings of Great Council State Park as the 76th Ohio State Park on June 7, 2024. Located on the site of Oldtown, near Xenia, the park is a celebration of Shawnee and early pioneer history. The centerpiece is a 12,000 square foot, 3-story interpretive center that includes a living stream, a wiikwa/bark house, and an array of interactive learning experiences.



Inside of Great Council State Park's
Wiikwa/Bark House

NATURE CENTER EXPERIENCES

FY24 saw the reopening of two highly visited centers – the Trautman Nature Center at Maumee Bay State Park and the Malabar Farm State Park Visitor Center. ODNR's vision for each nature and visitor center is to spark interest in learning about nature and encourage conservation of Ohio's precious natural resources. At the Maumee Bay nature center, the new Interactive exhibits invite guests to step into the shoes of the early settlers navigating the Great Black Swamp, to experience the journey of migrating birds, and to compare their arm span to the wingspan of a trumpeter swan. Upgrades provide an even more immersive experience with touches such as the floor which reflects the waters of Lake Erie.

At the Malabar Farm Visitor Center, visitors are able to learn about the methods Louis Bromfield used to change the face of farming, encouraging conservation of our natural and agricultural resources.

More is planned for nature and visitor centers in the coming year. The Salt Fork Eco-Discovery Center, a model of sustainability, is set to open in fall 2024. Additional projects include centers at Appalachian Hills State Wildlife Area/Jesse Owens State Park, Buck Creek, Lake Loramie, Mohican, and Portage Lakes.



ACCESS TO THE OUTDOORS

This year, the division again focused on making improvements to better ensure all Ohioans have access to boating and fishing opportunities. Investments in fishing access at Pymatuning and Punderson state parks, along with a new, accessible kayak launch at Wingfoot Lake State Park, enable people with disabilities the chance to experience the outdoors in whole new ways.

H2OHIO WETLANDS AT OHIO STATE PARK

Through a generous donation from Intel, ODNR will be adding wetland habitat at Dillon State Wildlife Area that will benefit Dillon State Park. Wetlands benefit water quality by filtering pollutants and nutrients out of water, functioning like the kidneys of an ecosystem. Additional H2Ohio projects are in process at Indian Lake, Grand Lake St. Marys, Mary Jane Thurston, and Sycamore state parks.



Dillon State Park

OUR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

In March 2024, a category EF3 tornado ripped through Indian Lake State Park and the surrounding communities. Through resilience, teamwork, and grit, park staff worked to restore safety and accessibility to the park. Community volunteers signed up in droves to help locate and cleanup debris that was strewn across the park, and, amazingly, the park was able to still host a huge total solar eclipse event less than a month after the tornado.

ECLIPSE VISITORS CHOSE OHIO STATE PARKS

People from across the world converged on Ohio for the April 8, 2024, total solar eclipse. This was the first total solar eclipse in Ohio since 1806, and the next will be viewed in 2099! Department properties, including almost 30 state parks, hosted over 150,000 guests on eclipse day. Thanks to years of preparation, no major incidents occurred in any of the parks that day.



CONSERVE OHIO CELEBRATES EARTH MONTH

April 2024 was an eventful Earth Month for ConServe Ohio! Eclipse glasses were collected for re-use in other countries, the Bigfoot "Shrink Your Footprint" activity was a hit at COSI's Earth Day event, and staff began the onboarding process with JadeTrack, the new utility management system. Most importantly, park staff convened for the inaugural Ohio State Parks Sustainability & Resource Management Summit to soak up insights from conservation experts and brainstorm sustainable solutions.

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Natural Resources Officers in northwest Ohio began a new community outreach for youth, Outdoor Adventure Kids (OAK) Camp, during the summer of 2023. Officers led outdoor skills-related sessions at Maumee Bay State Park for youth from the Zepf Center in Toledo. Participants learned kayaking, archery, fishing, and more. Given the program's success, the division plans to continue OAK Camp in multiple locations.

EXCITEMENT ON THE HORIZON

The next year will bring a many exciting new features to our parks, including a glass bridge at Nelson Kennedy Ledges State Park. We'll also be continuing our statewide restroom improvement project and making upgrades to campgrounds around the state. The Salt Fork Eco-Discovery Center also will open and highlight sustainable practices in our parks. We can't wait to share what the future will hold!

ANNUAL DETAILED FINANCIAL REPORT



For Fiscal Year 2024
(July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024)

**The Annual Report of the
Department of Natural Resources
covers the receipts and expenditures
of all moneys.**

QUICK FISCAL NUMBERS



\$165M
GENERAL REVENUE (GRF)
OPERATING EXPENSES



\$1.1B
TOTAL OF
ALL EXPENSES



\$913M
NON-GRF
EXPENSES



\$378.6M
NON-GRF
REVENUE

ANNUAL EXPENDITURES – FISCAL YEAR 2024

By Appropriation Line Item

Fund	ALI	Appropriation Line Item	Expenditures
GRF	725401	DIVISION OF WILDLIFE-OPERATING	1,700,000.00
GRF	725413	OPFC RENTAL PAYMENTS	61,769,662
GRF	725456	CANAL LANDS	118,000.00
GRF	725459	BUCKEYE STATE TREE NURSERY	1,134,650.03
GRF	725460	LWCF RECREATION LANDS	249,797.59
GRF	725505	HEALTHY LAKE ERIE FUND	910,999.56
GRF	725507	COAL AND MINE SAFETY PROGRAM	3,000,000.00
GRF	725520	SPECIAL PROJECTS	1,194,796.74
GRF	725903	NATURAL RES GEN OBLIG DEBT SRV	19,912,394
GRF	727321	DIVISION OF FORESTRY	9,562,000.00
GRF	729321	COMPUTER INFO SVS/COMMUNICATNS	524,999.31
GRF	730321	PARKS AND RECREATION	54,999,990
GRF	736321	DIVISION OF CHIEF ENGINEER	2,400,000.00
GRF	737321	DIVISION OF WATER RESOURCES	1,849,992.82
GRF	738321	OFF OF REAL ESTATE & LAND MGMT	974,991.08
GRF	741321	DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS	4,567,000.00
		Total GRF	\$164,869,274

Fund	ALI	Appropriation Line Item	Expenditures
1550	725601	DEPARTMENTAL PROJECTS	\$1,498,420
1570	725651	PROGRAM SUPPORT	\$25,003,689
2270	725406	PARKS PROJECTS PERSONNEL	\$2,836,201
3320	725669	FEDERAL MINE SAFETY GRANT	\$279,771
4300	725671	CANAL LANDS	\$441,213
5090	725602	STATE FOREST	\$10,387,290
5100	725631	MAINTENANCE-STATE-OWNED RESID	\$43,713
5110	725646	OHIO GEOLOGICAL MAPPING	\$5,454,837
5110	725679	GIS CENTRALIZED SERVICES	\$276,661
5120	725605	STATE PARKS OPERATIONS	\$42,430,358
5140	725606	LAKE ERIE SHORELINE	\$1,582,234
5160	725620	WATER MANAGEMENT	\$3,245,322
5180	725677	OIL & GAS WELL PLUGGING	\$29,593,778
5180	725643	OIL AND GAS PERMIT FEES	\$61,597,301
5210	725627	OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS	\$268,886
5220	725656	NATURAL AREAS CHECKOFF FUNDS	\$585,191
5290	725639	UNRECLAIMED LANDS	\$3,751,870
5310	725648	RECLAMATION SUPPLMNTL FORFTURE	\$555
6150	725661	DAM SAFETY	\$1,420,624
6970	725670	SUBMERGED LANDS	\$632,139
7015	740401	DIVISION OF WILDLIFE CONSERVTN	\$91,904,333
7015	C725K9	WILDLIFE AREA BLDG DEV/RENOV	\$182,083
7026	C725D5	FOUNTAIN SQ BLDG/TELPHNE IMPRV	\$4,591,954
7026	C725D7	MARCS EQUIPMENT	\$30,946
7026	C725E0	DNR FAIRGROUNDS AREAS-UPGRDING	\$86,105
7026	C725N7	DIS OFC RENOV DEV	\$2,689,276
7031	C725E1	LOCAL PARKS PROJECTS-STATEWIDE	\$3,348,492
7031	C725E5	PROJECT PLANNING	\$457,915

Fund	ALI	Appropriation Line Item	Expenditures
7031	C725N8	FORESTRY EQUIPMENT	\$2,460,091
7031	C72549	ODNR FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT	\$4,896,273
7031	C725K0	STATE PARK RENOVATIONS/UPGRDNG	\$898,000
7031	C725M0	DAM REHABILITATION	\$124,847
7035	C725A0	ST PKS CAMPGROUNDS/LODGS/CABNS	\$81,255,010
7035	C725B2	PARKS EQUIPMENT	\$85,016
7035	C725C4	MUSKINGUM RIVER LOCK & DAM	\$26,696,297
7035	C725E2	LOCAL PARKS PROJECTS	\$57,123,624
7035	C725E6	PROJECT PLANNING	\$12,117,426
7035	C725L8	STATEWIDE TRAILS PROGRAM	\$1,715,446
7035	C725M5	LAKE ERIE ISLAND SP/MIDDLE BSS	\$10,680,533
7035	C725N6	WASTEWTR & WTR SYSTMS UPGRDE	\$3,836,180
7035	C725R3	ST PKS RENOVATIONS/UPGRADE	\$13,735,753
7035	C725R4	DAM REHABILITATION-PARKS	\$20,441,439
7035	C725R5	LAKE WHITE ST PARK-DAM REHAB	\$88,439
7035	C725U7	EAGLE CREEK WTRSHD FLOO MIT	\$30,000,000
7035	C725U9	RECREATION FACILITIES	\$9,071,304
7061	C72514	CLEAN OHIO TRAIL FUND	\$12,816,948
7061	725405	CLEAN OHIO OPERATING	\$250,400
7086	C725N9	OPERATIONS FACILITIES DVNT	\$375
7086	725414	WATERWAYS IMPROVEMENT	\$5,490,819
7086	739401	WATERCRAFT OPERATIONS	\$27,016,212
8150	725636	COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT PRJETS	\$625,271
8160	725649	WETLANDS HABITAT	\$659,691
8170	725655	WILDLIFE CONSERVATION CHECKOFF	\$1,923,060
8180	725629	COOPERATIVE FISHERIES RESEARCH	\$1,500,000
8190	725685	OHIO RIVER MANAGEMENT	\$43,786
3B30	725640	FEDERAL FOREST PASS-THRU	\$419,535

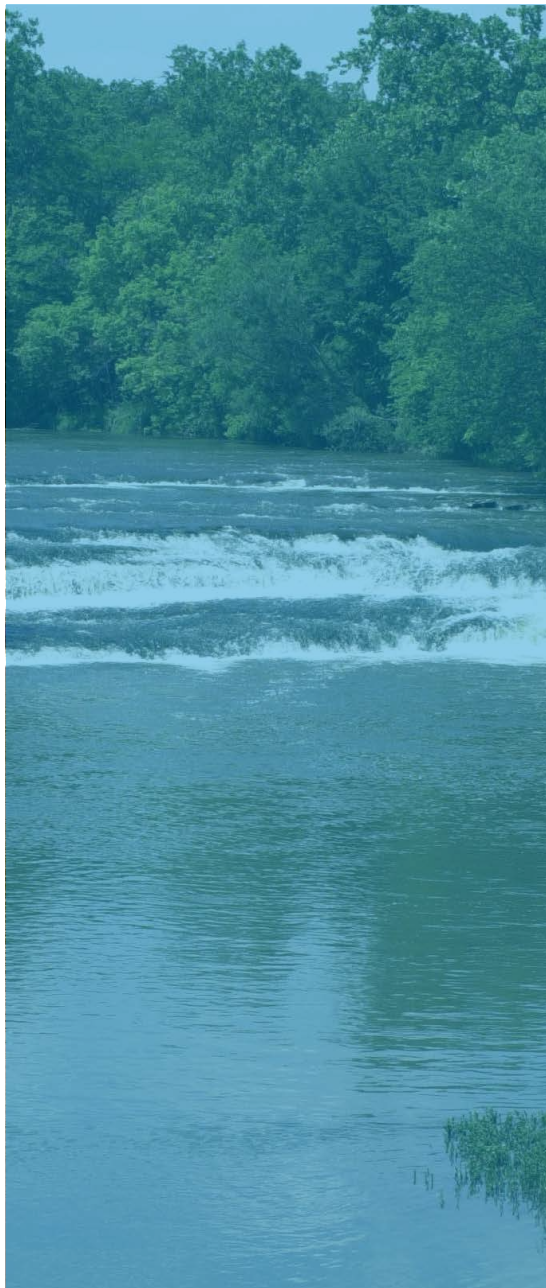
Fund	ALI	Appropriation Line Item	Expenditures
3B40	725641	FEDERAL FLOOD PASS-THRU	\$106,648
3B50	725645	FEDERAL ABANDONED MINE LANDS	\$68,660,048
3B60	725653	FEDERAL LAND & WATER CONSERVTN	\$7,264,836
3B70	725654	RECLAMATION-REGULATORY	\$1,224,698
3P10	725632	GEOLOGICAL SURVEY-FEDERAL	\$252,980
3P20	725642	OIL AND GAS-FEDERAL	\$153,439
3P20	725698	OIL AND GAS - FED ORPHAN PLUG	\$22,363,120
3P30	725650	REAL ESTATE & LAND MANAMNT-FED	\$3,775,929
3P40	725660	WATER-FEDERAL	\$354,599
3R50	725673	ACID MINE DRAINAGE ABATE/TRTMNT	\$860,489
3Z50	725657	REALM FEDERAL	\$1,107,795
4S90	725622	NATUREWORKS PERSONNEL	\$234,903
4U60	725668	SCENIC RIVERS PROTECTION	\$58,860
5CV3	C725V4	PARKS ARPA	\$82,099,428
5CV3	C725V5	TRAILS ARPA	\$7,371,071
5CV3	C725V6	WASTEWATER/WATER SYSTEMS ARPA	\$22,188,283
5HK0	725625	OHIO NATURE PRESERVES	\$9,239
5P20	725634	WILDLIFE BOATER ANGLER ADMIN	\$5,968,330
5TD0	725514	PARK MAINTENANCE	\$1,540,331
5ZT0	7256A2	STATE PARK LODGES MRR	\$11,950,641
6H20	725681	H2OHIO	\$50,915,348
81B0	725688	WILDLIFE HABITAT	\$1,359,102
R017	725659	PERFORMANCE CASH BOND REFUNDS	\$450,999
R043	725624	FORESTRY	\$2,104,919
		Total Non-GRF	\$912,968,970
		Total All Funds	\$1,077,838,244

ANNUAL REVENUE – FISCAL YEAR 2024

Fund Code	Fund Description	Revenue
1550	DEPARTMENTAL SRVCS-INTRASTATE	\$2,991,425
1570	CENTRAL SUPPORT IND CHARGEBACK	\$22,667,347
2270	PARKS CAPITAL EXPENSES	\$2,785,452
3320	MINE GRANT	\$304,359
3B30	FOREST PRODUCTS	\$413,652
3B40	FLOOD CONTROL	\$113,829
3B50	ABANDONED MINE RECLAMATION	\$36,305,341
3B60	LAND WATER CONSERVATION	\$6,012,852
3B70	REGULATORY	\$1,260,834
3P10	GEOLOGICAL SURVEY-FEDERAL	\$300,811
3P20	OIL AND GAS-FEDERAL	\$10,616,133
3P30	REAL ESTATE/LAND MANAGEMENT	\$5,571,393
3P40	WATER-FEDERAL	\$375,686
3R50	ACID MINE DRAINAGE/ABATE/TREAT	\$1,497,964
3Z50	REALM FEDERAL	\$1,506,071
4300	CANAL LANDS	\$469,583
4S90	CAPITAL EXPENSES	\$232,737
4U60	SCENIC RIVERS PROTECTION	\$81,060
5090	STATE FOREST	\$9,010,168
5100	PROPERTY MANAGEMENT	\$72,977
5110	GEOLOGICAL MAPPING	\$6,058,870
5120	STATE PARK	\$44,976,385
5140	PERMIT AND LEASE	\$1,494,658
5160	WATER MANAGEMENT	\$1,539,259

Fund Code	Fund Description	Revenue
5180	OIL & GAS WELL	\$70,640,129
5210	STATE RECREATIONAL VEHICLE	\$473,079
5220	NATURAL AREAS & PRESERVES	\$694,099
5290	MINING REGULATION SAFETY	\$4,018,503
5310	RECLAMATION FORFEITURE	\$146,192
5EL0	WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT	\$1,495
5EM0	PARKS & REC LAW ENFORCEMENT	\$1,978
5HK0	OHIO NATURE PRESERVES	\$47,745
5LD0	OIL AND GAS LEASING COMM ADMIN	\$3,900
5P20	WILDLIFE BOATER ANGLER	\$4,227,751
5UV0	MULTI-YEAR LIFETIME LICENSE	\$4,686,209
5ZT0	STATE PARKS LODGE MRR	\$8,127,063
6150	DAM SAFETY	\$1,911,993
6970	LAKE ERIE SUBMERGED LANDS	\$993,451
6H20	H2OHIO	\$6,281,038
7015	WILDLIFE	\$72,355,221
7031	OHIO PARKS & NATURAL RESOURCES	\$3,533
7086	WATERWAYS SAFETY	\$37,360,923
8060	ACCRUED LEAVE LIABILITY	\$296
8150	COOPERATIVE MANAGEMENT	\$358,148
8160	WETLANDS HABITAT	\$872,775
8170	NONGAME & ENDANGERED WILDLIFE	\$2,197,217
8180	COOPERATIVE FISH RESEARCH UNIT	\$1,507,215
8190	OHIO RIVER MANAGEMENT	\$24,167
81B0	WILDLIFE HABITAT	\$783,378
GRF	GENERAL REVENUE	\$31,052

Fund Code	Fund Description	Revenue
R017	BOND REFUNDS	\$158,697
R043	TIMBER SALES REDISTRIBUTION	\$1,889,501
R063	WILDLIFE HOLDING FUND	\$12,091
R064	PARKS AND WATERCRAFT HOLDING	\$793,820
R074	STATE LAND ROYALTY FUND	\$1,289,557
	Total	\$378,551,066





Department of Natural Resources

ANNUAL REPORT

2045 MORSE RD
COLUMBUS, OH 43229

ohiodnr.gov



2024

FISCAL YEAR

GOVERNOR MIKE DEWINE | DIRECTOR MARY MERTZ