

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

January 2004



VICTOR RICKS: MANAGER, TEACHER, PROTECTOR

Alum Creek is the largest state park in central Ohio,

attracting more than three million visitors a year. Of our 74 state parks, it has the most boat traffic and the largest beach. Its law enforcement section is the second largest in the state park system. And being near the capital city, it receives lots of media attention. Needless to say, the park requires a knowledgeable, friendly, and skillful manager.



Victor Ricks is more than up to the challenge. He's been the park manager for four years, and this year became regional manager, supervising not only Alum Creek, but Delaware and Mt. Gilead state parks as well. His extensive history began in 1978 when he was hired as a park ranger at Mohican State Park. Over the years, he has served at nine parks in all, working his way from ranger to assistant manager to manager. In addition, he was personnel administrator for the Civilian Conservation Corps at Fountain Square for three years, and also attended the state Watercraft Officer Academy.

Victor explained, "I seem to move every three or four years, and it's served to broaden my horizons. I've learned from different management styles, and have taken a piece from each one for my own."

His experience has served him well, giving him a blueprint for success. He said a park manager must be good at multi-tasking because "you deal with a wide

range of issues on an hourly, daily, and weekly basis. You must have good business sense because each park manages its own budget. Coming up through the system was good, because I learned about operations from the ground up, so today I know the issues my employees face on a daily basis." And that's not all. A park manager must also be politically astute, good at planning and logistics, and able to organize and prioritize.

But he acknowledges that a manager doesn't do it on his own. He said, "I've been blessed with a fabulous staff throughout the region, people who are 'doers' from the old school with good work ethics."

Another important characteristic for managers is a genuine love for people. Victor enjoys watching people and studying their behavior. One thing he likes about working with people is that "you see results, immediate results" from your interactions. As a law enforcement instructor, he tells his students "you've got to focus on people, got to like people — otherwise it's not going to work. Officers see their share of tragedies and violence, but at other times you want to stand up and cheer."

He has a strong attachment to nature, a life-long appreciation for the environment that he learned as a child. He said, "When I'm outdoors, I can see God's work everyday, and it ensures my

belief in a greater power. Spring brings new life, and in winter, Mother Nature heals herself through rest." He believes spending quiet time in nature reduces his stress level and helps him focus.

In his spare time, Victor has a second career providing protection services to celebrities and corporate VIPs. A few of his famous clients includes the Three Tenors, Lee Greenwood, Garth Brooks, Janet Jackson, Cher, the late Dudley Moore, and Doc Severinsen, who taught him that to have a passion for something, you must make sacrifices. His favorite was Dudley Moore, who "was so kind, so personal."

The rest of his personal time is devoted to civic volunteerism. He's president of the Northern Columbus Youth Association and a member of the Young Christian Athletes, organizations that involve youngsters in sports. His other great passion is his children. "I'm a very hands-on type of parent," he laughed. Jessica and Janelle are in college; Whitney and Samuel are in high school.

Victor is a Youngstown native, where his grandparents had an important impact on his life. He graduated from The Ohio State University, majoring in accounting and political science, the ODNR Seventh Ranger Academy, and the Central Ohio Police Academy, where he learned "discipline and patience." He lives in north Columbus.



ODNR'S NEW PUBLIC MANAGERS



Fifteen ODNr employees graduated from the Ohio Certified Public Managers program (OCPM) at a ceremony held in downtown Columbus in November.

The OCPM is a nationally accredited management development program for public managers in Ohio. **Bruce Motsch**, GIS/remote sensing services manager with REALM, explained that the program is affiliated with 12 state universities and makes education convenient and practical. "Throughout the 24-month program we took a wide variety of classes to improve our managerial skills, such as statistics, business writing, computer technology, the legislative process, and how to prepare and conduct presentations."

Gene Wells, acquisition administrator for REALM, believes the commitment of time is well worth the effort, "The OCPM experience was very rewarding — not only in the learning aspect but also the relationships built and knowledge gained from other agencies within state, regional, and local governments." For information about the program, see your supervisor or visit the web site at www.ohio.gov/ocpm.

2003 ODNr Graduates: (Left to right) Mike Hallfrisch (Water), Marty Hall (Parks), Scott Fletcher (Parks), Tim Carr (Parks), Chris Grupenhoff (Parks), Deb Green (Watercraft), John Gillespie (Parks), Sonya Lindsey (Parks), Bruce Motsch (REALM), Patricia Reynak (Recycling), Larry Tornes (Water), Dee Hammell (DNAP), Gene Wells (REALM), Neal Brady (Parks), and Tim Waln (Parks).



ODNR PURCHASES NORTH BASS ISLAND

In December, the department received approval to purchase 589 acres of North Bass Island in Lake Erie for \$17.4 million, using a nearly equal match of state and federal funds. The state plans to preserve the island's natural setting by offering low-impact recreation, such as primitive camping, hiking trails, hunting, fishing, swimming, and nature study.

The acquisition includes nearly 2.5 miles of undeveloped shoreline, 58 acres of natural coastal wetlands, unique geologic features, and numerous state and federal endangered species. The island has also been known since the mid-1800s for its vineyards.

North Bass Island, also known as Isle St. George, is the northern-most of Ohio's Lake Erie Islands. It's located 18 miles from the Ohio mainland and less than two miles from the Canadian border. With only two dozen year-round residents, the 677-acre island has a one-room schoolhouse, a church, and 12 small, privately owned properties; these parcels were not included in the sale.

TIDBITS

SCHOLARSHIP AVAILABLE: A \$500 scholarship is available to Ohio high school graduates who will attend college to major in law enforcement or natural resources. The **Larry A. Hart** scholarship is offered by the Ohio Wildlife Officer's Lodge 143 of the Fraternal Order of Police, and the Twin Valley Rod and Gun Club of Preble County. For an application (due March 15) or more

information, please contact the Larry A. Hart Memorial Scholarship Committee, 120 Wayne Ave., Eaton OH 45320, or leave a message at 937-456-5371.

ON THE COURTS: ODNr's two volleyball teams had a great season — both made it to the playoffs! The Slammers ended up in third place and the Cardinals took fourth. **Patti Barnett**, marketing manager for Parks, said everyone had lots of fun and look forward to next year.

Teammates included **Ken Alvey, Mindy Bankey, Susan Banks, Patti Barnett, Mary Hughes, Olan Hylton, Becky Jenkins, Dianne King, Emily King, Treva Knasel, Robert Lasley, Lori Marteney, Bill McGarity, and Cindi Solomon.**

ODNR's Lovable Losers

An inspirational article from the ODNR Employee Wellness Team



"It's like a lifestyle change ... it really is." Those are the words **Anna Gantt** used to describe her experience of losing 55 pounds this past year. She has high praises for Weight Watchers and plans to continue losing into the new year. Anna is an executive secretary in REALM and has worked for ODNR for more than 19 years.

The birth of Anna's first grandchild, Charlie, in December of 2002, gave her the motivation to change her lifestyle. She wanted to be around for him when he grew up. So she joined Weight Watchers in January 2003, and became a Weight Watchers and Points System believer. She recommends "journaling," the daily tracking of the food you eat; it really made her aware of what she was eating.

A lot more has changed about Anna than just her weight. Now she can cross her legs and be comfortable; she lost an entire shoe size; she sleeps better; and she can walk farther without getting out of breath. "It's amazing how much better you feel," she said.

And a lot has changed about her diet. She eats more fish, chicken, and turkey and stays away from red meat – and candy. And she drinks a lot more water. She doesn't feel like she's given up a lot or that she's deprived. She still goes to lunch with co-workers but controls her portions. She enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner but noted she didn't have dressing and had a salad prior to dinner – a trick she learned along the way.

More than once she mentioned the support of family and co-workers as the impetus to keep going. She uses her treadmill on a daily basis, walking about three-quarters of a mile each day. Her co-workers at REALM and throughout the department have encouraged her every step of the way.

Anna's final remark was something she'd heard on the news the night before the interview: It takes 6 hours to walk off the calories and fat of a fast-food combo meal.

Congratulations, Anna! You are an inspiration to all!

ODNR sponsors a Weight Watchers at Work group that meets Thursdays at noon. Contact Cindi Solomon, ODNR Employee Wellness Team Coordinator, at 614-265-6941.

MORE TIDBITS

WATER AWARDS: Three employees of the Division of Water received honors from the Water Management Association of Ohio in November, 2003. **Steve Dorsten**, canal supervisor at the St. Marys Office, and **Ron Gray**, canal supervisor at the Akron office, both received the Technician of the Year Award. **Cindy Crecelius**, floodplain management program manager, won the Wayne Nichols Award for her leadership, innovation, cooperation, and accomplishment.

OUR HERO: On a dark and stormy night last October, **John Joshua**, a Division of Water employee in Akron, stopped by his office - even though he didn't have to - to make sure the heavy rains weren't flooding the Ohio-Erie Canal. *When suddenly he heard breaking glass!* Running to the front door, he surprised a burglar trying to get inside to steal the division's valuables. John chased the burglar away and then called the police. The suspect was quickly apprehended, thanks to John's accurate description. This is one instance where "working late" had a whole new outcome!

WELCOME OUR NEW ADMINISTRATORS

Glen Alexander

has been named ODNR's new assistant director. He was chief of Ohio State Parks from 1991 to 1997.



Under his leadership, Ohio State Parks earned the National Park and Recreation Association's first-ever Gold Medal for Excellence as the best state park system in America. He most recently was the executive director of the National Association of State Park Directors, based in Tucson, Arizona. Prior to ODNR, he had a distinguished career with the National Park Service.

Jim Carnes

has been named new deputy director for resource conservation. He has served the last eight years in the Ohio Senate, where he represented the 20th Senate District in eastern Ohio.



During his tenure, he held key leadership positions, including chair of the Natural Resources, Energy & Environment Committee, and the Senate Finance & Financial Institutions Committee. He was chief sponsor of our Industrial Minerals legislation, and was honored as Legislator of the Year by both the League of Ohio Sportsmen and the Ohio Environmental Council. Jim will oversee the Office of Coastal Management and the divisions of Geological Survey, Mineral Resources Management, Water, Soil & Water Conservation, and Recycling & Litter Prevention.

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Dave Mullett, Maintenance Repair Worker, Parks/Pike Lake
Eric Bear, Officer, Wildlife #4
Robert Hare, Area Technician, Wildlife #4
Elizabeth Cramlet, Account Clerk, Watercraft/East Fork
Matthew Backhaus, Fish Mgmt. Unit Leader, Wildlife #3
Brian Goldick, Officer, Wildlife #5
Valerie Childress, Environmental Specialist, Water
Julius Dobbins, Construction Project Specialist, Engineering

10 Years

Matthew Minter, Naturalist Aide, Parks/Pike Lake
Dwayne Butts, Officer, Watercraft/Buckeye Lake
Rob Hamilton, Resource Mgmt. Specialist, Soil/Wilmington
Mindy Bankey, Chief, Legislative Services
Tina Lombardi, NR Engineer, Water
Gus Smithhisler, NRE4, Engineering
Tara Kinsey-Lee, NRE4, Engineering
Yolanda Aekins, Administrative Assistant, Engineering

15 Years

John Sambuco, GIMS Specialist, REALM
Sean Murphy, Area Technician, Wildlife #4
Douglas Hissong, Area Technician, Wildlife #5
Skip Trask, Audio/Visual Production Supervisor, Wildlife

Paul Spahr, Geologist, Water

Mary Sklodowski, Officer, Parks/West Branch

20 Years

Dave Irvin, Conservation Aide, Parks/Pike Lake
Douglas Sourds, Area Supervisor, Wildlife #2
Frank Fetzer, Officer, Wildlife #4

John Janosko, Fish Mgmt. Unit Leader, Wildlife #4

Theresa Shaffer, Business Services Officer, Wildlife #4

Jim Svoboda, Soil Scientist, Soil/Cortland

Chris Webb, Telecommunications Admin., Comm Center

David Brown, Law Enforcement Supervisor, Wildlife #5

Dwight Edwards, Officer, Wildlife #5

Scott Phillips, Area Manager, Wildlife #5

Robert Sneller, Survey Operations Manager, Engineering

Herb Leen, West District Preserve Manager, DNAP

25 Years

Emma Suber, Administrative Assistant, Wildlife

Randal Battista, Investigator, Watercraft/Akron

Terence Glynn, Officer, Wildlife #5

Dave Cashell, Supervisor, Water

Frank Kay, Architect Administrator, Engineering

Nancy Turner, Drafting Technician, Engineering

James Jones, Surveyor, Engineering

Bernice Donaldson, NR Admin., Engineering

30 Years

Jim Ritchie, Design Specialist, REALM

Ray Wallace, Equipment Operator, Water/Akron

Steve Dorsten, Equipment Maint. Superintendent, Water/St. Marys

MILESTONES

New Hires

Edward Roseman, Fisheries Biologist, Wildlife/Sandusky

Timothy Beck, GIMS Specialist, Water

Kelly McCoy, Office Assistant, Engineering

Doug Polack, NRE4, Engineering

Will Martin, Survey Tech, Engineering

Jim Bennett, Treatment Plant Operations Manager, Engineering

Larry Robinson, Architect, Engineering

Stephon Ash, EEO Regional Program Admin., Engineering

Andrea Misko, Public Information Officer, Communications

Promotions

Jeremy Byers, to Research Technician, Wildlife #3

Melissa Meyers, to Secretary, Wildlife

Dave Mohr, to Assistant Chief Engineer, Engineering

Tara Kinsey-Lee, to NRE4, Engineering

Nel Santa, to NRE3, Engineering

Frank Kay, to Architect Administrator, Engineering

Gus Smithhisler, to NRE4, Engineering

Toni Rahaman, Account Clerk 3, Engineering

Lori Benhase-Wolf, Account Clerk 3, Engineering

Jane Beathard, Media Relations Manager, Communications

Karen Kentosh, Public Information Specialist, Communications

Transfers


Janice Gartner, Environmental Specialist, from Water to ODOT

Jeremy Carter, Officer, to Wildlife #3/Lorain Co.

Jerrold Allison, Officer, to Wildlife #3/Trumbull Co.

Retirements

Ella Hardman, Admin. Assistant, Water, 14+ years



THE RESOURCE
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