

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

April 2003



HEATHER OAKES TO THE RESCUE

Heather Oakes always wanted to be a watercraft officer. "I like stress, I like keeping busy," she explained. In 2000, she got her wish and became a commissioned officer with the Division of Watercraft. Today she's a watercraft officer specialist with the Chillicothe office, keeping an eye on 14 counties in south-central Ohio.

Heather enjoys the diversity of her job. In addition to patrolling waterways in the summer and teaching boating education classes, she's also part of a disaster response team. She said, "Watercraft officers are the first to be called out when flooding or other disasters strike a region. We're on call 24/7, 365 days a year."

She carries her rescue gear with her at all times, and keeps an overnight bag packed. "We always keep an eye on the weather, take note when streams start rising — which in my area is a frequent concern."

In February, she was among the first responders to the devastating ice storm in southern Ohio. Watercraft staff assisted local departments by transporting equipment, directing traffic, and checking roads. "We were also anticipating floods, but thankfully that didn't happen," Heather confided.



River rescue practice

Part of her job is to train other Watercraft personnel in river rescue techniques. ODNR's nationally recognized River Rescue Program was developed in 1978, and was the first of its kind in the U.S. and Canada. Training focuses intensely on rescuing people or recovering bodies caught in flash floods, flat-water floods, and other fast water emergencies.

The first day of instruction is spent in the classroom where topics include safety, how to "read" a river (identify river characteristics and hazards), and rescue sequence.

The rest of the time is spent in and around the water, practicing rescue techniques. It's often very cold; "sometimes we have to break ice," Heather attested. For training purposes, the Army Corps of Engineers opens dams on the Olentangy and Licking rivers. The release mimics "high swift water" situations, in which a stream that's normally two feet deep becomes a raging torrent after heavy rains or thaws.

The river rescue instructors teach self-rescue, because you have to be able to save yourself before you can save someone else.

In addition, Heather said, "Boat handling is a big part of the program — how to run in swift water with motors, how to maneuver using just a paddle or oar. We also concentrate on swimming in rough water."

And what does the best-dressed river-rescuer wear? You can wear a wetsuit — but a "dry suit" is much preferred. "You dress in layers," Heather said. You start with fleece or similar fabric that "wicks" or draws



moisture away from the body. On top of that goes a Gore-Tex suit with rubber gaskets at the feet, hands, and neck to keep water out. "A helmet is a MUST," Heather emphasizes. "And we wear a special rescue-type life jacket, neoprene boots with hard soles, and gloves."

"It's a tough job, but it's also fun," she declared.

Heather grew up in Delaware County, and graduated from Hocking College with a degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. She volunteered for four years at the Cambridge Watercraft office, and worked as a seasonal employee with Ohio State Parks and the Division of Wildlife.

She now lives on 12 acres with her dog, Belle, an Australian shepherd, in Scioto County. Heather is engaged to wildlife officer Travis Abele. "We met on the job," she said. He's very much part of the ODNR family: his father works for Forestry, an uncle retired from Parks, two brothers and a cousin are with Wildlife.

Heather's hobbies include fishing and hunting, especially for wild turkey. She's also a big OSU fan, "even before last year," she laughed.

ENGINEERING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The American Council of Engineering Companies of Ohio recently presented their 2003 Engineering Excellence Awards. The organization recognizes "those firms who have presented dazzling examples of their profession." Three of the success stories were projects undertaken for ODNR.

Outstanding Achievement Award for the South Fork Licking River Watershed Study

ODNR team members: Division of Engineering: Steve Manilla, Chief, Jerry Reed, Construction Supervisor, and Joel Reed, retired; Division of Water: Mark Ogden, Water Management Administrator; Engineering company, Fuller, Mossbarger, Scott & May.

Heavy rain in 1997 caused more than \$2 million damage in the Buckeye Lake area (Licking, Fairfield, and Perry counties). Angry citizens blamed state and federal agencies for failing to address the flooding problems. ODNR's flood management project included a technical analysis of the causes of flooding and cost-effective solutions. In addition, residents gained a better understanding of the problems and had a direct influence on the decision-making process.



ODNR's award winning projects were represented by (left to right): Gary Harsanye, Jerry Reed, Jim Morris, Greg Albrecht, Steve Manilla, and Tara Lee.

Honor Award for Old Man's Cave Gorge Trail Redevelopment

ODNR team members: Division of Engineering: Gary Harsanye, Engineer, Greg Albrecht, Construction Project Specialist, Tara Lee, Engineer; Hocking Hills State Park: Greg Miller, Assistant Park Manager, and Pat Quackenbush, Naturalist; Division of Parks & Recreation: Dave Stites, Development Group Manager; Engineering company, ms consultants.

In January 1998, a flash flood destroyed stairs, trails, and bridges at Old Man's Cave. A two-phase project included initial design of temporary improvements to allow safe operation

during the busy summer season. The final phase included an improved trail and bridge system that would withstand any similar events. The \$4.1 million project was completed in 2002.

Honor Award for the Ohio Floodplain Management GIS

ODNR team members: Division of Water: Jim Morris, Chief, Cindy Crecelius, Floodplain Program Manager, Darlene Magold, GIMS Specialist, Ken Pendley, GIS Coordinator, Chad Berginnis, Floodplain Management Supervisor, Rick Archer, Dam Safety Project Manager, George Meyers, Floodplain Engineering, and Jim Sanderson, retired; Office of Information Technology: Dave Crecelius, GIS Coordinator; Engineering company, Fuller, Mossbarger, Scott & May.

This project is the first-known application of a Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping program for floodplain management on a statewide level. Numerous hard copy maps and files were converted into a user-friendly GIS system for faster retrieval and more efficient updating of floodplain information. While the system is extremely sophisticated, it can be used easily by non-GIS experts to assess the risk of flooding anywhere in the state.

Union Scholarship Available

OCSEA Chapter 2515 is offering a **\$1,000 education scholarship** to a dependent child of any nonexempt ODNR employee (active union member or fair share participant).

The money is for text books, instructional and equipment fees at an accredited two- or four-year college or university.

For more information or to obtain an application form contact:

Nancy Gogle 614-265-6615

Jeff Reichwein 614-265-6641

Derek Collins 614-265-1038

Gregg Russell 614-265-6483

Applications along with an essay are due by May 15, 2003 to Nancy Gogle, Division of Watercraft, 4435 Fountain Square Dr., Building A2, Columbus OH 43224-1362.

THE PRETTIEST GARDENS

From Laura Roth,
Horticulturist



BOLTONIA ASTEROIDES

(bol-TOE-nee-ah
as-ter-OY-deez)

Also known as white boltonia,
Bolton's aster, false aster,
thousand-flower aster

Cultivars: Snowbank, Nana,
Pink Beauty



Laura Roth is pleased with this month's plant, boltonia, because "it's a native Ohio plant!" In the wild, it grows in open woodlands, wet prairies, marshes, stream banks, and edges of ponds. At your house, it can be part of your flower bed or prairie garden.

Boltonia is a hardy perennial and very large — five to six feet tall and three to four feet wide. It blooms profusely from late summer until frost with inch-long white daisy-like flowers. Lance-shaped grayish-green leaves give it an open and fine texture. "It's so pretty," she said, "and it makes a nice cut flower."

She explained, "Boltonia's covered with clouds of little white flowers that butterflies and bees love! It's a late season bloomer, so it's a good source of nectar in the fall."

She assured that boltonia is available commercially as both seeds and seedlings. Easily grown in full sun, it can grow in partial shade but may get floppy and need to be staked. Plant it in well-drained soil, watering regularly. She added, "It's tolerant of all soils but prefers to have its feet a little wet."

Laura recommends using boltonia at the "back of the

border, with companion plants such as Russian sage, sedum, and asters, which are also attractive to butterflies."

It has few problems — it's resistant to mildew and requires little attention. It does extremely well on its own once established, and propagates easily. You can divide it in spring or fall, take tip cuttings in spring, or grow it from seed. Laura said, "If it gets leggy, you can cut it back in the spring, or pinch off the stems, to make it bushy."

If you want to see it for yourself, Laura has planted it on Fountain Square's retention basin. She smiled, "We should be swarming with butterflies this fall!"



TIDBITS

ODNR has many knowledgeable employees who regularly share their expertise with a wide variety of audiences. For example:

Chief **Tom Berg**, Geological Survey, gave a presentation on the geology and mineral resources of the tri-state region (Ohio-Indiana-Kentucky) at a meeting of the Society of Mining Engineers. His presentation focused on regional geologic history, sand and gravel resources, high-calcium carbonate resources, landslide-prone materials, and geologic mapping.

Gene Wright and Linda Feix, with DNAP's National Estuarine Research Reserve, participated in an international teacher exchange in Belize (Central America) with teachers from Huron. They're involved in a project with the Belize Audubon Society to protect

wetlands habitat for neotropical migratory birds. They visited classrooms at their partner-schools where they presented lessons to more than 200 Belizean students and delivered teaching materials from students in Huron. Funding was provided by the Friends of Old Woman Creek, Inc. and individual participants.

Cheryl Socotch, Mineral Resources north region hydrologist, presented an EnviroScape water quality model demonstration to several fifth grade science classes in Canal Fulton (Stark Co.). The EnviroScape 3-D model demonstrates various forms of nonpoint source pollution. Cheryl modified the model to include an active coal surface mine and an oil well storage tank.

For the seventh consecutive year, **Scott Kell**, deputy chief with Mineral Resources Management, and his Middle School Science Olympic team

from Grandview Heights (Franklin Co.) took the gold in the geology event at the state southeast regional competition.

Jean Backs, Ohio State Parks, gave a slide presentation to the Granville Garden Club on the diverse natural landscapes in our state parks. The presentation was part of an ongoing project to develop a series of floral displays on the Denison University campus featuring Ohio State Parks as the theme.

John Mathews, Soil & Water's urban stormwater specialist, and **Bob Gable**, DNAP's scenic river group manager, spoke with geography graduate students at Miami University. They discussed important stream processes, and developing policies to protect healthy, self-sustaining stream systems.

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Mark Rogers, Radio Operator,
Administration/Comm Center

Mark Broughton, Conservation
Aide,
Parks/Mosquito Lake

Kevin Newsome, Officer, Wildlife
#5

John Jolliff, Forester, Forestry/
Mohican

Patrick Williams, Equipment
Operator, Forestry/Shawnee

10 Years

Larry Klapp, Investigator, Wildlife/
Lake Erie

15 Years

Thomas Frison, Account Clerk,
Minerals/Permitting

Phil King, Federal Aid Coordinator,
Wildlife

Richard Harris, Nursery Technician,
Forestry/Marietta

20 Years

Stephen Messbarger, Account Clerk,
Minerals/Fiscal

David Nicklaus, Environmental
Specialist, Minerals/Permitting

Steven Kullman, Environmental
Specialist, Minerals/Technical

Brent Weickert, Area Technician,
Wildlife #5

Kevin O'Dell, Law Enforcement
Administrator, Wildlife

Richard Mundhenk, Bridge Worker,
Forestry/Shawnee

25 Years

Gary Rothwell, Mine Safety
Inspector, Minerals/Mine Safety

Vanessa Tolliver, Geologist,
Minerals/Permitting

Keith White, Inspector, Minerals/
Bellefontaine

Franklin Stone, Mine Safety
Inspector, Minerals/Mine Safety

Joan Weiser, Chief Counsel,
Administration

Kenneth Davis, Area Coordinator,
Wildlife #3

Chris Swires, Nursery Technician,
Forestry/Marietta

Donna Stewart, Conservation Aide,
Forestry/Marietta

MILESTONES

New Hires

Austin Imm, NRW, Wildlife/Lake
LaSuAn Fish Station

Promotions

Chris Smith, to Area Supervisor,
Wildlife/Cooper Hollow

David Scott, Biology Program
Administrator, Wildlife

Mark Weihrauch, Investigator,
Wildlife #2

Jay Harnish, Investigator, Wildlife #2

Charles Stone, Investigator,
Wildlife #4

Joel Buddelmeyer, Investigator,
Wildlife #5

Walter Elliott, Equipment Operator 4,
Forestry/Scioto Trail

Transfers

Aaron Ireland, Officer, from
Cuyahoga to Butler County,
Wildlife

Dustin Thompson, Fish Mgmt.
Technician, from Kincaid to
London Hatchery, Wildlife

Karen Norris, NRW, from Big Island
to Deer Creek Wildlife Area,
Wildlife

Steven Moss, Fish Mgmt. Technician,
from Spencer to Berlin Wildlife
Unit, Wildlife

Thomas Lavergne, Education Officer,
from Officer, Wildlife #2

Promotions & Transfers

Thomas Hill, Inspector, from Parks to
Mineral Resources

David Naukan, Inspector, from Parks
to Mineral Resources

Shanda Lumney, Account Clerk, from
Budget to Forestry

Retirements

Clyde Dobbin, Inspector, Mineral
Resources, 23 years

Ted Dobbin, Inspector, Mineral
Resources, 28 years

Barry Ramsey, Administrative
Assistant 4, Mineral Resources,
39 years

Deaths

Eric Smith, Fish Mgt. Technician,
Wildlife/Highlandtown Fish Unit,
Feb. 26

WHAT'S COMING UP?

Annual Health Fair

*Fountain Square Assembly
Center, Building E1*

Thursday, May 1, 1 to 4 p.m.

Check out your options for your
health care coverage for 2003-4,
along with dental and vision plans
for exempt employees. Benefits
Trust will also be here to answer
your questions on dental, vision,
supplemental life, and more.

FREE CLASSES!



For more information, visit
[www.ohiodnr.com/hr/
orgdevelop.htm](http://www.ohiodnr.com/hr/orgdevelop.htm) and click on
"Curriculum Registration," or
call Jeaneen Hooks at 614-
265-6994.

Microsoft Outlook E-mail -
April 8 or 24, 9:30-12,
Building I

Microsoft Outlook Calendar
- April 8 or 24, 1:30-4;
Building I

Microsoft Windows XP -
April 22, 9:30-2, Building I

**Moving from Managing to
Coaching** - April 15-16, 8:30-
5; Horace Collins Lab @
Alum Creek



THE RESOURCE

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*Karen Kentosh, Editor
Mike Williams, Photographer*

**Bob Taft, Governor
Sam Speck, Director**