

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

May 2003



POLITICALLY CORRECT — ODNR'S LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Mindy Bankey and Chris George, ODNR's legislative services team, are the eyes and ears of the department in government affairs, protecting our interests at the Ohio Statehouse.

Mindy said, "We coordinate legislative activities for the department — which means our office touches a lot of different areas."

Needless to say, they spend a lot of time in meetings, both at ODNR and at the Statehouse in downtown Columbus. They stay involved in division activities, helping the department remain proactive. "We help coordinate the department's position on issues," she continued. "If the legislature schedules a hearing on natural resources concerns, we find experts to testify on our behalf."

As with other state agencies, the divisions have rules regulating their scope of operations. For example, Ohio State Parks is currently considering changing the rules regarding campground and other park fees. The Division of Engineering is adjusting the rules regarding engineers or consulting firms that want to do business with the state. These rules are funneled through the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review (JCARR).

Mindy is the director's designee for JCARR. She continued, "I work closely with the divisions to get information for legislators." Although the divisions typically prepare the rules and are present at JCARR hearings, she is the contact person for the committee staff, as well as the general public (rules are displayed on the Register of Ohio).

Chris said, "I assist in handling the department's legislative agenda and working with legislators on issues of importance to the department. We continually work with the general assembly, especially new members, educating them on the department's programs and funding sources."

He would know. Because of his extensive experience, he's playing an increased role in the review and processing of Controlling Board requests. The board is the state's fiscal watchdog that signs off on contracts and expenditures.

They also help legislators respond to constituent inquiries by providing information, or responding to constituents directly, or locating an expert to respond to inquiries.

Because of their responsiveness, our department enjoys a good relationship with legislators. Mindy said, "ODNR is highly reputable. We work to maintain our reputation as a responsible agency. Our job is easier because they like us and our issues."

But our influence doesn't stop at the state line. Mindy is the department's liaison with the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. "We've been increasing our federal presence, in part to help identify more grant opportunities, and to develop stronger ties on key issues. I work closely with staff members for Ohio's senators and representatives. In addition, the State of Ohio has an office in D.C., and I work together with our counterparts there. They



help keep us posted on national issues that affect Ohio — such as Great Lakes water-use and nuisance aquatic species."

Mindy's involvement with government goes back a long way. "I was a congressional intern in D.C. for a couple of summers and really enjoyed working behind the scenes — so I got more active in political campaigns and other opportunities. It was an exciting opportunity — and challenging. What I like best about working at ODNR is our issues — which make it easier to sell to the legislators downtown. I have the opportunity to work with highly respected and knowledgeable people here at the department. It's always a learning experience!"

Chris too found his direction early. He previously worked for Senator Jim Carnes as a legislative aide. Their district covered nine counties in southeast Ohio. "I managed the senator's legislative priorities, taking care of anything he wanted done — such as drafting legislation and running it through the legislature; handling media relations, and helping address constituent complaints."

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He added, "I was drawn to legislative work because I enjoy being involved in policy making and the political process. While in the legislature, I enjoyed watching the discussions among senators and interest groups, and the give and take that are part of policy making. It was fascinating to be involved in this process, and to see policy making first hand. It's very interesting."

Mindy Bankey, a native of Piketon, graduated from Cedarville College with a bachelor's degree in social sciences. For a couple of years, she was a legislative aide for Senate President Doug White during his days as a state representative. She lives in Grove City with husband, Jeff, and daughters, Lauren and Natalie. She likes to garden and is an outdoor sports fanatic. She and Jeff like baseball so much they named their dog Glavine after a favorite pitcher.

Chris George, a native of Navarre, went to Otterbein College, where he received a bachelor's degree in history and political science. He worked for a year with the Ohio Republican Party before joining Senator Carnes. He and his wife, Amy, live on five acres in London with their kids, James and Sarah. His hobbies include camping and sports — especially Cleveland Indians baseball.

Want to know what's going on and who's who in Ohio government? Visit www.legislature.state.oh.us. You'll find information about "Laws, Acts, and Legislation," what's happening today at the Statehouse, the means to search for current legislation, and much more. Be an active part of your state government. And don't forget to celebrate Public Service Recognition Week -- May 5-11. This time has been set aside to honor the men and women who serve America as federal, state, and local government employees!

ESSENTIALS: GETTING TO KNOW ODNR SUPPORT STAFF

Emily Mitchem, who used to be Forestry's receptionist, recently became the division's executive secretary, replacing Sheila Sheets, who retired after 37 years. "She's a hard act to follow," Emily laughed.



Like most ODNR employees, Emily performs a variety of duties, which is what she likes about the job. "It changes from day to day," she said, "and I can keep up on all the different aspects of the division, what each program is doing."

Besides acting as the chief's secretary, she processes payroll and workers compensation, coordinates mailings for timber management projects and fire equipment grants, receives bids, and processes contracts.

"We have a lot of contracts," she explained. "I track them to ensure they get to all the right people, such as our legal section and the deputy director. For instance, we have volunteer agreements for the people who check out entries in the Big Trees program. We have volunteers who maintain bridle trails in state

forests. We have equipment agreements from the Federal Excess Program for rural fire departments, and equipment leases for such things as cleaning up the recent storm damage at Shawnee State Forest."

In addition to processing paper work for new hires, forwarding phone calls about seedlings and APV trails, she produces certificates for fire training programs and brochures. "I stay busy," Emily said, "which is good -- it makes the day go quickly!"

Emily and husband, David, have two kids, Jon and Katy, both in college. David is a full-time farmer, working 700 acres in Centerburg (Knox County). "We raise corn, soybeans, wheat, and hogs," Emily said. Three dogs and some cats fill out the pet picture. Two huge gardens provide abundant vegetables, sweet corn, strawberries, and flowers. Besides gardening, Emily is accomplished at sewing.

The Mt. Sterling native has been with ODNR for 15 years, beginning at the Mt. Vernon Service Forestry office; she came to Fountain Square in 1992.



Remember winter? Seems so long ago now. This photo was taken by Mike Williams, Office of Communications, at Hocking Hills in January.

THE RESOURCE

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THE PRETTIEST GARDENS

From Laura Roth, Horticulturist

CALADIUM (ka-LAY-dee-um)



This summer, Laura Roth is planting three cultivars of caladiums: Aaron (creamy white with a deep green border), Mrs. Arno Nehrling (netlike pattern of red, pink and white with large red veins and a thin green border), and Gingerland (a sun-tolerant, dwarf variety; creamy white with red spots and narrow green margins).

She said, "I like caladiums because they are a great splash of color for light to deep shade. The colors are vibrant and unusual. They will produce leaves like crazy when it is hot and humid. They don't like to dry out, but don't wish to be standing in water either.

"They are very versatile," she continued. "I use them in my flower pots, hanging baskets, and in flower beds. I usually combine caladiums with impatiens, asparagus fern, and some vining plants, like bacopa, vinca, and licorice vine."



Caladium is a tropical foliage plant, a native of the Amazon River region of South America. Laura said, "Plant the tubers after Memorial Day. Caladiums like warm ground and warm temperatures. Planting them before it gets consistently warm will stunt them, and they'll take longer to mature."

There's a trick to keeping the leaves producing. Laura explained, "The flower is a typical arum — like a jack-in-the-pulpit. It's unusual looking — you may have to hunt for the flowers underneath the leaves. But snap them off or the plant will slow down. It's worth the extra effort."

Caladium grows to full size in one season, but is not hardy year-round. "Make sure you bring them inside before it gets cold or they will go dormant," she advised. "You can also dig up the tubers and winter them over in an onion sack in the basement or heated garage."

A note of caution: Caladium is a toxic plant. Severe irritation to the mouth and throat may occur if ingested. Some people may experience skin irritation from handling the plant.

BAD NEWS FOR SLUGS

Are slugs chewing holes in your favorite plants? Laura recommends "top dressing with diatomaceous earth. Diatoms have microscopically sharp edges, and are drawn to the slug by static electricity. The diatoms puncture the slug's skin, and its bodily fluids drain out. The slug dies of dehydration. This has been an organic insect control method for centuries." Diatomaceous earth is available at almost any place that sells garden supplies. It's also good for roaches, ants, and other pests.



DNR DOINGS

May 6 Tuesday

Ohio Deferred Compensation Program

Assembly Center, Building E-1

10:30 a.m. - for employees interested in enrolling in the retirement savings program.

1:30 p.m. - for employees who need assistance with their investments and have questions about their accounts.

May 20 Tuesday

Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS)

Assembly Center, Building E-1

Two sessions will be scheduled to discuss the importance and life-long implications of your retirement plan. One session is for employees with five years of service or less; and the other for new employees as of January 1, 2003. Brenda Brehm will be scheduling appointments for these sessions by e-mail later this month.

May 30 Friday

Bloodmobile, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The last blood drive had donors from: Administration 3; Engineering 1; Forestry 1; Geo Survey 3; MRM 2; Natural Areas 2; REALM 3; Recycling 6; Soil 3; Water 4; Watercraft 5; Human Resources 1; OIT 1; Security 1

C'mon, ODNR, we can do better than this!

Our goal is to have 10 percent of Fountain Square employees donate blood — which is 65 people. We're 20 short. So roll up your sleeve and give up some of your own natural resource!

Schedule an appointment through Nicole Harris-Smith by e-mail or phone (265-6981). Walk-ins are also welcome when time slots aren't full. The bloodmobile parks in front of Building E; registration is in the Assembly Center.

TIDBITS

A BUSY MAN: Dave Graham was named an assistant chief of the Division of Wildlife in April. He was previously manager of the District 5 office in Xenia, over-seeing a 17-county region. In his new position, Dave oversees fish management, information and education, wildlife management, law enforcement, aviation, wildlife diversity, and construction. A graduate of OSU, he has a degree in wildlife biology, and began his career with ODNR in 1977 as a conservation aide.



AN HONORED MAN: In February, Rob Lucas, Watercraft's public program coordinator, received the Northland Community Council's 2003 President's Award. He was recognized for his work as public relations officer for the Forest Park Civic Association, on Columbus' northside. Rob, who has a degree in English from OSU, has been with ODNR for 10 years.

A NEW ADDRESS: The Office of Coastal Management has new digs. Send all mail to 105 W. Shoreline Drive, Sandusky OH 44870. The main phone and fax numbers remain the same.

MILESTONES

Promotions/Transfers

Kerry Eberhardt, Auto Mechanic, from Parks to ODOT
Ken Fincher, Auto Mechanic, Parks, from Maumee Bay to East Harbor
Melissa Meyers, Telephone Operator, from Parks to Wildlife #1

Promotions

Kathy Garza-Behr, Area Technician, Wildlife #5/Fallsville
Steven Bank, Propagation Unit Supervisor, Wildlife/Urbana
Karen Norris, Area Technician, Wildlife #1/Deer Creek

Transfers

Eric Bear, Officer, from Putnam Co. to Washington Co., Wildlife

New Hires

Chris Ashley, Maintenance Repair Worker, Parks/Maumee Bay
Kathleen Jesonek, NR Specialist, Watercraft
Todd Miller, Inspector, Mineral Resources/Cambridge
Travis Hartman, Fisheries Biologist, Wildlife/Sandusky



New Class/Seasonal Watercraft Officers

Dwane Butts, Alum Creek/
Buckeye Lake
Lynn Dunbar, Alum Creek/
Mohican River
Kirsten Brackney, Springfield/
Grand Lake
Corey Hartman, Springfield/Indian
Lake & Grand Lake
Andrew Foos, Springfield/
Indian Lake
Ben Howard, Cambridge/Salt Fork
Adam Kahelin, Akron/Portage Lakes
Scott Stauffer, Cleveland/
Pymatuning Lake
Eric Christen, Maumee Bay/
Mary Jane Thurston
Travis Martin, Portsmouth/Lake
White & Rocky Fork

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Chris Langford, Park Officer, Parks/
Maumee Bay
Richard Gardner, Botanist, DNAP/
Field

15 Years

Roger Barber, Researcher, DNAP
Barbara Burkholder, Ecological
Analyst, DNAP
Martin McAllister, Regional
Preserve Manager, DNAP/South
Debbie Woischke, Researcher, DNAP

20 Years

Glenn Larsen, Geologist, Geo Survey

25 Years

Steve Roloson, Regional Scenic
River Manager, DNAP/Northeast
Clark Scheerens, Geologist, Mineral
Resources
William Thomas, Project Crew
Leader, CCC

30 Years

Emliss Ricks, District Preserve
Manager, DNAP/Northeast
Thomas Hines, Field Operations
Liaison, Mineral Resources

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.