

The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

June 2002



A NATURALIST RESOURCE: RON MILLS

Retired Program Section Manager, Ohio State Parks

Ron Mills didn't initially set out to be a naturalist. In fact, it was his third choice for a career. His first choice was first mate on a charter boat out of Florida, but the captain never showed up. His second choice was porpoise trainer at a Florida marine attraction. He was a week away from starting that job when his parents talked him out of it.

So Ron came home to New Lexington in Perry County, where, as a kid, he had fallen in love with the outdoors. He had spent many happy vacations with his grandparents in Mt. Storm, West Virginia, where his dad took him fishing. Ron was active in the Coonskin Cap Brigade, a program of the League of Ohio Sportsmen for dads and kids, and an international organization dedicated to the conservation of cold water resources and fly fishing.

In these groups, Ron learned another important lesson: making contacts. He remembers a dinner where he was seated next to then chief of the Division of Wildlife, Danny Armbruster, who told him all about naturalists. Ron, who'd never heard of such a thing, said he didn't think he could ever be one. The chief said, "Oh, yes you can!" And the rest is history.

Ron went to The Ohio State University, but wanted to take some art classes that weren't offered, so he transferred to West Virginia University. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in recreation resources management with a minor in fish and wildlife management. He pursued extra research in owl calling, sitting in

the woody hills of West Virginia at night to record owl sounds.

In 1970, he came to ODNR as a seasonal naturalist with the Division of Parks & Recreation, working at Cowan Lake and Lake Hope state parks. In 1972, he was promoted to full-time district naturalist for south-eastern Ohio, one of four park districts. His activities included public workshops, nature displays, and trail layout. He said, "I also learned a lot about handling animals."

The next step was a move to Fountain Square as statewide naturalist where he became involved in public relations, promotions, marketing, brochures, maps, and interpretive displays. It was during this period that environmental education gained focus.

Ron said, "From the administration on down, people were supportive of outreach environmental education and have seen the value of education for youngsters."

In 1988, he started the School Days program. "I always liked working with kids," he explained. This series of free one-day events is held for area elementary schools in parks where students learn about natural resources. Topics include watershed management, fisheries, safe boating, wildlife identification, and forestry. Since its inception, the program has been given to nearly 110,000 students from schools across the state.

Ron was also instrumental in starting the Scouting Outing for Boy Scouts at Burr Oak. Scouts from Ohio, surrounding states, and Canada have participated in this fall campout. The Girl Scouts have a similar program



called the Girl Scout Round Up Sample Chores Day and Sample Nature weekend.

Ron was once instrumental in securing grants for many parks programs from the Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention, such as beach cleaners, signage, and park litter coordinators. He also received funding from the Ohio Arts Council to create Arts in the Parks. This popular program included storytellers, bluegrass music, and other entertainment offered free in the evenings for park visitors. He was also involved in the early development of other popular programs, such as the Winter Hike at Hocking Hills and Heritage Days at Malabar.

Ron is an enthusiastic proponent of nature tourism. "People are busier than ever but still bored; they want to get outdoors. But because of time constraints, they're going for options that are packaged — such as a weekend getaway at a state park coupled with instructional programs where they can learn to fly fish, canoe, and other outdoor basics."

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(Ron Mills Continued)

He continued, "Programs such as the Mohican Weekend offer all kinds of activities for families. Attendance at a park's events helps boost regional economies by bringing money to local restaurants, lodging, shops, and other commercial interests. Involved businesses have reason to protect the natural resource — because it's an essential part of their product."

Today, Ron and wife, Tobi, live on three wooded acres near Thurston in Fairfield County with three dogs and a cat. He retired at the end of May and has many interests to keep him busy — fishing, nature drawing, cartooning, and playing the guitar. After Tobi retires from teaching in two years, they plan on moving to Florida, where some serious salt-water fishing will be done.



Ron Mills shows off his animal-handling skills to a determined snake and students at a School Days event.

ESSENTIALS: Getting to Know ODNR's Support Staff



The Division of Watercraft has many activities that aren't always obvious. One of them is managing records of boat and motor titles. Titles are issued by the clerk of courts in Ohio's counties, but the records are kept by Watercraft's Registration and Titling Section.

"In fact," said **Debra Carmack**, records specialist, "we have records that date back to the 1960s stored on computer and in a bank of file cabinets where the 'short copies' [paper titles] are stored."

She continued, "Boats called inboards have the engine built in, so there's only one title for inboards. But boats with an outboard motor have two titles — one for the boat and one for the motor."

Titling should not be confused with

registering a boat. Debra explained, "Registration is a separate function and is handled through registration agents. Registering a boat is like getting license plates for your car. The 'OH' numbers are applied to the front of the boat for easy identification." In Ohio, only boats are registered; motors are not.

Debra receives requests to run title searches in the mail and on the phone. People want to know why they haven't received titles for boats they've purchased, law enforcement officers check on boats found adrift or reported stolen, marinas process abandoned boats, and banks check on liens and proper ownership — just to name a few of the many inquiries her section gets.

Debra has been on the job for 13 years. She lives in Obetz, Franklin County. She's been married for 25 years to Dana; they have two children, Adam and Heather, and one grandchild, Jeffrey. Her hobbies include watching NASCAR races, baking, crocheting, and drawing. She was the Watercraft Employee of the Year in 1999. "It was a great honor," she said.

PROUTY HEADS TO D.C.



Sally Prouty, chief of the Division of Civilian Conservation, is retiring July 1, but her career isn't over. In May, she was named Presi-

dent/CEO of the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps in Washington, D.C. The agency is a membership organization representing corps nationwide.

Sally had mixed emotions about the move: "ODNR has presented me with amazing learning experiences and friends that will be a part of my life forever. For both, I am truly grateful. Although leaving CCC will not be easy for me, I will be in a position to better support our program and other corps nationally. It is an amazing opportunity and I look forward to the opportunities it will provide."

Sally has been with ODNR for 11 years, serving 1991-1995 as deputy director for Resource Management.

ERASING E-TRASH

The best way to get rid of used electronic equipment is to recycle it. The Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention held a home electronics collection day in April at Fountain Square.

Employees were invited to unload their outdated computers and related equipment, TVs and radios, VCRs and camcorders, cell phones, and boom boxes.

The materials will be used by Ohio Penal Industries to refurbish computers for use in schools



Division employees **Gordon Hufford** and **Jim Ankrom** add a TV to the electronic bone pile.

NOMINATE YOUR CONSERVATION HERO

Every year, the department solicits nominations for the Ohio Natural Resources Hall of Fame and the Cardinal Award.

The **Cardinal Award** is the department's way of showing appreciation for an individual, organization or company supportive of our mission of ensuring a balance between the wise use and protection of Ohio's natural resources. The deadline for this year's nomination is June 28. Only ODNR employees can make nominations for the Cardinal Award.

The department is also seeking nominations for the Ohio Natural Resources **Hall of Fame**, which was created in 1966. The Hall of Fame is the state's top natural resources award and honors a lifetime of commitment to protecting Ohio's great outdoors. The deadline for nominations is also June 28 and is open to all Ohioans.

Nomination forms are available on the ODNR Intranet (<http://intranet/>) or by calling the Office of Communications at 614-265-6875.

EMILY KING AWARDED

Emily King, boating safety and education program administrator for the Division of Watercraft, was recently presented with an Award of Appreciation by the American Society for Testing and Materials. She was recognized for her dedication and outstanding contributions in developing national standards for water search and rescue methods.

Emily serves as recording secretary for the organization's Search and Rescue Committee and chairperson of the Personal Training and Education Subcommittee. The not-for-profit organization, founded in 1898, provides a global forum for the development and publication of voluntary consensus standards for materials, products, systems, and services.



**THE 2002 OHIO STATE FAIR
Volunteers Wanted:
Friday, August 2 through
Sunday, August 18**

It's that time of year again — cotton candy, Ferris wheels, livestock champions — and Natural Resources Park!

It's time to volunteer for your favorite activity — where you'll meet new people and see old friends, have fun, and help visitors learn about Ohio's natural resources.

Fill out the form below — make sure your supervisor approves your volunteer activities — and send it to the volunteer coordinator of your choice.

Information Booth: Greet the public, stock literature racks, and answer questions. Three shifts: 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.; 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.; or all day 10:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. with an hour for lunch. Contact Karen Kentosh, Office of Communications, phone 614-265-6834.


Critters: Be a Skunk or a Cardinal and entertain the kids. Also need companions to help the costumed critters around the grounds. Varying hours on Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays. Call Bryan Patton, Office of Communications, 614-265-6812.



Gift Shop: Assist customers, ring up sales or stock shelves. Hours to come. Contact Diana Cordi, Ohio State Parks, phone 614-265-6513.

Smokey Bear: Be Smokey's voice or a helper who interacts with kids. Two shifts 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and 3 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Contact Division of Forestry, 614-265-6702.

As usual, passes for parking and entry to the Fair are supplied.

 Yes! I want to volunteer to work at the Fair! Sign me up for:
 Information Booth Critters Smokey Gift Shop

The shift I can work: _____ T-shirt size: _____

The day(s) I want to volunteer:

Friday	8/2	8/9	8/16		
Saturday	8/3	8/10	8/17		
Sunday	8/4	8/11	8/18		
Monday	8/5	8/12	Tuesday	8/6	8/13
Wednesday	8/7	8/14	Thursday	8/8	8/15

Name _____

Division/Office _____

Phone Number _____

Supervisor's Signature _____

ANNIVERSARIES

5 Years

Thomas Hill, Conservation Crew
Leader, Parks/Cleveland Lakefront
Andrew Loving, NRW, Parks/Cleveland
Lakefront
Meloni Miller, Personnel Officer, CCC
Ryan Peterson, Officer, Wildlife #1
Kenneth Schenk, Fish Mgmt. Techni-
cian, Wildlife/London
Jeff Webb, Program Specialist, Wildlife

10 Years

Richard Marciante, Park Officer, Parks/
Cleveland Lakefront
Roger Price, Dredge Operator, Parks/
Statewide Dredge Crew
Brian Kitchen, Fish Mgmt. Technician,
Wildlife/Hebron
Roby Williams, Wildlife Officer,
Wildlife #4
Joe Barber, Aviation Administrator,
Wildlife

15 Years

Rick Maier, Federal Excess Personal
Property Coordinator, Forestry/
Chillicothe
Sue Strickland, Account Clerk, Parks/
Statewide Dredge Crew
Kevin Sheehan, Equipment Operator,
Parks/North Construction Crew
Vicki Ervin, Public Information
Specialist, Wildlife #1
Tom Donnelly, Wildlife Officer District
Supervisor, Wildlife #4

20 Years

Thomas Schaefer, Park Officer, Parks/
Cleveland Lakefront
James Tunnell, Wildlife Investigator,
Wildlife #5
Charles Stone, Wildlife Officer,
Wildlife #4
Robert Hesterman, Wildlife Officer,
Wildlife #2
Ronald Smith, Equipment Maintenance
Supt., Wildlife #2

25 Years

Lester Freeland, Conservation Aide,
Forestry/Marietta

30 Years

Dana Bookman, Maintenance Repair
Worker, Forestry/Hocking
Darrell Stancliff, Auto Mechanic, Parks/
Geneva

Mike Custer, Wildlife Officer,
Wildlife #5

Mike Serio, Wildlife Officer,
Wildlife #5

Dan Frevert, Asst. Wildlife Mgmt.
Supervisor, Wildlife #5

Jerry Rolli, Wildlife Officer, Wildlife #4

35 Years

Carol Wells, Public Information
Specialist, Wildlife #4

MILESTONES

New Hires

Brian Mercier, Survey Technician,
Engineering
Steven Poling, Maintenance Repair
Worker, Wildlife #4

Retirements

Sally Prouty, Chief, CCC, 11 years
Jeff Kinkaid, Treatment Plant Operator,
Parks/Harrison Lake, 15 years
Willard Drabic, Jr., Assistant Park
Manager, Parks/Tinker's Creek,
29+ years
Edward Maphet, Conservation Worker,
Parks/Stonelick, 32+ years
Bob Barnhart, Forest Program Adminis-
trator, Forestry/Scioto Trail, 28+ years
Betty Basinger, Office Assistant,
Forestry/Mount Vernon, 17 years
Don Baun, Service/Urban Forestry
Coordinator, Forestry/Perrysville,
27+ years
Harold Bower, Forester, Forestry/Mount
Vernon, 38 years
Toni Burkepile, Business Service
Officer, Forestry/Perrysville, 28+ years
Bruce McPherson, Deputy Chief,
Forestry, 29+ years
Dave Miller, Equipment Operator,
Forestry/Mohican-Memorial,
28+ years
Ed Parmer, Program Administrator,
Forestry, 29 years
Wayne Oney, Forest Program Adminis-
trator, Forestry/Shawnee, 30+ years
Steve Sowkulech, Bridge Worker,
Forestry/Shawnee, 33+ years
Pete Suerken, Forester, Forestry/
Marietta, 36 years
Donna Oney, Business Service Officer,
CCC/Zaleski, 23 years
Joyce McDonald, Secretary, Wildlife,
23 years

Gary Hoskins, Area Supervisor,
Wildlife #3, 25+ years

Deaths

Forest Buchanan, 1999 Hall of Fame
inductee, one of Ohio's foremost
naturalists; on April 16

Peter Finke, retired from Division of
Water, Floodplain Management; on
April 18

HEALTHY OHIOANS



A "fitness day" was held at the Statehouse in Columbus on May 15 where **Governor Bob Taft** recognized several state employees for great strides in improving their own health and fitness through various means, such as exercise, dieting, and nutrition. The event was part of the National Employee Health and Fitness campaign that encourages employees to become active and healthier through fun, non-competitive activities.

Included in the honors was **Kim Lutz**, personnel officer with the Division of Wildlife. She was saluted for all her efforts in weight loss — more than 108 pounds — which has lowered her blood pressure and put her diabetes in remission. Her success comes from great will power and determination, including getting up at 4:30 a.m. to exercise daily.

Governor Taft has issued a fitness challenge to all Ohioans to exercise 30 minutes every day.



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