

# The Resource

Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

August 2002



## KIM BAKER — Environmentally Correct



**K**im Baker wanted to work for ODNR ever since she was a little kid growing up in the state parks. In fact, her first job was marina attendant at Dillon State Park in 1986. Today, she coordinates environmental policy matters for the department.

As REALM's environmental administrator, Kim examines how any development in the state impacts the environmental quality of streams and wetlands. Her duties include working with divisions here at ODNR and outside agencies.

She explained, "I'm a conduit for information. The important skills of this job are communication and conflict resolution." These skills are put to good use when she reviews other agencies' proposed rule changes. "For instance," she continued, "if the EPA wanted to change rules on streams, I talk to the divisions to gather information and then coordinate a response to the EPA."

**ODNR divisions are often required** to review construction projects involving other agencies, such as plans for the future of the Wayne National Forest. Kim coordinates these efforts to ensure a unified response regarding the protection of the state's natural resources. The department's position, issued as "comments," carry a lot of weight, according to Kim.

Last year, she coordinated the review of more than 600 projects. For example, she reviews all Ohio Department of Transportation construction projects in the state and any housing or retail development that impacts the waters of the U.S.

She said, "This job is a challenge, but it's also very diverse — so it's a whole lot of fun!"

**She has a special love for wetlands.** Kim physically goes to a site to investigate the quality of wetlands, what she calls "swamp stomping." She walked all over Middle Bass Island making the necessary environmental assessment for receiving federal grant funds to develop the park.

As a member of the Mitigation Banking Review Team, she joins other agencies in overseeing efforts to purchase and restore previously drained lands into wetlands. This team consists of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the U.S. and Ohio EPAs, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service.

She recently served as the acting manager of the Ohio Coastal Management Program.

**Kim, a native of Muskingum County,** has had an extensive relationship with ODNR since that job at Dillon. While attending college, she was in the Leadership Mentor Program, and her mentor was Joe Sommer, then-director of ODNR. She served as an intern in environmental review for the Office of Outdoor Recreation Services, then became a full-time employee with the Division of Water as a water resource specialist. In 1991, she left for two years, working as an independent environmental consultant. She came back to work as an assistant and speechwriter for Director Fran Buchholzer. She's been with REALM as environmental administrator since 1994.

She said, "All this exposure to other aspects of the department has given me a better understanding of how the divisions work and how it all fits together."

Kim received a bachelor's and master's degrees in Natural Resources Development from The Ohio State University. She was in a combined honors program, graduating summa cum laude. Her areas of study were environmental policy and wetlands ecology.

She said, "I didn't realize at the time that wetlands would become so important — but I'm glad they did!"

**Kim thinks of ODNR as family,** particularly because she met her spouse here: John Marshall, who recently retired from the Division of Wildlife. They have two dogs and live in Johnstown on 8-1/2 acres with their own high quality wetland. She and John like to garden, backpack, kayak, and bird watch.

# WHAT'S ALL THIS TALK ABOUT MITIGATION?

**W**etlands weren't always appreciated. Pioneers and settlers couldn't wait to drain the swamps, cut down every tree, and plow the fertile ground into farmland. From the 1780s to the 1980s, Ohio's wetlands declined from about 5,000,000 acres to about 483,000.

In the 1980s, wetlands started gaining new respect, and with it, preservation and restoration. The benefits of wetlands are many: catching and filtering storm runoff, and releasing floodwaters gradually downstream. They're also hotbeds of habitat — teeming with a diversity of plants, fish, and wildlife.

Wetlands-restoration experts work to return "disturbed" wetlands to their approximate original condition. But, as development still goes on, sometimes a wetland targeted for destruction is traded for a wetland-restoration project elsewhere in the state. This is called "mitigation."

According to the Clean Water Act: "Wetlands may legally be destroyed, but their loss must be compensated for by the restoration, creation, or enhancement of other wetlands. In theory, this strategy should result in 'no net loss' of wetlands."

A further wrinkle in this process is wetland mitigation banking. In this scenario, a wetland is "restored, created, enhanced, or (in exceptional circumstances) preserved," and then set aside, as if in a savings account.



Landowners who need to compensate for authorized impacts to wetlands may purchase credits from the mitigation bank, rather than restoring or creating wetlands at the development site.

Ecological restoration is the process whereby degraded and destroyed natural wetlands are reestablished at sites where they once existed, as close to original condition as possible. The objective is to copy a natural, self-regulating system that is integrated ecologically with the landscape.

Many federal, state, and private programs are available to protect wetlands and assist landowners. The following list is a sample.

**Natural Resources Conservation Service:** administers cost-share programs for agricultural landowners to protect and/or restore wetlands, and performs wetland determinations on agricultural lands.

**Ohio Department of Natural Resources:** restores more wetlands than any other entity in the state, and is Ohio's largest wetland landowner.

**Ohio EPA:** issues or denies Clean Water Act certification and isolated-wetland permits, monitors mitigation wetlands and assesses wetland quality.

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers:** administers the day-to-day activities of the Clean Water Act program, issues permits and denials of projects involving wetland fills.

**U.S. EPA:** provides comments on individual permit applications, has authority to veto Corps permit decisions, and provides wetland education and information materials.

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service:** provides comments on permit applications and manages federally endangered and threatened wetlands plants and animals, and provides technical assistance to landowners.

*(Information for this article was taken from the ODNR "Wetlands" web page, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency "Wetlands" and "River Corridor and Wetland Restoration" pages. The photo is Cedar Bog in Champaign County.)*

## NEW DUCK STAMP



This year's competition for the Ohio Wetlands Stamp competition is over, and the winner is an enchanting couple of hooded mergansers by Brian Blight of Pennsylvania. The painting will appear on the duck stamp in the fall of 2003.

Blight's entry was selected from a field of 21 entries of original paintings submitted by artists in 14 states, including seven from Ohio. His art won the competition in 2000 with his design appearing on the Ohio stamp in 2001.

Waterfowl hunters and collectors purchase more than 35,000 wetlands stamps every year. The stamps cost \$11 each. Proceeds are used for waterfowl habitat restoration projects across Ohio.

## Essentials: Getting to Know ODNR's Support Staff

### CLEVE BROWN



**W**ater is arguably our most essential natural resource. Its availability and quality are vitally important to everyone. Most city dwellers take water almost for granted, but if you depend on a water well for your supply, you want to know everything you can about it.

A “go-to” guy for information about water wells is Cleve Brown, administrative assistant in the Division of Water’s Water Resources

Section. His job is to collect and provide information about ground water resources, homeowner wells, and private water systems to Ohio’s water-well drilling contractors and the public.

When a water-well is drilled, the contractor files a report, called a log, with the division. These reports form a historical record of that well’s performance. Cleve manages the records as they come in, reviewing each one for completeness, and following up with drillers to fill in any blanks.

On the other end of the scale, Cleve answers calls from people inquiring about water wells. He shares technical information regarding ground water availability, quantity, and comparative values for drilling new wells, such as how far down to drill.

“For instance,” he explained, “if you’re considering buying a piece of land, you can call to find out if there’s a well on the property, how many gallons of water per minute it

produces, how deep the well is, and how reliable the water source is.”

Cleve’s been with ODNR seven years, four with the former Division of Oil & Gas prior to joining the Division of Water. He has a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from the Mt. Vernon Nazarene College.

When asked about his name, Cleve smiles and admits that he is sometimes teased about it. “Cleveland Brown is actually my full name. I was named after my parents — my father’s first name is Cleveland and my mother’s maiden name was Brown. And no, I’m not a fan of the football team!”

He played college basketball, but is now an avid bowler, bowling three nights a week, with an average of 207. His big game came in December of 2000 when he bowled a 299. A Columbus native, Cleve plays drums in his church band and likes jazz. He’s married to Erika, and has three children, Dezmond, Simone, and Ariana.



## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### Highlights of legislative activity of interest to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

**Sunday Hunting (HB493):** In a major victory for sportsmen and women across Ohio, the legislature overwhelmingly passed this bill and the governor signed it into law in early May. Sponsored by Rep. Bob Latta (Bowling Green), this bill simplifies the laws relating to hunting on Sunday. With an effective date of August 14, the Division of Wildlife will be able to address the changes just in time for fall hunting season.

**House Energy Policy Committee:** Several special committees of the House of Representatives will meet periodically over the summer to address a variety of issues. Of interest to the department is the House Energy Policy Committee, which was created to develop a comprehensive energy policy for Ohio. The committee, made up of members of the Public Utilities Committee and the Energy & Environment Committee, is considering issues such as the need to increase energy conservation methods and energy resources, including electricity supplies. The divisions of Mineral Resources Management, Geological Survey, and Recycling & Litter Prevention are expected to testify before this committee.

**The next legislative session is scheduled for September.**

*If you have questions about any legislative activities, feel free to call Mindy Bankey, chief of the Office of Legislative Services, at 614-265-6836, or Rusty Orben, Legislative Liaison, at 614-265-6874.*

## MILESTONES

### Retirements

Cindy Love, Executive Secretary, CCC, 32+ years

### Promotions

Thomas Rowan, District Supervisor, Wildlife/Law Enforcement

Kenneth Fitz, Wildlife Officer Supervisor, Wildlife #1

Sean Finke, Fish Hatchery Coordinator, Wildlife/London

Donna Stusek, Deputy Chief, Recycling

Patricia Raynak, Technical Administrator, Recycling

### Transfers

Neil Lynskey, Officer, to Harrison Co. from Monroe Co., Wildlife

Jay Abele, Officer, to Monroe Co. from Defiance Co., Wildlife

Kandie Parkman, Executive Secretary, to CCC from REALM

Chris Kasselmann, Grants Manager, to Recycling from REALM

Tom Davis, Assistant Chief, to REALM from Recycling

## ANNIVERSARIES

### 5 Years

Joe Wells, GIMS Database Administrator, Geological Survey

Maria Lavengood, Campground Attendant, Parks/Mohican

Scott Butterworth, Asst. Mgmt. Supervisor, Wildlife #2

Jennifer Dennison, Public Info. Officer, Wildlife

Mike Bowden, NRA, Forestry

### 10 Years

Randall Hoover, Fisheries Biologist, Wildlife #5

Bill Bopp, Planner, REALM

Pete George, NR Engineer, Water/Water Management

### 15 Years

Janet Kramer, Business Service Officer, Forestry/Lebanon

### 20 Years

John Buchanan, Manager, Parks/Paint Creek

Thomas Cassity, Officer, Parks/Paint Creek

### 25 Years

Robert Bucher, Officer, Parks/Mohican

James O'Brien, Manager, Parks/Mohican

Lynn Holtzman, Mgmt. Consultant, Wildlife #5

Diane Wilhelm, Account Clerk, Wildlife #2

Paul Baldrige, Chief, REALM

Wayne Channell, Resource Analysis Administrator, REALM

Bill Daehler, Planning Administrator, REALM

Steven Estle, Equipment Operator, Parks/Paint Creek

## TIDBITS

**FIREFIIGHTERS:** In July, nine Division of Forestry employees were assigned to fight the Missionary Ridge fire near Durango, Colorado: **Gary Vollrath**, Jackson; **Charles Lee**, Scioto Trail; **Josh Shepherd**, **John Bailey**, **John Bauerbach**, Shawnee; **Ron Collins**, **Clayton Acord**, Zaleski; **Scott Costello**, Lebanon; and **Greg Guess**, Findlay. Two division staffers went to Arizona to assist with the large Rodeo fire: **Dave Hildebrand**, Blue Rock, and **Clark Carson**, Shawnee. As of July 16, another group has gone to join this national fire-fighting effort.

**DEVOTED GEOLOGIST:** **Larry Wickstrom**, petroleum geologist supervisor with the Division of Geological Survey, was given the Honorary Membership Award by the American Association of Petroleum Geologists. He was recognized for his service and devotion to the oil and gas profession.

**FOREST FOR A FORESTER:** **Ron Abraham** served as Ohio's state forester from 1988 to 2001; he retired in December as chief of the Division of Forestry. In June, a 69-acre site in

Sandusky County was dedicated as the Ronald G. Abraham Forest. The planting of 29,000 hardwood trees was funded by FirstEnergy Corporation as a reforestation project designed to help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

**FLOODED WITH HONOR:** The **Division of Water** received an award for its efforts to reduce potential flood damage and protect the natural resources and functions of floodplains. The Tom Lee State Award for Excellence was presented by the Association of Floodplain Managers, a national organization.

## SAFETY

Make a Clean Sweep of Hazards



- ✓ A clean work space is a safe place. If you make a mess, clean it up!
- ✓ Time-saving shortcuts often create hazards. Take your time to do the job safely.
- ✓ Clearly identify all potential hazards.
- ✓ If you opened it, close it. If you unlocked it, lock it up. If you obstructed it, clear it.

Brought to you by the ODNR-OCSEA Health & Safety Committee

## THE RESOURCE

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