

The Resource



Employee Newsletter of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources

November/December 2003

TOM TOMASTIK – SALT OF THE EARTH

Tom Tomastik said, "I wanted to be a geologist since I was in third grade. My first interest was — of course! — dinosaurs and fossils. My dad's hobby was jewelry making and lapidary, so I was always picking up rocks when I was a child." He still is.

Today, Tom's work is his heart's desire, as a geologist with the Division of Mineral Resources Management, Technical Support Services Section. Much of his workday is consumed by salt.

Brine, which is salt dissolved in water, is a natural by-product of drilling oil and gas wells. Tom noted, "In Ohio, more than seven million barrels of brine are produced each year." A barrel of brine is equal to 42 gallons.

Much of Tom's responsibilities revolve around brine production associated with the Division's Underground Injection Control Program (UIC), including reviewing applications, issuing permits, overseeing well operations for compliance with state and federal regulations, and coordinating all UIC enforcement actions for violations.

This saltwater must be disposed of properly, since it can contaminate drinking water and harm the environment. Tom explained, "One way of disposing of it is to inject it back into the ground into newly drilled wells or converted old wells." These underground injection wells must be properly sited, constructed, and operated.

The brine is often transported by trucks from one site to another. He said, "Brine is tracked from the cradle to the grave, where it comes from and where it goes, every step of the way. Townships and municipalities legally use some of this brine on their roads for dust and ice control."

Salt-solution mining is another part of Tom's job. "Salt-producing companies drill wells into salt beds and inject water into them to dissolve the salt. This saturated brine water is pumped to the surface where it is evaporated, leaving the salt." One barrel of brine evaporates into more than 100 pounds of salt. In the U.S., more than 50 percent of the salt is produced this way.

Tom's involvement in geology doesn't stop with his job. He's a state chair for the national Ground Water Protection Council, where he works with federal and state agencies on issues concerning injection wells, mining, large animal feedlots, and wastewater. He also belongs to the American Association of Petroleum Geologists and the Ohio Geological Society.

Tom has been with ODNR 15 years; he has a bachelor's and master's degree in geology from Ohio University in Athens. "When I was growing up, my parents and I vacationed almost every summer at a working dude ranch in northeastern Colorado. I really loved the west and its history, so obtaining a job as a geologist in the hard rock mining industry out west was my first dream. Unfortunately, precious-metal mining had declined rapidly when I graduated."

Before coming to ODNR, he acted as a teaching assistant at OU's geology field camp in central Nevada where he taught basic field mapping methods to undergraduate students. After that, he was a consulting geologist for the exploration and development of oil and gas wells in southeastern Ohio.



Tom is very busy in his spare time, working on the zoning board of his local township. He was recruited to this position because "township trustees were happy to meet someone who knew the procedures" for resolving regulation issues.

A Chillicothe native, Tom now lives south of Galena in Delaware County with wife, Cindi, and son, Craig, who is 13 years old. He helps with his son's Boy Scout activities and provides instruction for the merit badge in geology. He collects fossils, rocks and minerals and is interested in old books.

Tom has collected "many old geology books, but I also have most of Louis L'Amour's books. I also enjoy reading and collecting books on the military history of World War II, particularly the European theater of operations. I also have a number of WWII items given to me by my uncles." Another long-time interest is OSU football. "I'm a big fan, and have been since I was a little kid," he admitted.

MAKING PARK RESERVATIONS

People with a penchant for planning ahead will soon be able to enjoy making reservations at their favorite state parks.

According to John Hunter, Ohio State Parks reservation coordinator, "By the end of the year – or early 2004 – you'll be able to make reservations at state campgrounds and "getaways" (yurts, teepees, cedar cabins, and so forth) through a new Central Reservation System." State-operated cottage reservations should come online in mid-February, 2004.

Reservations can be made for up to six months in advance, and at cottages at eight parks up to 12 months in advance. A one-time \$8 fee per reservation will be charged. At least 10 to 15 percent of campsites will be set aside for people heading outdoors on the spur-of-the-moment. Lodge rooms and concession-run cottages are not included in the new system.

John explained, "This real-time system is run by a satellite linking the parks to an operational call center and the Internet. When a customer at home makes a reservation at a particular park over the phone or Internet, that information is instantly recorded, and availability is updated automatically."

One of the best features of the new system is its ability to display interactive maps of the campgrounds, allowing customers to select specific campsites and cottages at their favorite parks.

ODNR's State Park Central Reservation System is unique in that it's combined with a point-of-sale system that standardizes the sale of on-site merchandise. Both systems will be managed by Spherix, a Maryland firm that handles reservations for state parks

ANNUAL ODNR CONSERVATION AWARDS PRESENTED



ODNR director Sam Speck with Hall of Fame inductee Frances Seiberling Buchholzer, and inductee Harold Jeffers with his wife, Elizabeth.

On October 31, the 37th annual ODNR Conservation Hall of Fame awards were presented. Two Ohioans were honored for a lifetime devoted to the preservation, protection, and wise management of Ohio's natural resources.

Also on that day, the department presented the annual Cardinal Awards. Two individuals and two organizations were honored for demonstrating awareness and concern for the issues reflected in ODNR's mission statement: To ensure a balance between the wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all.

HALL OF FAME

FRANCES BUCHHOLZER

As director of ODNR during 1991-1994, Fran worked tirelessly to pass the \$200-million NatureWorks bond program, which provides funding for the maintenance and improvement of Ohio's parks and natural resource facilities. Also during her tenure, the department planted seven million trees, protected and restored sensitive habitat through the acquisition of 38,000 acres, instituted regulations for a federally approved coastal

management program, passed permanent recycling legislation, and established a non-point source pollution program to protect Ohio waterways. Most of her adult life has been involved with some facet of education or public policy dealing with conservation and management of natural resources.

HAROLD JEFFERS

Harold Jeffers, known for his skill, stewardship, and love of growing trees, is a proponent of sound forest management practices. His contributions to forestry management, in both the public and private sectors, are widely acknowledged throughout Ohio.

Beginning with just a few acres of strip-mined land 37 years ago, he and his family now operate 1,800 acres of certified tree farm in Morgan, Athens, Washington, and Hocking counties. Approximately one-half million seedlings have been planted. The tree farm provides habitat for a wide variety of game and non-game animals. Currently, he is a member of the Morgan County Soil & Water Conservation District and is a former Outstanding Tree Farmer of the Year.

(Continued on next page)

CARDINAL AWARDS

Dr. Prabhat Krishnaswamy, vice president of Engineering Mechanics Corp. of Columbus, chairs a section of the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) responsible for developing all standards for recycled plastic lumber materials. New specifications for plastic lumber have increased use of this versatile, durable, low-maintenance alternative to wood. Recycled plastic lumber is used in boardwalks, playground equipment, benches, trash receptacles, and retaining walls, just to name a few. Prabhat is an industry advisor to the Division of Recycling & Litter Prevention, which encourages the recycling of plastic materials and finds new markets for recycled-content products.

Steve Robinson provides strong support to the Division of Soil & Water Conservation through his tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and dedication to the state's soil and water conservation district (SWCD) program. Through years of service on the Union County district board, he's assisted his community in local natural resources management. He identified the need for additional engineering assistance and technical training for all Ohio's districts; spearheaded a campaign for funds to support training to the districts; and secured funding for grants to hire watershed coordinators in 21 impaired watersheds.

Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. and Chagrin River Land Conservancy

The Chagrin River drains approximately 267 square miles, a watershed containing the main river, eight tributaries, more than 100 miles of perennial streams, hundreds of small lakes, ponds, and wetlands. Bordering Cleveland, the Chagrin was designated a state scenic river in



Cardinal Awards (left to right): Steve Robinson, Prabhat Krishnaswamy, Kyle Dreyfuss-Wells for the Chagrin River Watershed Partners, and Mark Skowronski for the Chagrin River Land Conservancy.

1979, the only one with a majority of its length located within corporation limits. The Upper Chagrin was named a state scenic river in 2002.

The Chagrin River Watershed Partners, Inc. is a nonprofit organization, founded in 1996 with a mission to "strive to preserve and enhance the scenic and environmental quality of the ecosystem of the Chagrin River and its watershed in a manner that assures a sustainable future for people, plants, and animals." This coalition from a four-county area supports local governments within the watershed in making land-use decisions through direct technical support, education, and sound scientific information.

Chagrin River Land Conservancy is a private non-profit conservation organization established in 1987 to serve landowners and communities. Their mission is "to preserve the scenic beauty, rural character, and natural resources of the Chagrin River watershed through direct land protection and promotion of the responsible use of land and water resources." So far, the group has protected 4,714 acres and assisted more than 90 landowners in preserving family lands through donations, bargain sales, conservation easements, and a number of other creative agreements devised and implemented by the conservancy.

MILESTONES

New Hires

Daniel Terrell, Chemist, MRM/Cambridge

Transfers

David Dobbins, Officer Specialist, Watercraft, from Cambridge to New Philadelphia

Mary Fitch, Grants Administrator, from Watercraft to REALM

Jeremy Payne, Officer, from Clinton County to Logan County

Michele Welsh, Officer, from "at large" to Clinton County

Brian Banbury, Officer, from Trumbull County to Ashland Co.

Retirements

Robert Wilcox, Area Technician, Wildlife #3, 32+ years

Promotions

Cindy Bellar, Law Enforcement/Search & Rescue Coordinator, Watercraft

Eric Reed, Water Rescue Coordinator, Watercraft

Beverly Huggins, Registration/Titling Supervisor, Watercraft

Kipp Brown, Fisheries Biologist 2, Wildlife #5

Jeffrey Carter, Investigtr, Wildlife #3

Brett Barnes, Investigtr, Wildlife #3

Daniel Frevert, Wildlife Management Supervisor, Wildlife #5

David Shinko, Officer Supervisor, Wildlife #3

Andy Ware has been named assistant chief of the Division of Forestry, where he'll have responsibility over Ohio's 20 state forests, the state tree nursery, and various programs. He joined ODNR six years ago, working



for the Office of Commu-ications as media relations manager, and was previously with the Ohio Department of Agriculture. A resident of Mt. Gilead, he and wife, Soni, have two children, Ashley and Nicholas.

THE GREAT CHILI COOK-

The 2nd annual chief's chili cook-off took place on October 22 at the Fountain Square cafeteria; this event benefited the 2003 Combined Charitable Campaign. Fifteen ODNR employees – not all of whom were actually chiefs – participated with a wide range of delicious home-made chili.



Co-chairs for the popular lunch and the Campaign were Kim Dobbins, Division of Recycling, and Jill Evans, Soil & Water.

Participants in the cook-off:

Mindy Bankey, Legislative Services
Brutus Buckeye Beanless Chili
Tom Berg, Geo Survey
Turkey Jalapeno Heaven
Mark Ervin, Forestry
Smokey Likes It Hot
Dave Hanselmann, Soil & Water
Mud Chili
Don Karas, Forestry
Smokey Likes It Mild
Ted Lozier, Water
Mountain Forest
Bill McGarity, Watercraft
Skipper Chili

Loretta's Chili
Dave Mohr, Engineering
ASTM CH736
Dave Pagnard, Communications
Award-winning Punjab Chili
John Rupert, REALM
Venison with Black Beans
Dick Schorr, REALM Senor Dick's
Mike Sponsler, MRM
Coal-Fired Possum Trot Chili
Dave Stites, Parks -
#1 at Joe's Bar & Grill
Nancy Strayer, DNAP
Indigenous Chili

Randy Miller, Wildlife

Judges were Ron Kolbash, chief of Recycling, and two loaned execs from the Campaign: Bill McPherson from ODOT, and Terri Demorest from Youth Services.



The delicious entries were judged on Taste, Texture, Palatability, Presentation, Creativity, and a Gratuitous Bonus -- for a total of 30 points.



Winners were: 1st place, Mike Sponsler (left) and 2nd place, Dave Stites (right). Sondra Yates (Recycling) won the "Candy Corn Count" by guessing 230 (actual count 236).

ANNIVERSARIES

5 years

Damon Privette, Storekeeper
Supervisor, Watercraft/Alum Creek

Scott Denamen, Officer, Wildlife #3

Brian Keyser, Officer, Wildlife #3

Donley Tennant, Officer, Wildlife #3

Bonnie Emmitt, Office Assistant,
Wildlife #2

Jason Porinchok, Officer, Wildlife #2

Mark Weihrauch, Investigator,
Wildlife #2

Mary Ann Borch, Geologist, MRM/
Jackson

Jason McClarren, Chemistry Lab
Supervisor, MRM/Cambridge

10 Years

Jarod Roof, Officer, Wildlife #3

James Davis, Officer, Wildlife #2

THE RESOURCE

Beth Wilson, Public Information
Specialist, MRM

15 Years

Denise Knisely, Records Specialist,
Watercraft

Phil Miller, Resource Planning
Manager, Watercraft

Robert Brown, Fish Mgmt.
Technician, Wildlife #2

David Seiter, Wildlife Area
Technician, Wildlife #2

Tom Tomastik, Geologist, MRM

20 Years

Lyndell Elias, Officer, Parks/
West Branch

Jeff Burris, Wildlife Mgmt.
Consultant, Wildlife #2

Vickie McKinney, Office Asst., MRM

Frederick Rothwell, Mine Safety
Inspector, MRM/Cambridge

Jerry Stewart, Mine Safety Manager,
MRM

25 Years

Nancy Gogle, Planner, Watercraft

Gary Clawson, Maintenance
Supervisor, Parks/West Branch

Jeff Herrick, District Manager,
Wildlife #3

Nancy Duggan, Office Assistant,
Wildlife #2

Jay Harnish, Investigator, Wildlife
#2

Della Jones, Office Assistant, MRM/
New Philadelphia

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