

- 1. Keep DNR operating efficiently. Support funding for Central Support, as proposed in the Governor's Budget.**
- 2. Help keep our State Nature Preserves pristine. Support the small funding increase, as proposed in the Governor's Budget.**
- 3. Keep our State Parks safe and in good repair. Increase funding for campground safety patrols and wastewater treatment upgrades.**
- 4. Conserve our soil and water. Fund matching dollars for local soil and water conservation, as proposed in the Governor's Budget.**
- 5. Clean up abandoned mine lands and acidic streams. Raise the Coal Severance Tax.**
- 6. Keep our State Forests healthy. Fund forest operations, as proposed in the Governor's Budget.**
- 7. Invest in advanced energy. Fund stepped up geologic mapping to enable coal bed methane recovery**



Ohio's State Parks and State Nature Preserves. They're a source of wonder and memories. They're also a source of \$1 billion in annual local income.

added \$1.3 million in central support assistance to *all* divisions. These critical dollars will provide essential administrative support to all divisions by reducing the central support burden from current appropriations.

2. Keep our nature preserves pristine.

Lawrence Woods. Blackhand Gorge. Big and Little Darby Creeks. These and other State Nature Preserves and State Scenic Rivers are among Ohio's jewels—the finest remnants of our natural heritage. The Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves is responsible for protecting nearly 15,000 acres of unique and endangered sites—as well as overseeing 21 scenic river segments and maintaining the Natural Heritage Database. Ohio's fragile natural treasures need continuous care to protect them from abuse, including from invasive plants. It takes funds to protect Mother Nature. The DNAP desperately needs the small funding increase as proposed in the Governor's Budget.

3. Keep our State Parks safe and in good repair.

Ohio's State Parks are the third most visited park system in the nation. They generate over \$1 billion to their local economies per year. But the State's investment in our parks has declined precipitously. In 15 years, the parks have lost nearly one of every two (46%) of full-time employees. Law enforcement staffing is stretched thin. Thirty-two parks have no on-site manager. Infrastructure and facility backlog is \$300 million to \$350 million to upgrade existing facilities and structures, including water treatment. The parks have 154 water treatment systems that were built over 20 years ago. A full 90 percent are in need of renovation due to current EPA standards ensuring quality drinking water. Our state parks need additional revenue streams—now.

The Ohio DNR protects and conserves our natural heritage, natural benefits, and natural energy sources.

The Ohio DNR has an awesome responsibility. It is charged with oversight of the wise use of Ohio's natural resources and care and protection of its system of public lands and scenic rivers. Highly dependent on the General Revenue Fund, the DNR has suffered from flat budgets and the resulting loss of many years of experience from staff attrition and reduced buying power by budgets that have struggled to keep pace with inflation. Ohio truly gets more for less from the DNR. Here's how lawmakers can help enable DNR to be a better steward of our natural resources:

1. Support the Central Support line item, as proposed in the Governor's Budget.

The highlight of the ODNR budget recommendation is the



Soil and water conservation. It's helping keep our land productive and our water clean.



Some streams actually run orange, because of acid drainage from abandoned mines. lands.



Ohio can pioneer carbon capture and Storage, or it can try to play catch up. The time is ripe to invest in the Ohio Geo Survey.

4. Conserve our soil and water resources.

Some researchers estimate that the U.S. is losing soil 10 times faster than the natural replenishment rate. One rainstorm, they say, can wash away 1 mm (.04 inches) of dirt. If left to natural processes, it can take years, even decades, to replace that loss. Erosion promotes critical losses of water, nutrients, soil organic matter and soil biota; reduces soil productivity; and contaminates water with fertilizers and pesticides. Fortunately, ODNR is a recognized leader in soil and water conservation. The Governor's Budget provides an 85.9% and 82.4% match in FY 08 and FY 09, respectively, to the 88-county soil and water conservation districts to improve water quality and the use of agricultural resources. It also continues support for the Lake Erie Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and two other watershed CREPs to improve water quality for public drinking and recreation.

5. Clean up abandoned mine lands. Raise the Coal Severance Tax.

Abandoned coal mines have scarred and polluted 32,000 thousand acres of land and poisoned more than 1,300 miles of streams in Ohio. That's a land area as big as Pittsburgh and a stretch of streams longer than the Ohio River. Some experts estimate that Ohio faces more than \$300 million in cleanup costs, yet the state spends less than \$8 million a year. Properly reclaimed, old coal fields support nature and recreation. The General Assembly took a small step in the right direction last year, raising the State Coal Severance Tax from 7¢ per ton to 10¢ per ton. The new rate is estimated to yield \$2.4 million a year in tax revenue. By comparison, the total value of 23 million tons of coal mined in Ohio in 2004 was \$533 million. The General Assembly should raise the State Coal Severance Tax and adequately fund the State Abandoned Mine Land Fund.

6. Keep our State Forests healthy.

Purified air. Filtered water. Stored carbon. Wildlife habitat. Backcountry recreation. These are among the priceless public benefits that Ohioans accrue from the 186,000 acres of State Forests. In addition, State Service Foresters work with private landowners to develop forest stewardship plans. State Forests are one of Ohio's bargain investments.

7. Invest in advanced energy. Fund stepped up geologic mapping to enable coal bed methane recovery and carbon sequestration.

The Ohio Division of Geological Survey. This sophisticated geologic mapping this quiet division develops helps guide responsible development of geologic resources, protect water supplies, improve the coastal resources of Lake Erie, and monitor seismic activity in Ohio. With serious support, it can play a crucial role in enabling Ohio to control its greenhouse gas emissions while developing its deep reserves of coal. But, there's a problem: Ohio's Geo Survey has a staff of only 27. Surrounding states have twice or more staff. This contributed to Ohio losing out on the Future Gen proposal. Unless Ohio invests more in the Geo Survey, it may fall behind other states competing to be leaders in advanced energy technology. It is time to invest in the future.

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