

I am Dick Feldmann from Centerville Ohio. I am an active Ohio ODNR State Park user. I camp in park campgrounds two to three times a year, hike the Ohio forests as often as possible, including the Hocking Hills Winter Hike. I bicycle in the State Parks. And I am an active volunteer in the Little Miami State Park.

We in Ohio are very lucky to have one of the finest Park, River and Natural Resource systems in the country. Each Ohio state park is unique with their own unique natural features. The ODNR system of parks, lakes and rivers is a very diverse system that supports

- Boating, swimming and fishing on its many lakes.
- Canoeing and kayaking on the scenic rivers.
- Hiking and backpacking through its many forests.
- Camping from primitive to full recreational vehicle hookup sites.

The Little Miami State Park, where I volunteer my time to support the maintenance of the Little Miami Scenic Trail, is used for bicycling, hiking, walking, horse-riding, cross-country skiing, and backpacking. We measure approximately 1.5 million trail visits each year.

The parks not only draw park users from Ohio citizens, but extensively from out of state. In the Little Miami State Park, the volunteers I work with have talked to and supported bike riders and hikers from all over the country. They come to ride the bike trail, but also stay in hotels, eat in restaurants, and support the businesses in the cities and villages along the trail.

Each of the ODNR parks and facilities have unique maintenance requirements. In the case of the Little Miami State Park, you might assume that a 10-14 foot wide, 50-mile-long strip of blacktop requires minimal maintenance. In fact, maintenance continues year-round. The berms along the trail require continuous mowing and brush removal during the growing season so as not to impede the bicyclists, horsemen, and hikers. Trees fall across this trail and the other hiking trails in the state and have to be removed. Culverts tend to fill with debris from tree litter and dirt from storm run-off. These must be kept clear to keep mud from washing across the trail, creating a dangerous situation for bicyclists. Leaves must be blown off the trail in the fall. The pavement must be maintained and bumps from tree roots must be ground down to eliminate dangerous situations for the trail users. Bridges and culverts need to be maintained. And, for some strange reason, the Little Miami River, a National Scenic River that parallels the 50 miles of park, keeps wanting to shift and encroach into the bike trail.

The park users and communities around the parks, lakes and rivers are greatly appreciative of the mission of division of parks and watercraft and the work performed by the park staff. It is typical that park users of the trail stop and personally thank the park staff for their work on the trail.

To maintain and keep the parks, rivers, lakes and recreational facilities managed by Ohio Division of Parks and Watercraft at their current high level of quality, I respectfully request that the ODNR budget be set to support the high level of maintenance and improvements of the Ohio parks and natural resources that we currently enjoy.