

House Natural Resources Committee
Chairman Don Jones & Committee Members

In this time of federal turmoil, chaos, and anti-environment attitude we need strong funding of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources Divisions of Forestry and Wildlife to protect and manage our woodlands, wildlife and fish. As an outdoor enthusiast and owner of over 500 acres of woodlands, private land owners need the support and expertise to manage our properties. I am thankful for the Governor providing funding for the Buckeye Tree Nursery in Zanesville and hiring additional service foresters to help private landowners. The Divisions of Forestry and Wildlife have been able to purchase several key parcels of forest land and wetlands to add to our state forests and wildlife areas. As urbanization spreads across the state driving up land prices, folks need more areas to hunt, fish and enjoy the outdoors. The rapid expansion of invasive plants across Ohio is endangering regeneration of our valuable hardwood forests. Now that we have (CWD) Chronic Wasting Disease established and spreading in our famous deer herd, we will need more testing, data, and research to manage this disease. Wildlife Council will soon approve an eight-county disease management area. Chronic Wasting Disease not only endangers our deer herd but also has potential implications on human health. The hiring of 10 additional private lands biologists will help private land owners provide the proper habitat for threatened species such as the ruffed grouse.

Governor Dewine has been great for conservation in Ohio. I hope this trend continues so my children and grandchildren can enjoy Ohio's natural resources as I have. May we remember what Aldo Leopold (Father of Conservation) said in the 1940's, "Conservation will ultimately boil down to rewarding the private landowner who conserves the public interest". Thank you for your current support and potentially increasing funding to the Divisions of Forestry and Wildlife.

Yours in Conservation,

Paul P. Mechling, DVM

2016 Ohio Forest of Honor

2018 Ohio Conservation Farm Family

2019 Ohio Tree Farmer of the Year

2020 ODNR Cardinal Award

Ohio Wildlife Council - member & past chairman

Ohio Forestry Advisory Council - member