



May 4, 2023

Dear Ohio Senate Agriculture & Natural Resources Committee,

I wanted to write to you in support of funding for ODNR's planned upgrades for Jesse Owens State Park. My troop as well as scouts throughout the Muskingum Valley Council have enjoyed camping and holding events at the park for many years. This series of campgrounds brings lots of community groups out camping, hunting, fishing, and teaching. Our troop has hosted classes in fishing, fly fishing, and fish and wildlife management. We partner with ODNR, our local sheriff's office and others to help children and families learn about what the outdoors offer. We have also enjoyed the recent addition of the archery range at Hook Lake. If these upgrades happen I can see more people coming out to enjoy the parks and thus support of our local businesses and other tourism funds that come to our county. Morgan County is hours away from larger cities and lakes so the Jesse Owens Park has been one of our favorite and close to home camping and training areas. As an educator leading scouts, I would love to see a full time naturalist be assigned to the park like the other state parks in the state. I partner with them to offer merit badges and other trainings for my troop and council. Again, with the remoteness of the park, having more law enforcement would also be something I would encourage. My troop applies to ODNR to camp in the off season and I like seeing ODNR and county law enforcement stop through the park for safety checks.

I hope that the Jesse Owens State Park will be able to complete the full vision for the park and provide excellent services to park visitors. I am excited to see what the future for the park will be and that you will support it with funding House Bill 33.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James W. Johnson".

Jim Johnson, Ph.D.
Scoutmaster
Troop 288 Morgan County