



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

JOHN R. KASICH, GOVERNOR

JAMES ZEHRINGER, DIRECTOR

**Sunset Review Committee
Testimony on the Natural Areas Council
Provided by ODNR Chief of Ohio State Parks Gary Obermiller
December 14, 2015**

Good afternoon Chairman Brown and members of the Sunset Review Committee. My name is Gary Obermiller and I am the Chief of Ohio State Parks within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present testimony on the Natural Areas Council (Council) for your consideration.

Purpose of the Natural Areas Council

The Council was established by law in 2010 to advise the Director of ODNR on the administration of nature preserves and the preservation of natural areas.

Composition of the Natural Areas Council

The Council consists of seven members appointed by the Governor with the advice and consent of the Senate. They are appointed as follows: one member shall represent natural history museums; one member shall represent metropolitan park districts; one member shall represent colleges and universities; one member shall represent outdoor education programs in primary and secondary education; one member shall represent nature centers; and two members shall represent the public. Additionally, the Director of ODNR or the Director's designee shall be a non-voting ex officio member of the Council.

Natural Areas Council Summary and Recommendation

It's important to note that the Council was originally sunset in 2004. In 2010, under the last Administration, the Council was re-created, but never seated. ODNR feels that this Council does not currently add any value outside of our normal stakeholder outreach, and that input can be offered to the Department through a less formalized and bureaucratic process. Therefore, ODNR recommends that the Council be sunset by the Sunset Review Committee. We are committed to maintaining a line of communication and further engagement between the Department and these valuable stakeholders, but in a more efficient and effective manner.

Members of the Committee, thank you again for giving me the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to take any questions that you may have at this time.