



**Sunset Review Committee
Testimony on the Ohio Parks and Recreation Council
Provided by ODNR Chief of the Division of Parks and Recreation 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 the Division of Parks and Recreation within the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR). Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present testimony on the Ohio Parks and Recreation Council for your consideration.

Purpose of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Council

The Ohio Parks and Recreation Council was established by law to advise and make recommendations to the Chief of the Division of Parks and Recreation in the areas of development, formulation and creation of policies, planning, programming, financing, and park acquisitions.

Composition of the Ohio Parks and Recreation Council

The council consists of seven members, appointed by the Governor with one member representing each of the following areas: municipal parks, metropolitan park districts, conservancy districts, soil and water conservation districts, private recreational facilities; and two members are representatives of the general public. Each serves a three-year term and not more than four are permitted from the same political party. The council is required to hold at least one regular meeting each quarter and has a chairperson and a vice-chairperson. All meetings are open to the public.

Ohio Parks and Recreation Council Summary and Recommendation

The council has met three times since June 2015. Currently, there are five members appointed to the council. At all three meetings, Division of Parks staff provided departmental updates and answered follow-up questions from the members. Furthermore, members asked how they can be of help to the Division and sought guidance as to what their goals should be as a council.

Since the council has neither formed any overarching goals and objectives for how to best support the Division, nor offered any substantial guidance or recommendations in the areas set forth in Revised Code, ODNR recommends that the Ohio Parks and Recreation Council be sunset by the Sunset Review Committee.

ODNR remains committed to maintaining an open line of communication with our parks stakeholders, especially those who currently serve on the council to meet our mission of enhancing the quality of life through exceptional outdoor recreational experiences and sound resource management. We value their input, and want to continue this productive dialogue, but prefer that it be done through a less formalized and bureaucratic process. Seeking guidance and recommendations as new policies are proposed and considered would be more productive and efficient than discussing issues on a quarterly basis through an overarching council.

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.