



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

TED STRICKLAND, GOVERNOR

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New Release
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ODNR Announces Statewide Program to Employ Young Ohioans

Plan Will Clean Up, Improve Parks and Natural Areas in Southwest Ohio

CINCINNATI, OH – The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) have formed a partnership to create immediate jobs for young Ohioans and improve parks, trails and natural assets throughout Ohio.

An announcement of the Recovery Conservation Corps (RCC) as it relates to southwest Ohio was made at Mayor Mark Mallory's 4th Annual Youth Job Fair in Cincinnati. ODNR Director Sean Logan discussed the launch of the program in which ODNR has identified maintenance, repair and improvement projects throughout the state's natural lands, including Hueston Woods State Park, Caesar Creek State Park and the Little Miami Scenic Park. The RCC will establish work crews of young Ohioans, ages 16-24.

"These workers will gain critical experience and on-the-job training as they improve the state's parks, wetlands, forests and other natural areas," said Director Logan.

Focusing on both rural and urban areas, RCC workers will help improve recreation lands, build boardwalks, observation areas and trails and curb the spread of invasive species. In addition to projects identified in the Hamilton County area, the program will create opportunities throughout southwest Ohio, particularly those in economic decline. Based on the number of projects identified, ODNR estimates the program could put hundreds of young people to work.

"Job opportunities teach young people valuable traits that will help them in their future careers, such as responsibility, punctuality, and a strong work ethic," Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory said. "The new state program will not only help youth in Hamilton County gain skills, knowledge and work experience, but it will also teach them the importance of conservation, ensuring a greener and healthier future for us all."

Funding for this program comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), signed into law by President Barack Obama in February, which provides a total of \$138 million to Ohio through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program. The state plans to utilize \$20.7 million in WIA funds from ARRA to support four new initiatives, including \$2 million to support the RCC program. The \$138 million also includes \$14.6 million for rapid response efforts and \$102.7 million to be distributed to Ohio's 20 workforce investment boards. ODNR and ODJFS will partner with the workforce investment boards to make optimal use of the ARRA resources.

“These projects fulfill the spirit of the rapid economic response needed now by the people of Ohio and called for in the stimulus plan,” said Logan. “The program puts young people to work and does it quickly.”

Recovery Conservation Corps, in mission and name, is reminiscent of the Federal Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) created in the 1930s, which provided needed conservation work on public lands while offering meaningful employment and job training for its members.

Ohio joins similar programs getting underway in other states, including Indiana, New York, Tennessee and California.

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