

Natural Areas and Preserves FACT SHEET

The Division of Natural Areas and Preserves manages a system of 131 dedicated state nature preserves and 13 state scenic rivers. Daily management includes law enforcement, site maintenance, eco-management, public service assistance and educational programming. Despite an increase in the number of protected areas and scenic rivers, staffing for the

division has remained unchanged and funding levels have decreased. One ongoing challenge for the division is to use their dwindling resources to address the host of invasive plants which will increasingly threaten the integrity of Ohio's natural landscape.

DIVISION OF NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES BY THE NUMBERS:

- ✓ 131 state nature preserves.
- ✓ 732 miles of state scenic river
- ✓ 28,000 acres of protected land.
- ✓ Present in 56 counties.
- ✓ More than a million visitors annually.
- ✓ 12 managers responsible for 1,600 acres in 56 counties
- ✓ 5 new scenic river segments since 2000
- ✓ 9 preserves added since 2000
- ✓ 100 miles of public trail.
- ✓ Manage 17,000 record Ohio Natural Heritage Database that tracks rare and endangered species
- ✓ Perform 1,700 environmental reviews and data requests per year

DECLINE IN NATURAL AREAS AND PRESERVES:

- ✗ Since 2000, 4,000 more acres added to the state nature preserve and scenic river systems.
- ✗ Despite increase in land holdings, full-time staff is less than 1981 staffing figures.
- ✗ Since 1997, five more segments totaling 101 miles, have been designated as scenic rivers (with an additional 45 miles to be added in 2008)
- ✗ Demand for scenic river designation studies cannot be maintained at current funding levels.
- ✗ Critical ancillary funding through the Ohio Income Tax Checkoff fund and Scenic River license plates have plummeted. The number of competing conservation license plates and the addition of a new checkoff fund have dramatically increased competition for donations.