

**THE FRIENDS OF THE HOCKING HILLS STATE PARK**

**STATEMENT OF FACTS**

**Proposed  
Astronomy Park And  
Visitors Education Center  
At Old Man's Cave**

**Hocking Hills State Park  
Logan, Ohio**

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## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

- I. Executive Summary**
  
- II. The Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park**
  
- III. Hocking Hills State Park**
  
- IV. The Proposed Astronomy Park and  
Visitors Education Center at Old Man's Cave**
  
- V. Proposed Costs**
  
- VI. The Proposed Fundraising Campaign**
  
- VII. Benefits of the Proposed Fund Raising Campaign**

### **Appendices**

- A. Board Members, Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park**
- B. Table of Investments Required to Reach \$13,000,000**

## I. Executive Summary

The Friends of The Hocking Hills State Park (The Friends), a non-profit organization, is considering a capital campaign for the construction and operation of two new facilities at Old Man's Cave, located within the Hocking Hills State Park near Logan, Ohio: an Astronomy Park, and an expanded Visitors Education Center.

**Benefits:** Benefits in three areas are envisioned as a result of the organization's initiatives:

**1) Education:** The major thrust of these two projects is to enhance the outdoor experience of all visitors to the magnificent Hocking Hills State Park – especially Ohio's young people - by providing more educational opportunities. The Astronomy Park will be the first in Ohio's park system; it will feature one of the most powerful telescopes in the state and provide novel educational approaches into the workings of our solar system and beyond. The Visitors Education Center will be expanded to nearly three and a half times the size of the existing facility, and will provide an increased array of information sources, exhibits, and activities for the more than 2 million people who currently visit the park each year. Additionally, the completion of these projects, and the resulting educational opportunities that they would provide, would be a major factor in increasing attendance at the park and the surrounding region.

**2) Environment:** The Hocking Hills region of Ohio is truly one of the natural wonders of the world. As previously stated, these proposed projects will draw more people to the area and will instill in them an increased awareness and appreciation for this beautiful corner of the earth. In addition, the new Visitors Education Center will utilize "green" construction, showcasing design strategies that emphasize energy conservation and sustainability. Finally, the fact that these projects will be constructed on State Park-owned land creates a natural barrier ensuring preservation of the environment within the park.

**3) Economic Impact:** During 2005, the tourism industry contributed nearly \$15 million to the income base in the Hocking Hills region. Tourism is currently the leading employment category in Hocking County, where the park is located, and supports more than 6,000 jobs - both directly and indirectly. Travelers' expenditures in Hocking County totaled \$267 million during the past year, generating \$16 million in state sales tax revenue, and \$6.6 million in municipal tax revenue. In the future, to accommodate the ever-increasing number of people visiting the park, it is projected that more supportive services will be needed, such as overnight guest facilities. In the short term, however, there exists an abundance of lodging facilities (cabins, inns, bed & breakfasts) already in the area with adequate capacity to handle a modest increase in visitors. Increased visitation will generate increased tourism income and job creation, and eventually, additional economic development and job creation in Logan and surrounding communities, while confining development to these areas due to the natural environmental conservation barrier created by the state park.

**Funding sources:** While every effort will be made to obtain funding from grants, foundations, local, state and federal government sources, the majority of funding for these two projects will consist of donations from individuals and the corporate sector. These proposed projects are a shining example of dedicated volunteers working together with government leaders and officials in a public-private partnership created in order to serve the general public.

**Consultant:** The Friends organization has authorized The Philanthropy Group of Ohio, Inc., to conduct a Feasibility Study that will determine if \$7 million can be raised for construction of the two projects, plus a \$6 million endowment to fund operations.

## II. The Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park

The Friends is one of several state park Friends groups that are in turn members of a statewide umbrella organization, the Friends for the Preservation of Ohio State Parks Association. Statewide, Friends groups provide significant support to the Ohio State Park system: their monetary contributions and volunteer efforts are vital in helping park staffs maintain quality educational programs and recreational facilities. The Hocking Hills State Park is the most popular park in Ohio, and the Hocking Hills Friends organization is one of the most active groups. Managed by a 17-member Board of Directors, The Friends has membership of over 250 individuals. The group works closely with administrators and staff of the Hocking Hills State Park and with key staff members of the Parks and Recreation Division of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

The Friends' mission: *To foster a partnership between outdoor enthusiasts and the Hocking Hills State Park that ensures a better place for nature education, while setting high conservation standards and raising a strong sense of responsibility for future generations.*

Since its formation in 2003, The Friends has been responsible for a number of park improvements, including, among other projects:

- The construction of a new raptor housing unit.
- The construction and maintenance of a wildlife photo and observation blind at Rose Lake.
- The construction of a handicap-accessible interpretative trail.
- The purchase of rope and rescue equipment and three automatic external defibrillators for use by park rangers and other park staff.
- The promotion of the park as a destination location.

In 2005, The Friends embarked upon two major initiatives within the park:

- A. The proposed construction of an astronomy park near the Hocking Hills Dining Lodge.
- B. The proposed expansion of the current visitors center at the entrance of Old Man's Cave, creating a new visitors education center complex.

### **III. Hocking Hills State Park**

Hocking Hills State Park is located near Logan, Ohio in the Appalachian region of the state, and contains the popular tourist sites of Lake Logan, Ash Cave, Cedar Falls, Rock House, Cantwell Cliffs, Conkle's Hollow and Old Man's Cave, which together comprise some of the most breathtaking natural geological formations in the United States. The park provides a variety of recreational opportunities in a splendid natural setting. In addition to its scenic beauty, the region is rich in cultural history.

Ancient cultures such as the Adena and the Hopewell are believed to have inhabited the park more than 7,000 years ago. In the mid-1700's, Indian tribes – the Wyandotte, Delaware and Shawnee – traveled through or lived in the park. After the Greenville Treaty of 1795, numerous white settlers moved into the region.

By 1870, the cave areas were well-known scenic attractions. In 1924, the State of Ohio purchased the initial 146-acre parcel, including Old Man's Cave. The park now contains nearly 2400 land acres and 17 water acres. A dining lodge and cottages were opened in 1972.

Today, 45.5% of the population of the United States lives within a one-day drive to Logan. Two million visitors come to the park annually to witness its natural beauty, take advantage of its camping, hiking and picnic grounds, and learn about its unique natural history.

#### **IV. The Proposed Astronomy Park and New Visitors Education Center**

These two ambitious projects that The Friends has proposed will provide countless benefits to Ohioans and out-of-state visitors to Hocking Hills State Park. Both projects enjoy the enthusiastic backing of state and local governmental officials, and have been endorsed by the Ohio Department of Natural Resources at every level, from the local management staff of the park, to the head of the Division of Parks and Recreation, to the Director of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources.

##### **A. The Astronomy Park**

Pat Quackenbush, the Naturalist at Hocking Hills State Park, has continued the park's 30-year tradition of conducting astronomy programs at Conkle's Hollow. Members of the Columbus Astrological Society (CAS) have participated in these programs and, over the years, have discussed developing an observatory at the park. The observatory concept took greater shape when CAS indicated that it would build and donate a telescope with a 24" lens – which would be one of the largest observatory telescopes in Ohio - if a proper setting could be provided.

The Friends, along with the CAS, have proposed the creation of an astronomy park near the Hocking Hills Dining Lodge, allowing visitors an opportunity to view and learn about the wonders of the night sky. This site is an ideal location, as it possesses the attribute of being one of the highest points in the park, and a location that is situated in the region of Ohio most devoid of light pollution. The dark skies of the Hocking Hills region will provide much better views of star clusters, nebulae and galaxies than can be found at other Ohio public observatories subjected to light pollution from metropolitan areas.

The observatory will be made of natural materials procured locally and will feature a roof that slides on rails to reveal the sky. Construction plans for the observatory feature a design that will incorporate it seamlessly into its natural surroundings, and will allow use for viewers of all ages, including those with handicaps and disabilities.

The observatory will be the centerpiece of the astronomy park, which will be a 70-foot circular structure surrounded by an 8-foot wall. The sundial-like features of the park will enable daytime visitors to learn about the path of the sun across the sky, and to appreciate how the earth's rotation defines our time zones. The wall surrounding the park will contain precisely placed slots that will capture the light of the rising sun on the first day of each new season. Similar slots will track the more complex, long-term motion of the rising moon.

## **Benefits of the Astronomy Park**

- The astronomy park will be open year-round, and available for both daytime and nighttime educational opportunities, such as school field trips.
- The park will attract new visitors and allow them the privilege of observing celestial objects through a large telescope from the best vantage point in the state.
- The park will become a focal point for astronomy professionals and enthusiasts from throughout the state and nation, providing important economic stimulation (increased travel, tourism and tax revenue) for the park and the Hocking Hills region.
- Visitors will have the opportunity to interact with amateur and professional astronomers, and enjoy special programs conducted by park staff, guest professionals, and organizations such as CAS.
- Families - especially children - will be entertained and stimulated to learn more about astronomy and the world of science in general.

## **B. The New Visitors Education Center**

The new Visitors Education Center will be constructed at the entrance to Old Man's Cave, and will incorporate the existing 4,500 square foot Visitors Center. With the expansion, the total available space will be approximately 15,000 square feet. The main purpose of the facility will be to educate the public about the geological, natural and cultural history of the Hocking Hills region. This will be achieved through the use of discovery, interactive, immersive and traditional museum exhibit techniques. The center will include the following features:

- Cave-like exhibit areas where visitors will walk through a sandstone gorge, emphasizing the geology of the region – specifically the stages of sandstone formation as well as the formation of coal and iron.
- Exhibits emphasizing the traumatic changes to the land that have taken place throughout history, including glacial periods and mountain-peak formation.
- A topography-relief map of the region.

- Exhibits describing the environment, e.g., ecosystems, soil and trees, etc. with interpretation of the basic underpinnings of the park's environment.
- Models of the specific habitats of the area.
- Exhibits that illustrate the effects of seasonal changes on wildflowers and bird migrations.
- Artifacts from early humans such as the Adena culture, Indian tribal populations, and white settlers who arrived in the 1700's and 1800's.
- A discovery help desk equipped with microscopes, maps, lesson boxes and other items to prepare visitors for hikes in the park, to facilitate research projects, or simply to help visitors enjoy the special qualities of the park.
- A food court.
- A book and gift shop.

In addition, the new Visitors Education Center will be designed as a green building where new construction and renovation of existing spaces will seek to meet "LEED" (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) consensus-based national standards promulgated by the United States Green Building Council, a national volunteer organization. The council is committed to minimal-impact site development, water conservation, energy efficiency and indoor environmental quality. It is expected that the unique construction of the facility will make it a destination in itself for those who study environmental harmonious architecture and construction.

**V. Proposed Cost**

The proposed cost to construct these two facilities and to provide support for future operations is approximately \$13 million.

The proposed costs are as follows:

<b>A. Cost to construct the Astronomy Park</b>	<b>\$ 500,000</b>
<b>B. Cost to construct the new Visitors Education Center</b>	<b>3,500,000</b>
<b>C. Site Development, Sanitary Systems, Etc.</b>	<b>750,000</b>
<b>D. Professional Fees</b>	<b>750,000</b>
<b>E. Exhibits/Equipment</b>	<b>1,500,000</b>
<b>F. Endowment for Programs and Operations</b>	<b>6,000,000</b>
	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$13,000,000</b>

Note: investment income from the endowment is specifically earmarked for funding payroll and operational costs associated with administration, staffing, programming, operating and maintaining the facilities.

## **VI. The Proposed Fundraising Campaign**

To raise the estimated \$13 million required to construct and provide operating funds for these two major initiatives, The Friends is considering a major gifts (capital) campaign.

The Board of Directors of The Friends has retained **The Philanthropy Group of Ohio, Inc.**, a Columbus-based fundraising consultant and campaign-management firm, to conduct a feasibility study to determine if these funds can be raised. Specifically, the consulting firm will ascertain if a combination of gifts and pledges from the private sector, payable over a five-year period, along with public funds from the State of Ohio and the federal government, and grants and gifts from other sources, can be attained for these projects. The board members are an integral part of the planning process underway and are committed to achieving a successful project.

It is expected that a final report will be made available to The Friends group by June 30, 2007.

## **VII. Benefits of the Proposed Fundraising Campaign**

The benefits of a successful capital campaign for these projects will be as follows:

1. A new astronomy park, operating year-round, day and night, will be the first in Ohio's park system, and will provide important recreational and educational benefits to Ohio's families and to visitors coming to the park every year from around the world.
2. The new Visitors Education Center will provide an updated venue for educating Ohio's students and the public about the uniqueness of the Hocking Hills region, and will stimulate much-needed economic development in one of the poorest regions of Ohio in order to serve the needs created by a significant increase in visitors to the region.
3. The emphasis on "green building" will demonstrate the strong commitment toward preserving our natural resources through use of sustainable energy systems - a major goal of the project. The new facility, in fact, will be an object of study itself.
4. Young people, as a result of these new initiatives, will be stimulated to continue their education in ways perhaps not heretofore considered. These initiatives will provide additional local avenues for employment in the fields of natural science and natural resources – a boon to local institutions of higher learning, such as Hocking College.
5. Hocking Hills State Park, already a jewel in Ohio's park system, will be enhanced immeasurably and become an even more attractive natural destination for Ohioans and out-of-state visitors.
6. As stated in point 2, the economic benefits of the two projects will be substantial, as the increase in visitors will create more demand for cabins, motels, campgrounds, and other support services associated with ecotourism. However, the 2,400 acres of state park land that will surround these projects creates a natural control barrier in terms of environmental conservation, and thus confines commercial development to where it is needed: urban areas situated nearest the park, such as Logan, Ohio, which currently lists a national discount retailer as its largest single employer.
7. Overall, the project is an outstanding example of a public-private partnership between volunteers and the Ohio State government to produce a valuable public benefit. To this end, The Friends has already engaged the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) in order to ensure that the facilities and the park will be able to handle the expected significant increase in visitation without compromising safety or the environment. ODOT has been found to be just as supportive of these proposed projects as other involved state governmental agencies and officials. The park itself has undergone substantial sewage treatment, roadway, and other infrastructure upgrades during the last year, and is thus primed to accommodate the addition of these two projects.

## Appendix A

### Board Members, Friends of the Hocking Hills State Park

#### Officers

Jerry Jividen, President  
Chillicothe, OH

Jennifer Mitchell, Vice President  
South Bloomingville, OH

Randie Adam, Secretary  
Lancaster, OH

Greg Kidwell, Treasurer  
Sugar Grove, OH

#### Other Board Members

Lisa Eiselstein  
Logan, OH

Clyde Gosnell  
Ashville, OH

Judy Hard  
Logan

Eric Hoffman  
Logan, OH

Barbara Jividen  
Chillicothe, OH

Jamie Kidwell  
Sugar Grove, OH

#### Other Board Members (Con't)

Paul Knoop  
Laureville, OH

Mary Jo McCain  
Circleville, OH

Derek Mills  
Logan, OH

Karla Ross  
New Plymouth, OH

Barb Saving  
Logan, OH

Alex Snyder  
Glouster, OH

Dr. Louise Warner  
Ashville, OH

## Appendix B

**Table of Investments  
Required to Reach \$13,000,000**

No. of Gifts	IV. V.	Gift Category	Total this Category	Cumulative Dollar Total
<b><u>Advance</u></b>				
1		\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
2		1,000,000	2,000,000	4,000,000
3		500,000	1,500,000	5,500,000
4		250,000	1,000,000	6,500,000
8		100,000	800,000	7,300,000
12		50,000	600,000	9,900,000
<b><u>Leadership</u></b>				
24		25,000	600,000	9,500,000
50		15,000	750,000	10,250,000
100		10,000	1,000,000	11,250,000
<b><u>Major</u></b>				
200		5,000	1,000,000	12,250,000
750		1,000	750,000	13,000,000