

**FOR RELEASE:** May 26, 2011  
**MEDIA CONTACT:** Erin Strouse, (614) 644-2160  
**CITIZEN CONTACT:** Jed Thorp, (614) 644-2160

**Ohio EPA Accepts Public Comments About ODOT's Proposed SR 664 Realignment  
At Old Man's Cave in Hocking County**

Ohio EPA will hold a public information session and hearing at 6 p.m. on Wednesday, June 8, 2011, regarding the water quality impacts of a proposed 0.82-mile realignment of State Route 664 adjacent to Old Man's Cave State Park. The meeting will be held at the Hocking Hills Dining Lodge in the private dining room (20020 SR 664 in Logan).

The Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) is proposing the project to eliminate an ongoing pedestrian safety concern and allow for the expansion of state park facilities. SR 664 is currently situated north of the scenic gorge, existing park facilities and parking lot. Currently, pedestrians walk across SR 664 at multiple locations to access the gorge and park facilities. An increase in pedestrian and vehicular traffic is expected if the Ohio Department of Natural Resources expands the existing education center.

The proposed realignment extends from the park entrance near Culp Road west and north around the parking area and reconnects with SR 664 near Lodge Road. Pedestrians would no longer be required to walk across SR 664 to visit the gorge.

Discharges from the construction and development activities, if approved, would result in lowering the water quality of seven streams within the Lower Scioto River watershed. ODOT's preferred alternative, if approved, would impact approximately 961 feet of streams. ODOT would be required to offset any impacts resulting from the project. Ohio EPA also will consider other alternatives that result in lesser or no impacts to water quality.

The federal Clean Water Act requires anyone discharging dredged or fill material into Ohio waters to obtain a Section 401 water quality certification from Ohio EPA and Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ohio EPA received a Section 401 certification application for this project. The Agency's review is to ensure the project will comply with Ohio's water quality standards.

The project may result in a change from current water quality conditions but cannot violate standards that protect human health and the environment. Ohio EPA will review the application and the technical, economic, social and environmental aspects of the project before making a decision.

Ohio EPA places a high priority on public involvement and encourages citizens to become involved in the decision-making process. During the June 8 information session, representatives from Ohio EPA will explain the proposed project and answer questions. During the hearing, which immediately follows the information session, the public can submit comments for the record regarding the application. The purpose of the hearing is to obtain additional information that will be considered before Ohio EPA issues or denies the certification.

In addition to oral comments provided at the public meeting, Ohio EPA will accept and equally consider written comments received through June 15, 2011. This is an extension from the date mentioned in a recently issued public notice. Written comments can be mailed to Ohio EPA-Division of Surface Water, Attention: Permits Processing Unit, P.O. Box 1049, Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049. Interested parties also may request to be placed on a mailing list for information by writing to the same address.

The application and other related materials are available for review at Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water, Lazarus Government Center, 50 W. Town St., Suite 700, Columbus by first calling (614) 644-2001.