

# Oil & Gas State Lands Leasing: Draft Outline for Communication Plan (8/20/12)

## SUMMARY

### I. SITUATION

#### Goals of the Present Initiative

ODNR will exercise state-owned drilling rights under a state forest – Sunfish Creek SF in Monroe County – and two state parks – Barkcamp SP in Belmont County and Wolf Run SP in Noble County – in a way that a) *maximizes benefits and safeguards* for Ohioans, b) *completely avoids park surface disturbance* and c) *minimizes forest surface disturbance and offers a model for good forest land management*.

#### Communication Problem to Solve

An initiative to proactively open state park and forest land to horizontal drilling/hydraulic fracturing will be met with *zealous resistance by environmental activist opponents*, who are skilled propagandists. *Neutral parties* in particular – such as ordinary citizens concerned about their families' health – will be vulnerable to messaging by opponents that the initiative represents *dangerous and radical state policy by Gov. Kasich*.

#### Stakeholders and Key Influencers

1. *Allied* opinion leaders, groups and forums (current and potential) – includes state and local government, education, business, and local community sector organizations interested in park improvements, dam repairs, economic development, and oil and gas development.
2. *Neutral* opinion leaders, groups and forums – includes state and local government officials, civic groups and national, state and local news media.
3. *Adversarial* opinion leaders, groups and forums – includes “eco-left” pressure groups.

#### Communication Obstacles and Constraints

1. Vocal adversaries will communicate emotionally and aggressively to the news media and online to cast this initiative as “*risky and radical*.”
2. Opponents will attempt to legally and *physically halt* the drilling.
3. Opponents will attempt to create *public panic* about perceived health risks.
4. Opponents' proxies in the media will *slant news coverage* against us.
5. This initiative could blur public perception of *ODNR's regulatory role* in oil and gas.

### II. COMMUNICATIONS MISSION

As ODNR opens certain state park and forest land to horizontal drilling for oil and gas in the fall of 2012 (drilling in parks would be non-developmental), the department will begin communications to important audiences to *build understanding, foster support, counter opponents' criticism* and *minimize public concerns* regarding the initiative. The communications will continue for the duration of the initiative.

### III. PROGRAM EXECUTION

#### A. Targeted Audiences

1. *Allied audiences* include friends of park/forest groups; park/forest neighbors; park/forest users; local community and civic groups; state agency partners; economic development officials and proponents; and supporters/participants of economic/oil & gas development in Ohio
2. *Neutral audiences* include the general public, civic groups and the news media

#### B. Communication Objectives

1. *Build understanding and support* for the initiative from **allied** audiences
2. *Build understanding and minimize concerns* regarding the initiative among **neutral** audiences
3. *Marginalize the effectiveness* of communications by **adversaries** about the initiative

#### C. Communication Strategy

ODNR will use three broad communication channels – the *Web*, the *news media*, and *direct communications and engagement* – to outline how the initiative will *benefit the public* and to *reassure the public about safeguards* in place to protect the public.

#### D. Key Messages

- A. This initiative will *solve long-standing problems* to benefit the public.
  - a. It will provide millions of new dollars to restore deteriorating park and forest infrastructure.
    - i. For example, it will allow us to build modern bathrooms, more and better camping spaces, better park and forest roads.
  - b. It will provide millions of new dollars to repair deteriorating dams controlled by ODNR.
  - c. It will create thousands of new jobs for Ohioans (*messaging will be done by JobsOhio*).
- B. This initiative will be implemented in a way that *will benefit the state park system, minimize impacts on state forests and safeguard the public's health*.
  - a. We will follow best management practices to *prevent any negative impact on park lands and minimize impact on forest lands* (e.g., sound abatement).
  - b. We have some of the nation's *strictest regulatory safeguards* to protect public health and the environment.
- C. This initiative follows sound, sensible and established public policy.

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### Tactics, by Channel:

#### a) Via *Web*. Examples:

- 1) On a dedicated ODNR one-stop-shop web page (separate from the Oil & Gas Division), post *ODNR videos and third party educational videos* about fracking safety, best practices by industry and other states' programs, and dam safety and repairs.
- 2) Web-post and promote *announcements of interest* to a target audience and links to *supportive third-party articles* (e.g., timely examples of industry environmental best practices and regulatory safeguards in Ohio and other states).

#### b) Via *News Media*. Examples:

- 1) *Kick-off announcement* featuring the benefits to state parks/forests and dam safety statewide and in particular locales
- 2) Place a series of *Op-ed columns* covering these topics:
  - a. how this initiative will *benefit* park users and taxpayers
  - b. how it will be *safe* for people and the environment, including only positive impact on state parks
  - c. how it is *sound public policy*, with strong precedents and rationales
- 3) Editorial board meetings on these subjects

#### c) Via *Direct Communications and Engagement*. Examples:

- 1) *Small-group meetings* with state legislators and local elected officials, business leaders, and friends of the park organizations
- 2) *Conference calls* with targeted opinion leaders to pre-announce upcoming news

### Team Members

- a) **Main Effort** – ODNR Director, Assistant Director, Policy Staff and Communications Office
- b) **Supporting Efforts** – ODNR Oil and Gas Division (for information about BMPs and regulatory compliance), Ohio State Parks Division, Forestry Division, Soil and Water Division, Legislative Affairs, Legal Services; JobsOhio (for information regarding economic development)

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Draft Outline for Communication Plan**

8/3/12

**I. SITUATION**

**A. ODNR Mission**

To ensure a balance between wise use and protection of our natural resources for the benefit of all.

**B. Pertinent State Policies**

No oil and gas drilling is permitted that would cause surface disturbance on land within state parks. Drilling may be permitted underneath inland state park land and waters.

**C. Goals of this Initiative**

Scenario 1: ODNR will influence the exercise of privately controlled drilling rights under state park land and waters to maximize benefits and safeguards for Ohioans and prevent park land surface disturbance. *(Example: Lake Milton SP, Mahoning County)*

Scenario 2: ODNR will exercise state-owned drilling rights under state forests to maximize benefits and safeguards for Ohioans and minimize forest surface disturbance. *(Examples: Sunfish Creek SF, Monroe County, and Yellow Creek SF, Columbiana County)*

Scenario 3: ODNR will exercise state-owned drilling rights under state parks to maximize benefits and safeguards for Ohioans and avoid park land surface disturbance. *(Example: Barkcamp SP, Belmont County)*

**D. Stakeholders**

1. Allied groups and forums (current and potential) include:

*State Government:*

- Governor's Office
- JobsOhio/Ohio Department of Development
- Ohio EPA
- Ohio Department of Health

*Business sector:*

- Director's natural resources advisory board (tba)
- Canton Regional Chamber of Commerce ([www.cantonchamber.org](http://www.cantonchamber.org))

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- Cambridge Area Chamber of Commerce ([www.cambridgeohiochamber.com](http://www.cambridgeohiochamber.com))
- U.S. Chamber of Commerce ([www.uschamber.com](http://www.uschamber.com))
- Ohio Chamber of Commerce ([www.ohiochamber.com](http://www.ohiochamber.com))
- Ohio Oil and Gas Association ([www.ooga.org](http://www.ooga.org))
- Halliburton ([www.halliburton.com](http://www.halliburton.com))
- America's Natural Gas Alliance/Regina Hopper ([www.anga.us](http://www.anga.us))
- FracFocus ([www.fracfocus.org](http://www.fracfocus.org))

### *Education sector:*

- Mid-East Career & Technology Centers, Zanesville ([www.mid-east.k12.oh.us](http://www.mid-east.k12.oh.us))

### *Media sector:*

- Third Base Politics ([www.thirdbasepolitics.blogspot.com](http://www.thirdbasepolitics.blogspot.com))
- Zanesville Times Recorder (potential) ([www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com](http://www.zanesvilletimesrecorder.com))
- Newark Advocate (potential) ([www.newarkadvocate.com](http://www.newarkadvocate.com))
- Business First (potential) ([www.bizjournals.com](http://www.bizjournals.com))
- Youngstown Vindicator (potential) ([www.vindy.com](http://www.vindy.com))

## 2. Neutral groups and forums include:

- National, State, and local news media
- Stateline/Pew (potential) ([www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com), [www.pewstates.org](http://www.pewstates.org))
- Network for Public Health Law (potential) ([www.networkforphl.org](http://www.networkforphl.org))
- Earthworks (potential) (<http://www.earthworksaction.org>)

## 3. Opposition groups and forums include:

- Sierra Club ([www.ohiosierraclub.org](http://www.ohiosierraclub.org))
- Ohio Environmental Council ([www.theoec.org](http://www.theoec.org))
- OhioFracktion ([www.ohiofracktion.com](http://www.ohiofracktion.com))
- Rep. Robert Hagan
- Rep. Nickie Antonio
- EcoWatch ([www.ecowatch.org](http://www.ecowatch.org))
- WaterKeeper Alliance ([www.waterkeeper.org](http://www.waterkeeper.org))
- OMB Watch ([www.ombwatch.org](http://www.ombwatch.org))
- Marcellus Earth First ([www.marcellusearthfirst.org](http://www.marcellusearthfirst.org))
- Marcellus Shale Protest ([www.marcellusprotest.org](http://www.marcellusprotest.org))
- Natural Resources Defense Council ([www.nrdc.org](http://www.nrdc.org))

### **E. Obstacles and Constraints**

Vocal opponents of this initiative will react emotionally, communicate aggressively to the news media and online, and attempt to cast it as unprecedented and risky state policy. (This will require aggressive and sustained communications by ODNR about our policy and public health precautions.)

Anti-fracking activists will attempt to legally and physically disrupt or halt the drilling projects, including staging dangerous protests on state lands. (This will require sustained legal countermeasures and crisis readiness by ODNR.)

Anti-fracking activists will attempt to create public panic about perceived public health risks posed by the oil & gas industry. (This will require sustained messaging about risks and safeguards, and coordination among ODNR, ODH, and OEPA.)

This initiative can be expected to blur public perception of ODNR's regulatory role in oil and gas. (This will require precise messaging and coordination by ODNR.)

### **F. Opportunities for Success**

This initiative is expected to bring substantial initial revenues to the department that can be used for significant and continued improvements to state parks and forests.

This initiative has the potential to bring public support, especially among and park/forest users, local labor pools, and supporters of economic and oil & gas development in Ohio. (This will depend on how ODNR decides to use the generated revenues, how it discusses and promotes this initiative, and to what extent state parks and state forests will benefit.)

### **G. Research Needed**

1. Anticipated legal and political arguments by challengers
2. Conformance to past and current land use policies and precedents at ODNR, other states, and the federal government
3. Legal and public relations vulnerabilities of oil and gas lessees

## **II. MISSION**

As ODNR opens state parks and forests to horizontal drilling in the summer of 2012, the department will promptly begin communications to stakeholders and the public to encourage support for, pre-empt and respond to criticism of, and minimize concerns about the program; these communications will continue for the duration of this initiative.

### **III. EXECUTION**

#### **A. Target Audiences**

1. Allied parties include friends of park/forest groups; park/forest neighbors; park/forest users; state agency partners; state and local officials; certain members of national, state and local media; economic development officials and proponents; and supporters/participants of economic/oil & gas development in Ohio
2. Neutral parties include national, state, and local media organizations; most of general population
3. Adversarial parties include certain local and state officeholders and ideological opponent groups; certain members of national, state, and local media

#### **B. Communication Objectives**

1. Generate support from allies (e.g. associations of friends of parks/forests, park/forest users, park/forest neighbors, local labor pools benefitting from economic development, economic development officials, oil and gas initiative supporters).
2. Minimize impact of adversaries on neutral audiences (e.g., neutralize adversaries' public health risk claims).

#### **C. Communication Strategy**

ODNR will flood three broad communication channels – the Web, the news media, and direct communications and engagement – with messages to educate audiences about the initiative's: a) anticipated job-creation benefits, b) park- and forest-improvement benefits, and c) public health precautions. (ODNR will partner with state development officials to promote program intentions related to economic recovery.)

#### **D. Key Messages**

1. "This initiative will help lift eastern Ohio out of economic distress as well as help restore deteriorating park and forest infrastructure. It will bring much-needed improvements to our parks, such as modern bathrooms, more environmental protections, better park and forest roads, more and better camping spaces, and more operational efficiencies."
2. "We will allow no negative impact on park or forest lands or scenic views, and we have some of the nation's strictest safeguards in place to make sure there is danger to public health or the environment."

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3. "We are confident our park users will love these improvements, and we are planning for greatly increased park use as a result."

**E. Communication Tactics**

**1. Tactics by Strategy:**

- a) Promote the program's job creation benefits, relying on state development officials as surrogates. Examples include:
  - 1) State development officials will provide promotional quotes and response statements about how the program is helping the state's economic recovery.
  - 2) Development officials will provide facts and figures about anticipated economic impact of this program.
- b) Promote the program's benefits to park and forest users. Examples include:
  - 1) Produce, disseminate and web-post artist renderings of capital improvements to result from the program, such as improvements in state park bathroom facilities and park roads, and additional campsites.
  - 2) Promote improvements to forest roads and other infrastructure to result from the program.
- c) Promote the program's public health safeguards. Examples include:
  - 1) Promote regulations in place or proposed to protect the environment and public health.
  - 2) Produce, web-post, and disseminate videos about inspections and enforcements of industry regulations designed to protect the environment and public health.
  - 3) Web-post articles and videos about efforts by industry to follow BMPs.
  - 4) "Truth-squad" factual errors and biased accounts about our program via rapid responses directly to opponents' allegations, letters to the editor, news releases, and emails to supporters.

**2. Tactics by Channel:**

- a) Via Web (e.g., ODNR website, Director's blog, Director's Facebook page, Director's Twitter page, YouTube). Examples include:
  - 1) Web-post and promote links to third party articles and announcements of interest (e.g., examples of industry environmental best practices here and other states).
  - 2) Post ODNR videos about best practices and link to videos about best practices posted by industry and other state programs.
  - 3) Post director's speeches on subject and link to Governor's posted speeches on subject: "readout of Governor's remarks to ... on..."



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- d) *ODNR Oil and Gas Division*: Conduct seminars and media interviews and issue fact sheets about ODNR's regulatory program; support Communications and Policy Staff in responding to criticisms and false allegations.
- e) *ODNR Ohio State Parks Division*: Develop plans and budget for upgrades to state parks; coordinate with Communications re: presentations and media interviews about the improvements and precautions to avoid park surface disturbance; create visual aids showing benefits to parks.
- f) *ODNR Forestry Division*: develop plans and budget for upgrades to forest infrastructure; coordinate with Communications re: presentations and media interviews on improvements and precautions to minimize forest disturbance.
- g) *JobsOhio/Department of Development*: research economic benefits of ODNR initiative; speeches and presentations about ODNR initiative's economic impact; provide quotes for ODNR speeches, news releases, and fact sheets about economic impact.

**IV. ADMINISTRATION AND LOGISTICS**

*Timeline (This will be a milestone chart).*

*Evaluation (These will be notes about how will measure performance.)*

*Budget (These will be notes about additional budget needs for this communication program.)*

**V. COORDINATION**

*(These will be notes about how we will coordinate with the Governor's Office and Director to keep them updated on progress and new challenges and opportunities, including mid-course corrections based on program evaluations.)*

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- 4) Post ODNR and Governor's news releases and fact sheets on subject.
- b) Via News Media (e.g., local, statewide, national media and blogosphere).  
Examples include:
  - 1) News releases and web-posts
  - 2) Reporter conference calls
  - 3) Op-ed columns
  - 4) Editorial page phone calls and editorial board meetings
  - 5) Letter to the editor
  - 6) News conferences
  - 7) Reporter interviews
  - 8) TV public affairs show appearances
  - 9) Radio public affairs show appearances
- c) Via Direct Communications/Stakeholder Engagement Meetings. Examples include:
  - 1) Emails to target constituents (e.g., merchandise positive news articles to pre-established mailing lists)
  - 2) Small-group meetings with target constituents (e.g., business leaders, friends of the park organizations)
  - 3) Speeches to target constituent groups (e.g., local chambers of commerce)
  - 4) Conference calls with target constituents (e.g., to pre-announce upcoming news)

**3. Tactics by Team Member**

- a) *ODNR Director*: Communications with Governor and senior staff; communications directly to key constituents via emails, speeches/presentations, public affairs program interviews, personal web blog posts.
- b) *ODNR Assistant Director and Policy Staff*: Support Director's communications with Governor's staff; support Director's Op-Ed columns and letters to the editor; coordinate with Communications; conduct research.
- c) *ODNR Communications Office*: Communications to media via news releases, fact sheets, web posts; support Director re: speech writing and interview prep; support Assistant Director and Policy Staff with research; support Oil and Gas Division regarding fact sheets and talking points; create videos and other visual aids showing benefits to parks and forests.