



2018 Gubernatorial Candidate Questionnaire

In addition to strong support within the hunting community for the Second Amendment, Ohio sportsmen and women have other serious concerns about the quality of hunting, fishing and trapping in Ohio. These invaluable parts of our heritage are increasingly threatened by a fiscal crisis facing the agency, and the direction of that agency that has exacerbated relations with the paying constituency – Ohio's hunters, anglers and trappers. Ohio needs a governor and an administration that values the partnership of sportsmen and women, and wants to work with us to address this crisis, and restore Ohio's natural resources to the quality people deserve. To help ensure this outcome, the Sportsmen's Alliance formed the Protect What's Right Campaign, which includes the Buckeye Firearms Association, Central Ohio Chapter of Safari Club International, Ducks Unlimited, Greene County Fish and Game Association, Ohio Conservation Federation, Ohio State Trappers Association, Pheasants Forever Chapters, Columbiana Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and Hocking County Fish and Game. The questionnaire should be sent to Luke Houghton, associate director of state services, Sportsmen's Alliance, 801 Kingsmill Parkway, Columbus, Ohio 43229. The questionnaire can also be emailed to lhoughton@sportsmensalliance.org.

1. The Ohio Division of Wildlife is facing a funding shortfall of \$185 million over the next ten years. Ohio's sportsmen's organizations overwhelmingly support modest increases in resident hunting, fishing and trapping fees to offset this crisis threatening hunting, fishing, trapping and quality habitat. Will you work with sportsmen's groups to create a plan that will be included in your first biennial budget to fully address the financial shortfalls of the Ohio Division of Wildlife?

Yes, I recognize that the issue of funding wildlife efforts has been a contentious one and there has been dispute over the state of the various funds that are controlled by the Division of Wildlife, as well as the need for additional revenues from increased license fees. As a CPA, I understand the numbers and this is not a partisan or ideological issue. I will continue to work with the various sportsmen's groups to reach a consensus on the numbers and develop a plan to ensure that the priorities for wildlife are funded.

2. Because Ohio's hunting, fishing and trapping fees have not increased since 2004, the Ohio Division of Wildlife has a \$129 million backlog of capital projects that include \$50 million in dam repairs, \$25.5 million in shooting range development needs, and \$32.4 million in boat ramp and lake access. Will you agree to create a plan to utilize capital bill bond dollars to address this backlog, and work to see the plan enacted in your first term as Governor?

Yes, as described in #1 above, I understand the backlog and that this needs to be prioritized in the State of Ohio. I believe that it is completely appropriate to use the state's capital budget to fund Wildlife capital projects.

3. Ohio sportsmen and women have long supported the Ohio Division of Wildlife because it has consistently produced quality hunting, fishing and trapping, and abundant habitat to enjoy these activities. Additionally, the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation is designed to remove undue political influence and instead rely upon science-based wildlife management professionals. Since its creation, the Ohio Division of Wildlife has operated under this model, to great success. The agency has been seen as a leader nationally, while working to address the needs of all Ohioans and the customers who fund conservation programs. The agency has been recently politicized, which threatens these programs and support for the agency itself.

A.) Will you restore civil service protection for senior staff of the agency that will serve the interest of the paying public?

While I'm open to discussing this, and I certainly commit to depoliticizing the Division and ensuring the Division is staffed with trained professionals, I tend to believe that senior staff of a state agency should not receive civil service protection. Civil service provides important protections for public employees, but it is necessary that the executive maintain some degree of control over leadership of state agencies.

B) Additionally will you commit to appointing a Chief and senior leadership of the Division of Wildlife based on sound wildlife management and leadership experience, as well as, their passion for hunting, fishing, trapping and the shooting sports?

Yes, I understand and agree that the appointment of Division leadership that has appropriate Wildlife background is critical to earning the confidence and support of the sportsmen's community.

4. Ohio sportsmen and women have long enjoyed access to 60,000 acres of American Electric Power's ReCreation lands. Recently AEP announced its intention to sell the property, which comprises approximately 10% of all available public lands in Ohio. Estimates on retaining the property run as high as \$150 million dollars, which is more than the Ohio Division of Wildlife can afford on its own. Will you create a multi-faceted plan that includes bond dollars, general revenue funds and other sources to help secure the preservation of this critical public access to conservation habitat?

Yes, the AEP land has been an amazing resource for the people of Ohio for years and I am committed to ensuring that it continues to be available for public use. The decision by AEP to sell creates both a challenge and an opportunity for the State of Ohio and I will be absolutely

committed to marshalling all available resources and crafting a long-term plan that inspires confidence that the land will be available for generations to come.

5. The Ohio Division of Wildlife's wildlife officer ranks are currently understaffed by 25 officers, a historic low. Will you restore wildlife officer ranks to full staffing levels, including a minimum of one wildlife officer per county, and a fully-staffed Lake Erie unit?

I am committed to working with the sportsmen's community to identify the appropriate staffing levels and to fund the necessary positions. If the evidence supports an officer in every single county, I will support it, but I will want to work with you to see the support for those staffing levels before committing.

6. Wildlife law enforcement requires specific and comprehensive training unique to hunting, fishing and trapping, separate from other, more traditional law enforcement agencies in the ODNR and the state of Ohio. Will you commit to maintaining the unique and separate wildlife law enforcement section under the direction of the Chief of the Oho Division of Wildlife?

Yes, I believe the confidence and support of the sportsmen's community is critical to the success of the Division of Wildlife, and I understand that the movement to combine functions with other ODNR divisions has caused a great deal of concern within the hunting community. The separate wildlife law enforcement section is an important part of earning the confidence of the hunting community, and I will commit to keeping them separate.

7. Because hunting, fishing and trapping license fees are only raised every 10-15 years, the fee hikes are often high enough to shock license sales and reduce participation by 5-10%. Studies have been shown that granting the executive branch the authority to raise fees administratively in smaller increments, on a more frequent basis, would address funding concerns, and help prevent the loss of customers that come with higher increases.

In your executive budget will you include language that grants fee increase authority to the Chief of the Division of Wildlife, while still remaining under the controls of the Joint Committee on Agency Rule Review?

Yes, I understand the need for license fees to keep pace with the needs of the Division, and I am confident that the rulemaking process provides sufficient oversight over fee increases.

Candidate's Name: **Mary Taylor**

Candidate's Signature/Date:



Campaign Contact/Phone Number: **330-961-1315**