

The 'Natural' Ohio outdoors website

By Larry Claypool
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Consider it an easy-to-use road map for the 'Information Highway'. Outdoor enthusiasts in Ohio and surrounding states who want to visit the Buckeye State now have a great resource available. A resource of endless, useful information that will help plan, guide and find everything to do outdoors within the state. It's address on the 'Highway': thenaturalresource.com.

The Natural Resource website was launched last October by Toledo native Eric Kraus. The site features a unique map-driven directory of everything outdoors for those interested in hunting, fishing, camping, boating, biking and golf information. thenaturalresource.com lists more than 4,000 Ohio businesses, services and public access areas and a smooth, creative way to find those services and places.

Kraus said his site is differ-

ent than most because of its enhanced map-based method of listing everything needed by outdoor enthusiasts. "The difference is the maps. We're truly a directory, geared toward mapping," said Kraus.

The site offers two major functions, according to the owner. "First, it's a local resource. Everybody may have one favorite thing or place they like to go and make regular visits, but don't remember the business' hours or phone number. For locals, it's one directory they need. And the second use is for someone wanting to go somewhere they've never been before. They need local information and someone to talk to in that area. They can plan their trip before

they leave," said Kraus.

"If you're looking for something, it's only four clicks away," said Kraus. For example; let's say

you're looking for a bait shop near Guilford Lake (Columbiana County), and you don't even know what the name of the shop

is. It's easy. Click the 'fishing' tab on the top banner of the page. Then click

"live bait and tackle shops'. Click the county it's in (it also lists it in Region

3). Click the area located on the map that's marked with a blue balloon and the name of Glenn's Archery and Tackle will appear. The address and phone number of the shop will pop up too.

Directions to the shop can also be found by zooming in on the map provided. The zoom feature

will allow you to see that Glenn's is located on Baker Road, just off state Route 172.

The mapping directory can also pull in information in geographic areas from maps illustrated by the U.S. Geological Society topographical maps and aerial photography. Details also can be provided about local terrain, the paths of streams and tributaries and even the configuration of a marina's boat ramp.

Kraus said a hunter can also look up land he hunts and locate his tree stand. GPS coordinates are also available.

Kraus said the website is growing rapidly, as is the information that is provided. He welcomes comments and ideas about improving the service.

"We want to promote the state. We feel like we're cheerleaders for Ohio," said Kraus.

The website is free to the user. The traffic-driven site is funded by participating advertisers.

