



STATE OF OHIO

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OHIO INSPECTOR GENERAL INVESTIGATION FINDS OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES EMPLOYEE IMPROPERLY TOOK HOME WOOD WORTH MORE THAN \$2,000 FOR PERSONAL USE

Columbus, Ohio, October 24, 2019

The Ohio Inspector General issued a report of investigation today after receiving an anonymous complaint alleging that an Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) state logging crew harvested a valuable maple tree in Hocking State Forest that was sawed into blocks of wood intended to be used to make gunstocks.

Investigators determined that a state logging crew transported a curly maple tree from Hocking State Forest to Shawnee State Forest. Upon arrival at Shawnee State Forest, state equipment was used to cut the wood into 23 boards estimated to be worth \$2,373, that were ultimately taken home by ODNR Forest Manager 1 Matthew Morgan for personal use. After learning that the inspector general was investigating the matter, Morgan returned the wood to an ODNR pole barn. Morgan and two other ODNR employees claimed that an ODNR assistant director, who retired in February, authorized Morgan to take the wood home.

The report of investigation contains three recommendations, and referrals to the Scioto County Prosecutor, the Hocking County Prosecutor, and the Ohio Ethics Commission for consideration.

Ohio Inspector General Report of Investigation file number 2018-CA00042 is now available at: <http://watchdog.ohio.gov/investigations/2019investigations.aspx>

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