

1913 back in focus

Great Flood led to MWCD; dams, lakes

By today's standards, the devastation from exactly a century ago still is mind-boggling and heartbreaking.

Easter Sunday of 1913 (March 23) always will be recorded as the day the rains started in Ohio during The Great Flood of 1913, and four days later, 6 to 11 inches of rain had fallen over the state as part of the nation's greatest known natural disaster, with a dozen states impacted by the massive storm that compares to Hurricane Katrina, only spread across a larger area.

The flood wiped out homes, effectively eliminated the canal system in Ohio, covered downtowns and led to more than 400 deaths in the state, including 11 in the Muskingum River Watershed in Eastern Ohio. Half of the overall property damage occurred in Ohio and some experts estimate that in today's dollars the state's damage would have been around \$3 billion.

Throughout much of the Midwest of the United States, where the storm was concentrated, ceremonies and other events have been held and are scheduled this year to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the flood



The Great Flood of 1913 wreaked devastation in many downtown areas in the Muskingum River Watershed, including Marietta.

"Many experts who have studied the flood and its aftermath have concluded that The Great Flood of 1913 changed the country in many ways, and they are correct," said John M. Hoopingarner, MWCD executive director/secretary. "In the Muskingum River Watershed, leaders of the region eventually organized the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and implemented its plan to construct dams and reservoirs to reduce the effects of potential flooding and capture the floodwaters for beneficial public uses."

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Speakers available to discuss Flood, MWCD

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District provides speakers to discuss The Great Flood of 1913 and the MWCD.

For details contact Darrin Lautenschleger at the MWCD office toll-free at (877) 363-8500 or via e-mail at darrin@mwcd.org.

Questions about the MWCD - Go to www.mwcd.org 24 hours a day!



MUSKINGUM WATERSHED CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Lake Views

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Mission Statement

*Responsible stewards
dedicated to providing the
benefits of flood reduction,
conservation and recreation
in the Muskingum River
Watershed.*

Limbach appointed to new Board term

A former member of the Board of Directors of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) has been selected to return to the five-member Board.

The judges of the Conservancy Court of the MWCD appointed Joanne Limbach of New Philadelphia to a five-year term on the Board of Directors during the Court's annual session held in June in the Tuscarawas County Courthouse at New Philadelphia. Limbach replaces Steve Kokovich of New Concord in Muskingum County, who completed two consecutive terms of service on the Board of Directors, which is the maximum permitted.

Limbach, the only woman who has served on the MWCD Board and the first member to ever be appointed to a second stint on the Board, formerly served as a

member of the MWCD Board of Directors from 1996-2006. She also served as the tax commissioner for the State of Ohio from 1983-1991 after being appointed by Gov. Richard F. Celeste and is a former Tuscarawas County commissioner and member of the New Philadelphia Board of Education. A former schoolteacher, she also was a founding partner in a tax consulting firm in Columbus.

A graduate of Muskingum University and Bowling Green State University, Limbach is a volunteer with AARP, having served as the Ohio president for six years as well as being a member of AARP's National Policy Directors. She is a member of the Tuscarawas County Public Library Board and represents consumers on the Ohio Health Information Partnership Board.

Board sets goals for 2013

Each year, the Board of Directors of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) establishes goals to guide the priority management objectives for the conservancy district.

In 2013, the Board has established four major goals. They are as follows:

Oil and Gas Development – The MWCD will negotiate and enter into an oil and gas lease for Seneca Reservoir in the first quarter of 2013 that will contain significant provisions focusing on the protective development of these mineral resources and will produce in excess of \$30 million in revenue to be used to fund park, recreation and public access improvements. Using the Seneca lease as a model, MWCD will consider further leasing opportunities at remaining reservoirs as interest develops throughout the remainder of 2013.

Park Capital Improvements – The MWCD will complete its park and recreation master plan in July 2013. The plan will provide a basis for park capital improvement projects at each of the five lake parks and marinas operated by the MWCD. An implementation plan and long-range budget will be developed during the second half of 2013. Capital improvement projects will begin in 2013 in accordance with the master plan.

Marina Operations – The MWCD will develop a general evaluation of marina operations which will assess the operational performance, customer satisfaction and potential growth and development opportunities of all MWCD marinas during the 2013 season. From this, the MWCD will develop performance standards for our marina operations to be implemented in the 2014 season.

Fiscal Management – The MWCD will develop a plan for the use of revenue generated from the development of oil and gas revenues and determine the amount of revenue needed to meet its obligations to fulfill the Official Plan and the Amendment to the Official Plan adopted in 2005. In the first half of 2013, the MWCD will address the issue of whether or not the current maintenance assessment should be reduced, suspended or eliminated.

1913 Flood

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“Their incredible vision and dedication led to a system of dams and reservoirs that has saved more than \$10 billion of property damage from flooding, saved lives and produced lakes and lands that are enjoyed by millions of people each year, while contributing to the conservation of the region’s rich natural resources.”

The Great Flood of 1913 effectively dumped on Ohio about three months of rain over a five-day period, flooding every stream, creek and river in the state, and destroying or severely damaging a total of 69 bridges in the area of the Muskingum River Watershed alone.

In Zanesville in Muskingum County, some portions of the downtown area were swamped with water more than 20 feet deep as leaders in the city wrestled with how to respond to the needs of the affected citizens, businesses and schools, as well as how to develop a plan to reduce the future loss of life, destruction and damage.

Twenty years after the storm and following the leadership of Bryce C. Browning, the manager of the Zanesville Chamber of Commerce who raised \$2,500 in the 1920s to begin a study to develop potential solutions to mitigate future flood damage, the MWCD was organized in 1933. Browning became the MWCD’s first secretary (or executive director), and oversaw the development, lobbied for funding assistance and later led the implementation of the MWCD Official Plan that called for the eventual construction of 16 reservoirs and dams in the Muskingum River Watershed, which is the state’s largest wholly contained watershed taking in an area of all or portions of 27 counties and covering more than 8,000 square miles. Through a partnership with the federal U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the USACE owns and operates the dams in the system and the MWCD manages much of the reservoirs behind the dams where floodwaters are stored temporarily for their safe release downstream as part of the coordinated operation of the system.

The results have led to billions of dollars saved in potential damage from flooding, the development of open, public lands and waters that offer free access for varying outdoor recreational activities, and a water resource that can be tapped for beneficial public domestic and consumptive uses.

Great Flood of 1913 by the numbers

- * Still considered the ‘greatest’ natural disaster in Ohio’s history
- * Nearly 3 months’ worth of rain fell across Ohio from March 23-27, 1913
- * Damage from the flood extended over 12 states and lasted for several days
- * Approximately a quarter of the nation’s population was directly affected by the storms
- * Every stream, creek and river in Ohio flooded
- * Infrastructure damage in today’s dollars is estimated at \$3 billion in Ohio - and \$4 billion to \$6 billion overall
- * 400,000 homes were flooded
- * The canal system in Ohio effectively was ended by the flooding
- * The Great Flood of 1913 led to the formation of conservancy districts in Ohio, including the MWCD

“The dams and reservoirs cannot stop flooding in the watershed, but they do reduce the potential damage and negative effects from flooding,” Hoopingarner said. “And for many people, they are a source of relaxation and fun that they and their families look forward to visiting throughout the year.”

Perhaps no single event has demonstrated the MWCD Official Plan in action with more clarity than during the January 2005 flooding in the Muskingum River Watershed, which was the most significant flood on record since the construction of the reservoirs and dams in the 1930s. Seven of the system’s 16 dams set records for the depth of floodwater levels reached behind the dams.

But unlike the Great Flood of 1913, there were no deaths from the flooding in 2005, an estimated \$400 million in potential property damage was averted through the flood-reduction work and strategies of the USACE, and property damage reports themselves were virtually non-existent. That’s because the system worked as designed

with the dams holding back the potential damaging floodwaters on lands that the government purchased easement rights on nearly 80 years ago for temporary storage of floodwaters until they could be released safely downstream.

“The pictures and stories from 1913 and its aftermath are absolutely riveting and heart-wrenching,” Hoopingarner said. “Lives were changed forever and the great leaders and citizens of those days certainly were thinking about the long-term future of the Muskingum River Watershed when they went about the enormous task of planning what became the Official Plan of the MWCD.

“In our region, there may be no greater story of the dedication of ‘paying it forward’ than to look at the development and eventual operation of the Official Plan of the MWCD. Saying ‘thanks’ is not merely enough, it seems, as we pause to reflect on the 100 years since this watershed and much of the Midwest of this country were ripped apart by The Great Flood of 1913.”

MWCD to develop plan for assessment reduction

A plan is being developed that will trigger any future reductions of the annual assessment paid to the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) by the owners of nearly 500,000 parcels of property.

Members of the MWCD Board of Directors have requested that the MWCD staff develop concepts for review and discussion over the next few months that will guide reductions in the assessment based on the amounts of oil and gas royalty revenues that are received by the MWCD from Utica Shale operations.

“The Board and staff are committed to fully informing the public we serve in the 18-county MWCD region about the way the conservancy district is managing these public revenues,” Hoopinger said. “Board members have made it very clear that there will need to be guidelines developed that will explain in simple terms how any future reduction in the assessment may be handled.”

Since 2011, the MWCD Board has approved three leases in the Utica Shale region for property owned by the conservancy district, netting the MWCD more than \$77 million in signing bonus payments. The MWCD recently received \$750,000 as its first royalty payment from the operation of wells from one of the leases.

The MWCD Board of Directors also is discussing potential guidelines for use of the Utica Shale oil and gas revenues that would stipulate that all signing bonus funds will be used for capital improvement projects at the MWCD facilities for recreation and public access, and that any plan developed for reductions in the assessment be based on a percentage of the royalties earned by the conservancy district. To date, the conservancy district has utilized a portion of its signing bonus funds to defray debt and make improvements at the MWCD’s recreational and public access facilities, where more than \$80 million in improvements, compliance issues and deferred maintenance projects have been identified.

“In essence, as the royalties grow over time, a percentage of those royalty funds will determine what any reduction in the assessment will amount to on an annual basis,” Hoopinger said. “Naturally, then, as royalties may increase in upcoming years, the amount of reductions would increase as well based on the plan that will be developed. The appropriate amount of the royalties then would be used to cover the difference between the amount collected and the reduction in the assessment to ensure that critical projects at the dams and reservoirs continue without interruption.”

Specific proposals will be presented to members of the MWCD Board at upcoming meetings for review and discussion, he said.

The MWCD collects about \$11 million annually from the owners of nearly 500,000 parcels of property in the conservancy district’s 18-county region.

Collected through landowners’ county property tax statements, the funds legally may be used to pay for projects and programs that protect the operation of the system of 16 dams and reservoirs that were constructed nearly 80 years ago for flood reduction and water conservation in the Muskingum River Watershed. Nearly 95 percent of all property owners subject to the assessment pay the minimum annual amount of \$12 per year.

The MWCD serves as the federally required local cost-share sponsor for the work that has been identified at several of the system’s dams owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-



Projects to stabilize and repair eroded shorelines at the MWCD reservoirs (top), along with the safety assurance work at Dover Dam, are funded by the maintenance assessment.

neers (USACE). Projects are under way at both Dover and Bolivar dams in northern Tuscarawas County, the entire project plan at the dams is projected to cost more than \$600 million and the MWCD share is estimated to be up to \$137 million.

In addition, the MWCD has spent assessment funds on shoreline stabilization projects at the MWCD lakes, planning for dredging of the lakes that will begin as early as next year, grant funding for area communities for projects that encourage flood reduction and water quality improvements and other programs that protect the benefits of flood reduction and water conservation that were created for property owners with the construction of the dams and reservoirs.

Assessment revenues by law cannot be used to pay for projects that enhance or improve the MWCD’s recreational programs and facilities, and all expenditures must be covered by guidelines stipulated in the Amendment to the Official Plan of the MWCD that was approved in 2005 by the Conservancy Court and the Board of Directors.

The MWCD has managed oil and gas leases on its properties for its entire 80-year history as a part of its overall natural resources stewardship program.

Taking on potential thefts

'Dock Watch' seeks to protect boats, items

Items stolen from boats are a concern for anyone who docks their boat overnight.

Lake rangers with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) are fighting back with the aggressive "Dock Watch" program they have launched this year to take on potential thieves at the MWCD lakes.

The MWCD rangers are encouraging owners who dock their boats at an MWCD lake to record an inventory of the boat's equipment (in an official, free Dock Watch brochure produced by the MWCD) and to mark those items with the boat's registration number. In return, boaters will receive two free decals to place on boat windows that warn simply: "Criminals Beware: equipment on boat can be identified by police."

John Bird, MWCD's deputy chief-law enforcement, said that protecting boats and boat equipment is a top priority for the conservancy district lake rangers, and that the effort to encourage boaters to mark anything that can be carried off a boat with the registration number can have positive results for all boat owners at the MWCD lakes.

"Boat equipment theft is easy because it is easy to carry off and hard to identify," Bird said. "Thieves can steal boat batteries and portable gas tanks that they sell at a scrap yard, and fishing rods and other equipment are being sold at yard sales, pawn shops or on the Internet."

"Our goals are very simple with the Dock Watch program – we want to catch a

thief and we want to stop potential thieves."

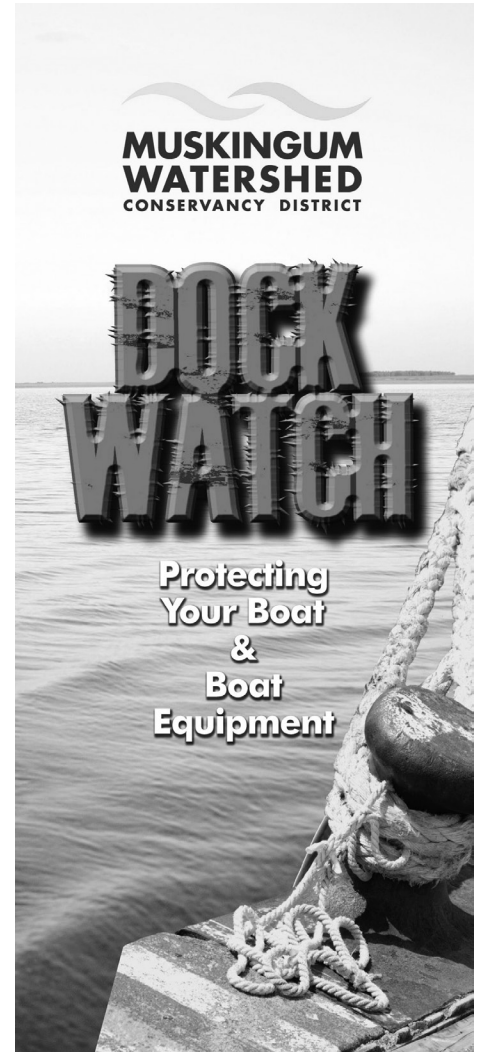
MWCD lake rangers also are encouraging boaters to keep an eye out for suspicious people around their boats and for activities that just don't appear to be normal, and then to report those people and/or activities to the closest MWCD park office or county sheriff's office.

The MWCD also is advising boat owners to take valuable equipment home with them, and to lock all items that can fit in cabinets, under seats or in securely fixed storage lockers. Loose equipment should be stored out of sight and outboard motors and gas tanks should be chained and locked to the boat.

"We will be distributing signs to marinas at the MWCD lakes to identify the program and to warn potential thieves," Bird said. "We also are distributing the brochures with space inside to record an equipment inventory and we encourage boaters to fill those out now, along with marking and photographing the equipment on board."

By recording boat registration numbers on items from a boat, police can trace the item to the boat and contact the owner through the registration records.

Suspicious activity can be reported by contacting the MWCD lake rangers, or by calling the MWCD park office that serves your lake (Clendening and Piedmont lakes are served by the Tappan Lake Park office, and Leesville Lake is served by the Atwood Lake Park office), or the county sheriff.



The "Dock Watch" brochure includes an equipment inventory registration section where boaters can record their items, along with helpful contact information.

MWCD revises docking rate fees, policies

Seasonal campers and cottage site lessees at the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) lakes who own two or more boats that they dock overnight probably noticed a reduction in their docking fees for the 2013 recreational season.

The MWCD Board of Directors approved a docking fee reduction from \$220 to \$110 for the cost of overnight docking for a second watercraft for this year for seasonal campers and cottage site lessees. Fees for one boat are \$65, for a second boat are \$110 and for all additional boats are \$220 each.

In addition, docking fees have been eliminated by the MWCD for owners of canoes, kayaks and paddleboats, and the docking fee for personal watercraft has been cut in half from \$220 to \$110 for the season.

Also new this year is a fee increase of \$25 each for all docking decals purchased after June 1.

A list of fees by customer type and application forms are available at the MWCD website at www.mwcd.org/recreation/docking-on-our-lakes.

The updated fee structure was developed over the past couple of years following a survey completed by MWCD customers in early 2011, along with the input of members of the MWCD's Development Advisory Committee (DAC), which is the 18-member volunteer committee that meets periodically and provides recommendations to the Board of Directors on assigned items. After reviewing the survey results and the previous fee structure, the suggested changes were submitted to the MWCD Board of Directors.

Seneca's new look

Improvements at park, marina for 2013 season

Improvements are everywhere at Seneca Lake this year with the construction of a new Welcome Center at Seneca Lake Park and the renovations to the building at Seneca Marina.

The new Welcome Center provides information and services to the park's campers and visitors, along with housing offices for park staff members.

Down the road at Seneca Marina, the building has been completely refurbished and will complement the services that are available to boaters and visitors.

One of the top attractions at Seneca Marina this summer is The Dockside Restaurant at Seneca Lake Marina, which is open daily.



Seneca Lake Park's new Welcome Center includes offices for park staff members as well as serving as an information center for campers and visitors to the park and lake.



Renovations at Seneca Marina have transformed the facility that serves the boating public.



The Dockside Restaurant at Seneca Lake Marina is now open for business.

MWCD parks' master plan nearly done

For decades, the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) has managed and operated successful and popular public use and recreational facilities at its lakes and reservoirs.

More than 5.5 million people visit the MWCD lakes and parks annually in pursuit of outdoor recreation. Boating, fishing, hiking, hunting, camping, along with special programming and activities are available at five lake parks (located at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca and Tappan lakes).

Many of the facilities were developed in the 1950s and 1960s and have not undergone major improvements, replacement and/or additional enhancements to meet updated customer demands, or technological upgrades and improvements.

In 2012, the MWCD began a planning phase to review its facilities, programs and organizational structure in order to prepare for the future.

"It is evident that while we all can agree that facility upgrades are needed at the MWCD recreational locations, there also are projects, programs and facilities

that need to be enhanced in order to improve the experiences of our users and meet the demands of the public," said Scott D. Barnhart, MWCD's chief of recreation/ chief ranger. "The MWCD has gone directly to our visitors and customers to hear about their ideas.

"This master plan not only includes that, but has emphasized it by engaging our staff, our public and our customers from start to finish."

Woolpert, a planning and development firm with its headquarters in Ohio and operations throughout the United States, was selected by the MWCD to develop a master plan for the organization's 18-county operations.

Woolpert will develop a two-level master plan that supports MWCD's mission of flood reduction, water conservation and recreation. The first level will structure broad, overarching district programs and services, facilities and design standards as well as provide guidelines for management, operations and policies. The second level will include conceptual plans for each selected

park facility or area to bring facilities to the desired level of function and optimal operation for current and future needs.

The planning process has engaged stakeholders at two levels: the park system as a whole and selected, individual parks. Each park will have its own business plan that is structured to guide park development within the structure and principles of the overall park plan.

Since August 2012, individual meetings were held at all park locations, surveys were sent to the members of the various user groups that utilize MWCD's facilities, and updates were provided to members of the MWCD Board of Directors and the public through the MWCD's website, www.mwcd.org.

Woolpert is scheduled to provide the plan and recommendations to the MWCD by the end of July.

"All of us look forward to reviewing the final report and recommendations as we position the MWCD's facilities, programs and staffing for the greatest benefit to our visitors, customers and the public," Barnhart said.

50 years strong Atwood Lake Boats celebrates, ranks among top 100 in USA

From a family garage where wooden sailboats were built for fun races on the lake, Atwood Lake Boats has grown over the decades to become one of the top 100 marinas in the country for the fourth year in a row and one of the largest pontoon boat dealers in the United States.

The marina, with two locations on Atwood Lake, is celebrating its 50th anniversary in business in 2013, and has no plans to slow down any time soon.

Founded by Gary Spahr, the marina is now owned by Brian and Chris Valot. The business actually started out as the Spahr Boat Co. in 1963 when Spahr and his father Kenny took orders to make three or four wooden Thistle sailboats from their garage.

A few years later, Gary Spahr opened the Sailboat Center at Magnolia to continue building boats, and then purchased what is now Atwood Lake Boats East Marina near Dellroy.

As Spahr grew the business, he later bought the business that became Atwood Lake Boats West Marina near Atwood Lake Park.

The Marina West building, originally constructed in the 1940s,



Atwood Lake Boats Marina West (above) is located next to Atwood Lake Park. Atwood Lake Boats Marina East is located just outside the Village of Dellroy.

was destroyed by fire in 1995. But Spahr and the Atwood Lake Boats staff rebounded by designing the facility there today, including the lighthouse that stands as a symbol of growth and service.

In 2000, after 37 years in the boating industry, Spahr sold the business to the Valots. Brian Valot had been employed by Atwood Lake Boats since 1975.

The business also includes a marina at Salt Fork Lake.

The marinas' boat sales have earned the Valots national recognition, and their status in repeating as one of the nation's top 100 boat dealers comes as a result of an independent analysis by boating industry experts.

Atwood Lake Boats can be found online at www.atwoodlake-boats.com, and maintains a page on social media on Facebook.

'Fishing For Feedback'

MWCD launches online surveys at www.fishingforfeedback.com

Earlier this year, the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) began "Fishing For Feedback." The Fishing For Feedback program is an interactive online customer service program that encourages guests to visit www.fishingforfeedback.com and complete the online customer survey for not only a chance to win a \$25 gift certificate, but to provide the MWCD staff with valuable information and feedback designed to improve service, facilities and receive suggestions from guests.

Feedback information from the forms completed by customers is accessible by MWCD managers to review, and even offers customers who believe they have an issue that needs to be addressed immediately the ability to indicate their concerns, which permits the appropriate managers to access and review the information quickly.

This can decrease the time necessary for responding to the issue and developing a possible resolution. Being able to contact a guest while they are still at an MWCD property or within hours of their visit demonstrates that the MWCD's customer service commitment pledged to guests is taken seriously by the MWCD staff.



One of the winners of a \$25 gift certificate as part of the MWCD's "Fishing For Feedback" online survey program is Claude Boyce, who is a seasonal camper with his family at Leesville Lake's Southfork Campground. In the photo above, Claude and his grandson enjoy a day on the water at Leesville Lake. Claude told MWCD staff members that he enjoys fishing and the many friends his family has made at the campgrounds.