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MWCD Executive Director Announces Retirement

John Hoopingarner, Executive Director of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD), has announced that he will retire on May 31, 2020, after more than 30 years of service to the MWCD.

A native of Tuscarawas County, Mr. Hoopingarner was appointed to his position with the MWCD on September 1, 1989, at the age of thirty-five. Prior to his appointment as Executive Director, he served as legal counsel to the MWCD for ten years while in the private practice of law in New Philadelphia.

"It has truly been an honor to provide leadership to the MWCD. We are a unique organization dedicated to providing the benefits of flood reduction, conservation and recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed. Every day of my career has been both challenging and rewarding. It has been a privilege to work alongside a staff of responsible stewards so dedicated to our mission," said Mr. Hoopingarner.

When Hoopingarner succeeded Raymond E. Eichel in 1989, he became only the third person to lead the MWCD in its 86-year history. Bryce C. Browning was its first chief executive officer from 1933 until his retirement in 1965.

The MWCD Board of Directors will now begin the process of finding Hoopingarner's successor. "As Executive Director of the MWCD, John's leadership and dedication to the organization made a tremendous impact over the last 30 years," Board President Joanne Limbach said. "We are excited to celebrate with John as he approaches his upcoming retirement, and are fortunate to have an exceptional staff and board which gives us stability in this time of transition."

Mr. Hoopingarner is looking forward to retirement and has pledged to assist the Board of Directors through the change of leadership. "I hope to stay connected to the MWCD through my involvement with the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Foundation on which I serve as a member of the Board of Trustees. The non-profit Foundation exists to support the mission of the MWCD, a mission to which I am firmly committed," concluded Hoopingarner.



MWCD Board Approves \$65 Million Phase Two of Master Plan Improvements

On July 19, 2019, the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District Board of Directors approved a \$65M plan with a funding distribution of approximately \$45M for park improvements, and \$20M for marina improvements.

The implementation strategy for this phase presents a vision for the future of the MWCD which not only includes the continuation of upgraded camping facilities and rental cabins, but also the development of additional amenities which have been long awaited and requested by the public, including additional playgrounds, spray grounds, sports courts, and fiber optic cable for improved communication. Alternative camping, such as primitive/backpack camp areas, will be added to allow the MWCD to offer a diverse mix of experiences and reach a wide variety of user groups.

Phase Two expands the program to include Clendening Marina and Campground, Leesville North Fork Marina, Leesville South Fork Campground, and Tappan Marina, which have all been acquired since the inception of the Master Plan. The implementation strategy for the Marinas in Phase Two is to focus on infrastructure first, followed by camping and waterfront improvements.

Prior to the implementation of the Master Plan in 2013, the campgrounds and marinas, constructed between 1947 and 1966, had no major redevelopment or construction since their inception. Outdoor recreation is one of three pillars for the MWCD mission statement: "Responsible stewards dedicated to providing the benefits of flood reduction, conservation and recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed." Camping and boating serve as major sources of revenue to maintain operations of the MWCD Parks and Marinas. Improvements were required to meet the demands of an ever-changing industry, such as increased power service and campsites large enough to accommodate modern recreational vehicles. According to the 2018 North American Camping Report (an annual independent study supported by Kampgrounds of America, Inc.), more than 6 million new North American households have adopted the camping lifestyle since 2014. Campers who camp more than three times or more each year have increased by 64 percent.

Phase One of the Master Plan, which was developed based on public opinion surveys, totaled approximately \$130 million in new project funding. The implementation strategy has been first to improve infrastructure needed for Phase One campground upgrades and allow for future growth; and secondly, to construct new campground areas to accommodate existing campers during renovations and to offer





limited amenities. Now five years into the Master Plan, Atwood, Charles Mill, Piedmont, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks have new camp areas offering full hook-up and 50-amp power service with level pads. In total, six new campgrounds have been constructed with 333 sites, and 13 camp areas were renovated, improving 873 existing sites. Each camp area also has new ADA-compliant restroom and shower facilities with laundry.

The Master Plan also included developments that allow guests to access and experience all that MWCD lands offer. Amenities that have been completed include multi-surface trails passing through hardwood and pine forest, ADA-compliant kayak launch ramps, and floating water toys on the beaches to entertain kids for hours.

Throughout the Master Plan process, construction cost and financial sustainability have been a priority. A key element of planning was quantifying the financial impact of the Master Plan and ensuring there was an acceptable return on the dollars invested. Detailed business plans for each location were developed to guide construction decisions throughout implementation. New rates for the renovated camping areas were developed through thoughtful analysis of the market, with the desired goal to generate sufficient revenues to cover operating costs and allow for future maintenance.

Also, imperative to maintaining the Mission Statement and Core Values of the MWCD, water quality and conservation best management practices have been carefully considered while planning renovations. Seawalls have been constructed to

protect the shoreline from erosion, and rain gardens and vegetative filter strips have been developed to help with storm water management and water quality enhancement. In addition, many of the infrastructure improvements at the lakes will help to reduce contaminants and improve water quality.

Focusing on more than just updating facilities, the Master Plan has allowed the MWCD to take advantage of the national rise in outdoor recreation to create a positive impact on quality of life. The MWCD is dedicated to not only improving existing amenities, but also adding new opportunities that satisfy a wide variety of interests and abilities to encourage more people to participate in outdoor recreation at MWCD parks and marinas.



Upon completion of Phases One and Two, the MWCD facilities will become destinations boasting state-of-the-art accommodations and amenities, drawing guests from near and far. The improvements are based on sustainability, ease of access, customer satisfaction, and conservation practices. These

facilities will become a model for outdoor recreation, and the results will leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy the benefits of recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed.

For more information, visit www.mwcd.org and follow the MWCD on Facebook and Twitter.

MWCD Begins Search for New Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the MWCD has begun the search for the next Executive Director, retaining Waverly Partners as its executive search firm. Joanne Limbach, Board President, along with the four other MWCD Board members, will work with Waverly Partners to identify qualified local, regional and national candidates.

“Our Board, along with MWCD staff, has developed a position profile with the experience and leadership characteristics of our preferred candidate,” Limbach said. “We are open to executives with backgrounds in parks and recreation agencies, conservation-focused organizations, other kinds of nonprofits, private sector entities, or other related experience. A candidate

with a commitment to our mission of responsible stewards dedicated to providing flood reduction, conservation and recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed is a priority.” The position profile is available on the MWCD website at www.mwcd.org.

John Hoopingarner, the MWCD’s Executive Director since 1989, has announced his plan to retire in the Spring of 2020.

For more information about the search, contact search consultants Heidi Milosovic and Eric Peterson at MWCD@Waverly-Partners.com.

Hunter Education Course Offered This Fall



NOVEMBER 9TH & 10TH

Anyone applying for a hunting license, including all first-time license buyers (but not apprentice license buyers), is required to successfully complete a hunter education course before purchasing a hunting license.

The hunting course is designed to instill a code of ethics and responsibility, as well as provide instruction on guns and how they work, types of ammunition, gun handling, field care of game, wildlife identification, wildlife management, hunting regulations, and other topics. Statistics show that hunter education has helped reduce the number of hunting-related injuries and incidents.

The course is offered November 9 and 10, from 9 am to 4 pm. Participants must attend both days at the Appleseed Heritage Center near Charles Mill Lake, located on St. Rt. 603 in Ashland. It is a 12-hour course with 1-hour lunch break each day. Bring your own lunch. You must register online for this course.

For more information, see the calendar of events for MWCD.org, which includes a link to the ODNR registration website.



Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience

In the spring of 2019, MWCD launched a new educational program to encourage exploration of local watersheds, while increasing environmental literacy and meeting curriculum learning standards. The MWCD's Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) is a comprehensive environmental education program for 7th graders that combines in-class projects with field exploration. It is richly structured, and based on high-quality instructional design. Students investigate issues and problems by collecting samples, and performing quantitative and

qualitative analysis of the data. The students also apply their investigative and problem-solving skills to various restoration, monitoring, and protection projects.

MWCD staff, assisted by volunteers from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources – Scenic Rivers, Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist program, and the Holmes Soil and Water Conservation District – hosted the first MWEE event in the Pleasant Hill Lake/ Mohican State Park region in Loudonville, along the banks of the Clear Fork of the Mohican River.

Approximately 180 students and teachers from the West Holmes Local School District attended the event. Students broke into smaller groups to visit four stations: Land Use, Water Quality, Biodiversity, and Biology. At each station, students had the opportunity to collect data and make observations to complement their classroom instruction and research, and ultimately analyze and evaluate their results to communicate to an outside audience. Teachers also had the opportunity for professional development.

MWCD plans to build on the success of this initial event and continue the program in 2020 and beyond. Interested schools can contact MWCD for additional information and consideration for future events.

Materials and supplies for the program were obtained through a generous grant from the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Foundation.





New Philadelphia, OH 44663



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Lake Views



Catch a SUMMER JOB at the Lake

**Tues, Dec 17
8am-1:30pm**

HIRING FOR SUMMER 2020

Job Fair will be held at the
MWCD Annex Office

2050 Reiser Ave SE
New Philadelphia, OH 44663

Tues, Dec 17 • 8am-1:30pm

Apply and interview for
positions on the spot!

Visit www.MWCD.org
for more details