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# Lake Views



### Message from Craig Butler:

*It's safe to say that 2020 hasn't turned out the way anyone anticipated. A few short months ago, no one had ever heard of COVID-19, nor could anyone predict the impact it would have. Yet, despite these impacts I am incredibly impressed with how MWCD staff and patrons adapted. We are thankful that our guests, new and old, trusted us to provide a safe environment at our parks, lakes, marinas, and on our trails. We do not take your trust lightly and feel blessed we could provide a safe place, even if for a short time, to escape from the world's problems.*

*I am proud of all of our full-time, variable, and seasonal staff that overcame every challenge placed before us, that otherwise would have kept our doors closed, or compromised our quality of service. No matter how difficult the ask, the answer was always, "we will find a way." Despite being understaffed and oftentimes facing unclear or even contradictory guidance, we developed safety protocols with state and local health officials and opened our doors.*

*In spite of these challenges, we had a successful year and exceeded many of our 2020 goals, and are already planning for 2021. We anticipate bringing back events that were cancelled, and add new amenities for your enjoyment.*

## MWCD Names Chief of Recreation

After a nationwide search, Ryan McCleaster has been named Chief of Recreation for Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD). The recreation department is comprised of parks, marinas, and docking and includes 230 employees during peak season.

Ryan brings more than 20 years of experience in the Parks and Recreation/ Sports Management fields. He most recently worked for the Township of Upper St. Clair (Pittsburgh, PA) as Assistant Director of Recreation – Facilities and Operations.

Throughout his service, he has received numerous awards and accolades, most notably, he was recognized by Pennsylvania Recreation & Park Society (PRPS) with the Outstanding New Professional Award for his contributions, leadership, and commitment in the parks and recreation field. He was a part of a team which went on to win multiple awards from PRPS in operations and recreation programming.

Ryan has a master's degree in Instructional Leadership with an emphasis in Sports Management from Robert Morris University. In his free time, he enjoys spending time with his family and staying

active through weight training, basketball and golf.

"We are pleased to welcome Ryan to MWCD as our new Chief of Recreation," said Executive Director, Craig Butler. "His education and background in the recreation industry, plus his childhood connections to MWCD, and growing up in Northeast Ohio makes him a perfect fit for our organization."





## Conservation Partnership Helps To Restore Wetlands In Ashland County

In 2019 the MWCD Board of Directors approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between MWCD and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Private Lands Office. The focus of the MOU is the USFWS "Partners for Fish & Wildlife" program, and the subsequent restoration of wildlife habitat on Ohio private lands. The Ohio Partners for Fish & Wildlife program serves as a bridge to the owners and managers of Federal and non-Federal lands to develop partnerships that directly benefit fish and wildlife. The approach is to engage willing partners to conserve, restore and protect valuable fish, plant and wildlife habitat on their property and in their communities.

This high-priority wetland restoration project in Mohican Township, Ashland County, Ohio, within the Walhonding Watershed Focus Area of the MOU, is the product of partnership efforts between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and

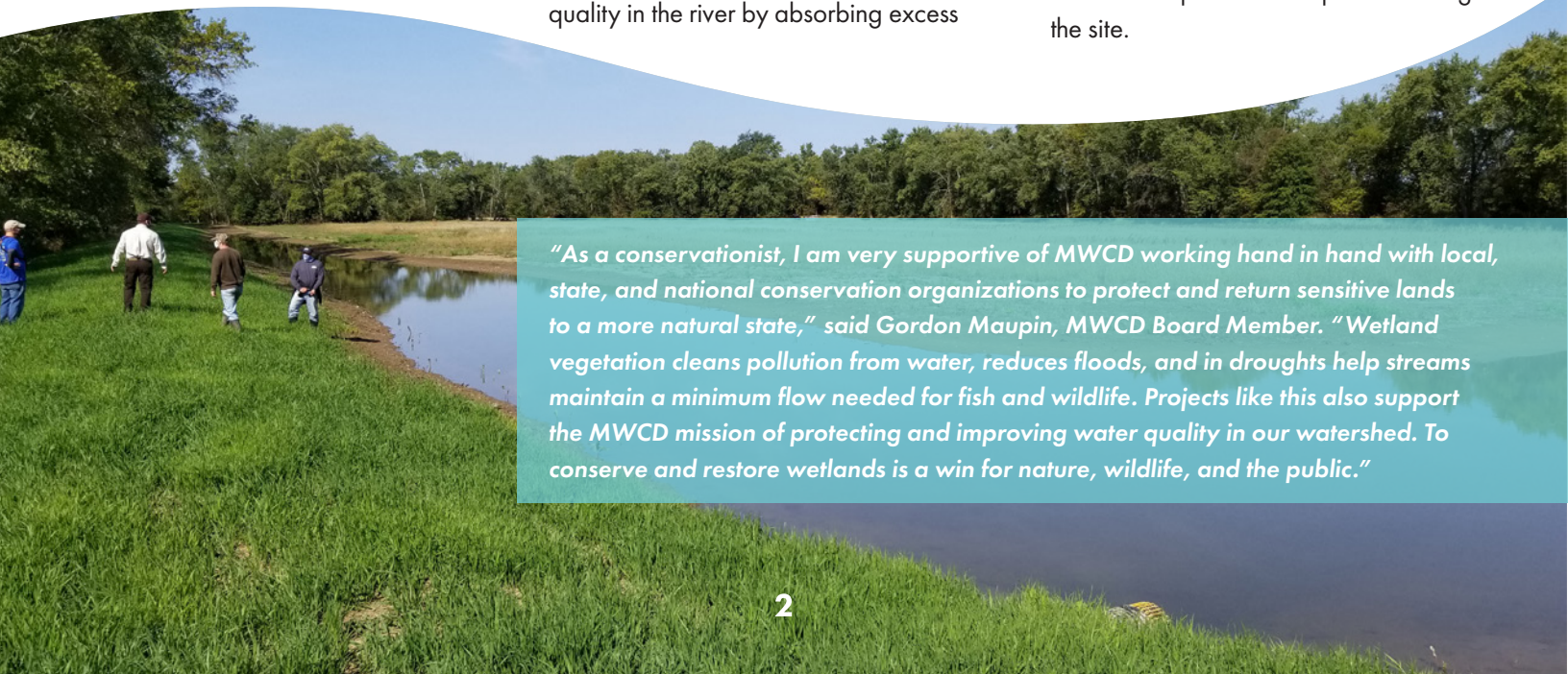
Wildlife Program (USFWS-PFW), Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD), and the Private Landowner.

This project involved the restoration of 46 acres of wetland in central Ohio. Prior to restoration, the site was composed primarily of floodplain agricultural land and mature floodplain forest adjacent to the Jerome Fork of the Mohican River. It is immediately adjacent to Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR) 1,536-acre Funk Bottoms Wildlife Area, and Ashland County Park District Hopkins Landing park.

Restoration will provide increased connectivity between habitats in the area and contribute toward a large, landscape-scale restoration effort in the area. Upon completion of the restoration, the site will provide a tremendous habitat for migratory birds seasonally, including countless species of migratory shorebirds and waterfowl. This restored wetland complex will also significantly increase water quality in the river by absorbing excess

nutrients and sediment and will provide flood protection during high flow events. It will include in-line water control structures to facilitate seasonal water level management, which will provide diverse habitat and critical food resources for waterfowl and shorebirds as they migrate through the area. This site falls within the Walhonding River Watershed, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program (USFWS-PFW) defined focus area for critical habitat restoration.

As part of this project, USFWS-PFW worked with the Landowner, MWCD, and other partners to restore hydrology on most of the agricultural acres. This was completed through the construction of two low-level earthen berms and incorporation of multiple in-line water control structures. Additionally, several nesting mounds and associated micro pools were constructed to increase habitat diversity on the site, providing resources for nesting and loafing waterfowl, as well as reptiles and amphibians using the site.



*"As a conservationist, I am very supportive of MWCD working hand in hand with local, state, and national conservation organizations to protect and return sensitive lands to a more natural state," said Gordon Maupin, MWCD Board Member. "Wetland vegetation cleans pollution from water, reduces floods, and in droughts help streams maintain a minimum flow needed for fish and wildlife. Projects like this also support the MWCD mission of protecting and improving water quality in our watershed. To conserve and restore wetlands is a win for nature, wildlife, and the public."*





## Hunting Is A Popular And Welcome Activity On MWCD Properties.

Here's how to make the most of your trip while staying safe.

The thrill of seeing the elusive prize. Quietly observing nature without interruption. Packing the freezer with free-range meat. These are just a few of the reasons why thousands of hunters take to the woods each year. Many of them on the 56,000 acres of land and water in the Muskingum River Watershed, most of which is open to public access for hunting. Through extensive management of MWCD's lands, we have created a diversity of habitats which provide a unique hunting experience. Upland game including rabbits, grouse, woodcock, wild turkey and white tail deer are very common in MWCD hunting areas. You can also take it to the water to find a diversity of abundant waterfowl.

While we welcome hunters to our beautiful, rural settings behind the dams of the MWCD reservoirs, we want to remind you to be safety aware, as our properties are shared by outdoor enthusiasts of all types. Hunting is prohibited within 500 feet

of "Restricted Use" areas, buildings and public roads. Signage is posted showing restricted areas in the field. However, we suggest you familiarize yourself in advance with informational maps available on our website. MWCD property boundaries have been blazed with yellow paint and signage in most areas.

A link to our Online Interactive Map can be found at [www.mwcd.org/hunting](http://www.mwcd.org/hunting), as well as printable maps that represent property owned by MWCD available for hunting and indicate the Restricted Use areas. They are for informational purposes only and hunters are advised to comply with signage showing restricted use areas in the field. ODNR Hunting Rules and Regulations apply.

Through a memorandum of understanding with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources' (ODNR), ODNR is responsible for all fish and wildlife management.

All hunting and fishing rules, regulations and license requirements of the State of Ohio apply. Annual reports about wildlife activities at the reservoirs are provided to the MWCD by the Division of Wildlife.

Here's to a successful, safe hunting season in Ohio!



# Lake Views

## MWCD Master Plan Project Status

In 2012, work was initiated on the development of the Master Plan, which was approved in late 2013. Since that time, the Plan has served as a roadmap for the most significant upgrades to MWCD facilities and properties in 50 years. While some infrastructure projects were not so glamorous, they were necessary to serve as the backbone for the more visible, publicly pleasing projects like new, upgraded campground sites, playgrounds, shelters and restrooms/shower houses.

Today, with the completion of campground construction projects at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, and Seneca parks in 2020 we draw to a close Phase 1 of that Master Plan to improve our facilities and operations. This \$120 million investment has provided valuable capital and created many jobs throughout the region. We are now quickly pivoting to Phase 2 of the Master Plan which represents another \$60 million of amenities to further improve our patrons' experience.

Following is an update on the projects wrapping up as a part of Master Plan Phase 1.

### Atwood Lake Main Campground Improvements Phase 2

Utility installations, concrete pads, picnic shelter, and asphalt paving in the campground has been completed. Landscaping and shower house renovations are nearly complete. The project includes reconstruction of 72 RV campsites in existing Camp Areas B and C, renovation of the existing restroom/shower building, playground, walking paths, and abutments for cluster docks. Substantial completion is scheduled for November 2020.



### Piedmont Water Treatment Plant

Plant start-up has taken place and we are expecting the electrical subcontractor to program the system controls soon. Substantial completion is scheduled for December 2020.

### Charles Mill Lake Park Main Campground Redevelopment Phase 3

Finish grading, landscaping and restroom construction are wrapping up. All RV pads have been poured and all paving is complete. This project involves the reconstruction of the existing southern section of the main campground with 51 full-hookup RV campsites with concrete pads and a new pre-engineered restroom. Substantial completion is scheduled for November 2020.

### Pleasant Hill Campground Area G

All utility installations, concrete pads, the picnic shelter, and asphalt paving in the campground has been completed. Landscaping and shower house renovations are nearly complete. The project will provide 49 full-hookup RV campsites, a new pre-engineered restroom/shower building, and a picnic shelter. Substantial completion is scheduled for December 2020.





## Projects wrapping up as a part of Master Plan Phase 1 (cont'd)

### Seneca Lake Marina Point Campground Redevelopment Phase 2

Finish grading, landscaping and restroom / shower house construction are wrapping up. Paving has been completed. All concrete RV pads have been poured. The project will provide 102 seasonal RV sites with full utility hook-ups, two pre-engineered restrooms/shower houses, two picnic shelters, a boat ramp, and a key card gate entrance. Substantial completion is scheduled for March 2021.



### Tappan Marina Renovations

Demolition to the existing marina building has been completed. Underground plumbing in the lower level is being installed. Interior walls are being framed. Footers for columns have been poured. Substantial completion is June 2021.

### Tappan Marina Sanitary Sewer and WWTP Improvements

Wastewater treatment plant tank installation is completed. Construction of sanitary lift station and piping to serve the marina is underway. Substantial completion is April 2021.

### Message from Craig Butler (cont'd)

We also continue to safely manage our natural resources, including our forests and minerals, and continue efforts to protect and invest in improving water quality and conserving critical habitat in our 8,000 square mile watershed.

I also want to introduce you to Ryan McCleaster, the new Chief of Recreation. Ryan is hitting the ground running and has many ideas for continuing to improve our facilities. Likewise, I want to extend congratulations to Adria Bergeron and welcome her to the Executive Team as Director of Marketing and Communications. You will see more changes in 2021.

Lastly, for me personally, it has been a rewarding transition as the MWCD Executive Director. I am thankful to the MWCD Board of Directors, Executive Team and staff for opening their arms and accepting me into the MWCD family, embracing some of my new ideas. Like everyone, I am anxious to see COVID-19 in our rearview mirror so we can restore some sense of normalcy and show you what we have in store for the future.

Come see us in 2021.



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## Lake Views

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