

In This Issue...

How Conservation Became as Important as Flood Control..... 3

Fall Programs..... 4

Law Enforcement
Scholarship Program 6

Jennifer Ponchak
Appointed to Board..... 6

Lake Views



Fascinating Historical Events Lead to MWCD's 90-Year Longevity

By Craig Butler, Executive Director

History is a curious thing. I have written before, less than one half of one percent (0.5%) of businesses survive to celebrate 100 years. While we are ONLY 90, the odds are good that MWCD has a long and positive future.

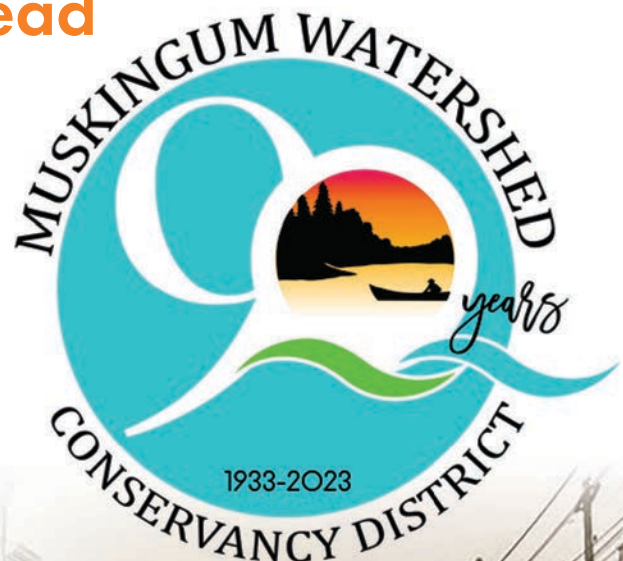
To mark this historic occasion, represent how far we have come, and envision what is ahead of us as we adapt to new challenges and opportunities, I thought I would use a new tool to help me write this article: ChatGPT.

WOW! If you ask ChatGPT for an analysis of important historical decisions in MWCD history, you will get a fair, yet general overview of our history. It nails important dates, like the passage of the Vonderheide Act in 1914 and the need for a "comprehensive solution to notorious flooding and the pioneering effort in the United States to manage water resources at the watershed level." This was, and remains, a sentential decision in our history and is one reason we have been successful.

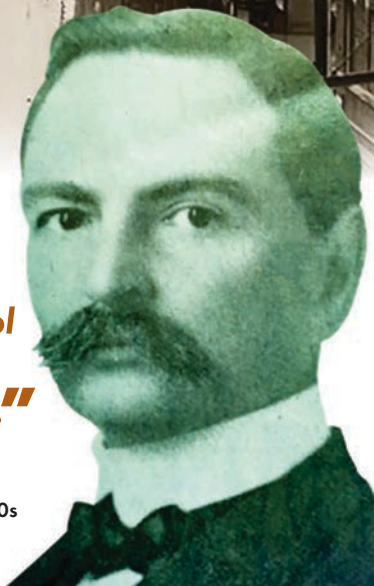
What is not chronicled is a series of forgotten, but significant historical events I find fascinating that led to the success of MWCD. These are discussed in detail in the book, *A Valley Renewed* (Hal Jenkins, 1976) that chronicles MWCD's early history.

The first instance was changing the narrative from the need for flood control to soil management. Who would have thought this would be instrumental in building public support for MWCD? Without this simple, yet critical moment in history, MWCD may have never gotten off the ground. Why? Well, recall that the historic floods happened in 1913, but through a series of events, MWCD was not created until 1933. During this period, time passed; people forgot, and momentum stopped.

This is where it gets fun. Without the engagement with George H. Maxwell, a prominent California attorney with experience in water management issues, public sentiment may never have supported the formation of the MWCD. What did Maxwell do? He reframed the issue from that of flood control to that of water and soil management. Maxwell moved to Ohio and began a vigorous writing and speaking campaign about water management, saying "floods are not your real problem. Erosion control is your big problem here."



"Floods are not your real problem. Erosion control is your big problem here."



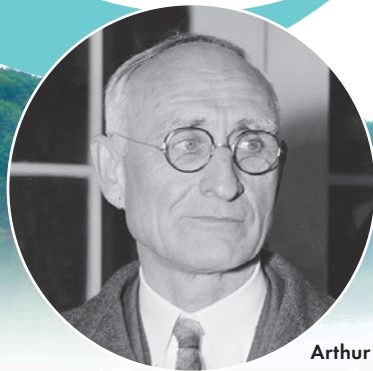


Bryce Browning

Bryce Browning, MWCD's founder, was even skeptical. It is noted in the book, during one of Maxwell's speeches Bryce said to his friend, Bill Barnhart, County Agriculture Agent, "Bill, the old man is crazy, isn't he?" In the end, this switch from talking about long-off or forgotten flooding, to building an organization focused on soil health and erosion helped reinvigorate the momentum to create the MWCD. My point? Sometimes it is the unplanned, chance, or subtle and inconsequential decisions that play an oversized role in the history and longevity of an organization. This is one small example.

In another instance, which I also find interesting, is when Browning, Chief Engineer Arthur Morgan and others were encouraged by various federal officials to meet with President Franklin Roosevelt to discuss their plan for a conservancy district and request funding. They declined to do so, as they did not want to "add unnecessarily to the President's burdens." However, had it not been for a misunderstood telegram from the President to Arthur Morgan requesting an in-person meeting, MWCD may not have existed. Morgan expected to discuss flood mitigation in the Muskingum Valley and forming and funding the MWCD at the meeting. As soon as the meeting started, Morgan began discussing MWCD and while the President was indeed interested – the 20-minute meeting lasted two hours – the President admitted that he arranged the meeting so that he could ask Morgan to become the Chairman of the soon-to-be-formed Tennessee Valley Authority.

I find the timing of a third occurrence fascinatingly important. Browning, Morgan, and others were interested in seeing how, or if, the newly formed Civilian Conservation



Arthur Morgan

Corps (CCC) could help with their mission of water management and conservation. They traveled to Washington, D.C. to meet with Robert Fechner, the newly named head of the CCC. So new, that it was Fechner's first day on the job and he was having trouble finding his new office within the Department of Interior.

As Browning describes this encounter, he states:

"Except for a desk and a few chairs, the office was empty. And after a lengthy wait we heard someone in the hall inquiring about the location of his office. It was Fechner. We hurried out and facetiously told him we were the reception committee and were there to present a project that we hoped would be his first project. He seemed to enjoy the experience, listened patiently to our rather lengthy presentation, and indicated a sincere interest in it."



Robert Fechner, 1939



Again, a chance encounter played a vital role in the formation of MWCD.

Maybe it is my own bias or applying the standards of today to that time, but this chance encounter would be very unlikely



Franklin Roosevelt

today. Having been in meetings like this, I can envision Director Fechner looking to say anything to get these Ohioans to leave his office so he could figure out his role on the first day in his new office.

So, back to ChatGPT. I asked, "what are the traits that have helped MWCD reach 90 years?" It does a great job of talking about our strong mission, purpose, adaptability, sound governance, financial stability, public support, long-term focus, community engagement, and education and outreach.

These are all key and accurate traits that have contributed to MWCD's ability to endure and thrive for 90 years. I believe MWCD has always focused on building an organization that will last and have purpose serving Ohio for generations. Sure, there have been, and will continue to be rough patches along the way, but our past and future endurance can be attributed to our strong foundation and principles.

So, what am I driving at? Yes, through careful planning, management, and execution, MWCD is a compelling narrative of human ingenuity and dedication to environmental stewardship.

From its early days responding to devastating floods, it has grown into a multifaceted organization that not only safeguards communities but also nurtures the natural world it encompasses. ChatGPT can tell you that. However, what is more fun, and what ChatGPT cannot tell you, are those lesser-known facts, people, instances, and decisions that have as much, if not more, impact on shaping an organization's history. These few examples are what make MWCD a unique and extraordinary organization.



By-Products and Incidentals

How Conservation Became as Important as Flood Control

By Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation

The 1913 flood that ripped through the Ohio Valley was unstoppable. The storm unleashed a terror of moving water that blasted through cities, melted away bridges, moved houses from their foundations and killed hundreds of people. In some areas, farms were buried under feet of rubble, rock, and sand, rendering the land useless.

This flood also unleashed an equally unstoppable effort intent on saving farmland and soils from the ravages of erosion. Big solutions were needed to match these large threats. This was modern America in the making, born out of the floods, dust, and the Great Depression. To meet this challenge was Arthur Morgan. Between his time at the Miami Conservancy District and the Tennessee Valley Authority, he developed the plan that put into motion a landscape-level engineering feat that was the largest in the world at the time. Taming the Muskingum River and its tributaries was no longer an impossible dream, but was now a reality; this was the beginning of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District.

To combat these threats, Morgan needed large areas of low-lying land to hold the flood waters after heavy rains. The original design of a network of “dry dams” that would have no pool of water was later changed to include reservoirs to meet the growing concern of drought from the Dust Bowl. This redesign allowed for permanent reservoirs of water and undeveloped natural areas to lay behind the dams. These by-products and incidentals of flood control would provide the protection needed by retaining and releasing the water slowly and at a more controlled rate.

Conserving our natural resources, including fertile soils and clean water, became just as

important to protecting towns, bridges, and infrastructure. These conservation areas also provided intangible recreational value for the public with inspiration and relaxation in nature. In the 1930s, the National Park concept itself could fit into living memory and “nature” was quickly transitioning from something to be tamed into something to be kept wild. Here is where the new blended view of conservation came to be.

Navigating this transitional and turbulent time was Bryce Browning, our first and longest-serving Director of MWCD. His dedication and commitment to the growing conservation movement in America is perhaps best illustrated by his dedication and contribution to the creation and publication of a new quarterly journal called *The Land*, which spanned 12 years from 1941 to 1953. The first printing in February 1941 was a unique collection of poignant essays, poetry, woodblock prints, limited photography, and of course, hard conservation science.

The first editors would find themselves 10 months later faced with an America being drawn into a world war following the attack on Pearl Harbor. The trustees and editors of *The Land* deliberated heavily and agreed not to postpone the printing of the journal with the belief that “this work and teaching is even greater in times of world strain and confusion than in times of peace and ease.”

Working within the loosely defined and unifying themes of conservation, sustainable land use, and agriculture, Bryce Browning and editor Russell Lord curated hundreds of contributions over the years and kept the journal uniquely balanced between philosophy, art, and science. They achieved this balance

by peppering the pages with recipes, anecdotes, and songs.

Browning was one of only five trustees, out of dozens over the years, who carried *The Land* from beginning to end before it was finally incorporated into the Izaak Walton League in the 1950s.

Browning was the enduring bond that brought together an incredibly lengthy list of luminaries of the day. Noteworthy contributors and trustees of *The Land* included Russell Lord, J. Russell Smith, Aldo Leopold, Gifford Pinchot, Louis Bromfield, Hugh Bennett, Liberty Hyde Bailey, and Dwight D. Eisenhower – yes, that Dwight D. Eisenhower! They were all part of a crucible of ideas focused on conservation.

Browning’s steady pragmatic style simultaneously guided both organizations, *The Land* and MWCD. Both appealed to and informed a wide audience. He left behind an incredible written archive of his world. Through his handwritten notes, letters, calendar appointments, telegrams, cards, and blurry memos typed on onion-skin paper, one can track the daily effort it took to maintain balance between flood control, conservation, and recreation.

These “by-products and incidentals,” as Arthur Morgan and his team of engineers described in the 1920s, would become part of the foundation supporting the modern conservation movement in America.

Looking back on 90 years gives us the perspective and permission to look forward 90 years into the future. A lot will change for sure, but what will remain unchanged are the three core pillars providing the peace, abundance, and joy recognized by our founders.

Some programs require
preregistration.

Program details can be found
online at www.MWCD.org

MWCD Programs

Stay outside this fall and enjoy events at a MWCD Lake near you. The parks and lakes are the perfect place to enjoy time with family and friends snuggled beside a warm campfire, exploring the trails, and enjoying the fall colors! Programs and special events are offered throughout the season and are open to campers, community members, and daily visitors.



Halloween Weekends at the Lake

Pack your decorations and costumes for spooky, fun-filled weekends! Bring the family out to the park for trick-or-treating, crafts, games, hikes, and a Halloween-themed movie on the BIG screen!

See the website for dates and details at each lake location.

Haunted Trail at Tappan Lake Park September 29 – 30

Are you brave enough to hike the Haunted Trail at Tappan Lake Park? Take a wagon ride to the trail and then hike ½ mile through the woods with haunted sites along the way. Tickets will be available onsite at Tappan Lake beach. Enjoy a campfire, movie, and food before or after your haunting good time! \$10 per person, payable at the event. All children 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.



Bigfoot Basecamp at Pleasant Hill Lake Park October 5 - 8

Spend the weekend at the lake and search for Bigfoot (aka Sasquatch, Grassman, Yeti, etc.)! Attend the VIP Dinner with Matt Moneymaker, founder and president of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization (BFRO) and co-host of "Finding Bigfoot" on Animal Planet Channel. Plus enjoy Community Townhall event investigator presentations, Bigfoot book author signings, guided hikes, and pontoon tours, plus Bigfoot T-shirt tie dye and crafts. The weekend will feature family-friendly events, food trucks, Bigfoot souvenirs, a caricature artist, and a Bigfoot-themed Movie at the Lake. Reservations are required for the VIP dinner and select scheduled events.

More information, detailed schedule and tickets can be purchased online at MWCD.org/Bigfoot.



Bounty on the Bridge October 12

The third annual Bounty on the Bridge returns to Atwood Lake Park on Thursday, October 12. Experience an exclusive fine-dining opportunity prepared by the Culinary Arts Program from Buckeye Career Center on the pedestrian bridge near the Welcome Center.

Tickets may be purchased at [MWCD.org/bounty](https://www.mwcd.org/bounty).

Hunter Education Courses

Prepare for deer and turkey seasons by completing the ODNR required Hunter Education Course at Atwood or Charles Mill Lake Parks. Each course is a two-day, hands-on experience to cover a wide range of topics including conservation, safety, ethics, firearm handling, and more.

Registration will open closer to the event dates at [MWCD.org](https://www.mwcd.org).



Watch a Movie at the Lake

Bring your family or friends to watch a movie on the BIG screen outdoors at the lake. Movies are scheduled throughout the fall. Due to copyright restrictions, movie titles are posted at each park, or message the park on Facebook.

Go Hiking

MWCD Lakes offer a variety of hiking trails perfect for beginners and experienced hikers. Spend time outside and enjoy the crisp autumn air and fall colors around the lake. Hike on your own or join a guided hike scheduled throughout the fall. Make it a weekend and reserve a cozy cabin or campsite and end your day around a warm campfire.

View hiking trails at [MWCD.org/trails](https://www.mwcd.org/trails).



MWCD Law Enforcement Scholarship Program Supports Future Public Safety Leaders

MWCD, a leading advocate for community safety and law enforcement excellence, was thrilled to announce its inaugural Law Enforcement Scholarship Program offered through Buckeye Career Center in July. The program is designed to recognize and support individuals pursuing a career in law enforcement, fostering the development of the next generation of public safety leaders.

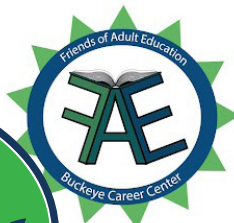
The Law Enforcement Scholarship Program aims to address the critical need for well-qualified and dedicated professionals in law enforcement by providing financial assistance to deserving students. Through this initiative, MWCD seeks to contribute to the advancement of public safety practices and ensure that communities continue to be protected by highly skilled and compassionate law enforcement officers.

MWCD partnered with the Buckeye Career Center Friends of Adult Education Foundation to financially assist two adult

students in Buckeye Career Center's Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) beginning with the 2023-2024 academic year.

"We are delighted to launch the Law Enforcement Scholarship Program, as it aligns perfectly with our mission to promote excellence in law enforcement and foster stronger community ties," said Craig Butler, MWCD executive director. "By investing in the education of promising students, we hope to encourage their pursuit of a rewarding career in law enforcement and contribute to a safer and more secure society for all."

Once students complete their required OPOTA training, they are eligible to pursue a career in law enforcement, which includes the possibility of becoming a MWCD Ranger. MWCD Rangers are vital in ensuring the safety of over five million



visitors who choose MWCD's parks, marinas, lakes, and campgrounds as their recreation destination each year. Rangers also oversee the safety of MWCD's 1204 cottage sites.

For more information about the MWCD Law Enforcement Scholarship Program, please visit mwcd.org/LEScholarship.

MWCD Conservancy Court Appoints New Member to Board of Directors

In June, twelve judges attending the MWCD Conservancy Court session appointed Jennifer Ponchak from Morgan County to fill a vacancy on the five member MWCD Board of Directors. Ponchak was appointed to a five-year term on the Board of Directors during the Court's session held on June 2, in the Tuscarawas County Courthouse in New Philadelphia. She fills the seat held by Joanne Limbach who served on the MWCD board for a total of 20 years.

"I congratulate Jennifer on her appointment to the Board of Directors," said Craig Butler, MWCD executive

director. "Jennifer's background will prove to be helpful as we continue to enhance our conservation and flood mitigation efforts, so I look forward to working with her in the future."

Ponchak is the founder of Follow the River Environmental, a specialty company that performs clearing and grubbing, erosion control, seeding, landscaping and environmental consulting services on private commercial, heavy highway and municipal projects. Follow the River is a certified DBE, SBE, EDGE and WBE Company. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from



The Ohio State University, CPESC and CPSWQ certifications and is a Licensed Underground Storage Tank Installer.

Butler said, "Joanne is the longest serving board member – serving 20 years. She has dedicated her professional life to

Board of Directors — (cont'd)

public service with MWCD, the State of Ohio, and many other national and local causes. On behalf of all MWCD staff past and present, we thank her for her service."

"Thank you to the Conservancy Court, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, MWCD Board, and colleagues for the opportunity to participate in public service at its best," said Limbach. "I've had the pleasure of seeing the district through many years of change, many ups and downs. Through it all, the MWCD has been true to the values created at the inception, which is to provide flood mitigation, conservation, and outdoor recreation to the citizens in the region, and I am honored to be a part of this history."



Col. Jayson Putnam,
Joanne Limbach and Craig Butler

Colonel Jayson Putnam, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Huntington District Commander provided an update which included projects on the Dam Safety Classification within the MWCD. Colonel Putnam, on behalf of the USACE, recognized Ms. Limbach for her dedicated service to MWCD.

Other members of the MWCD Board of Directors include Robert S. Moorehead of Guernsey County, Gordon T. Maupin of Wayne County, Jim Gresh of Stark County, and Ronald E. Dziedzicki of Medina County.

Members of Board of Directors are appointed by the Conservancy Court to oversee the operations and business affairs of the MWCD, which manages more than 57,000 acres of land and water dedicated to public use. Board members meet once a month in open, public session.

MWCD Has a Lot to Speak About



Is your civic, social, or community group looking for speakers for upcoming meetings? How about providing information for a discussion about the MWCD or any of its many programs?

MWCD can provide the details by supplying a speaker and presentation for those in attendance.

For details, topics, or to book a date, contact Ethan Zucal at MWCD at (330) 556-4814 or by email at ezucal@mwcd.org.



Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation, shares the value of water quality through an enviroscape demonstration.

PUBLISHED BY
Muskingum Watershed
Conservancy District

Call, write or e-mail for a
free subscription

MAIN OFFICE

1319 Third Street NW
New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663
(330) 343-6647
Toll Free: (877) 363-8500
www.MWCD.org
info@mwcd.org

ANNEX OFFICE

2050 Reiser Avenue SE
New Philadelphia, Ohio 44663
(330) 343-6647

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday 7 am - 5 pm
Friday 8 am - 5 pm

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

James M. Gresh
President

MEMBERS

Ronald E. Dziedzicki
Gordon T. Maupin
Robert S. Moorehead, Jr.
Jennifer Ponchak

ADMINISTRATION

Craig W. Butler
Executive Director/Secretary
Adria L. Bergeron
Director of Marketing and Communications
Mary C. Burley
Director of Human Resources
James L. Crandall
Chief Financial Officer/Treasurer
Bradley P. Janssen
Chief of Natural Resources and Land Management
J. Ryan McCleaster
Chief of Recreation
Jonathan C. Mizer
Chief Legal Counsel
Boris E. Slogar, P.E.
Chief Engineer
Matt A. Thomas
Chief of Conservation
Patrick J. Brockmeier
Chief Ranger



New Philadelphia, OH 44663



FALL 2023 | VOLUME 42 ISSUE 3

Lake Views

CATCH A LINE ON MWCD EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District has a variety of full-time and seasonal employment opportunities. Whether you are in high school, college, or advancing your career, we have opportunities for everyone.

Types of positions include: park and marina staff, law enforcement and security services, engineering, maintenance/grounds keeping, gate attendant, cleaning staff, and beach attendant.

For more information, please visit www.MWCD.org.