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# Lake Views



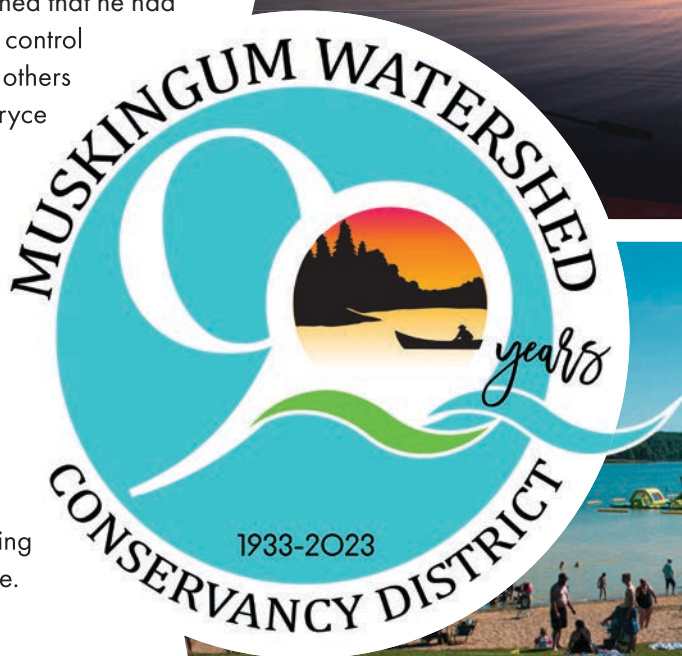
## Celebrating 90 Years of Flood Reduction, Conservation, and Recreation

By Craig Butler, Executive Director

Age is just a number, right? 55 is the new 35, or so I am told. We hear these axioms all the time and it made me think about age in a different way. MWCD is turning 90 years old this year and if we think about this in terms of business survival, that is excellent! The prevailing theory, though unconfirmed, is that only about a half a percent (0.5%) of all companies have what it takes to last 100 years. This means that centennial firms—and MWCD is getting close—truly do have a lot to celebrate. In our case, turning 90 is unique from a business longevity perspective, but we see it as “just a number.” While we make time to honor and celebrate our past, we as stewards of MWCD, are looking forward and making plans for MWCD to be active, healthy, and a positive influence in the region for decades to come.

Speaking about honoring our past, immediate past Executive Director, John Hoopingarner took to the pen in 1993 to mark the 60th birthday of the MWCD. He eloquently reminded us of the will and foresight of strong leaders instrumental in our founding and success, none more-so than Bryce Browning, founder of MWCD and our first Executive Director. John penned that he had “energy, vision, and tenacious approach, devoted to a flood control project in the Muskingum River Valley.” Bryce, certainly, and others including John Hoopingarner and Ray Eichel, successor of Bryce and predecessor of John, have laid and protected a strong foundation for which the modern-day MWCD is built. All of us in the Muskingum Valley and Ohio should be thankful for them and what they did.

Moving forward 30 years and we are just finishing a new strategic plan that will guide our actions, investments, and direction for the next five years, while also looking out 20 years. If you have ever gone through a robust planning process like this, it can be both rewarding and difficult. Difficult in the sense you are trying to juggle the day-to-day activities of running the business, while at the same time coming together with your staff and stakeholders to plan for the future.







# Conservation: A New Era

By Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation

To remain effective and to add value to any organization, strategic plans need to be refreshed and kept relevant especially when an organization as old as ours looks to the future. In 2022, MWCD began the process of updating its strategic plan. We are now sharing the results of that process, the MWCD 2022-2027 Strategic Plan, Honoring our past, planning our future. Our new plan outlines important initiatives across all programmatic areas. These initiatives highlight the important steps that will be taken over the next five years while maintaining an eye on aspirational goals over the next 20 years.

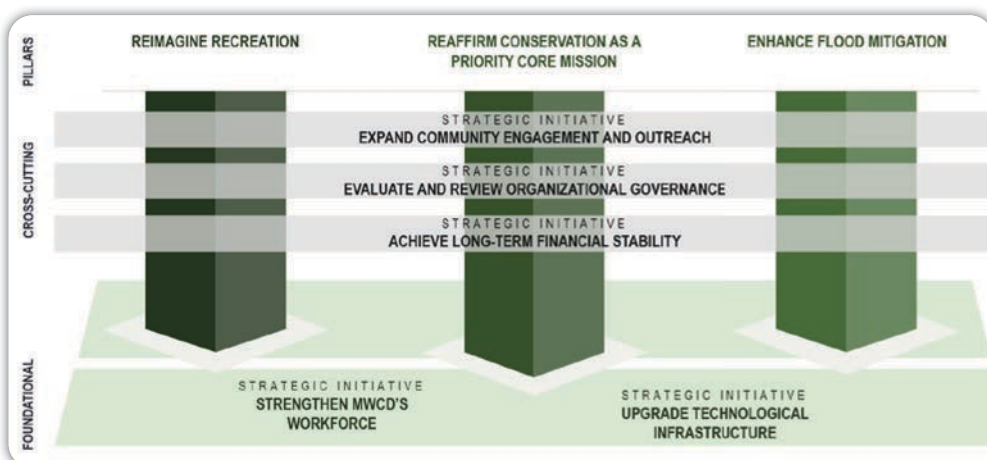
The stewardship of our core pillars: Flood Mitigation, Recreation, and Conservation, will remain constant and strong.

We are entering an exciting new era for the organization as we reaffirm and pivot towards strengthening the conservation pillar of the organization. By design, the Conservation Department will continue to

work across all departments within MWCD and its role will be seen through a wide-angle lens. More importantly, we recognize the greatest impact the Conservation Department can have is where we support conservation efforts for communities and how landowners can be assisted.

Our organizational mission is paired with a vision of becoming leaders in our core pillar areas over the next five years with progress toward measurably improving the quality

of life and the ecosystem in the watershed. That is no small task. To make strides toward achieving this, we take a holistic watershed approach and work together in areas where all pillars have overlap and can support each other. The common thread among them is clean water. Clean water supports first class recreation, benefits flood reduction efforts, and will always be at the focus of the Conservation Department. MWCD is one of the few organizations that has important roles and responsibilities in all three areas.







We are fortunate to live and work in this part of the state. The Muskingum River Watershed benefits from large wetland and forest complexes that provide recharge to groundwater, and natural filtration providing clean water for streams and rivers. As we have seen in the news lately, an abundance of clean water provides the best long-term buffer protecting human health and ecological recovery from local disasters. Areas impacted recover faster with healthy systems well established and already in place. These natural systems are not without risk and require constant support and management.

To meet those challenges, MWCD will be investing in and expanding the Conservation Department while ensuring fiscal responsibility for the entirety of the District. Already, the Conservation Department has several new sustainability projects underway at our facilities, parks, and marinas. We will continue to work with, and expand our federal, state, and local agency partners to monitor and measurably improve water quality in our reservoirs and beyond. Furthermore, MWCD will always remain committed to supporting communities through our Partners in Watershed Management grant program and supporting farmers by our close cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts. This will certainly be a building year for the Conservation Department.

In closing, progress cannot be made without strong partnerships, a secure financial foundation, and an exceptional workforce. This gives MWCD the ability to pivot from where we are today and look toward a more sustainable future. We have a vision, and once a vision is born, it can never die. The future is bright in the Muskingum River Watershed.

# 2022-2027 MWCD STRATEGIC PLAN SNAPSHOT

## VISION

By 2028, MWCD will be the known leader in providing state-of-the-art, more accessible outdoor recreation, conservation, and flood mitigation that is measurably improving quality of life and ecosystem in the District while continuing actions toward long-term financial sustainability.

## OBJECTIVES

**RECREATION:** Implement final phases of the Master Plan with a goal of making MWCD more accessible and attractive to a broader audience

**FLOOD MITIGATION:** Expand flood mitigation grant program to include stormwater-related flood events through partnerships with communities in the District

**CONSERVATION:** Sustain areas of highest water quality and measurably improve impacted and impaired areas of the Muskingum River Watershed

**FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY:** Define measures for long-term financial sustainability and lay the groundwork for achieving them

**WORKFORCE:** Become a top-rated employer in the region

## STRATEGIES

### PILLARS:

- Reimagine Recreation
- Establish Conservation as Core to MWCD
- Modernize Flood Mitigation

### CROSS-CUTTING STRATEGIES:

- Increase Financial Sustainability
- Ramp Up Community Engagement and Outreach
- Integrate Land Management with Conservation

### FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES:

- Strengthen MWCD's Workforce
- Upgrade Core Infrastructure



# MWCD Lake Park Programs

## Make Spring Fun

Spring is here and we are all looking forward to warmer weather and programs at the lake! Our programs are open to campers, boaters, day visitors, and community members. Mark your calendars for these fun events and be sure to follow us on social media to stay up to date with our program calendar.

### Camp With Us on Welcome Back Weekend

April 1 marks the first day of the official camping season! Spend the weekend at the campground, meet the staff, prepare your camper, and enjoy a variety of programs at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks.

### Meet the Easter Bunny and Hunt for Eggs

Celebrate Easter and springtime with Easter egg hunts and more on April 8 at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks. Details for each location can be found on the website calendar of events.

### Attend an Ohio Boater Education Course

Spring is the perfect time to get ready for boating season. Make sure to renew your registration through ODNR, purchase a new MWCD docking decal, if needed, and take the Ohio Boater Education Course. While this course is required for those who will operate a boat over 10 horsepower and were born after January 1, 1982, it is a great course for all boaters. There are many ways to complete the course – online, home study, or in-person classes. MWCD Rangers will be offering in-person courses at the following locations (registration required online).

**April 8:** Tappan Lake Marina

**April 22:** Pleasant Hill Lake Park

**June 20-21:** For Kids – Pleasant Hill Lake Park



Sign up to receive alerts about outdoor adventure programs, including hiking, kayaking, snowshoeing, and day camps directly to your email inbox. Enter your information at [www.mwcd.org/OutdoorFun](http://www.mwcd.org/OutdoorFun) and select topics of interest. Don't miss out on the fun!

Some programs require preregistration.

Program details can be found online at [www.MWCD.org](http://www.MWCD.org)



### Join the 2023 Earth Day Cleanup Challenge

Raise awareness for litter prevention and celebrate Earth Day at all parks and campgrounds! All you need to do is grab gloves and trash bags to pick up litter at a MWCD lake from Saturday, April 15 through Sunday, April 23. Post photos of the cleanup on MWCD Facebook and Instagram pages using #MWCEarthDay2023 and tag the park or marina to be entered into a drawing for a cooler filled with MWCD prizes and gift certificate! Or visit a park on the date listed below to earn coupons for a free night of camping by filling a trash bag. For details visit the website calendar of events.

**April 15:** Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Piedmont, and Clendening

**April 22:** Atwood, Seneca, and Tappan

### Take a Hike

MWCD Lakes offer a variety of hiking trails for beginners or experienced hikers. Get outside and search for signs of spring and get rid of the winter blues. Join one of the hikes listed below or explore the trails on your own. View hiking maps at [www.MWCD.org/trails](http://www.MWCD.org/trails).

**March 14:** Pi(e) Day Hike at Atwood Lake Park

**March 18:** Spring Equinox Pancake Breakfast & Hike at Tappan Lake Park

**April 1:** Night Hike at Seneca Lake Park

**April 15 & 22:** Guided Nature Hikes at Atwood Lake Park

**April 29:** Critters of the Lake Hike at Charles Mill Lake Park

**May 13:** Evening Hike with Mom at Tappan Lake Park

**May 20:** Night Hike at Atwood Lake Park

**TBD:** Wildflower Hike at Clendening Lake Dam

## Celebrating 90 Years — (cont'd)

The result of this, not surprisingly, has MWCD continuing its excellent mission and work reducing the threat of flooding across the entire district while supporting conservation efforts and offering recreational opportunities – our three core pillars. However, we are contemplating how to do this differently, such as working with communities on issues like stormwater management and using green infrastructure to slow these waters before they enter our lakes. Likewise, we are putting a spin on our other long-successful pillar, recreation. Our last several strategic plans had MWCD focus squarely on investing in replacing infrastructure and building new recreational – camping – assets at

our parks. While we will continue to work on areas still needing some TLC, we are looking forward to what our recreation mission will look like in the future. You will hear us talk about “reimagining recreation” and working to define what this means. Lastly, and somewhat new to the MWCD, is a large focus on conservation. This means many things. From improving our own sustainability and environmental performance, to planning for major investments of time and resources in the watershed to help improve water quality with our partners like the Department of Agriculture, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, farmers, and many others. So, as you can see, we are charting a

new course, looking forward to new opportunities, but respecting our past traditions and continuing to support our mission and values.

In thinking how to close this editorial, I couldn't find any better way than how John closed in his 1993 version...“our presence in the Muskingum Valley has enhanced our lives with countless benefits: jobs, commerce, industry, recreation, conservation, flood control, and on and on. Proud? Yes...and if you'd like to learn more about the district, give me a call. I never tire of telling the story.” I too, never get tired of telling our story. Happy 90th birthday, MWCD! You look great!

## MWCD Names New Chief Ranger

Patrick Brockmeier has been named Chief Ranger for MWCD to lead the ranger department. He will oversee 34 Rangers whose duties range from patrolling camp areas, cottage areas, and lakes, to providing Ohio Boater or Hunter Education Courses to the community.

They also conduct safety checks, respond to noise complaints, criminal violations, and assist other nearby agencies.

Brockmeier has been employed by MWCD as a variable Ranger at Seneca Park since 2019 while also working as a full-time probation officer for Marietta Municipal Court. He has prior experience as Chief of Police at the Matamoras and Beverly Police Departments. He also serves as part-time faculty at both Washington State Community College and Hocking College as an OPOTA Instructor, Ohio Correctional Officer Instructor, and Natural Resources Instructor.

“I am excited about this new opportunity at the MWCD,” said Brockmeier. “I consider the opportunity to serve the MWCD a great privilege and responsibility, one that I will approach with

professionalism and a commitment to work in partnership with our entire community.”

Patrick earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in General Studies, with a concentration in Political Science through Marietta College, his Associate of Applied Science degree in Criminal Justice through Washington State Community College, and an Associate of Arts degree in General Studies through Marietta College. He earned his Ohio Peace Officer Training Certification through Hocking College.

“We are pleased to welcome Patrick to MWCD as our new Chief Ranger,” said Executive Director, Craig Butler. “His education and background in law enforcement, as well the experience he has from working as a Ranger for us since 2019, brings an insight to our organization and will make him an effective leader. His desire to implement new ideas to further enhance our community policing style of law enforcement makes him the perfect fit for our organization.”







# Restoration of Storm-Damaged Forests

By Clayton Rico, Forest Operations Coordinator

On June 13, 2022, a storm containing an F1 tornado with wind speeds between 86 and 110 mph ravaged forests within the Pleasant Hill Lake Region. These strong winds created conditions that trees could not sustain.

MWCD forestry staff quickly evaluated storm damage across its properties. The first step was to evaluate our trail systems and see which trails were most heavily impacted. Once impacted trails were identified they were quickly closed. Decisions were then made on which trails could be opened safely by MWCD staff, volunteers, tree care contractors, or loggers.

Clearing of trail systems, especially in storm damaged areas, can be extremely challenging and dangerous. Many of the trees that were blown over were leaning into standing trees. These blown over trees, often referred to as “widow makers,” are extremely dangerous to users of the forest, like hunters and hikers. These trees are unpredictable and often require mechanized equipment to be safely handled to the ground.

Two particular 40-acre tracts were significantly impacted with most trees blown over, snapped, or missing a large percentage of their tops. Within these areas, there were a multitude of commercially valuable trees, including both hardwoods and pines that could be turned into usable timber product. Ultimately, a timber salvage operation was implemented across the 80 acres to fulfill the following goals:

- ✓ **Open existing trail systems and remove overhead hazards, as much as practical**
- ✓ **Create a safer and more usable forest to a variety of user groups**
- ✓ **Maintain stream quality and flow**
- ✓ **Be good stewards and prevent wasted natural resources**
- ✓ **Recover down, broken, and other trees that will provide a silvicultural benefit to the overall future management of the forest**
- ✓ **Cut tops and other unused portions of the trees as low as possible to expedite the breakdown of the material and further increase soil nutrients**
- ✓ **Utilize Best Management Practices for logging operations to limit soil erosion during and after logging operations**



Evan Ryan, MWCD Forest Technician, evaluates the summer 2022 storm damage in the Pleasant Hill Lake Region.

## MWCD Restoration — (cont'd)

MWCD quickly signed contracts with two local sawmills to have the down and significantly damaged trees salvaged, bringing us closer to meeting our goals. The salvage operations, in which MWCD was able to salvage 587,000 board feet of hardwood timber and 1,704 tons of pine, were completed nearly three months after the tornado touched down.

Plans are ongoing for the reopening of selected MWCD trails and creation of new trails within the region. For more information regarding trails and trail closures visit [MWCD.org/Trails](http://MWCD.org/Trails).

## 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](mailto:ezucal@mwcd.org).



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

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## *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](http://www.MWCD.org).