

In This Issue...

Focus on Sustainability	2
Assessment Reduction	3
Summer Fun at MWCD Parks.....	4
Unique Career as a Ranger	5
Celebrity Sightings.....	6
Atwood Lake RV Rentals.....	6
Master Plan and Project Updates.....	7

Lake Views



MWCD's 90-Year History on Display

By Wendy Zucal — Executive Director, Dennison Railroad Depot Museum

As the MWCD commemorates its 90th anniversary, a new featured exhibit at the Dennison Railroad Depot Museum — a National Historic Landmark — is an opportunity for us to do just that. As of June 3, the public is able to move through an immersive story of the District's beginnings, its progress through the years, its highlights, a description of its future, and an interactive hands-on children's component families will enjoy. I encourage everyone to take this opportunity to learn more about the history of the MWCD and how it works every day to make our lives safer and secure our homes, businesses, and communities.

A look back at the 90-year history is an inspiring story that sets our region apart.

The MWCD was established on June 3, 1933, in response to the destructive floods that had plagued eastern Ohio for years, particularly the devastating flood of 1913 which claimed the lives of approximately 470 Ohioans. To avoid a repeat of this disaster, the District began constructing dams and reservoirs throughout the Muskingum River Watershed — the largest watershed in Ohio — encompassing a fifth of the state.

Since then, the MWCD has gone on to create an extensive system of flood control resources, including a series of dams and reservoirs. These projects have helped prevent or reduce flooding or its impact throughout eastern Ohio, as well as provide water storage for agricultural and industrial use. In total, it is estimated that the District's flood mitigation system has helped prevent \$8 billion in flood damage.

The MWCD's mission is more than just flood mitigation. Over the years it has grown to include recreation and conservation, as well.

Early on, the District's leadership recognized how its network of lakes and surrounding lands could be used for recreation and how that could contribute to the region's economy. In the 1960s and 1970s, the MWCD transformed many of its reservoirs into popular recreation destinations, enhancing marinas and building campgrounds.



Conservation Department Focuses on Sustainability Goals

By Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation

MWCD's Five-Year Strategic Plan identified sustainability as a new area of focus for MWCD. Developing our first sustainability plan for an organization as operationally diverse and complex as ours is no easy task and will take cooperation and thoughtful input.

MWCD hired Paige Hay as our sustainability coordinator within the conservation department. Paige received her two-year certificate in the Natural Resources and Environmental Management program with honors from the Buckeye Career Center. She holds associate's degrees in environmental health and safety, and medical laboratory, a bachelor's in public health education and promotion from Kent State University, and a master's in health education from Purdue University. She also brings experience working with Carroll-Columbiana-Harrison County Solid Waste District where she oversaw the environmental compliance program. Paige will be looking at our facilities and operations to decide where we can make large positive improvements.

Last year, MWCD partnered with Rural Action's Zero-Waste Team, and funded a pilot project on Atwood Lake Park. The results of this study found that about half the waste generated during a typical summer weekend was recyclable or compostable material. Furthermore, half the waste generated from the Atwood Fall Festival could also be recycled and reused. This year we will be conducting another waste audit at Pleasant Hill Lake Park.

A significant impact can be made by increasing our efforts to recycle shrink-wrap plastic from our marinas. This low-density plastic film is very effective at creating a low-cost protective covering for boats during the winter. Like most plastics, the use is temporary and usually only lasts

one season, resulting in a large amount of material that can be recycled.

MWCD's marinas, leased and owned, generate an estimated 25,000 pounds of plastic annually for the purpose of covering boats for winter storage. Unfortunately, only 41% of that material is recycled due to the quantity and quality of the plastic. Despite increasing recycling efforts in recent years, we have reached our limit without investing in new equipment to help condense and move more material to the recycler.

Kathryn Suggs, MWCD's water quality coordinator, worked with our marina operators and the Ohio Clean Marina Program, and submitted a strong proposal to the Ohio EPA for necessary funds to help Atwood and Charles Mill marinas bundle and transport shrink-wrap plastic efficiently, making it more profitable to recycle. Funding has been awarded by the Ohio EPA's Recycling and Litter Prevention Grant Program and will boost our recycling capacity at the marinas by 32%, also providing the ability to bale cardboard to reduce even more landfill waste. This effort supports our ongoing participation with the Ohio Clean Marina Program administered through Ohio Sea Grant and ODNR.

The Clean Marina Program sets guidelines and recognizes marinas that adopt best management practices to reduce



Shawn Tharp, recreations operation manager, receives the Gold Level award from Sarah Orlando and Tracy Coe, ODNR Ohio River Basin program coordinators, at Clendening Marina.

environmental impacts. It also provides technical assistance for marina operators and encourages boaters to help keep Ohio's coastal and inland waterways clean. The statewide program includes both the Lake Erie and the Ohio River watersheds. Sarah Orlando, Ohio Sea Grant Specialist, leads the Shrink-Wrap Recycling Workgroup for Ohio and has been organizing the program since 2005. She recently joined the MWCD Development Advisory Committee providing valuable connections, insight, and knowledge of programs related to sustainability.

Sarah, Paige, Kathryn, and our marina operators are working as a team with the goal of having all marinas certified as Clean Marinas. Five of the nine MWCD marinas have achieved certification, with Clendening being elevated to the Gold Level this year.

As we bring our sustainability goals into focus, we realize we can reduce our waste, conserve natural resources, lessen our carbon footprint, and extend our investments further into the future. Sustainability takes a team effort and through partnerships, we will lower utility costs, reduce waste, and continue to provide clean and safe marinas for our visitors. Clean water is our most valuable resource, and having clean marinas is not only a reflection of the care we impart on the watershed but also bears the responsibility of providing clean water for communities downstream.



Boats covered and ready for winter storage. The plastic coverings can be used again in different ways if recycled.



History on Display — (cont'd)

Today, the MWCD manages over 57,000 acres of land and water, including nine campgrounds and 10 marinas on Atwood, Clendening, Charles Mill, Leesville, Piedmont, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan lakes and public access areas that offer boating, fishing, camping, hiking, and other outdoor activities throughout the District.

More recently, the MWCD has turned its attention to further enhance conservation efforts throughout the region. The District has recognized the importance of preserving the natural resources of the region for future generations and works with local partners to responsibly manage the resources within the District. Preserving the



land helps lead to better water quality, which makes the lakes more valuable for recreation and helps with flood mitigation. Educating the public and land users supports this work as well.

The MWCD has played a vital role in the development and conservation of our region, and its impact will be recognized for decades. We can all be proud of the work that generations of MWCD team members have made through the years and how their work has helped both tame the watershed's rough edges but also preserve all that is beautiful about the Muskingum River Watershed and the region we call home.

MWCD Reduces Maintenance Assessment

Property owners will see assessments reduced to \$2.00

Members of the MWCD Board of Directors have approved a plan to provide a reduction in all assessment payments for property. The assessment originally was levied in 2009 at \$12 per parcel and cut to \$6 in 2015. Assessments are collected through landowners' county property tax statements, and the funds legally must be used to pay for projects and programs that protect the operation of the system of 16 dams and reservoirs that were constructed nearly 90 years ago for flood reduction and water conservation benefits in the Muskingum River Watershed, as well as other important conservation and reservoir management projects.

"We have always been good stewards of these public funds and are very pleased to allow residents in the watershed to keep their hard-earned dollars in their pockets," said Craig Butler, MWCD executive director. "We are making this reduction because the district's financial position has changed positively. We have been fortunate to earn and invest nearly \$200 million in our public-use facilities and recreational areas, and now for the second time, the Board has voted to extend those benefits to the property owners in our watershed by reducing the assessment collection."

The assessment reduction will result in an estimated \$4 million overall cut in the assessments collected in 2024 by the MWCD.

However, the district will still meet its financial commitments to the Federal government, as well as expand our conservation and reservoir management projects. Routine financial reviews will be very important and any major changes in the district's financial position could result in corresponding assessment adjustments.

Assessment funds are also used to support the work of agencies and groups involved in conservation programs, water quality issues, and flood reduction and mitigation projects through the Partners in Watershed Management (PWM) Project Assistance Program. This program provides assistance to local communities, agencies and groups involved in projects and programs that support the conservation and flood control aspects of the mission of the MWCD. The PWM Program, approved by the Board of Directors in June 2009, has provided over \$12.2 million in grant funding for 177 projects.

"There is a tremendous need across the watershed to provide funding to communities, universities and other conservation organizations for projects that protect citizens," said Butler.

Make Your Plans for Summer Fun

Programs are offered each week throughout the season, May through September, at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks.

Additional programs are scheduled at Clendening and Piedmont Lakes.

Programs are open to campers, community members, and daily visitors!

Don't Miss Fireworks Over the Lake!

July 1 - Atwood, Tappan, Seneca, & Charles Mill

July 15 - Pleasant Hill

Fireworks shows begin at dusk and can be viewed from land or water.

Go Kayaking

Choose from a variety of kayak programs at MWCD lakes. Try kayaking for the first time or explore a lake on a guided tour, all while learning to be safe. Compete for a chance to win a kayak at one of our Poker Paddles, or paddle under the light of the full moon at a guided Moonlight Kayak. Find the perfect kayak event to float your boat!



Attend a Day Camp

Get the kids outdoors this summer. Day camps are designed to provide a fun and safe place for kids, ages 5-16, to explore nature, have fun, and learn a new skill. Each camp is one or two days long with a special theme and age-appropriate activities for a full day at the lake. Day Camp themes include Adventure Camp, Creepy Crawly, Messy Play, Nature Art, and Outdoor Cooking.



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 summer. Due to copyright restrictions, movie titles are posted at each park, or message the park on Facebook.



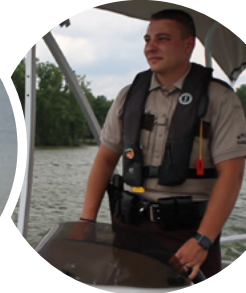
Take a Hike

MWCD Lakes offer a variety of hiking trails for beginners or experienced hikers. Get outside on your own or join a guided hike. Guided hikes include nature hikes, night hikes, and scavenger hikes. View hiking maps at www.MWCD.org/trails.



Some programs require preregistration.

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



Discover a Unique Law Enforcement Career as a MWCD Ranger

By Michael Mahaffey, Human Resources Generalist

Did you know MWCD has its own law enforcement division? MWCD Rangers are vital in ensuring the safety of over 4 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 cottage sites.

Have you ever thought of pursuing a career in law enforcement, but not quite sure if being a traditional police officer is for you? Consider becoming a Ranger! At peak season during the summer months, Rangers patrol and assist the parks, campgrounds, marinas, and lakes that comprise MWCD's recreational facilities. MWCD Rangers also provide Ohio Boater and Hunter

Education Courses, and complete vessel safety inspections for the community. MWCD's Rangers are extremely busy in the off season, not only on patrol but also attending trainings to augment their skills as law enforcement officers and first responders. All MWCD Rangers are trained in marine and land services.

MWCD is also working to provide opportunities to pursue the required Ohio Peace Officer Training Academy (OPOTA) certification through a partnership with Buckeye Career Center's Friends of Adult Education Foundation. Tuition expenses, up to and including the full cost of the academy, will be covered for those who apply and are selected

to receive the MWCD Law Enforcement Scholarship. More information coming soon on this program.

MWCD has full-time as well as variable-hour Ranger opportunities right now! New for 2023, we have added variable-hour Ranger positions that are eligible for a \$500 monthly incentive above their regular pay, if they work a required number of hours each week. Check out the posting for the Park/Lake Ranger – Variable Hours Incentive Eligible position on our Employment Opportunities page.

If you or someone you know has an interest in becoming a MWCD Ranger visit www.MWCD.org.

Maintenance Assessment Reduction — (cont'd)

"These projects help to prevent costly flooding, minimize soil erosion and nutrient loss from agricultural operations, assist with upgrading essential community services, and preserve and rehabilitate sensitive lands for public use. MWCD is proud to be a sponsor of these projects as they support our core mission and allow us to give back to the communities that are in our backyard."

In addition, the MWCD has spent assessment funds on shoreline stabilization projects at the MWCD lakes and dredging of the lakes. 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 collects assessments from owners of property in all or portions of the following counties: Ashland, Belmont, Carroll, Coshocton, Guernsey, Harrison, Holmes, Knox, Licking, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Richland, Stark, Summit, Tuscarawas, Washington, and Wayne.



Celebrity Sightings at Atwood Lead to Spotlights on MWCD Parks

May 18 was a beautiful day at Atwood Lake Park to host "Cribbs in the CLE: Josh and Maria Live!" Josh and Maria Cribbs stopped by the park to check out the new rental campers provided by General RV Center, and all the fun activities to enjoy while visiting the park including boat rentals from Atwood Lake Boats, hiking, biking, fishing, and camping. The episode aired June 5 on Cleveland 19 News and

can be found online at www.cleveland19.com/cribbsinthecle/

Jeff and Patti Kinzbach, hosts of "Rocking the RV Life," experienced lake-front camping at Atwood Lake Park on May 23! Kinzbach is well known to rock 'n' roll lovers from the late '70s through the early '90s. He is best known for hosting "Buzzard's Morning Zoo," featuring "Jeff

& Flash" on WMMS (100.7 FM) which regularly topped Rolling Stone Magazine's reader poll for "Best Radio Station" (large market) for nearly a decade.

Since retirement, Jeff and Patti have sold their home and now travel the United States with their RV, chronicling their camping adventures on Facebook and "Rocking the RV Life" podcast, on which MWCD Campgrounds will soon be featured.

Rental RVs Offered at Atwood Lake Park

Have you ever wanted to try camping, or maybe you love camping, but do not own an RV? MWCD has partnered with General RV Center to offer two rental RVs at Atwood Lake Park! The campsites feature full hook-up connections, and all the comforts of home. For more information or to make a reservation, visit www.MWCD.org.



Master Plan and Project Updates: Atwood and Tappan Lake Parks

By Eric Stechschulte, Deputy Chief – Planning and Projects

ATWOOD LAKE PARK

Activity Center

The renovation of the activity center will give a major facelift to the existing building, including new siding, a new roof structure, an addition to give added room to the central gathering area, and a covered outdoor patio. The renovation will include reorganization of the existing kitchen layout and retail area. The nature center will also be reorganized and renovated. The building is currently under construction, with all demolition complete, and new concrete footers and floor have been poured. Construction will continue through summer 2023 with completion of the project by summer 2024. Stanley Miller Construction was awarded the project for \$1,551,600.



TAPPAN LAKE PARK

Welcome Center

Bids opened for this project on February 2, 2023. Colaianni Construction was awarded the project for \$3,690,000, and onsite earthwork operations have started.

The new welcome center will provide an iconic view and sense of arrival when entering the park. The new building will be similar, both visually and functionally, to the Atwood Lake Park Welcome Center. The welcome center will house the administration and Ranger staff offices of Tappan Lake Park. The building will also include a retail area for various camping items and souvenirs. Construction will continue through summer 2023 with completion of the project by summer 2024.



Beach Restroom/Concession Building Upgrade Project

The project consists of the demolition of the existing changing rooms and construction of new restrooms/changing rooms at the beach. Demolition of the existing facilities has occurred, and the contractor has started the block on the new restroom. New stone has been added to the façade and pillars of the existing concessions building, aligning with MWCD branding guidelines.



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SUMMER 2023 | VOLUME 42 ISSUE 2

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.