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Lake Views



Message From Craig Butler

As winter approaches, most of our park and marina guests head home for the season in preparation for the holidays. While we miss the frenetic pace of the summer, and even fall, it does give us time to complete maintenance and construction projects, and rest up and prepare for the coming recreational season. As a reminder, however, we are open all year, so if you love winter activities and less crowded parks, please think about coming to see us. We would love to see you!

2022 has been a busy year for us! In addition to our normal operational activities, we have been busy planning. Strategic planning is important to any organization, but to us, it is essential. As an organization that will turn 90 years young in 2023, has hundreds of employees, and covers 20 percent of Ohio with several important missions, it is critical to have a strategy to

ensure we maintain our focus on core activities. So, this year we spent a lot of time updating the organizational strategic plan. We continue to focus on areas that have been key to MWCD, such as flood mitigation, but also are expanding from our focus on traditional flood mitigation via dams and reservoirs,



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Have You Heard of the Chippewa Subdistrict?

By Boris Slogar, Chief Engineer

Did you know that MWCD owns and operates a flood control system in Medina and Wayne counties that is separate from the Muskingum Flood Control System? The system is operated by the Chippewa Subdistrict of MWCD.

Chippewa Subdistrict was formed in the 1960s through a grassroots effort led by local business owners and farmers to lessen the devastating impacts of flooding along Chippewa Creek, which starts in northern Medina County and flows in a southeasterly direction to where it meets the Tuscarawas River near the town of Clinton. The Chippewa Creek watershed encompasses 188 square miles. The eight dams and

associated channel improvements along Chippewa Creek and two other tributaries, Little Chippewa Creek and River Styx, were designed and built by the Soil Conservation Service (SCS), now called the Natural Resources Conservation Service. The SCS built hundreds of similar dams all over the United States. However, to build the Chippewa system, a local sponsor was required. MWCD was asked to fill that role and was instrumental in acquiring property and easements for construction of the dams and channel improvements. Construction of the project was supported by federal funds at a total cost of \$12,190,000 with a local cost-share of \$2,268,000.



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Message From Craig Butler (cont'd)

to include helping communities better manage stormwater that also impacts our lakes and water quality.

If you have visited in the past few years, it is evident that we have transformed our recreational assets. In almost every way imaginable we have invested hundreds of millions of dollars to improve our parks, campgrounds, and marina assets – but we are clearly not finished. We are continuing to complete these activities, but also challenge ourselves to “reimagine recreation.” What does that mean? It means determining what you want from us in terms of new recreation opportunities and investing our dollars in these areas to improve your experiences when visiting MWCD.

If you are an avid follower of MWCD, you will remember how we annually grant dollars to communities throughout the watershed to improve waterways and water quality. Not only have we continued this program, but we have expanded our focus on conservation by hiring an executive-level chief of conservation. To further our commitment to conservation we will continue to hire staff, as well as complete a separate strategic plan to help focus our anticipated investments in conservation projects across the MWCD footprint. We are excited to build partnerships with new and old friends and get to work making significant improvements in water quality.

As we wrap up 2022 and look forward to next year and beyond, I am optimistic about our direction as an organization. We are maintaining our focus on our traditional areas but expanding these and developing exciting new programs and areas. It is an exciting time at MWCD! Come and join the fun. We would love to see you!



MWCD Celebrates 50th Anniversary of the Clean Water Act

By Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation

Fifty years ago, Congress passed the Clean Water Act (CWA), also known as the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1972, as a response to increasing public concern for the environment and the failing condition of the nation's waters. It served as a major revision of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948, which by that time had become ineffective in regulating how lakes, rivers, and streams were protected.

Functionally, the Act set minimum standards for industrial waste discharge, regulated point-source pollution, and developed a discharge permit program. As a result, many municipalities across the U.S. received federal funds to build and improve wastewater treatment plants – an investment we are benefitting from now. Today, the CWA has been expanded to include guidance pertaining to wetlands protection and Great Lakes water quality.

Water is a powerful force; it supports all earthly life, and its sheer weight alone can provide industrial power and float materials to far reaching markets. Forever flowing, rivers and streams also efficiently carry away our waste,

causing problems downstream and for another generation to fix.

The Cuyahoga River was one of the most polluted rivers in the country, poisoned with industrial cyanide and devoid of fish. The river was once described as more of a slow-moving pool with a brown oily surface containing heavy black oil slicks. Debris and trash were commonly found in the river helping rob the water of oxygen. Water temperatures were off the scale and sludge covered the river bottom. Only toxic blue-green algae could survive these extreme conditions. At least 13 fires have been reported on the Cuyahoga River since the mid-1800s. The largest and most destructive fire caused well over \$1 million in damage and destroyed boats, a bridge, and buildings in 1952. The fire of 1969 sparked a change in the way we view our natural resources and sustainability. This was the clarion call for all of us to think carefully and act differently about how we treat our waters. Decades of turning a blind eye to pollution control and treatment ushered in one of the United States' first and most influential modern environmental laws.



Public outcry over the nation’s polluted rivers pressured Congress to pass the landmark Clean Water Act and forced us to change the way we think in terms of where our water comes from and where it goes. It allowed us to reframe the way we view our waterways and wetlands. The Act also required states to develop clean water standards to protect uses such as swimming, fishing, and drinking water. Ohio played a major role in developing the standards and guidelines for aquatic life use. Furthermore, the Act maintained the responsibility of the states in addressing pollution and helped do so by including new construction and necessary upgrades for wastewater treatment plants. This created a shared balance of responsibility between the states and the federal government. This watershed-level view created a holistic approach and demonstrated the value

of building partnerships as the best way to finding real and lasting solutions to big problems.

It’s been said that Ohio is a water-rich state, wedged between two of the greatest water resources in North America – Lake Erie, connected to the other Great Lakes to the north and the Ohio River flowing south to the Mississippi. Ohio is now enjoying the benefits of the Clean Water Act. Compared to the 1970s, our major waterways are measurably cleaner. Very few of us, if anyone, would accept the environmental conditions and industry practices that were common 50 years ago. Let’s take a moment and reflect on what a landscape and what our waterways would look like today without these protections, funding, and guidance.

While significant improvements have been made in the last 50 years, our waterways still face challenges. What we see and smell today, or rather what we don’t see and smell today, is the result of the Clean Water Act. Clean water is worth the continued investment.



Left: Cuyahoga River Fire, 1952. Center: Dead fish from Cuyahoga River. Right: Brown oily substance discharging into the Cuyahoga River
Photos: Cleveland State University. Michael Schwartz Library. Special Collections.



Chippewa Subdistrict — (cont'd)

When the last dam was built in 1980, the entire system was handed over to the Chippewa Subdistrict to own, maintain, and operate.

The Chippewa Subdistrict is its own entity and was created and is operated in a similar fashion as the larger MWCD. Chippewa has a project coordinator on staff that keeps the system operating smoothly and the chief engineer for MWCD also serves as chief engineer for the Chippewa Subdistrict. The subdistrict also has its own Conservancy Court and maintenance assessment which generates \$320,000 per year. Those funds are used to maintain the eight dams and associated spillway systems, remove logjams and debris that accumulate throughout the channel system, maintain access along the channel system, and maintain over 600 drainage structures along the channel. Local contractors are utilized for much of the maintenance work and in doing so, Chippewa supports many small businesses in the local community.

For nearly five decades, the Chippewa Flood Control System has been a great success in preventing disastrous flooding for communities along Chippewa Creek including Seville, Sterling, Creston, Rittman, and Clinton. The last devastating flood occurred in 1969 when severe thunderstorms moved

from Lake Erie into Ohio's north coast communities on July 4th. This line of storms became stationary for eight hours from Toledo southeastward through Fremont, Norwalk, Ashland, and Wooster. 10-14 inches of rain fell in a band heading southeast from Ottawa County to Wayne and Holmes Counties. Massillon, just east of that area, received six or more inches of rain. Most of Ashland and Wayne Counties were flooded and isolated for two days after the flood. Killbuck Creek in Holmes County rose 20 feet, its highest known level.

Chippewa's dams range in size from 27 feet to 55 feet tall and from 470 feet to over 2,600 feet in length. Four of the dams are "dry dams" meaning they do not impound water during normal conditions, while the other four are "wet dams" where a permanent reservoir is impounded behind the dams. All eight dams are regulated by the State of Ohio and are in complete compliance with state standards and regulations.

If you ever find yourself driving west on Interstate 76 about two miles before the Interstate 71 intersection, look northward and you will see Hubbard Valley Dam, one of Chippewa's dams.



Winter Adventures at Our Lakes Will Keep You on the Move



MWCD Lakes are perfect locations for winter activities including cross-country skiing, ice fishing, and snowshoeing. Snowshoeing is a great workout and easy to learn. Try it at one of our pop-up snowshoe hikes and rentals. Since snowshoeing is dependent on the snow, we will host pop-up snowshoe programs when a lake receives at least 3" of snowfall. Pop-up program locations and times will be posted on our Facebook pages, so be sure to follow your favorite lake or follow MWCD's page for all location announcements. Or sign up to receive a direct email with pop-up program information at www.MWCD.org/OutdoorFun



The fun doesn't stop at our lakes just because it's cold! We have several events planned throughout the winter season and will add more as the snow falls.

- **Winter Solstice Hike**
December 21 — Atwood Lake Park
- **Winter Hike**
January (Date TBD) — Tappan Lake Park
- **Sweetheart Hike**
February 12 — Pleasant Hill Lake Park
- **Pi(e) Day Hike**
March 14 — Atwood Lake Park





Seasonal Camper Lotteries Begin in March

Escape the stresses of life by spending a relaxing weekend camping at the lake, anytime you want, all summer long by becoming a seasonal camper.

Seasonal campers maintain a camping permit April 1 through October 31 and can retain their campsite each year. If an established camper wishes to move sites, they can do so by entering the MWCD Seasonal Camper Lottery.

2023 Seasonal Camper Lottery Schedule:

First Lottery for Seasonal Campers:
Saturday, March 4, 2023

Second Lottery for New Seasonal Campers:
Saturday, March 11, 2023

The image shows the interior of a log cabin. A large stone fireplace with a wood mantel is the central feature, with a fire burning in the hearth. A television is mounted above the mantel. In front of the fireplace is a brown leather sofa with patterned cushions. Large windows with red curtains are visible in the background. The ceiling is made of light-colored wood. The top of the image is decorated with white snowflake graphics.

Log Cabins at Pleasant Hill Lake

The perfect winter getaway awaits with gas fireplace and outdoor hot tub! Reserve your stay today at www.MWCD.org



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 emailing at ezucal@mwcd.org.



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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.