

Friends of Lower Muskingum River



Water Quality, Watershed Management, Land Trust, Education, Economic Development, Recreation

"Restore, protect and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Lower Muskingum River and to protect and promote its natural, cultural, historic and socioeconomic resources." This is the mission of FLMR—a mission we have sought to fulfill every day since we became a non-profit organization over 9 years ago.

During our brief history we have worked with numerous stakeholders to protect our precious sources of drinking water, gathered invaluable knowledge on the health of the Lower Muskingum River basin, developed strategic watershed management plans, and educated hundreds of residents on watershed management. With this

On Sunday, August 12, the Muskingum River erupted in a flurry of activity as the 4th Annual Mighty Muskingum River Raft Race was kicked off by the Dragonboat.

Twenty-one rafts manned by 52 crew members raced down the river to the cheers of hundreds of spectators as the Sun shined down on a day that was made for being out on the water. The vessels themselves were quite



Photo by Tim Hoeflich

Thoughts from the Office

experience under our belt, we plan to continue pursuing our mission so that the next 9 years can be even more successful.

We are dedicated to pursuing this mission every single day. Here is a glance at some of the projects we are undertaking today:

- Developing a Watershed Action Plan for the southern most watershed on the Muskingum
- Seeking property owners that want a Conservation Easement for permanent protection of their land
- Working with the Stream Team volunteer monitoring program to identify water

quality issues in the basin

- Continuing to pursue land acquisition for conservation purposes
- Promoting "Rain Gardens, Clean River" as a tool to better manage storm water pollution

If you love the Lower Muskingum River as much as we do, then step up and get involved with FLMR. Donations of your time are just as valuable as monetary donations. Call 740-374-4170 to become a volunteer!

*Jesse Daubert
Watershed Coordinator,
FLMR*

Inside this issue:

Captain Hook part I	2
The Purple War	2
Community Shocked by Fish Diversity	3
Luke Chute's Bird Murmuration	3
FLMR: Our Duties as a Land Trust	4
The Dirty Truth About Sedimentation	4
Stream Team Data Making A Difference	5

The 4th Annual Mighty Muskingum River Raft Race

unique, using materials ranging from barrels to bicycles to hundreds of plastic bottles. If the phrase "motley crew" was ever relevant, it was on this Sunday at the Indian Acres Boat Ramp.

The winner of the race was Amanda Hambel, captaining the vessel "Live Action," who finished the race in a blazing fast 34 minutes. She was greeted at the Marietta Harbor by a cheering crowd and the musical stylings of Mark Williams, who provided entertainment for the event. Other winning rafts included "Flagship," captained by Peter Prigge,

which took first place in the lightweight category; "Muskingum River Pirates," captained by Corey Sites, which took first place in the youth crew category; "Hope Floats," captained by Derek Withrow, which took the prize for most creative and most recycled; and Josh Payne's "Dirty Gopher," which won the buoyantly challenged award.

The Raft Race was a great fundraiser for FLMR: over \$900 was raised, which will go towards supporting FLMR's work in the Lower Muskingum River watershed.



Photo by Tim Hoeflich

Photos of the race were taken by Tim Hoeflich and are available for viewing on our Facebook page and our website. After this year's success, we're excitedly looking forward to an even bigger race next year!

*Derek Hennen
Duke Energy Endowed
OSM/AmeriCorps VISTA,
FLMR*

On November 1st, 1819, a very ordinary little baby boy was born to a very ordinary couple living in a very ordinary sort of place. The baby was named Isaac Newton, the son of Esther and Henry Hook – living near the locks on the Muskingum River near Zanesville. It didn't take long to see there was something different about Isaac. He took to the river like a duck – not that unusual in that time and place, but young Isaac Newton Hook had energy and drive well above average.

At age 16, he was piloting flat boats loaded with local produce clear down to New Orleans – mastering not only the river he'd grown up along, but also the Ohio and the bigger and more dangerous Mississippi. With his cargo delivered, the craft sold for its timbers, the young man headed home with his money, hiking the dangerous Natchez Trace, known throughout the country as the "Devil's backbone." This was the trail usually taken

The purple loosestrife war is on. Can these weed warriors beat the garlic mustard pullers? We'll see. This fall we got off to a good start. FLMR VISTA Volunteer Derek Hennen and Board Members Katy Lustofin and Elin Jones lead the charge. Or barge...the barge being a 16' canoe.

The modus operandi was this: The banks of the Muskingum are steep, so we decided the main approach would be from the river. Loaded with muscle, gloves, pruners, and huge plastic bags from the Recycling Center, Marietta College students Nathaniel Punsalan, Jonathan Pulk, Hannah Platt,

Captain Hook: Part I

by flatboat men returning from the port of New Orleans. Since it was common knowledge that they would be carrying the cash profits from selling their cargo, it soon became the highway for ruthless bands of robbers. One writer described it as "the thoroughfare of the hunted and the hunter . . . men going to get what they wanted and others fleeing from what they well deserved . . ."

Isaac Newton Hook made the journey not once but many times, and despite his youth, he lost neither his money nor his life. Eventually, he accumulated enough of his hard-earned wages to buy land along the Muskingum, still known today as Hooksburg.

Hook dabbled a bit in politics and in 1840, he marched through the McConnellsville streets in a political parade on a pair of 11 foot stilts. This

established Hook's reputation once and for all as a unique and colorful local "character!" For the next few years, he ran a store at Hooksburg, made salt, and worked as a cooper and wagon maker. He continued to make those hazardous trips to New Orleans now and then. In 1842, when he was 22, he married Lucinda Dearborn, who would die 20 years later, leaving Isaac a widower with nine children.

Two years later, in 1864, he provided his children with a step-mother: Quitera Wilson. It may be presumptuous to draw any conclusion about anyone else's domestic life, but I think we'd be safe in saying the marriage of Isaac Newton Hook to Quitera was a bit stormy. At least, that was the opinion of almost everyone who knew the strong minded captain and his somewhat "hot-headed" second wife.

However, his life on the river had never been better - Isaac had become a steamboat captain by this time. With his usual get-it-done attitude, he built his own boat - the FREEDOM, and went on to pilot many others: the SILVERHEELS, and the EMMA GRAHAM to name just a few.

The flood of 1867 had swept away the dams at Beverly, Lowell, and Marietta, as well as a large part of the Zanesville dam and Captain Hook was the master of construction for their extensive replacement and repair. According to all accounts, he carried the work to a prompt and satisfactory completion. He was almost 50 years old by this time, but his career – and his life – on the Muskingum still had plenty of action ahead.

*For part two, see the next issue of **Always Downstream!***

*Louise Zimmer
Noted author and historian*

The Purple War



FLMR board member Katy Lustofin paddles upriver with the canoe filled to the brim with bags of purple loosestrife. Photo by Elin Jones.

Jason Woodan, and Rachel Shoop, along with Katy, Derek, and I pulled and cut 3 canoe loads or 1 4x8 trailer load piled high of this beautiful noxious non-native invasive weed. We then transported the lot to Marilyn Ort's house for composting.

Paddling three canoe loads against the wind from the site to the launching ramp was a challenge for this old body. Next year we would like to see a navy scour the banks of trash and really do a job on the purple loosestrife. It wouldn't take long if the College crew teams, the

Rowing and Cycling Club, FLMR, and the Mov'n Dragons made the armada.

Let's do it!

If you would like to help FLMR continue the war against the invading purple loosestrife, you can contact the office at 740-374-4170 or email Derek Hennen at vista@muskingumriver.org.

*Elin Jones
Board Member, FLMR*



On September 17th, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (OEPA) came to the Marietta levee to demonstrate the methods they use to conduct fish sampling: electroshock fishing. This is a process that uses electricity to stun fish in the water, which are then scooped up and identified.

A crowd of approximately 90 people learned about how the EPA uses fish studies to learn about water quality in Ohio's streams and rivers. The diversity and abundance of fish recorded during electroshocking helps to inform environmental scientists about the

And thus passes another murmuration season at Luke Chute. This is the term used to describe those masses of blackbirds that congregate and provide twilight performances of beautifully choreographed swoops and swirls, often superimposed over other large densely-packed masses flying in different directions that would wear out our eye muscles if we watched longer than the half-hour the performance usually lasts.

For at least the past three years, such a congregation has chosen the 15-acre six-year old carbon sequestration planting of bottomland hardwood trees at Luke Chute (one of FLMR's Land Trust properties) as their roost site.

Arriving during late summer and leaving in mid-October, the hundreds of thousands (if you had seen them you would not have that look of disbelief on your face as you consider that number) of blackbirds

Community Shocked by Fish Diversity

quality of the water because certain species are more sensitive to water quality impairments such as sedimentation and pollution. Generally, with better water quality, a stream's fish assemblage will be more diverse.

Kelly Capuzzi, Water Quality Specialist with the Ohio EPA, showed off many fish caught by the OEPA team: from well-known species such as catfish and smallmouth bass to less-known species with exotic names like river redhorse and gizzard shad. At-

tendees of the annual event quickly learned that there are more than catfish in our rivers. In fact, according to Capuzzi and Ohio EPA data, about 80% or more of Ohio's larger rivers are meeting the standard the Clean Water Act sets for aquatic life.

FLMR extends a huge thanks to the Ohio EPA for conducting the event for the community.

*Derek Hennen
Duke Energy Endowed
OSM/AmeriCorps VISTA,
FLMR*

Luke Chute's Bird Murmuration



including starlings, red-winged blackbirds, cowbirds, and no one knows how many other species do their fantastic synchronized swoops at speeds up to 40 mph each evening before dropping into the trees (now up to 20 ft. tall) where they chatter for a few minutes and then all is still. At early morning light they erupt from the trees with flocks heading out in all directions to feed for the day.

Often compared to schools of some species of fish that can turn on a dime in uni-

son, the large flocks superimposed over each other with their own sky-dance present an amazing show against the evening sky.

Some shorebirds have the same ability and are being studied in Scandinavian countries especially. How they accomplish the feat is still open to question but each reader is invited to put attending a performance on their calendar for 2013.

Sandy and Dave Blount in whose yard humans congregate to watch the nightly

Meet the FLMR officers, board members, and staff

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Jesse Daubert
Watershed Coordinator
Derek Hennen
Duke Energy Endowed
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spectacle have announced the birds departed on October 14 for 2012.

After peaking in mid-September each year, in 2010 they left on October 16 and in 2011 on the 23rd. Should we be impressed by the closeness of dates or that the dates are not more uniform? Did they respond to shorter days, temperature variations or had they just gleaned every last bit of corn within a radius of how-many-miles so it was time to move on?

We can only hope we have the opportunity to learn more in 2013.

Marilyn Ortt
President, FLMR

Friends of Lower Muskingum River is a land trust. As such, we can own land and can hold conservation easements. We now own nine pieces of property totaling 250 acres and have acquired this land through both generous donations and with the help of grants from the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund. All of it is held for its conservation value and is open to the public. Our care of these properties varies, due to location, accessibility, and availability of volunteers. The Luke Chute Conservation Area is our “show case” property, with easy access, a picnic shelter, and several miles of well maintained trails – thanks to Dave Blount and other hard-working volunteers. However, hikers, birdwatchers, and everyone

FLMR: Our Duties as a Land Trust

who enjoys nature, should also visit the Dana Island property, and ask us about the much less accessible Fairfield tract and the Wilson Sanctuary.

Stewardship of these properties requires work. On all the land we own, we try to control non-native invasive plants. We’re doing a pretty good job on tree of heaven (*Ailanthus*) and doing the best we can with garlic mustard, honeysuckle, and other species. Other work to do includes planting more trees and native flowers in some areas. Additionally, a number of signs and several fences need to be cleared of vines each year. Our members have been generous in

helping with all of this, and it would be wonderful to see more people involved.

FLMR holds conservation easements on three properties, for a total of 653 acres. On each of these, we are responsible for protecting the conservation values specified in the easement – such as prohibiting the selling off of home lots, cutting timber, etc. On issues not addressed by the conservation easement, the landowner retains the same rights as any landowner, including the right not to allow trespassing. As the land trust holding the conservation easements, FLMR needs to monitor each of these properties at least once a year. This requires walking

the properties to be sure there has been no activity violating the protected conservation values.

So far, only four FLMR members have been seriously involved with our conservation easements and with the acquisition of the land we own. We would welcome anyone who is interested to join us, learn the details of what needs to be done, and work with us on the important and exciting functions of a land trust.

*Doug Albaugh
Board Member, FLMR*

Help Support FLMR By Recycling!

Give us your old *Inkjet Cartridges, Laser/Toner Cartridges* and *Cell Phones* so we can recycle them and raise money.

The Dirty Truth About Sedimentation

At face value, sedimentation doesn’t seem like a very big deal. After all, dirt is everywhere around streams, so a little more can’t hurt, right?

However, sedimentation is actually a large problem facing the watershed. If you take a look at many streams in the watershed after a rain, you’ll probably see that they’re a bit brown and muddy-looking. That’s due to sedimentation—fine particles of dirt that are introduced into the streams as runoff from sources such as roads and agricultural fields. This muddying of the water can have harmful effects on aquatic life in the stream, ranging from small insects to mussels to fish. One insect sedimenta-

tion can adversely affect is the larval form of the stonefly, an insect that spends most of its life in the water.

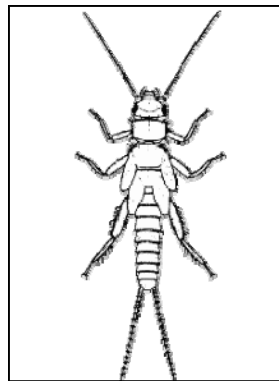


Photo from North Carolina State University

Sediments in the water increase the water’s temperature by absorbing more heat, which in turn reduces dissolved oxygen levels in the water, putting more stress on

the stonefly and other aquatic organisms. Larval stoneflies breathe through gills on their bodies, and particles in the water can settle on their gills, making it difficult for them to obtain oxygen from the water.

One important role stoneflies play is that they are sensitive to changes in the water quality of a stream. They can be used by scientists to assess if a stream is impaired by pollution or sedimentation, simply based on their presence (or lack thereof) in a stream. Using stoneflies in a biotic index to measure water quality is a cost efficient and ingenious way to figure out the health of a stream.

So if the interaction between sedimentation and aquatic life

is detrimental, how can we stop it? One way is to keep soil covered by vegetation, preventing it from being eroded into streams. Another way is to use silt screens to prevent sediments from getting to streams. For farmers, the USDA offers an Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which provides technical and financial assistance to farmers who implement conservation practices that address concerns such as sedimentation. More information is available on the USDA website: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/eqip/>.

*Derek Hennen
Duke Energy Endowed
OSM/AmeriCorps VISTA,
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A Huge Thanks Goes Out to the Gold Sponsors of the 4th Annual Mighty Muskingum River Raft Race!




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Stream Team Data Making a Difference

The Stream Team has been hard at work during this past quarter, sampling over two dozen sites within the watershed. This data gathering was helped by the addition of data from Steve Anderson and Al Reiter of Duke Energy, who pitched in with data from the far reaches of Olive Green Creek Subwatershed.

Our database is growing as new sites are sampled and previously-sampled sites and monitored again. This allows us to see trends at each site and keep a watchful eye on areas in the watershed that consistently exhibit higher than normal levels of param-

eters such as conductivity or nitrates. With this data, we're able to identify sites to monitor more closely, which can then alert us to problem areas in the watershed.

The Stream Team has mostly focused on the Meigs Creek and Olive Green Subwatersheds, though we welcome anyone interested in joining the team to sample in whichever subwatershed they choose.

Based on data obtained from the Stream Team, I have been working on the preliminary stages of an Acid Mine Drainage Abatement and Treatment (AMDAT) plan,

which will identify areas in Meigs Creek and Olive Green Creek that may be impaired by previous mining activity. Future editions of the newsletter will report on the results of the AMDAT.

It's exciting to see our water quality database growing with each sampling event the Stream Team members conduct. Our knowledge of the health of the watershed grows each quarter and the picture becomes clearer, enabling us to gauge which areas of the watershed are healthy and which may be impaired. The data collection is imperative for FLMR to be able to adequately fulfill its mission of

restoring, protecting, and maintaining the integrity of the Muskingum River, and the work of dedicated volunteers is what makes it possible.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Stream Team, feel free to contact the office by phone or email at 740-374-4170 or vista@muskingumriver.org.

*Derek Hennen
Duke Energy Endowed
OSM/AmeriCorps VISTA,
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Friends of Lower Muskingum River
348 Muskingum Drive
Marietta, OH 45750



Upcoming Events

How AEP Responds to a Widespread Power Outage

Thursday, December 13 at 7 PM, Rm 150 Selby Hall, Marietta College, 4th St. in Marietta. Presenter: Paul Prater, Community Affairs Manager for AEP, OH & WV
Paul Prater will discuss how AEP identifies the problems of a widespread storm event and then mobilizes crews to restore electrical service. Sponsored by the Marietta Natural History Society.

What and Why Is A Christmas Bird Count?

7 PM, Tuesday, December 4. 3982 Waverly Rd, Williamstown, WV.
Dick Esker, a member of the Mountwood Bird Club, will present about the Christmas Bird Count at the Refuge Headquarters. Sponsored by Friends of Ohio River Islands NWR.

For more information call the FLMR office at (740) 374-4170.

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Mail to: Quincy Robe, FLMR Member-
ship Chair, P. O. Box 31, Malta, OH
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