

# Towpath Times



Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association

[www.meccainc.org](http://www.meccainc.org)

Volume 14 • Number 1 • Summer 2011

## National Trails Day Features Deep Cut Path

By L. Neal Brady  
MECCA Executive Director

The American Hiking Society's National Trails Day on June 4 was celebrated locally with a trail dedication in Spencerville (Allen County), Ohio. The AHS reported around 2,000 events across the nation, 15 in Ohio alone, recognizing the 19th annual National Trails Day.

A ribbon cutting for the 1.6-mile towpath trail improvement between Deep Cut Historical Park and the Spencerville south corporation limit began the day's activities with about 75 people (and pets) participating. More than 40 hikers were involved with Grand Lake Health System's "Road To Fitness" program. Hikers enjoyed refreshments provided by The Dannon Company and Grand Lake Health System.



**National Trails Day Hike between Spencerville and Deep Cut Park.**

The trail construction was a joint effort of the Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District and the Ohio Department of Natural

Resources, with funding provided through Ohio Recreational Trails Grant Funding. During the trail development process, the ODNR Statewide Construction Crew gave assistance, and American Electric Power relocated poles that had been set on the trail.

This portion of the Miami and Erie Towpath Trail offers residents of the Spencerville area and visitors to the Deep Cut Historical Park an opportunity to enjoy an especially scenic section of trail. The trail adds another walk able section to the 1,444-mile Buckeye Trail and the 4,600-mile North Country National Scenic Trail.

In recent years, National Trails Day has seen the opening of seven sections of renovated Miami and Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Shelby, Auglaize and Allen Counties. For more information on the American Hiking Society, visit [www.americanhiking.org](http://www.americanhiking.org).



**Pictured at the Deep Cut-Spencerville towpath trail ribbon cutting (l-r): Kevin Haver (JAMPD), Sean Chapman (Village of Spencerville), Rich Beebe (Spencerville Canal Committee), Steve Dorsten (ODNR) and Neal Brady (MECCA).**

# Upcoming Canal Corridor Events & Activities

- MECCA Board of Trustees Meeting, July 25, 2011, MECCA Office in New Bremen.
- Auglaize County Fair, July 31- August 6, 2011



- North Country Trail Association Annual Conference, Dayton, OH, August 11- 14, 2011  
[www.northcountrytrail.org](http://www.northcountrytrail.org)

- St. Marys Summerfest, August 12-14, 2011

- New Bremen Bremenfest, August 19-21, 2011

- Canal Diggers Affair, September 8, 2011

- Delphos Canal Days, September 16 - 18, 2011  
-Thursday September 15 "The Toast to the City"  
September 18 - Delphos Canal Days 5K Run



- Canal Society of Ohio 50th Anniversary Tour and Banquet covering the Miami and Erie Canal in Dayton and Montgomery County, October 21-23, 2011



*(From left) Jacob Rutschilling working on Eagle project; Bob Kramer, Boy Scout Troop 95 Committee Chair; Samuel Rutschilling, Scout; Neal Brady, MECCA Director; Robert Geuy, Shelby County Engineer; Paul Dwenger, American Legion Post 241 New Bremen, Commander; Steve Dorsten, ODNR; and Taylor Haynes, Scout.*

## New Bremen Eagle Scout Completes Canal Signage Project

In February 2010, New Bremen Boy Scout Jacob Rutschilling began developing and planning his Eagle Scout project. His project was to identify and place signage at all road intersections of the Miami and Erie Canal Trail in Shelby County.

In the following months Jacob met with Canal Supervisor Steve Dorsten, MECCA Executive Director Neal Brady, Shelby County Park Director Richard Millhouse, Eagle Scout Project Advisor Bob Kramer, and Shelby County Engineer Robert Geuy and gained the approval and developed the scope of the project. During the same time, approvals were gained from the appropriate agencies and the final design of the signage was determined.

Funding, supplies and materials and equipment were gained from the American Legion Post 241, New Bremen; Shelby County Engineers Office; Fastenal of New Bremen; and Western Ohio True Value Hardware. The installation of posts began in November, 2010 and signs were placed in May and June, 2011. A total of 12 signs were placed along Shelby County Roads and along with State Route 66. The project clearly marks the Towpath Trail for visitors to the Canal Corridor and hikers who wish to experience the trail.





**Members of the Spencerville Canal Committee construct barley straw tubes to prevent algae.**

## Spencerville Effort Hopes to Control Algae

Efforts are being made to stop or retard growth of toxic algae in the canal in Spencerville with the installation of natural barriers.

Spencerville Canal Committee members Joel Hatfield, Ron Meyer, Rick Keller and Rich Beebe; and Village Administrator Sean Chapman constructed nearly 30 tubes using snow fence and plastic ties and then loosely packing the tubes with barley straw.

The constructed tubes were then placed and secured in the canal. The barley straw has been used as a way to control algae growth in ponds. As the straw decomposes by fungi, a chemical is released that prevents the growth of algae. The practice is said to prevent the growth of new algae rather than killing the existing algae.

The Barley Tube project represents a low-cost method hopefully restricting the growth of toxic blue - green algae that have been found in Grand Lake St. Marys as well as other canal clogging variations of algae



**Barley straw tubes being placed in the canal.**

## Delphos Canal Commission Organizes Canal Clean-Up

The Delphos Canal Commission had a beautiful Saturday morning for a canal clean-up in town on June 11. The Delphos community is diligent about keeping their canal looking the best, and an upcoming fishing derby prompted this particular event.

Several different crews removed wind-blown debris and fallen branches from the water, along with the wreckage of a bicycle and a record number of foul balls from Stadium Park.

The 54th annual Delphos Canal Days will take place on September 15-18, 2011. For the full schedule and detailed information, visit [www.delphoschamber.com](http://www.delphoschamber.com) and click on the "Canal Days" link at the upper right of the home page.



**CLEAN-UP VOLUNTEERS: (top) Jim Kimmet, Kay Ahten and Linda Baker. (Below) Tom Jettinghoff and Lou Hohman.**







*In cooperation and support of the Grand Lake Health System "Road to Fitness " program, the Heritage Trails Park District conducted hikes in March and April on the Towpath Trail. For both hikes more than 125 participants enjoyed the change of the season and gained points for the health and wellness program.*

## Improved Towpath Trail Reaches St. Rt. 66



*Improved section of the Towpath Trail where it intersects with St. Rt. 66 between Spencerville and St. Marys.*

Just in time for summer, the walkability of Auglaize County has gotten better. Two more sections of the Towpath Trail along the Miami and Erie Canal have been paved with crushed and compacted stone. Look for the section between Lock 14 Park going north.

The crushed stone trail now goes from 40 Acre Pond on Glynwood Road north of St. Marys to State Route 66. This work is paid in part by Clean Ohio Trail Fund and the Heritage Trails Park District.

The Towpath Trail between Deep Cut Park and Spencerville is now paved with stone and open for business.

This beautiful section of trail, dedicated on National Trails Day June 4, 2011, follows the canal through the deep hand cut canal in a wooded ravine making for a cool hike on a hot day. There were 75 people present to dedicate the trail, cut a ribbon, and take a hike. This work is paid in part by Clean Ohio Trail Fund and the Johnny Appleseed Metro Parks

# Final Layer Completes JAMPD Trail at Deep Cut

*Submitted by Steve Dorsten  
Ohio Department of Natural Resources*

The 1.6-mile Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District (JAMPD) Trail has been completed. The trail extends from Deep Cut Road to the south corporation limit of the village of Spencerville.

A layer of #411 stone six inches deep was installed and compacted several months ago on a bed of geotextile fabric. During the past 18 months, trees and brush were removed, tile and drains systems were installed to accommodate seepage, power poles and lines relocated and a 10-foot wide trough was cut in the towpath.

Funded through a Clean Ohio Fund, this trail project was a partnership between Johnny Appleseed Metropolitan Park District and Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Parks and Recreation Grand Lake St. Marys. Materials were purchased by the grant while equipment and labor was provided by Grand Lake St. Marys Staff and JAMPD.

The enhanced stone trail is part of the 44-mile State Miami and Erie Trail, the Buckeye Trail and North Country Scenic Trail.



**Paver adds the finishing touch for 1.6-mile trail.**



**Participants discuss canal corridor potential at the Lockkeepers House.**

## Visitor Center Potential Discussed

MECCA and the New Bremen Historic Association sponsored a meeting of local historical and tourism groups along the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor at the Miami and Erie Canal Visitors Center, “The Lockkeepers House” on May 19, 2011.

The meeting was conducted to discuss the benefits and opportunities of heritage corridor interpretation and focusing on partnerships with in the canal corridor. The meeting format provided opportunities for the representatives to learn of the assets of the groups. Much discussion was directed towards cross-promotion of the many attractions that could increase visitors’ experiences at the numerous museums and attractions in the designated heritage corridor and along the Miami and Erie Canal Scenic Byway.

The featured presenter was Nancy Desmond, Partnership and Planning Assistant with the Cleveland Metroparks. Prior to recently returning to the Cleveland MetroParks, Nancy was the Interpretative Coordinator with the Ohio and Erie Canalway providing technical assistance to diverse partners in the designated National Heritage Corridor in northeastern Ohio.

## MECCA Board Retreat

The Board of Trustees of MECCA held a planning retreat at the Lockkeepers House on February 5, 2011. The Board identified its mission and evaluated how the organization impacts the geographic region along the Miami and Erie Canal Heritage Corridor.

Priorities identified by the Board included a broad based initiative for current partners and members and promoting the region as a travel and tourism destination area. Action items included strengthening partnerships with businesses and industry; promoting health and wellness programs on the developed trail network; assisting with the development of the Miami and Erie Canal Visitors Center, The Lockkeepers House as a focal center for the corridor; communicating with state and federal officials to support projects and initiatives; and sharing information with partners and membership on the progress of projects in the recreational greenway.

Fundraising to effectively market the region and achieve the goals of the organization will continue to be a major focus. Currently, no federal or state funding is available. Membership and donations supports the operation of this not for profit organization



# Lockington Lock Funded

On April 18, 2011 The Ohio Historical Society and the Ohio Department of Transportation conducted a public informational meeting regarding the reconstruction of Lock One South at the Lockington Locks.

The restoration project is a partnership between the Village of Lockington and The Ohio Historical Society. The Village applied for Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Historic Transportation Enhancement matching fund project in 2002. From that application, \$1,898,232 was awarded to the project from ODOT with a 20 percent match of \$474,646 being required. Currently the matching funds are available but additional funds are required to finalize engineering designs and plans.

Drawings and design for approval are underway to allow for bidding of the project in Spring 2012. It is projected that construction will begin after July 2012, with work continuing for 12 to 16 months.

The scope of work begins with the dismantling and storage of stones of Lock One. Each stone will require marking as it is removed and stored in the staging area downstream from the Lock. After all stones are removed, foundation work will be completed.

Preliminary plans include the installation of footers and a concrete slab that will replace the original timber foundations that has deteriorated. Reconstruction of the lock using the stones placed in their original location will complete the project. It was noted that any missing or deteriorated stones will be replaced using stones salvaged from other lock sites or re-created from locally quarried stone.

McMullan and Associates of Vienna, Virginia is the consulting engineer that has experience in the rehabilitation and preservation of historic structures that have included canal and aqueducts repair and renovation.

In 1969, Lockington Locks were recognized by the Ohio Historical Society for construction and engineering significance.



*Work on the canal in the village of Minster.*

## Minster Overhauls Canal

Phase II of the Minster restoration project is nearing completion with the placement of rip rap from First Street to Seventh Street and the narrowing of the canal with fill dirt from Seventh Street to SR 119.

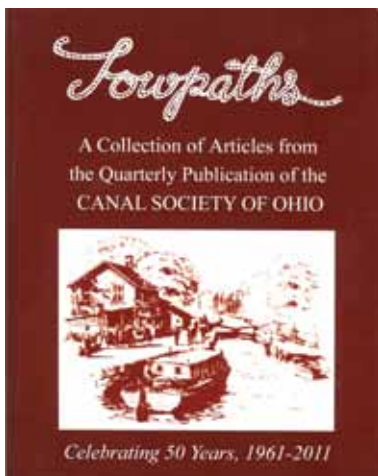
Phase I included the removal of trees and brush that was completed by crews from Tree Masters of Greenville and Tumbush Construction of St. Henry. All the brush was chipped and firewood was collected and used by the local residents.

Plans for the project began in September 2009 after the village of Minster filed a petition with the Auglaize County Commissioners to overhaul the Miami and Erie Canal watershed within the village limits.



*Lock 13 in downtown St. Marys.*

## Canal Society Offers Anniversary Book



Canal Society of Ohio, 50th anniversary *Towpaths* book is currently available.

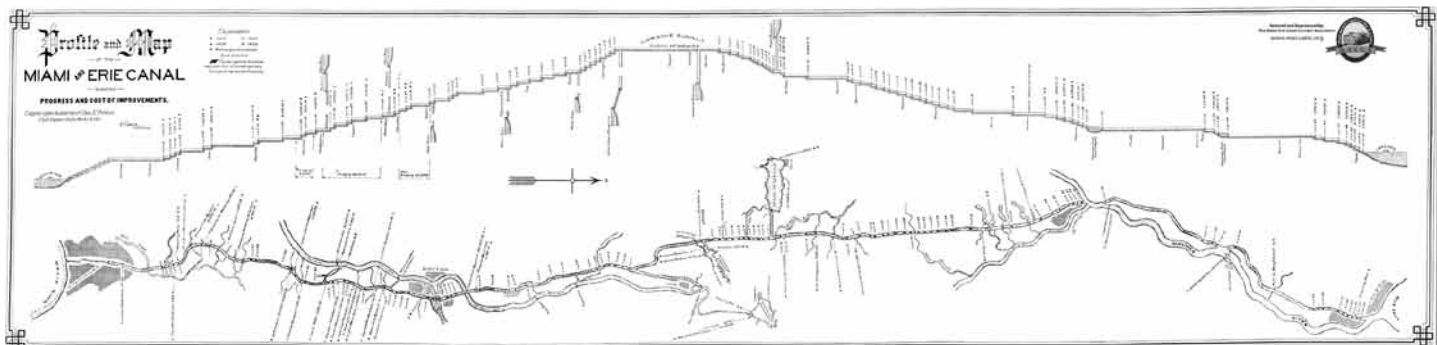
The book is comprised of 50 years of articles taken from the Canal Society of Ohio journals.

The book is available for purchase through Amazon.com or at the MECCA Office.

## St. Marys Improves Lock 13

An access drive and parking lot has been constructed in downtown St. Marys along the Miami and Erie Canal. The project is across the canal from the Tumbles and the St. Marys Power Plant. A brick paver walkway has been extended from Lock 13 to the parking lot site on the towpath. Near the parking lot, a circular brick paver maze has been installed to add special interest. An attractive brick paver patio with the pavers laid out to spell "Lock 13" was installed adjacent to the lock.

Future plans include extension of the brick paver walkway north toward the Carl Chiles Trail and the construction of a shelter house that can be used by the residents to enjoy the enhanced uptown canal corridor.



## Vintage Miami and Erie Canal Profile Map on Sale

MECCA has restored and reproduced a Profile and Map of the Miami and Erie Canal and the publication is available for sale.

The approximate 9" x 38" map on white stock paper indicates lock number elevation and location, lakes and the water supply system and distances on the Canal.

The maps are available for \$10 each at the MECCA Office and the Lockkeepers House in New Bremen. The maps can be mailed to you for an additional \$3. Send check to MECCA, PO Box 246, New Bremen, OH 45869. For additional information contact [meccadirector@nktelco.net](mailto:meccadirector@nktelco.net)

## High Bidders Enjoy Tour

At the MECCA Fundraiser "Canal Diggers Affair" in September 2010, a historical canal walking/driving tour with picnic lunch was auctioned. The buyers of the Tour Package and friends recently enjoyed a full day canal experience. The day began with an interpretative tour of Lockington Locks, guided by Andy Hite, Manager of the Johnston Farm and Indian Agency. The group viewed the five locks located on the north side of Loramie Creek and stories were shared of canal life as well as the colorful activities in the Lockington community. After a picnic lunch at the Johnston Farm, the group took a ride on the General Harrison canal boat on a restored section of the Miami and Erie Canal. Later, Volunteers at the Farm provided tours of the Museum and the Farm House. The Tour package was a fundraiser for MECCA and a different tour will be created and auctioned at our next fundraiser.



*"Taming of the Swamp" Tour stops at Junction.*



*(l-r) Nancy Davis, Stan Davis, Andy Hite, Karen Blumhorst, John Hassenauer, Bill Blumhorst, Kathy Hassenauer, Mike Lynch, Miriam Lynch, and Neal Brady*

## "Taming of the Swamp" Canal Tour

The Canal Society of Ohio and the Canal Society of Indiana conducted the "Taming of the Swamp" tour on the weekend of April 1-3, 2011.

Two busloads of "Canawlers" viewed or visited nearly 50 sites that included locks, culverts, aqueducts, historic sites and the now dry and farmed Paulding Reservoir that supplied water to the Wabash and Erie Canal.

The Tour started on Saturday and followed the Wabash and Erie Canal from Antwerp to Junction and then the Miami and Erie Canal to Delphos. A banquet was enjoyed on Saturday evening and on Sunday the group carpooled to Defiance to Independence Dam State Park to view locks and structures in that area.

# TAX-DEDUCTIBLE GIVING TO MECCA

Many people consider making charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Remember, MECCA is a tax-exempt entity and contributions to it are tax-deductible. Contributions can be in cash or "in kind". Appreciated stock given to a charity allows the donor gets a charitable deduction for the fair market value of the stock on the date of the gift. If you are considering charitable gifts, please consider a contribution to MECCA to help promote the historic canal corridor.

## Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) Membership/Donation Form



*Please check membership or donation level desired*

**\$15 Individual**..... \_\_\_\_\_      **\$25 Family**..... \_\_\_\_\_  
**\$50 Sponsor**..... \_\_\_\_\_      **\$100 Partner**..... \_\_\_\_\_  
**\$250 Corridor Partner**..... \_\_\_\_\_  
**One-time tax-deductible contribution of** ..... \_\_\_\_\_  
**Total amount enclosed** ..... \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

*Clip and Mail This Form to: MECCA • P.O. Box 246 • New Bremen, Ohio • 45869*

The Annual MECCA Canal Diggers Affair Dinner, Auction, Fundraiser is tentatively planned for Thursday, Sept. 8, 2011. Please mark your calendars and plan to support MECCA at this enjoyable event.

**Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association**  
**130 S. Washington St.**  
**P.O. Box 246**  
**New Bremen, Ohio 45869**  
*Return Address Requested*

PRESORTED  
 STANDARD  
 US Postage Paid  
 New Bremen, Ohio  
 PERMIT #5  
 ZIP code 45869