



Chippewa Subdistrict

Assignment:

Develop content for the Chippewa Subdistrict website and other media collateral.

Deliverable:

Creation, organization and implementation of written copy for website pages.

Detail:

The Chippewa Subdistrict (CSD) is an area in northern Ohio that has historically suffered from disastrous flooding. The Chippewa Subdistrict was developed to effectively and efficiently manage the flood prone area through a series of dams and canals to manage the massive amount of rainwater that occurs annually.

All property owners in the CSD area have an assessment tax on their property. The website was developed to communicate why the CSD was created, how the CSD was constructed, where the assessment tax is spent and most importantly - how it benefits the property owner.

Format:

Written copy with categories, subcategories and illustrations for website use.

Project Director:

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Director, Chippewa SubDistrict



Introduction

The Chippewa Subdistrict of the MWCD was established in 1960 to manage and maintain the Chippewa Flood Control Project for the purpose of reducing flooding and periods of inundation.

Our goal is to efficiently and effectively manage this flood control system while encouraging the wise use of our watershed and its natural resources.

The construction of the dams and modifications to Chippewa Creek and its tributaries through the Chippewa Watershed Project were funded through a federal program. Funding for the ongoing maintenance of the creek channel, flood control structures, banks and berms comes from an assessment of local land owners in the Chippewa Subdistrict.

Purpose

The Chippewa Subdistrict manages the flood control system by:

- Maintaining 8 dams and 33 miles of channel
- Optimizing flood control system performance

The Chippewa Subdistrict encourages wise use and stewardship by supporting:

- Agricultural best management practices
- Responsible and smart development practices
- State and local agencies and partners in watershed management

Flood Control

Creation of the Chippewa Flood Control System began in 1956 and was completed in 1980 and included the construction of 8 dams and the improvement of 33 miles of channel. It encompasses 188 square miles



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(120,320 acres) in northern Wayne and southern Medina counties.

Flood control projects are typically designed to convey significant amounts of stormwater runoff safely.

The dam and spillway system hold back floodwaters and release them gradually to reduce or eliminate downstream flooding and damage to properties.

Continued Growth

With increasing expansion of urban and residential areas, there is diminished amount of ground, soil and vegetative cover to absorb rainfall. More pavement, roofs, and parking lots mean less absorption and more runoff.

This diminished ability results in greater storm water volumes and velocities which are passed along to the flood control system.

Our area is enhanced with a well maintained, efficiently operating flood control system. Property assessments are essential to maintaining this flood control system by providing necessary funding. This enables us to take a proactive role in the maintenance of our shared investment.

Summary

Business and residential districts are better protected from periodic flooding. Any area prone to flooding is less likely to be considered for new companies to locate. Additionally, any local company may reconsider their expansion plans if flood control is not part of the region's planning and development future.

Your property assessment is a valuable investment that preserves the property value of your home, business and the safety and stability of your community.



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History

Ohio suffered devastating floods throughout the last century. It seemed as if no city or county of Ohio was immune to flooding; Dayton, Columbus, Cincinnati and Medina and Wayne counties all suffered horrific flooding.

The Chippewa Creek runs through Medina and Wayne counties to the Tuscarawas River and has been the source of major flooding in both urban and rural areas.

The constant flooding of our region prompted local citizens to create a solution to protect their families, homes and businesses. Local citizens recognized that the devastating flooding would continue until a plan was developed and a regional flood control system was implemented.

The Chippewa Subdistrict of the MWCD evolved through the efforts of citizens and many partnering organizations and governmental entities.

The Chippewa Creek Watershed Project is a flood-control program that began in 1956 and was completed in 1980. It included the construction of 8 dams and encompasses 188 square miles (more than 120,000 acres). The watershed project was established to reduce the acreage prone to flooding and to decrease the time periods of inundation.

The success of the Chippewa Subdistrict reflects what can occur when motivated citizens work toward a common goal that benefits the community.



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At Work

Since the beginning of the Chippewa Flood Control System, and during the past twenty-five years, much of the needed maintenance could not be completed as planned due to lack of funding. This caused many of the channel banks to become overgrown with woody vegetation, which made it near to impossible to maintain the banks or the culverts installed for the purpose of draining the floodwaters. In addition, as trees grew, many would lose branches or fall into the channel causing log jams, bank erosion, and more localized areas of flooding due to the inability of the stream flow to get through the blockage.

Maintaining the 33 miles of channel helps to ensure that flood waters will recede from the land, quickly and efficiently.

During the past ten years, an effort by the Chippewa Subdistrict has been made to provide funding through an assessment permitted by the Conservancy District Laws of Ohio.

These assessment dollars, which can only be spent on maintenance of the Chippewa Flood Control Project, have been utilized on several projects designed to return the Project to its original design objectives.

Annual Maintenance must be done consistently to keep the Flood Control System working properly. Special Projects are necessary to keep pace with aging infrastructure of the system's components and changes in our region due to new land development.

Visit our Shorle-Blough project in 2009 for an example of Annual Maintenance. Our GPS / GIS mapping is a Special Project allowing us to



locate and evaluate nearly 700 hydraulic structures originally installed throughout the channels. When completed, Subdistrict staff will be able to prepare a proactive maintenance schedule to ensure that structures are repaired or replaced before failure occurs.

Access and Easements

There are currently two types of easements in use for the Flood Control System.

1. Channel Construction and Maintenance Easement

The Channel Construction and Maintenance Easement allows Subdistrict staff to enter private property to inspect, maintain and permanently operate the Chippewa Flood Control System.

The easement grants Subdistrict staff permission to cut, clear, trim, and dispose of obstructive woody debris and foliage as necessary to accomplish maintenance, and the right to place appropriate spoilage removed from the channel upon the surface of the adjacent land within the easement as described below. All dirt and spoilage material shall be piled, spread or windrowed as requested by the landowner providing said request does not increase the cost or hinder or interfere with operation and performance of the Flood Control System.

The easement prevents disturbance of the sodded condition of the berms and the right to prevent construction of any type that would in any way impede the free flow of water either in the improved channel or on the adjacent berms or interfere with maintenance unless approved in advance by the Subdistrict.

This easement, except for purposes of ingress and egress, is limited to the



area occupied by the channel as shown by the Official Plan as amended and to the areas extending outward from the top of each side of the channel for a distance of 150 feet along channels having a bottom width of 60 feet or more, and extending outward from the top of each side of the channel for a distance of 100 feet along channels having a bottom width of less than 60 feet. Subdistrict staff shall use the existing drives and pathways wherever reasonably possible.

2. Flowage Easement

A flowage easement, in effect at each of the dam locations, provides for the right to back water over land up to the maximum flow line elevation as defined in the Official Plan and also the right for Subdistrict staff to enter that property to remove any impediments to the efficient operation of the flood control system. No buildings or structures shall be built below the maximum flow line elevation except by permission of the Subdistrict.

If you have questions or concerns about debris or structures within these easements, please contact us.

Your Money

The construction of the dams and modifications to Chippewa Creek and its tributaries through the Chippewa Watershed Project were funded through a federal program. Funding for the ongoing maintenance of the creek channel, flood control structures, banks and berms comes from an assessment of the properties within the Chippewa Subdistrict.

“Who paid for construction of this project?”

92% of the construction costs were paid with Federal funds while the re-



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maintaining 8% were paid with local funds.

“Who pays for maintenance of this project?”

A maintenance assessment was established for all properties within the Chippewa Subdistrict for the operation and maintenance of the Chippewa Flood Control Project. Tax bills for all properties within the Subdistrict indicate the amount each property owner contributes towards this fund.

Assessment dollars are used for the following:

- Removing trees, brush, and other obstructions which block or impede the flow of water along Chippewa Creek, Little Chippewa Creek and the River Styx.
- Repairing erosion, slips, and channel bank failures.
- Repairing and replacing drains, culverts, catch-basins, and gate structures (there are more than 600 of these types of structures along 33 miles of channel).
- Removing sediment to restore flood storage capacity of the dams.
- Mowing and maintaining dam slopes and surfaces.
- Mowing and maintaining channel banks and access points.
- Maintaining spillway systems and clearing debris that clogs spillway inlets.
- Maintaining the dams in compliance with Ohio Dam Safety Regulations.
- Educating and informing the community of the importance of the flood control measures and the Chippewa Flood Control System.



Maintenance

Maintenance of the flood control system consists of two parts:

1. Channels must be able to move stormwater runoff quickly and safely.
2. Dams must be able to hold back, store and release flood waters safely.

To accomplish this, the channels must be clear of obstructions caused by bank erosion, bank slips, and accumulation of debris. The sides and banks of the channels must be kept clear of woody growth that impedes flow and tends to jam, block and damage the culverts, catch-basins, and gate structures.

Dam spillways and mechanisms must be kept clear of debris and be repaired and maintained to be able to function at maximum efficiency.

In 1997, an engineering study of the project estimated that \$309,000 per year would provide needed annual maintenance on the channels and dams and return the project to its original condition, allowing it to provide the basic flood control protection for which it was designed. A current engineering estimate has increased that need to \$350,000 per year.

Your property assessment is essential to maintaining this system of flood control for our community. By providing adequate funding to maintain the system, we are able to take a proactive role in the maintenance of our shared investment. This is an investment that helps to preserve the property value of your home and the safety and stability of our communities.