

# Towpath Times



Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association

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## Exciting Opportunities exist for MECCA

### Director's Report

By Ben Richard

Although we are on the down side of the year 2000, MECCA is on the rise and experiencing some exciting opportunities!

Through the Ohio Heritage Area Program, MECCA has been awarded a \$ 7,500 Phase 1 planning grant from the Ohio Department of Development. This grant, along with the 50 percent match from MECCA (\$ 15,000 total), will be used to conduct a feasibility study along the canal corridor. The study will focus on various resources along the canal including, but not limited to, the natural, historical, cultural, recreational, economical, and physical resources. Once Phase 1 is completed, the Corridor will be designated a State Heritage Area.

Phases 2 and 3 will consist of a regional corridor management plan and a marketing plan, respectively, and ODOD matching monies will be available for both. This state program will prepare MECCA for future application as a National Heritage Corridor.

Another major project has been the compilation of a list of potential canal partners.

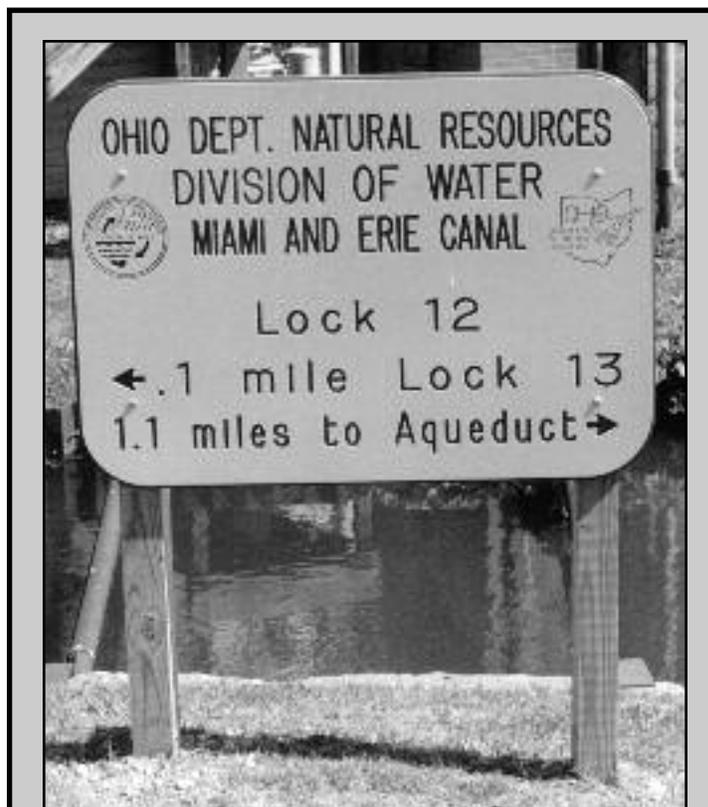
The list includes landowners along the canal, area businesses and industries, other non-profit agencies and historical societies, state and local government entities, and elected officials. Once a "somewhat" exhaustive list was compiled, information packets were then mailed to each of the over 650 partners. It is our intent to inform these partners of the canal's significance, invite them to share their feelings with us, and help us either financially or through volunteer work. If you or someone you know would like to be an active member of MECCA, let us know!

Other projects we are working on include gearing up for additional work days, working at the

Auglaize County Fair, and drawing up a proposal for a mobile canal museum. Look in our next issue for updates regarding these activities.

If you would like to have a MECCA representative come and speak to your group or organization, if you would like additional information regarding work days, special events, or projects, or you want to volunteer your time or resources for MECCA, please do not hesitate to give me a call.

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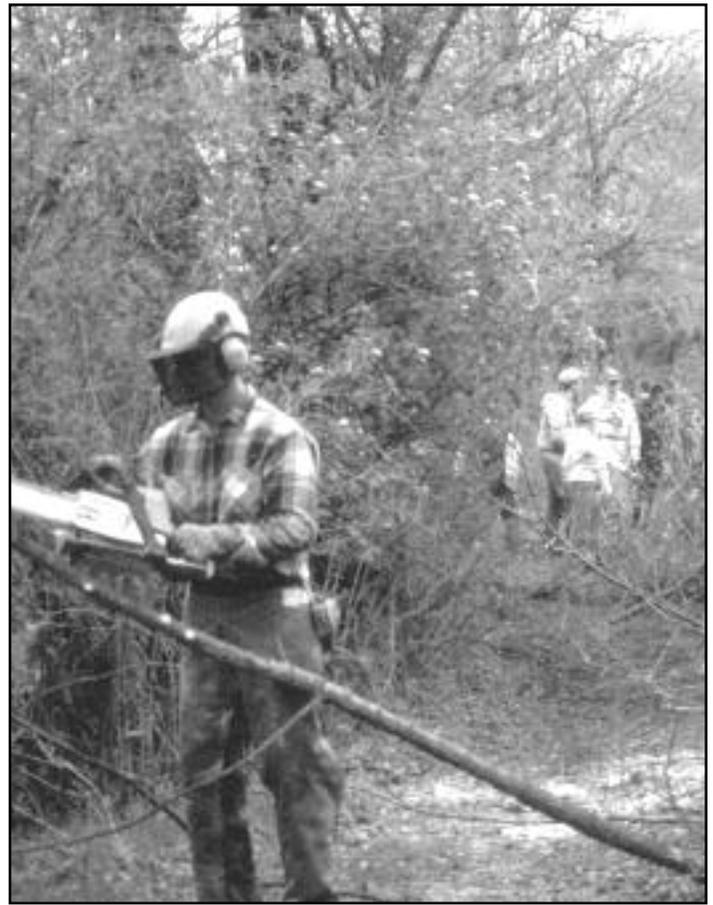


**Nearly 40 new signs have been constructed along the canal, noting various places of historic significance. The signs were constructed by the ODNR Division of Water.**

## **MECCA, Boy Scouts and ODNR Clean New Bremen Towpath**

On Saturday, April 22, twenty-two volunteers met in Lock Two for a work day on the Miami and Erie Canal. The group was composed of New Bremen Boy Scouts, scout leaders, ODNR staff, and MECCA board members. Lock Two, one mile north of New Bremen, remains as a cluster of a dozen houses and the remnants of a feed mill. Though very little can still be found of the original lock in Lock Two, Lock One can still be found in the center of historic New Bremen. The goal of the project was to widen the scenic stretch of towpath between the small burg and the adjoining town. By continuing to clear away the encroaching brush and overhanging branches along the canal, ODNR will soon be able to mow and maintain the entire length of towpath between Delphos and Ft. Loramie.

The volunteers organized into two basic crews. The first group was composed of ODNR workers. Using chainsaws and safety gear, the ODNR staff cut down all the ground level brush and small trees that had overgrown the path. Care was taken to remove all obstructions that would hamper trail maintenance, and still maintain the enjoyment of a tree-lined nature trail. The Boy Scouts and MECCA followed, removing the cut debris and cleaning the adjoining fence row. In only three hours of work, the group



***Clearing Brush on the towpath near Lock 2.***

had cleared 75% of the path between Lock Two and New Bremen. One passing jogger on the towpath exclaimed, "How far are you guys going? This is great!"



***The towpath trail was widened, graded and cleared of debris.***

After the work day, ODNR was able to access the trail with their equipment and mow the section of towpath that had been reopened. The group is looking forward to scheduling a follow-up event this Fall, which will be announced. MECCA extends a special thanks to ODNR and New Bremen Boy Scout Troop 95, who have helped us take one more step toward a beautiful canal corridor.



***Funded partially by a federal grant, ODNR is making major improvements to the canal bank near Kossuth. The project objective is to reinforce the towpath where the canal is “above ground.”***



***NATIONAL TRAILS DAY HIKE -- Several hikers showed up at the Deep Cut Historical Park for a hike on June 3 (National Trails Day). Johnny Appleseed Metro Parks hosted the event which featured historic and natural lectures. The hike went from the park to either Spencerville or Delphos with transportation back to the park being provided.***

## **MECCA Plans Changes in Bylaws**

The Miami Erie Canal Corridor Association Board of trustees is considering two bylaw changes, which will be acted on at its September meeting.

### **Proposed Amendment to Article I:**

This organization, which is not for profit corporation under the laws of the State of Ohio, shall be known as the Miami and Erie Canal Corridor Association, hereinafter referred to as “MECCA.”

### **Proposed Amendment to Article IV:**

Add a new Section 5 to read as follows: “Failure to attend regularly scheduled board meetings may subject a board member to being removed from the board by a majority vote of the executive committee. Prior to any such action, a member of the executive committee shall contact such board member being considered for removal to notify the member of such pending action, to ascertain the cause for such absences and, if the board member remains interested in serving MECCA. Following such contact, the executive committee may, in its discretion and upon a majority vote of the executive committee members, elect to remove a board member.”

Anyone with questions or comments about the changes may contact Interim Director Ben Richard at 419-221-1232.

# Support the Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association Become a Member Today

**E**stablished in 1996, The Miami-Erie Canal Corridor Association (MECCA) is a non profit corporation working toward the creation of a heritage corridor and recreational greenway along the Miami & Erie Canal. The Association is working toward the creation of educational programs and developing strong working relationship among corridor stakeholders to preserve and interpret the natural, historical and recreational resources throughout the corridor.



### Membership Benefits

- Quarterly Issues of a Newsletter
- Invitations to public meetings
- Invitations to programs and events
- Support the goals of MECCA

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



*Please check membership level desired*

\$10 Individual ..... \_\_\_\_\_ \$20 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 722 • St. Marys, Ohio • 45885*

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