



ROWAN'S FIRST
"PERMANENT" DWM
IS REBUILT IN 2002.

From The College
Dr. Jack D.
552 W. Sur
Morehead, K
606-784

88 200002









OPEN HOUSE SUNDAY AT LAKE—This picture was taken several weeks ago of the now-filled reservoir on Evans Branch which the state of Kentucky constructed to provide Morehead College with water. Under a cooperative agreement the city of Morehead also secures its water here. So far, it has been closed to the public, but college Business Manager Herbert Hogan has announced it will be open for tour and inspection from 1 until 5 o'clock Sunday afternoon. College personnel will aid in parking cars and answer questions. It is planned to eventually make this lake a show-place with fishing and boating for Morehead College students. The dam cost over \$400,000 and Was filled two weeks ago after recent heavy rains.

CONSTRUCTION

1952

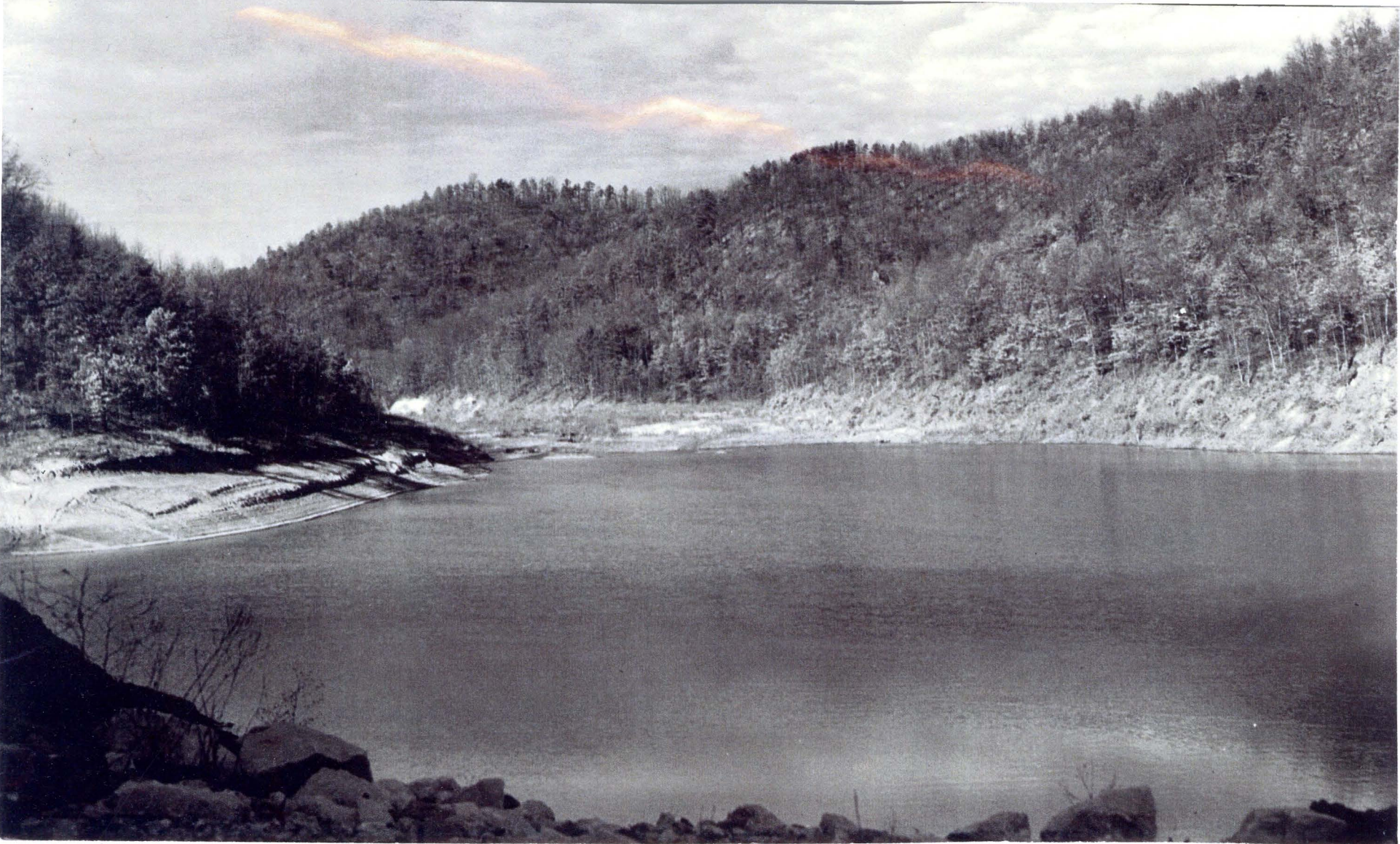
EMERGENCY
~~GET~~ EVANS BRANCH

MOREHEAD KY

From the Construction Unit:

Dr. Jack D. Ellis
552 W. Sun St.
Morehead, KY 40351
606-784-7473

M.F. 850-1

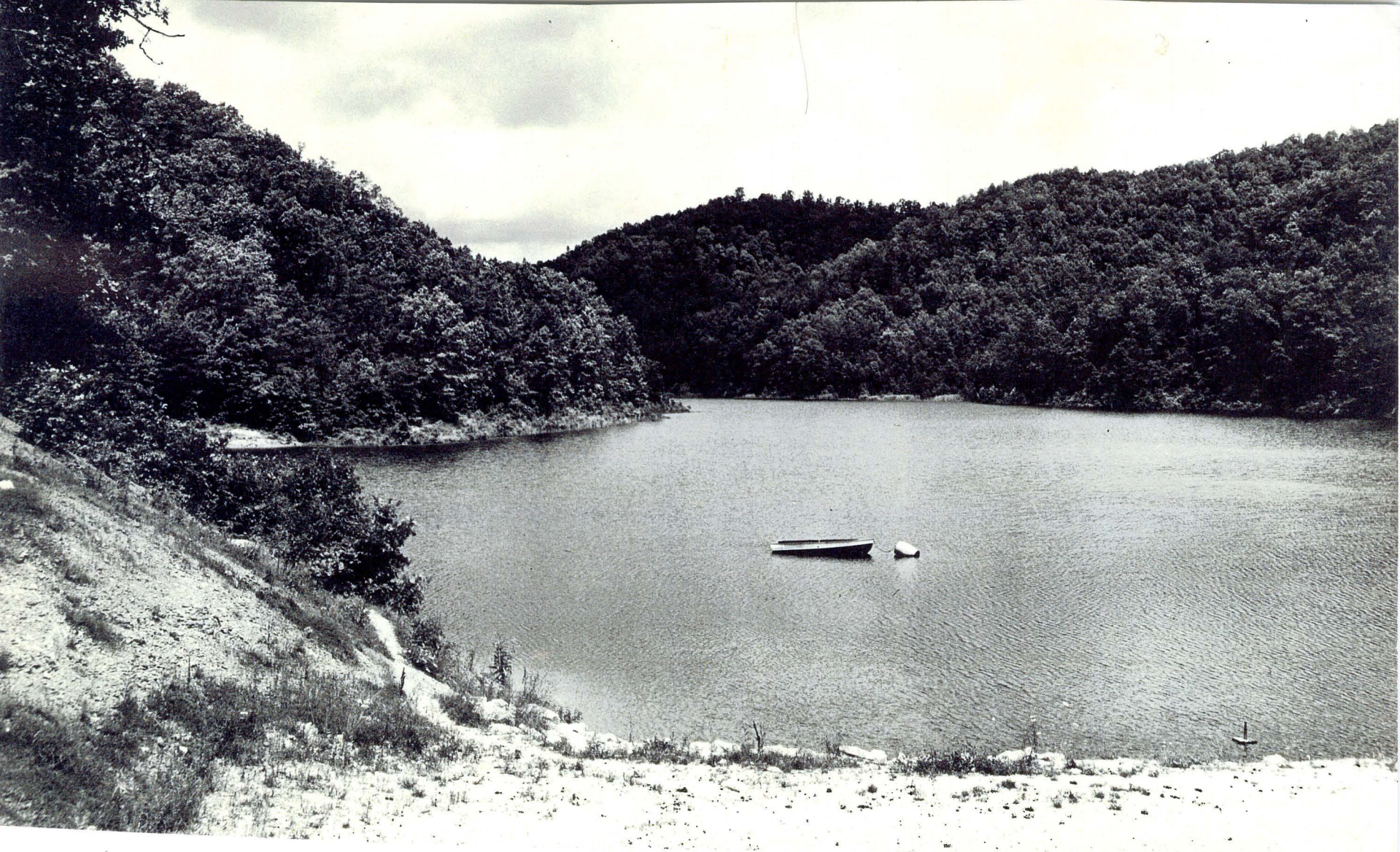


Eagle Lake Construction MSU

EAGLE LAKE UNDER CONSTRUCTION
BEHIND BAIRD HALL IN THE
EARLY 1960. ITS CONSTRUCTION
WAS ~~THE~~ BOTH THE CAUSE AND
THE CURE OF OF MOREHEADS
WATER PROBLEMS IN 1963.

(PHOTO ART STEWART)

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Eagle Lake Construction - MSU

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Dams

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C. 1942
ARIEL VIEW OF MOREHEAD DAM AND STOCK YARDS AND RAILROAD.
TURN AROUND FOR ENGINES.

ARIEL VIEW OF
MOREHEAD DAM,
STOCK YARDS AND
RAILROAD ENGINE
TURN AROUND

C. 1942

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Revised
25%

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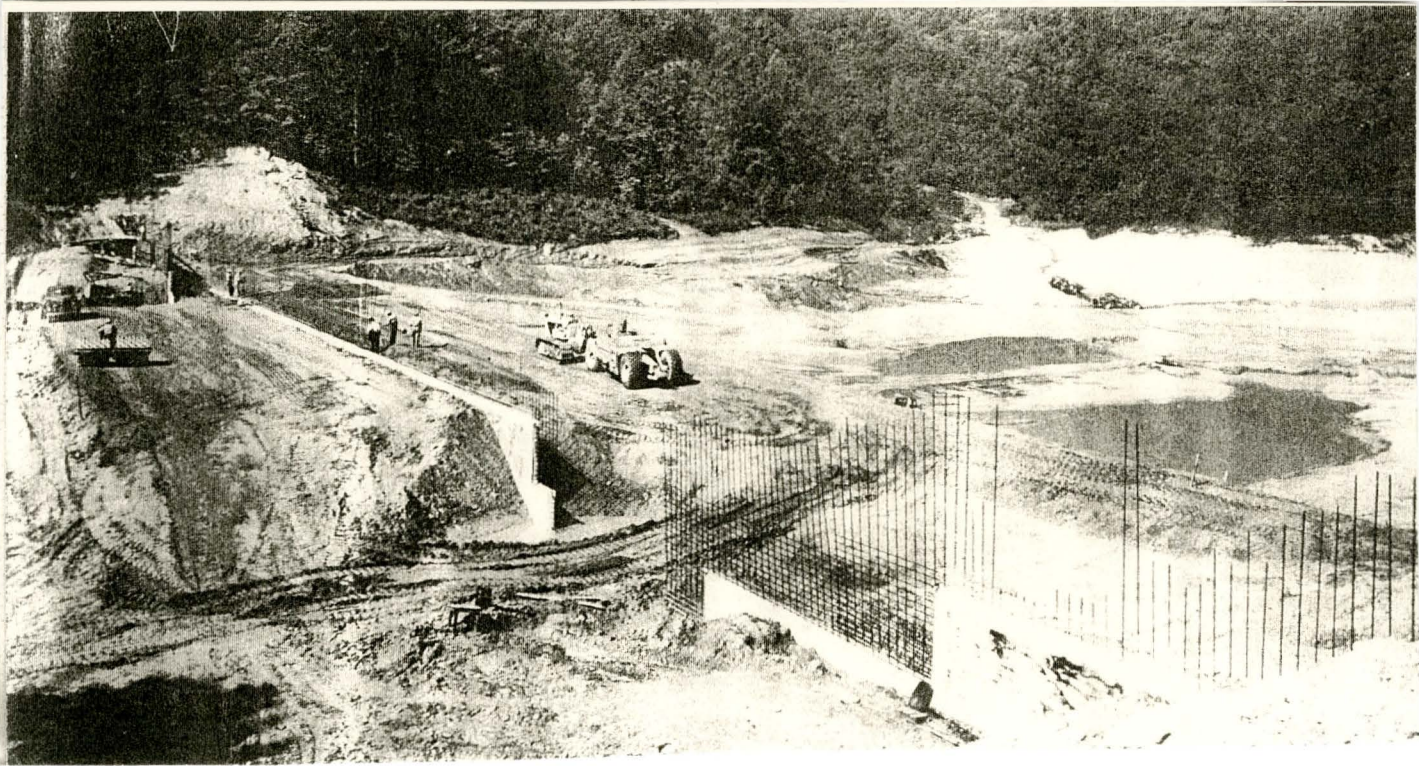
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1952
WORK ON EMBLE LAKE DAM

Art Stewart Photo

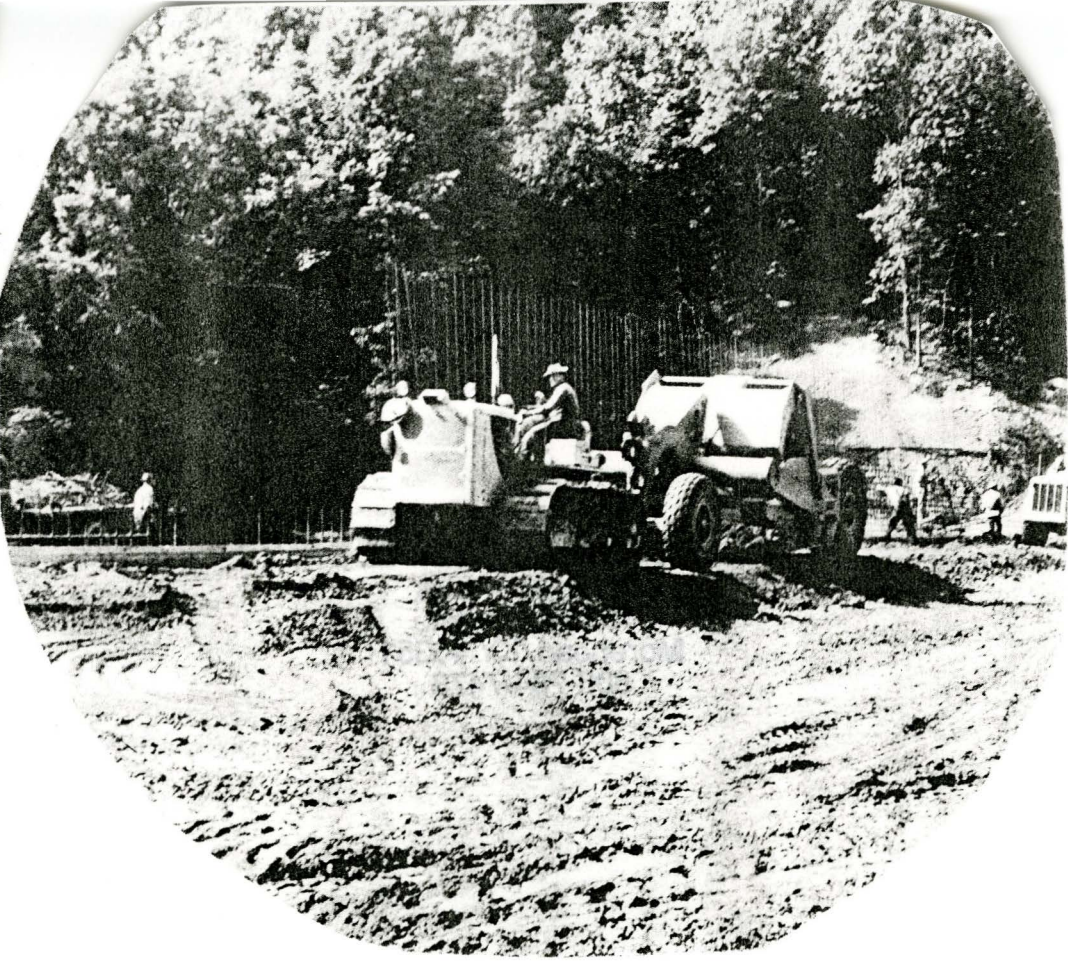
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EAGLE LAKE DAM AT MSU
CONSTRUCTED IN 1952

ART STEWART PHOTO

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Construction of Eagle Lake Dam
1952

Art STEWART

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Channelization has straightened out a section of the south fork of Triplett Creek near Morehead, Ky., and stripped its banks of vegetation, above, while farther downstream, right, the creek continues to meander

through the trees. Channelization is designed to aid flood control and farm production. Conservationists say, however, that it ruins the wild-life habitat and merely pushes the flood threat downstream.

Staff Photos by David Ross Stevens

Stream 'ditching' raises a storm

From The Collection Of
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529 W. Sun St.
Morehead, KY 4035
606-784-7473
Jan 10, 1971
Triplett
Creek
Morehead
Ky

By DAVID ROSS STEVENS, Courier-Journal Staff Writer

SOME CALL IT "our big rivers crisis" or "worse than water pollution" or "the greatest ecological damage of the century."

This kind of talk is coming from conservationists, and it is being directed toward the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (SCS) and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Their target is the transformation of streams into ditches, all in the name of flood control and farm production. The process is called stream channelization.

Creeks and rivers are straightened, widened and deepened. Their banks are denuded of all woody vegetation.

Without the zigs and zags and overhanging sycamores, the doctored-up waterways are made to resemble western irrigation ditches more than they do a normal meandering stream.

A few Kentucky scientists are joining the rising clamor for a halt to stream channelization. They are claiming that it merely pushes the flood threat downstream a bit farther, that it ruins wildlife habitat, that it lowers the water table and that it spends tax money to put marginal farmland into more unneeded production.

Kentucky's share of the country's

drainage program is relatively small in comparison with the highly drained flatlands of the Deep South. Channel work has been done or soon will be done on about 800 miles of Kentucky streams.

This drainage work is a portion of about \$75 million worth of watershed improvements completed or authorized at 50 Kentucky sites.

Indiana has fewer watershed projects than Kentucky. It also has a closer relationship with state wildlife specialists than the Southeastern states and therefore has come under less criticism of its channel work.

South Indiana—with only four Corps projects and nine SCS projects—has or will soon have 138 miles of streams channelized. They are portions of watershed plans that are costing about \$18.5 million.

In Alabama, about 2,000 miles of channelization is planned, and in Georgia 172 projects drawn up by the SCS will affect nearly all of the state's major fishing streams and lakes.

During the past 20 years drainage projects have destroyed three to four million acres of Southeastern bottomland hard-

woods of significance to waterfowl, according to George T. Bagby, Georgia game and fish commissioner.

THE CONSEQUENCES of ditching have unified fish and game agencies as never before. One of the chief opponents to drainage programs in Kentucky is Joe Bruna of Elizabethtown, wildlife biologist for the state Fish and Wildlife Resources Department.

To Bruna a creek is a place where a boy can plunk a cane pole down and drown worms, where a big old oak alive with a squirrel's den provides shade over a pool harboring a lazy old catfish, or where a raccoon might pounce on a crawdad.

To Roger Barbour, University of Kentucky biologist, a marshy area such as Murphy's Pond in Western Kentucky is invaluable as an outdoor classroom. He said that the 47-mile channel dredging project by the Corps of Engineers on Obion Creek may harm the well-known wetlands area. The project is costing \$2.9 million.

To ecologist Wayne Davis, also of the University of Kentucky (and a contribu-

tor to City & Countryside; see below), the flushing of rainwater down to the nearest river is merely a shifting of flood problems. He also questions the creation of new croplands by one federal agency while another division of the U.S. Agriculture Department spends money taking premium farmland out of production.

All of these complaints have been presented to the SCS. Bruna, Barbour, Davis and others recently toured several SCS projects "to help understand the problem rather than to agitate it."

THIS IS WHAT SCS chief Glenn Murray of Lexington, Ky., and his staff told the scientists:

"We do not create stream channelization projects. We draw up broad watershed programs for a local watershed group, which provides about half of the money.

"First of all we try to hold back the rain where it falls. This means we use vegetation and farming practices as best we can. Then we establish dams to retard the runoff water.

"If our engineers say that these methods will not prevent flooding of the

valley, only then do we start to work on the channel."

Davis, who is making a national reputation as an ecologist, said, "We don't question the goals or the original philosophy of the SCS. We agree with everything you are doing except your channelization work.

"Stopping the raindrop where it falls makes good sense, but turning around and doing the opposite doesn't. You just force the Corps of Engineers to keep building more floodwalls around towns on the major streams."

The Kentucky SCS staff insists that enough water is held back in headland dams so that any water that is flushed out rapidly to a river is not a problem to that river. They point out that only 25 SCS

projects are under way involving miles of streams.

BUT THE ECOLOGISTS reply that more Kentucky farm areas have applied for similar projects and who knows how many more in the future will receive federal funding for stream ditching.

About one-fifth of the agricultural land of the United States is or soon will be affected by the Small Watershed Program. In the 12 Southeastern states one-third of the farm lands are involved.

While the SCS defends its program, it does make some concessions to the environmentalists.

A. B. Rogers, assistant conservationist for watershed planning with the SCS,

See STREAM

PAGE 6, Col. 1, this section

Stream 'ditching' raises a storm; opponents blame Corps of Engineers

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Continued From Page 1

said, "We are taking a harder look at our drainage work. I suppose that according to our standards today we would not have done about one-third of the stream channel work that was done in Western Kentucky. We found that the fine topsoil has just been carried away to the Ohio River.

"We would just as soon not do any channelization," Rogers said. "But conservationists are going to the wrong place for help. We are merely doing what Congress wants us to."

On this point there is some dissent, but most conservationists agree with Rogers. The law known as Public Law 566 is the one that authorizes the SCS to prevent flood and erosion damage in small watersheds with less than 250,000 acres in drainage area. Urban flood control and watersheds larger than 250,000 acres are under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers.

ONE EXAMPLE of an SCS project is the Big Reedy Creek watershed, a once heavily wooded area near Mammoth Cave National Park. As farmers cleared trees and planted crops the flooding grew increasingly worse. Until recently high waters covered 2,230 acres of lowland on the average of once every five years.

Under the SCS formula of an estimated flood damage of \$21,286 per year, the 50-year cost to the Caneyville area comes to over \$1 million.

By building two dams in the upper part of the 41-square mile watershed, a portion of the anticipated flood protection was attained. But not enough.

No other dam sites were available, so the SCS decided it was necessary to straighten, widen and clear 15 miles of the Big Reedy. The channel work cost \$382,000 out of the \$630,000 grant from Uncle Sam. Local contributions totaled \$304,000.

Of the 220 farms in the drainage area, parts of only 70 farms had become accustomed to periodic flooding. After the dam building and stream channel work,

the 70 farmers doubled the cash crop yield from the affected area—from about \$500,000 to \$1 million annually.

CONSERVATIONISTS contend that watersheds such as Big Reedy cost too much, benefit too few, ruin the wildlife habitat and place a flood potential on the mother river, the Green River in this case.

Each watershed is different. In fact, the SCS project at Elizabethtown, Ky., receives rave reviews from virtually everyone for providing downtown flood protection, a drinking water supply and a recreation area. Enough dams were built to forgo the use of any channel work here.

Most urban flood control—handled by the Corps of Engineers—generally is expensive because of dense housing. Two miles of dredging on Upper Mill Creek on the south side of Louisville will cost \$2.1 million.

Conservationists and urban planners would rather see local governments zone undeveloped areas which are flood prone so that buildings are not erected in the first place. Preventing construction would prevent the spending of millions of dollars for flood-control measures.

In rural areas, perennial wetlands are receiving much more attention these days as wildlife habitats and as "sponges" for rain runoff.

A Corps of Engineers spokesman said that a harder look is being given to the environmental impact of all river channel work, including the project near Murphy's Pond in Western Kentucky. He said that ecologists' concern has prompted the Corps to propose moving the straightened channel to the other side of a valley to prevent any draining of the pond.

RE-EVALUATION OF stream channelization is apparently going on at all levels of the SCS and the Corps of Engineers. But it may not stem the tide of criticism that once came only from wildlife specialists.

Today general conservation groups

such as the National Audubon Society are making stream channelization a priority target.

John Franson, regional Audubon Society director in Owensboro, Ky., said, "Stream channelization is one of the most insidious natural resource practices in the nation. It is being conducted under the guise of good agricultural management."

Referring to the vegetation removal along the banks and the channel dredging, Franson said, "What was once a natural habitat and watershed becomes an ecological desert."

In at least one case, stream channelization is the subject of a court case. The Sierra Club and certain individuals in Arizona have objected to 40 miles of channel work on the Gila River on the grounds of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. This law requires detailed environmental studies by an agency undertaking action that might affect the quality of the environment.



Staff Photo by Billy Davis

AN AERIAL PHOTO SHOWS bulldozers, lower right, trying to bolster the cofferdam holding back the storm-swollen waters of the Licking

River, which threaten the Bath and Rowan county communities of Salt Lick and Farmers.



Peaceful Valley — Disturbed

CAVE RUN — The angry buzz of chain saws, the roar of truck engines and the growling of dirt movers is echoing off the hills enclosing the Licking River valley south of Farmers this week as construction on Cave Run Dam has gotten underway in earnest. This picture, taken near Lewis

Chapel, which is within a few hundred feet of the dam site, shows the extent to which work has already been done on the Bath County side of the river. The hills in the background are in Rowan County.

Local Trivia

Early History

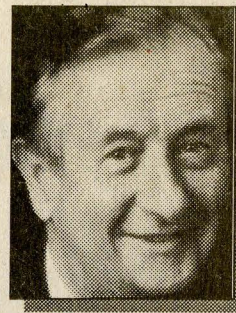
■ Matt Maze was another "die hard" as those who refused to evacuate were called by State Police. He expressed complete confidence that the dam would hold because there were too many men and machinery there.

SECTION C

History

THE MOREHEAD NEWS, MARCH 26

About the Author



Dr. Jack Ellis is a retired Morehead State University Library director and a retired minister.

Morehead Memories:

People & Places

Floods, Dams, and Devastation IV

By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

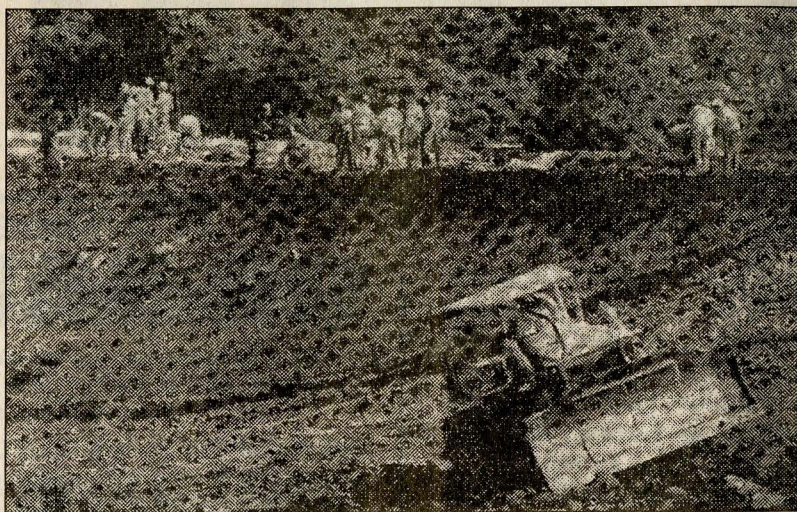
Who has divided a water-course for the overflowing of waters? (Job 8:11)

It was ironic to residents of the Licking River Valley that the very thing the dam was supposed to stop (flooding) almost destroyed it. It was during the month of July 1971, when there were heavy rains upstream along the Licking River and its tributaries. The heavy rainfall resulted in major flooding upstream. At that time the dam was essentially complete except for a few hundred feet on the west side. That end was left open to handle the flow of the river while work progressed on the bulk of the dam.

Army, State Police, and Governor Respond

Dana Greenfield was called to the dam site early on Sunday morning and found the water within three feet of the top of the temporary dam, and still rising. Later that day, General William Starnes and Colonel John Rhett flew in from Cincinnati and Louisville to assume command of the emergency crews working to save the dam.

On Monday morning, State Police and civil defense authorities began evacuating an area 10 miles square below the dam. Radio stations were asked to stay on the air to broadcast the evacuation



Donn Rooks photo, June 21, 1971

Workmen place sand bags along the top of the temporary Cave Run dam while bulldozers help shore up weak spots on the side of the earthen structure.

warnings. Media reporters emerged on the area and, with Governor Louie Nunn out of the state, Governor pro-tem Wendell Ford came to Morehead and set up residence in the State Police Barracks. He coordinated the emergency workers, media and the evacuation efforts from the State Police Barracks.

The governor pro-tem, in true political correctness, offered some criticism of the Corps of Engineers about their slowness to report the danger to the citizens. But Colonel Rhett responded by saying they were notified in plenty of time, in fact, the community reaction to the emergency was extremely well coordinated.

"Die-hards" Refuse to Evacuate-Others Cooperate

Of the 1,500 residents urged to evacuate, there were possibly 50 "die hards" who refused to leave. They had the clarion call to evacuate many times before and were not too impressed at the due warnings of the impending danger. Elderly Clyde Reynolds who lived two miles below the dam called the warning "poppy cock" and refused to heed the

State Police warning.

But those who heeded the warning and evacuated were the wise ones because had the dam failed, it would have been catastrophic like the famous Johnstown, Pennsylvania flood when a dam failed, sweeping away everything in its path. Mrs. Lloyd Alexander and about 30 members of her family heeded the warning and set up a tent on the higher ground. Also, Mrs. Charles McKenzie who moved out with her family said it was an eerie feeling with no sounds of cars as they moved out.

Many of the people living in the community of Farmers were plagued with flooding almost annually. Mrs. Miranda Caldwell, a 75-year old widow living in Farmers, Kentucky, expressed irritation at being told to leave twice in three days. But when she was told the second time, the State Policeman told her to get out and he "didn't mean maybe," she left quickly. Mrs. Caldwell said she had no choice because the only safe place she could hide was up a tree, and she was too old to climb. It was then the Sheriff gave her a ride to a dormitory at Morehead State University where she stayed overnight with 35 other people. Also, Wilma Wages, a teenager, was evacuated along with Mrs. Caldwell.

Matt Maze was another "die hard" as those who refused to evacuate were called by the State Police. He expressed complete confidence that the dam would hold because there were too many men and machinery there. But those men and machinery working to

save the dam were not that confident.

Dam Saved by Emergency Workers

Men worked feverishly piling sand bags on top of the

See FLOOD on C-2

Give a gift that honors all veterans for their service

"They were patriots for what they did, heroes for what they were willing to do." Patriots And Heroes: Eastern Kentucky Soldiers of WWII, by Morehead author Jack D. Ellis and published by the Jesse Stuart Foundation. This colorful, beautifully bound hard cover book contains 416 emotionally packed pages of personal sacrifice and suffering of WWII soldiers. It also includes 85 photographs and an appendix that lists over 2,800 veterans.

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Jack D. Ellis, 550 W. Sun Street, Morehead, KY 40351.
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By JACK D. ELLIS
Special to The Morehead News

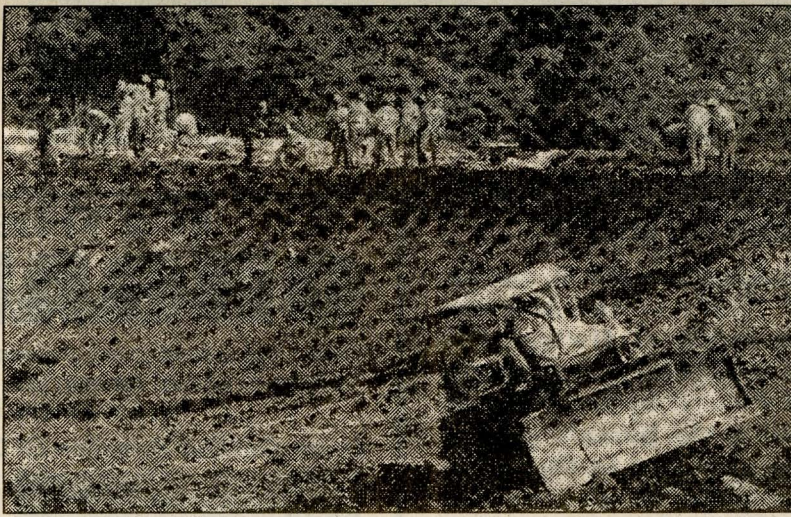
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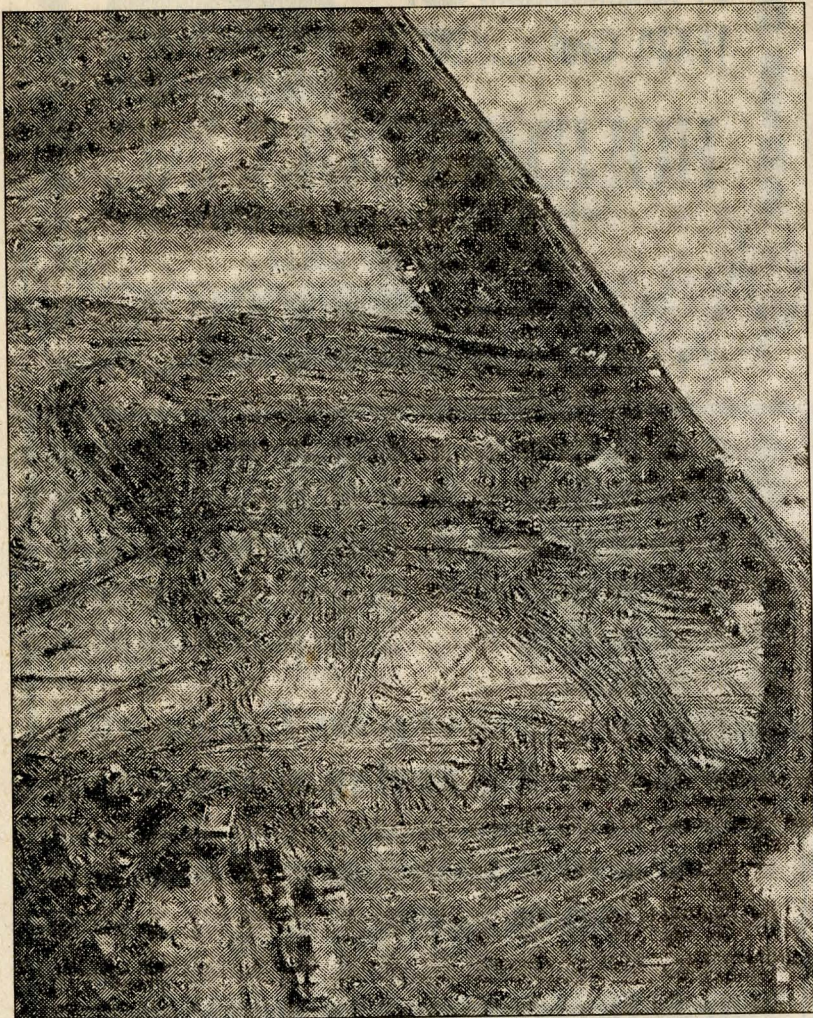
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Billy Davis photo

Men and machines work frantically to save Cave Run dam on the Licking River on June 21, 1971. The river came within inches from overflowing the dam.