



Annual Report of Operations

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



## ADMINISTRATION

Message from the Executive Director .....	1
Conservancy Court .....	3
Board of Directors .....	3
Board of Appraisers .....	3
Executive Staff.....	4
Development Advisory Committee .....	4

## YEAR IN REVIEW

Estimated Attendance .....	6
Park and Marina Revenues.....	6
Social Media Activity.....	7
Park Ranger Highlights.....	7
Employment Statistics .....	8
Quality of Life Initiative .....	8

## IMPROVEMENTS

Capital Projects.....	9
Tappan Marina.....	10
Trail System.....	11
Reservoir Maintenance .....	12-13

## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY

State Overview .....	14
2021 PWM Projects.....	15-18
Cover Crop Program.....	18
Carroll and Harrison County SWCDs.....	19
About the Development Advisory Committee.....	19
Tappan Marina Legislative Day.....	20
Ranger's Certification.....	20
Bounty on the Bridge.....	21
MWCD LakeViews Newsletter and Press Releases....	22
Reservation Totals by State.....	22

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

Atwood Activity Center.....	24
Tappan Lake Welcome Center.....	24
Seneca Marina Improvements .....	24
Cottages Overview .....	25
Coshocton Forest Preservation .....	26
Timber Stand Improvements .....	27
New MWCD Positions Names.....	27

## 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

2021 Cash and Investment Balances .....	29
2021 Receipts and Disbursements.....	29-30



## MESSAGE FROM EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) had a record-breaking year in 2021! From revenues and visitors to programming and awards, we broke records in every category. Our 2021 Annual Report will highlight many of these accomplishments, but I am excited to share a few successes with you. We had over 4 million visitors choose our parks and lakes as their recreational destination in 2021, an increase of 5 percent from 2020. Our camping and cabin rentals also increased by 8 percent and 23 percent respectively, exceeding our 2021 budget goals. Our operating revenues were up over 30 percent from 2020 and we offered more programs, activities, and events than ever before.

Over the past two years, we increased marketing and outreach on all media platforms and these efforts did not go unnoticed in 2021. MWCD received recognition and awards from the Ohio Travel Association and other organizations, honoring our successful advertising and public relations campaigns.

We continue to see new visitors at MWCD parks, lakes, marinas, and trails. We are thankful to be able to provide unique and safe outdoor opportunities for visitors to relax and reconnect with family, friends, and nature. We have made significant progress to the Master Plan renovations completing nearly \$200 million in investments at all our facilities. From rebuilding critical infrastructure to upgrading camping facilities and adding amenities like WhoaZone and others that are still in the works, visitors are letting us know they wholeheartedly approve of what we are doing. We have a team that makes this construction planning and management look easy, but I hope you can appreciate how complex and challenging this work is and can appreciate the results.





As we add new features, we remain focused on maintaining our original assets. Our lakes, shorelines, and dams are in constant need of maintenance. We continue to dredge and remove sediment from key areas, as well as improve shorelines in need of repair. Additionally, we highly value our relationship with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to make critical upgrades and repairs to the dams. Through this shared responsibility, we ensure MWCD is faithful to its original mission of protecting the residents of the Muskingum River Watershed from devastating flooding. Without maintaining these dams and levees, none of the other activities we do would be possible.

Investing in the communities located within the watershed is a priority for MWCD. Last year we provided over \$1.5 million to 18 projects in 13 counties to improve local communities and the watershed. From hellbender salamander research, invasive species control, and agriculture improvements to critical infrastructure repairs due to landslides, the MWCD Partners in Watershed Management (PWM) program was often the critical source of funds to make these projects happen. Since 2009, this program has been a vital source of funds for agencies, communities, and groups involved in conservation programs, water quality, and flood reduction and mitigation projects within the watershed. The PWM program affirms MWCD's mission to prevent flooding and enhance water conservation efforts, improving the quality of life for residents.

We are also looking to the future and are working to improve the organization. Our three-fold mission is to focus on flood control, recreation, and conservation. We clearly excel at the first two and are ready, now, to develop a strategic direction and program focused on conservation and sustainability.

The most noticeable move in this



direction was to restructure an executive position – Chief of Conservation – to build a strong program within MWCD and with all our conservation partners in the public and private sector.

It is time for MWCD to update its overall 5-year strategic plan. We were excited to start the process of our next strategic plan in 2021 and we look forward to developing a clear vision to honor our past, maintain the present, and plan for the future in 2022.

As I wrap up my introduction to this year's Annual Report, I cannot help but leave you with the words of MWCD founder Bryce Browning. These words are from a speech he gave as the Conservancy District was formed and, frankly, brings tears to my eyes.

***"We had a vision. We studied, planned, and worked to make it a reality. Strong leaders developed from among us. We followed them through the difficult days when discouragement made the vision seem dim and the goal, very far away. The Muskingum Valley today is a living thing. It is the growing trees and grasses. The fish and wild animals. The fertile fields responding to the changing season. The living waters. It is the people and the hopes and aspirations of generations, yet unborn. On this good land, full and abundant, there is life. It is a happy place. But our story does not end here. It will never end. Once a vision is born it can never die. The vision grows and the people grow with it. But come. See it for yourself."***

**– Bryce Browning**  
MWCD Founder

These words reflect pride in the accomplishment of establishing the Conservancy District. Moreover, to me they reflect the hope that the Conservancy District can and will change the lives of many in the Muskingum River Valley.

Come see us. Grow with us. Be part of our vision.

**Craig W. Butler**  
Executive Director

## CONSERVANCY COURT

### **Ashland County**

Honorable Ronald P. Forsthoefel

### **Belmont County**

Honorable John A. Vavra

### **Carroll County**

Honorable Michael V. Repella, II

### **Coshocton County**

Honorable Robert J. Batchelor

### **Guernsey County**

Honorable Daniel G. Padden

### **Harrison County**

Honorable T. Shawn Hervey

### **Holmes County**

Honorable Sean M. Warner

### **Knox County**

Honorable Richard D. Wetzel

### **Licking County**

Honorable Thomas M. Marcelain

### **Morgan County**

Honorable John A. Wells

### **Muskingum County**

Honorable Mark C. Fleegle

### **Noble County**

Honorable Kelly A. Riddle

### **Richland County**

Honorable W. Steve McKinley

### **Stark County**

Honorable Jim D. James

### **Summit County**

Honorable Amy Corrigall Jones

### **Tuscarawas County**

Honorable Michael J. Ernest

### **Washington County**

Honorable Mark Kerenyi

### **Wayne County**

Honorable Latecia E. Wiles

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**James M. Gresh**  
Term Expires in 2022



**Joanne Limbach**  
Term Expires in 2023



**Gordon T. Maupin**  
Term Expires in 2024



**Clark E. Sprang**  
Term Expires in 2025



**Robert S. Moorehead, Jr.**  
Term Expires in 2026

## BOARD OF APPRAISERS



**Mark J. Waltz**  
Term Expires in 2023



**Tracy Reiss**  
Term Expires in 2024



**John F. Ginikos**  
Term Expires in 2025



## EXECUTIVE STAFF



**Craig W. Butler**  
Executive Director/Secretary



**Boris E. Slogar**  
Chief Engineer



**Adria L. Bergeron**  
Director of Marketing and  
Communications



**Mary C. Burley**  
Director of  
Human Resources



**James L. Crandall, III**  
Chief Financial Officer/  
Treasurer



**Bradley P. Janssen**  
Chief of Natural Resources  
and Land Management



**J. Ryan McCleaster**  
Chief of Recreation



**Jonathan C. Mizer**  
Chief Legal Counsel



**Matt A. Thomas**  
Chief of Conservation

## DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

In 2021, under the leadership of the Executive Director, the DAC provided public input, feedback, and advice related to trails, revenue, marketing, and legislative matters.

**Matt Abbott**  
New Concord

**Bob Alsept**  
New Philadelphia

**Scott Arnold**  
Mansfield

**Trevor Dunlap**  
Perrysville

**Ronald Dziedzicki**  
Medina

**Alfred Fearon**  
Bolivar

**Karl Gebhardt**  
Westerville

**Chris Jacobs**  
Scio

**Marty Larsen, Jr.**  
Mansfield

**Ed Lee**  
New Philadelphia

**John Lofgren**  
Uniontown

**Dana McDaniel**  
Dublin

**Luke Messinger**  
Gahanna

**Joy Padgett**  
Coshocton

**Dave Pilcher, Sr.**  
New Philadelphia

**A. Bruce Robinson**  
Scio

**Jackie Stewart**  
Louisville

**Steve Walker**  
Navarre

**John Wirtz**  
Sherrodsville



# BUILDING VIABLE PROGRAMS ON THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR

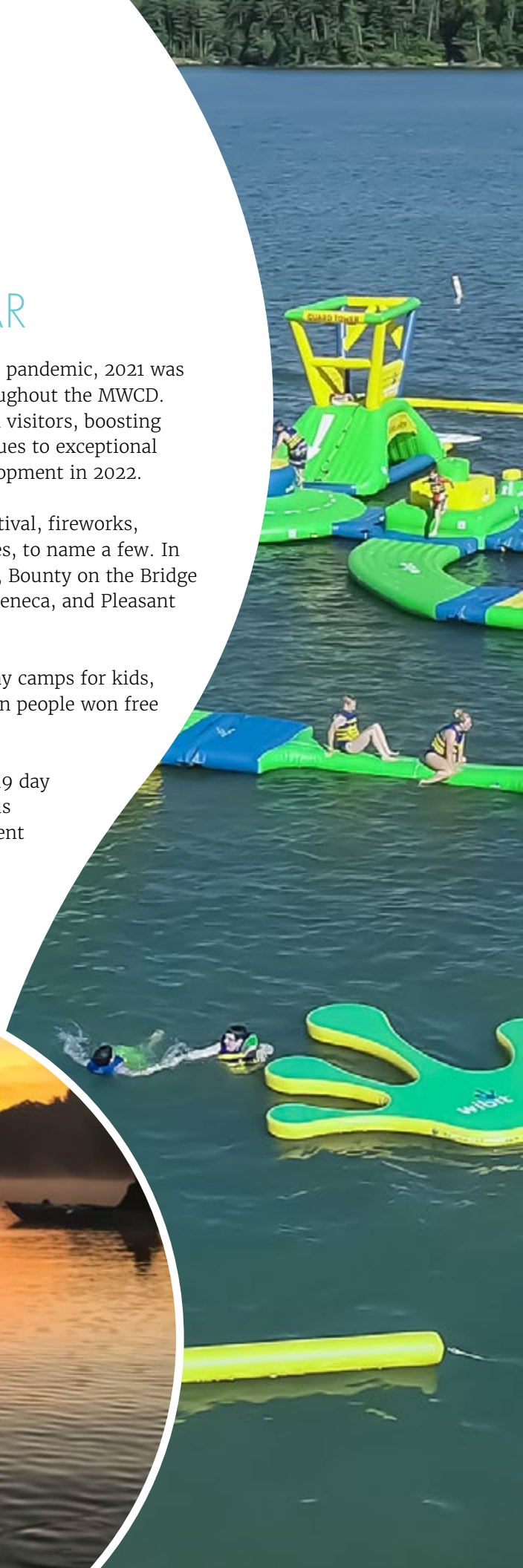
After a year of fewer and smaller events in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was filled with the happy smiles of visitors and staff at many events throughout the MWCD. In fact, 2021 brought record numbers in many areas ... over 4 million visitors, boosting reservation totals to new highs and, in turn, helping to elevate revenues to exceptional levels. All of which helps to form a firm basis for new program development in 2022.

2021 saw the return of the Alive Music Festival, Atwood Area Fall Festival, fireworks, Halloween events, Princess in the Park, and Hunter Education Courses, to name a few. In addition, new events included Halloween Weekend at Piedmont Lake, Bounty on the Bridge at Atwood Lake Park, and First Responders Day at Atwood, Tappan, Seneca, and Pleasant Hill Lake Parks.

More participants than ever before enjoyed guided kayaking tours, day camps for kids, Ladies' Night crafts, guided hikes, and Movies at the Lake. Plus, seven people won free kayaks at our Poker Paddles!

In 2021, staff also planned and implemented 38 guided kayak tours, 19 day camps for kids, 33 Movies at the Lake, and six fireworks displays, plus numerous other events each week throughout the year. Estimated event attendance was 14,250 participants, not including fireworks events.

As part of our effort to constantly expand and improve programs and facilities, WhoaZone inflatable obstacle courses were opened at Atwood and Pleasant Hill Lake beaches. The inflatable obstacle courses are designed to provide safe, challenging, water-based adventure for beach-going families, and proved to be very popular in 2021.





## Program Success Boosts Operating Revenues

Park and marina financial performance exceeded budget goals with operating revenues up over 30 percent – \$3.2 million – from \$10,611,328 in 2020 to \$13,823,825 in 2021. In addition, operating income (revenues minus expense) for parks and marinas increased by \$2.7 million – from \$2,529,476 in 2020 to \$5,319,784 in 2021.

Occupancy continued to show growth with cabin occupancy up 23 percent — from 5,778 nights in 2020 to 7,125 nights in 2021. Camping nights increased by 8 percent from 358,836 in 2020 to 388,716 in 2021.

**2021**  
OPERATING REVENUES  
**+30%**

### LAKE ATTENDANCE ESTIMATES

MWCD Location	2021 Attendance	2020 Attendance	% Change
Atwood	975,697	962,310	1.39%
Charles Mill	665,805	601,918	10.61%
Pleasant Hill	562,938	532,525	5.71%
Tappan	735,215	713,390	3.06%
Seneca	954,313	875,582	8.99%
<b>Subtotal Parks</b>	<b>3,893,968</b>	<b>3,685,726</b>	<b>5.65%</b>
Piedmont	204,520	200,389	2.06%
Clendening	36,987	39,172	-5.58%
<b>Subtotal Marinas</b>	<b>241,507</b>	<b>239,561</b>	<b>0.81%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4,135,474</b>	<b>3,925,287</b>	<b>5.35%</b>

### PARK AND MARINA REVENUES

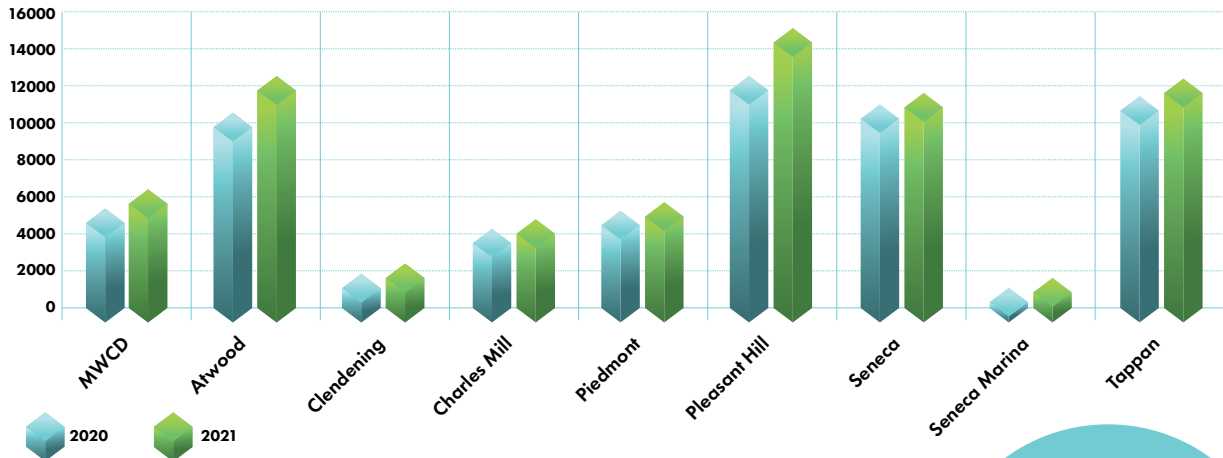
MWCD Location	2021 Revenue	2020 Revenue	% Change
Atwood Lake Park	\$ 3,158,567	\$ 2,415,043	31%
Charles Mill Lake Park	1,301,278	851,229	54%
Clendening Marina	601,338	599,418	0%
Leesville Campground	126,557	105,809	20%
Piedmont Marina	841,216	726,053	16%
Pleasant Hill Lake Park	1,960,070	1,426,358	37%
Seneca Marina	741,078	676,031	10%
Seneca Lake Park	2,250,329	1,507,128	49%
Tappan Lake Park	1,801,160	1,484,190	21%
Tappan Marina	498,931	579,560	-14%
Leased Marinas	539,936	528,826	2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 13,820,460</b>	<b>\$ 10,899,645</b>	<b>24%</b>

## Marketing Success Earns Recognition

The success of MWCD marketing activities earned recognition and awards from the Ohio Travel Association and other organizations, honoring our advertising and public relations strategies and efforts. In addition to traditional print, radio, and television media, our current program also uses contemporary approaches involving social media, with a recent introduction to Instagram, producing the following results:



### FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS



WEBSITE TRAFFIC

**15,000**

Average  
Monthly Visitors



## Rangers Respond to 10,774 Calls

During 2021, MWCD Rangers issued a variety of violations and completed 100 Incident Reports. The Rangers stayed extremely busy throughout the year and accomplished a great deal with limited staffing, resulting in these highlights:

- 10,774 Calls Entered
- 5,280 Campground and Marina Checks
- 2,619 Cottage and Outlying Area Checks
- 113 Vessel Safety Checks
- Only 10 Critical Incidents



## Employment Totals 119 Full-Time, 176 Seasonal/Variable

MWCD employed 119 people full-time in 14 different facilities in eight counties during 2021. Another 176 seasonal/variable employees worked during the recreational season.

The continued impacts of COVID-19 required all MWCD employees to go above and beyond their normal job duties to ensure the safety of not only MWCD employees, but guests and campers as well. The Human Resources office coordinated two on-site COVID-19 vaccine clinics for employees and their immediate family members conducted by local health departments. Other activities included:

- 16 Full-Time Positions Filled in 2021
- 10 Locations with No Recordable Injuries
- 17 Staff Trained in First Aid, CPR, and AED
- 38 Staff Trained in Cold Water Readiness
- 51 Staff Completed Fire Extinguisher Training



## Programs and Operations Focused on Quality of Life

MWCD is dedicated to not only improving existing amenities but also adding new opportunities that satisfy a wide variety of interests and abilities to encourage more people to participate in outdoor recreation at MWCD parks and marinas.

Focusing on more than just updating facilities, the Master Plan has allowed us to take advantage of the national rise in outdoor recreation to create a positive impact on quality of life.

These facilities and amenities will become a model for outdoor recreation, and the results will leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy the benefits of recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed.





# MASTER PLAN LEADS THE WAY TO SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

The MWCD Park and Marina Capital Improvement Plan, also referred to as the Master Plan, is the road map resulting in the most significant upgrades to our recreational facilities in a half century. Priorities were identified through public work sessions, gathering input from our customer base, and benchmarking national trends in recreation.

MWCD customers indicated that their No. 1 priority in capital improvements was to upgrade campsites and the infrastructure that serves the campers. In many instances, 50-year-old electrical, water and sewer systems serving the campsites could not accommodate today's larger and modern camping units. Modern units also require more space and parking for vehicles, and hard surfaces for leveling and ease of maintenance. The focus of engineering planning and design has been to upgrade the campsites to meet these camper-driven priorities.

On July 19, 2019, the Board of Directors approved Phase 2 of the Master Plan including about \$45 million for park improvements and about \$20 million marina improvements. Included in these amounts is nearly \$11 million earmarked for improved amenities, which may include additional playgrounds, spray grounds, sports courts, and fiber optic for improved communication, prioritized through research, online surveys, and focus group meetings.

Phase 2 of the plan expanded the program to include Clendening Marina and Campground, Leesville North Fork Marina, Leesville South Fork Campground, and Tappan Marina which were all acquired since the inception of the Master Plan. The implementation strategy for the marinas in Phase 2 is to focus on infrastructure first, followed by camping and waterfront improvements.

Over \$195 million has been committed to this Capital Improvement Program to upgrade the parks and campgrounds, funded with revenues reserved from oil and gas leases.

During 2021, MWCD delivered almost \$10 million in capital projects. The following were constructed or under construction during 2021:

## **Atwood**

- WhoaZone
- Main Campground Improvements – Phase 2
- West Marina Showerhouse/Restroom Rehabilitation
- Cemetery Bay Trail
- Woodland Trail

## **Charles Mill**

- Main Campground Redevelopment – Phase 3

## **Leesville**

- North Fork Marina Fuel Service Upgrade

## **Piedmont**

- Water Treatment Plant

## **Pleasant Hill**

- WhoaZone
- New Campground Area G
- RV/Boat Storage Lot
- Cabin Landscaping
- Cabin Roadway and Toad Road Paving

## **Seneca**

- Marina Point Campground Redevelopment – Phase 2
- Marina Shoreline Stabilization, Deck Replacement and ADA Site Access

## **Tappan**

- Marina Renovations
- Marina Wastewater Treatment Plant and Sanitary Improvements
- Marina WWTP Emergency Generator
- East Campground Pumps Station Emergency Generator







## Tappan Marina Takes a Major Step Forward

The \$6-million Tappan Marina and restaurant building renovation project includes a new 250-seat restaurant on the main floor, including seating for over 100 guests on a covered deck overlooking the lake.

“We are very excited to provide a full-service restaurant and bar where boaters and visitors can enjoy a delicious meal, in a comfortable, relaxing environment with a spectacular view!” said Shari Lewis, who is operating the Waters Edge Kitchen + Bar restaurant along with Matt Donohoe.

The lower level of the marina is home to MWCD’s Tappan Marina operations with pontoon and fishing boat rentals, boating supplies, gifts, bait and tackle, fuel sales, snacks and docking rentals.

“Tappan Lake is very popular for boating and fishing and draws guests from Ohio and surrounding states. The new design will provide a premier destination that will offer an inviting gateway to the Tappan Lake region.”

This project also includes construction of new asphalt driveways, asphalt paving of the parking lot, new concrete sidewalk along the shoreline, two sets of steps for dock access, three new dock abutments, 350 feet of shoreline improvements, and lighting of the parking lot and steps. It will also provide 126 parking spaces. The site also features elements of green infrastructure, including storm water management and vegetative filter strips to protect the water quality of Tappan Lake, and the use of geothermal energy to reduce utility costs.

Photo: © Andrew Dolph / Times-Reporter

“The renovations to Tappan Marina have not only beautified the facility, but more importantly, allow us to better serve our guests,” said Ryan McCleaster, MWCD Chief of Recreation.







## Trail System Continues Enhancement

The MWCD has featured trails since the development of our recreational facilities began in the 1950s, recognizing that hiking trails make our communities more livable. They connect us to our neighbors, businesses, places of interest, and even our jobs.

Trails improve the economy through tourism and civic improvement, preserve and restore open space, increase property values, and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health. As such, MWCD is committed to continuing to provide sustainable trails for our visitors, neighbors, and partners.

As part of that commitment, the MWCD has a strong, ongoing partnership with the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA). Established in 1959, the nationally known 1,444-mile Buckeye Trail circles Ohio and includes connections near Atwood and links between Seneca, Piedmont, Clendening, Tappan, and Leesville Lakes. The Tappan Lake area is also home to the BTA's Century Barn.

The MWCD has also seen increases in the popularity of the 37 miles of hiking,

biking, and equestrian trails on its own 57,000 acres of land, much of it open for public access. Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks have numerous self-contained loop trails.

The MWCD is also proud to have several designated water trails on the Kokosing, Mohican, Muskingum and Tuscarawas Rivers.

Cooperating with the Ohio Horseman's Council, an equestrian camp area and trail system has been developed in the Pleasant Hill region, adding three miles of trail to areas of Malabar Farm State Park and Mohican State Forest and Park for a total of 27 miles of trail.

In 2021, MWCD continued its commitment to trail improvement and development by completing the Woodland Trail extension project at Atwood Lake Park. Additionally, MWCD hired a trails coordinator and created a trails technician position, who will work to expand trails, improve the trails support team, and develop relationships with trail partners.





## Reservoir Maintenance Programs Continue

MWCD manages two main reservoir maintenance programs: dredging and shoreline protection.

Dredging continued at Seneca Lake again in 2021, resulting in the removal of about 63,000 cubic yards of sediment from areas near the Churchman Point Docking Association and Kennonsburg Boat Club, bringing the total volume of material dredged to over 85,000 cubic yards.



### Atwood Lake – Dredging at North Shore Cottage Area



Additionally, a small excavation dredging project at Atwood Lake was completed at the North Shore Cottage Area, resulting in the removal of about 3,400 cubic yards of sediment.



## 2021 Shoreline Protection Projects

In 2010, a study of MWCD's 300 miles of shoreline was conducted to identify stabilization needs at 10 MWCD reservoirs. As a result, over 9.5 miles of shoreline stabilization work has been completed over the past 11 years at a cost of about \$11.5 million.

Six shoreline stabilization projects were completed in 2021 at a cost of approximately \$440,000.



**Atwood North Shore  
Cottage Area**



**Atwood Lake Beach**



**Atwood Glens – Anchor Lane**



**Atwood Glens – Cherry Lane**



**Seneca Churchman  
Point Phase 2**



**Pleasant Hill Loudonville  
Wildlife Club Area**



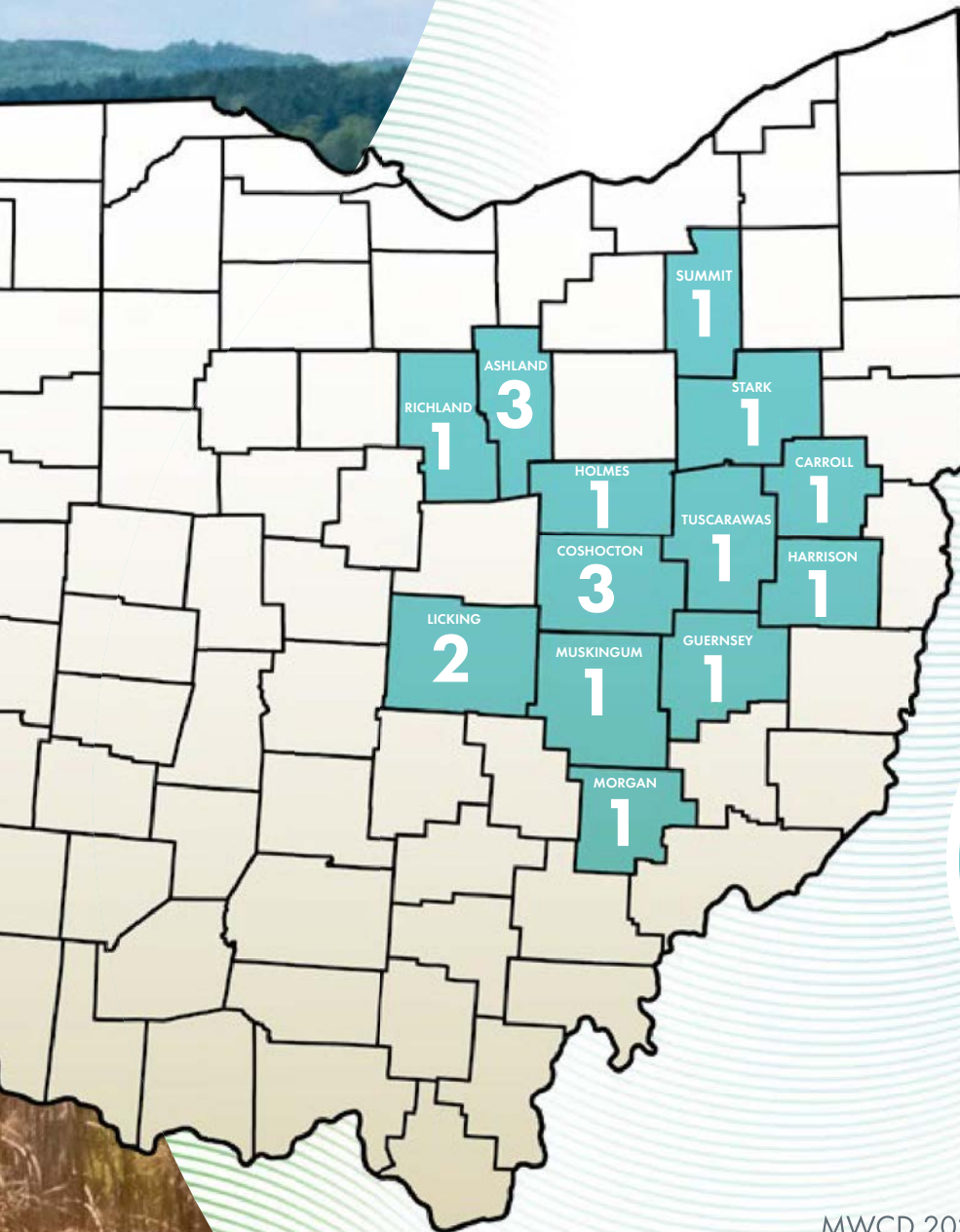




## PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS FURTHER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

MWCD developed the Partners in Watershed Management Project Assistance Program in 2009 to support the work of agencies and groups involved in conservation programs, water quality issues and flood reduction and mitigation projects, supporting the various aspects of the mission of the MWCD.

Since the program was launched, over \$10 million has been awarded to 156 projects. In 2021, 18 projects in 13 counties were awarded a total of \$1,544,991 in grants in the following counties.



## 2021 Partners in Watershed Management Projects

### Manure Application Tools for Small/Hobby Farms

APPLICANT: Ashland Soil Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
COUNTY: Ashland  
APPROVED GRANT: \$6,000

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Ashland SWCD proposed purchasing a small manure spreader and transport trailer to be used throughout Ashland, Holmes, and within the MWCD's jurisdictional area of Richland counties. The spreader would be made available for rent by farmers to reduce manure and nutrient runoff throughout the watershed. Rental fees would be used for equipment upkeep, maintenance, and replacement to make the program self sustaining.

### Project Soil Health Toolbox

APPLICANT: Carroll Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD)  
COUNTY: Carroll  
APPROVED GRANT: \$60,000

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Carroll SWCD requested funds to purchase a lime spreader and roller crimper for a cover crop program in Carroll County. This grant will expand soil testing for farmers and allow them to apply agricultural lime according to the results of the soil tests. The roller crimper will allow farmers to produce an alternative way to terminate cover crops without the use of herbicides or tillage.

### South Barberton Green Infrastructure, Phase 1

APPLICANT: City of Barberton  
COUNTY: Summit  
APPROVED GRANT: \$70,000

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Barberton is working with the State of Ohio, Ohio Emergency Management Agency, and regional and local entities to alleviate flooding in this area and within their portion of the Tuscarawas River Watershed. Creation of a singular large flood control structure will be detrimental to neighborhood cohesion. Rather, the city proposes a series of neighborhood-building green infrastructure flood control elements throughout the watershed. The city has preliminarily identified five green infrastructure projects to reduce localized flooding and retain regional stormwater from further exacerbating flooding downstream.

This application will provide partial design and construction dollars for this first phase green infrastructure element, which is located within MWCD's jurisdictional boundary. Phase 1 will install an oxbow wetland and in-stream grade structures on an existing property owned by the City of Barberton. The oxbow wetland and stream project will help store nearly 2 acre-feet of regional stormwater, which will lower the 10-year flood elevation for downstream properties and roadways.

### Muskingum Avenue Improvements (Muskingum River)\*

APPLICANT: City of Zanesville  
COUNTY: Muskingum  
APPROVED GRANT: \$500,000

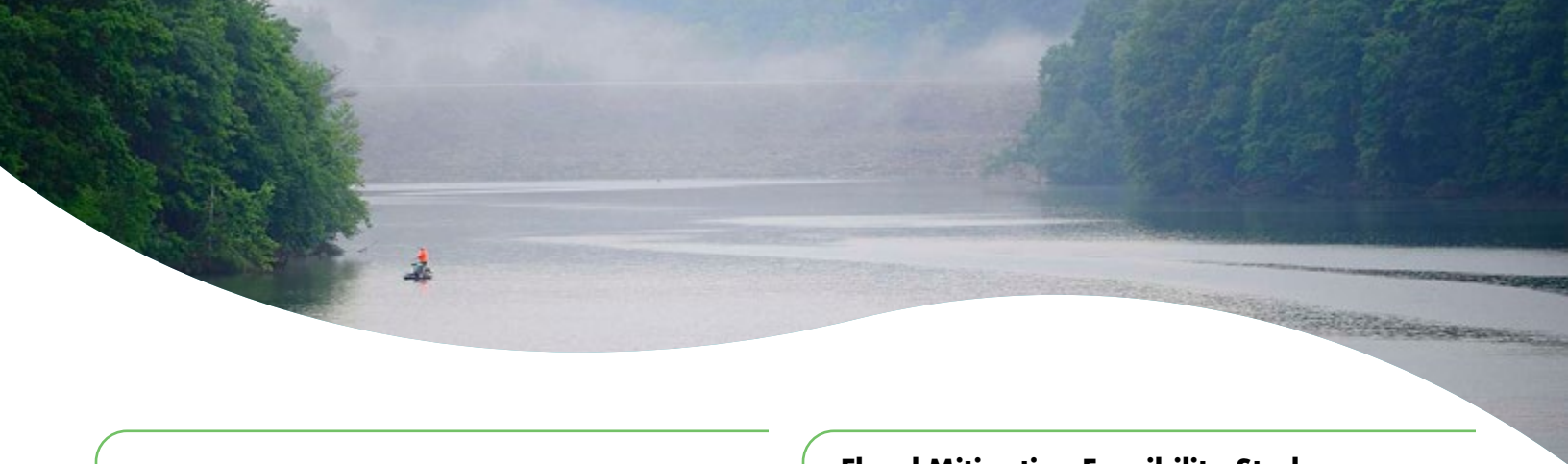
#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Zanesville requested funding to stabilize a substantial landslide along the Muskingum River which has forced the closure of Muskingum Avenue (Dug Road). The project will minimize and prevent further earth and debris slippage into the Muskingum River by stabilizing the land slippage of the roadway and cutting back the upper hillside to prevent rock falls and sediment that will impact the Muskingum River.

Also, the project includes provisions to add a 30-inch conduit under Muskingum Avenue to relocate the aging existing 24-inch wastewater force main currently located along the south edge of the Muskingum River whereas the existing force main is old and susceptible to damage from flood scour, erosion, and landslides. A break in the force main will result in large quantities of wastewater spilling into the Muskingum River and result in over 9,000 households and business being affected by the outage.

*\*This project was approved by the MWCD Board of Directors and is contingent upon applicant receiving other sources of grant funding for their project.*





### **Clark Township: Township Rd. 25 Bridge Replacement (Tributary to Killbuck Creek)**

APPLICANT: Coshocton County Engineer  
COUNTY: Coshocton  
APPROVED GRANT: \$85,000

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

This project requested funding for reimbursement costs associated with the replacement of a structure over Hoagland Run with a 20-foot x 16-foot galvanized bridge. Profile adjustments were made to the road in conjunction with the installation which has allowed the road to remain open longer when Hoagland Run tops its banks and floods the area. The section of the road between State Rt. (SR) 60 and Township Rd. (TR) 321 is the only route that allows for ingress and egress to SR 60 during a flooding event. Without this structure, emergency services and the traveling public would have a substantial detour around the flooded area to get to any residences that are located on TR 321 and other various township roads connected to it.

### **Flood Mitigation Feasibility Study (Muskingum River)**

APPLICANT: Morgan County Commissioners  
COUNTY: Morgan  
APPROVED GRANT: \$84,000

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Morgan County Commissioners requested funds to conduct a Feasibility Study for protection of flooding areas along the Muskingum River. The County intends to apply for funding through the Federal Emergency Management Agency Building Resilience in Communities (BRIC) program. The BRIC application requires a 25 percent local match, which is the portion being requested through the PWM program. Through the proposed study, the county will identify alternatives to mitigate the flooding along the Muskingum River corridor in the Village of McConnelsville along State Route (SR) 60 and adjacent to the Morgan County Fairgrounds along SR 376.

### **Soil Health Initiative**

APPLICANT: Harrison Soil and Water Conservation District (HSWCD)  
COUNTY: Harrison  
APPROVED GRANT: \$35,000

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The program provides producers with access to free soil tests for eligible producers for a determined number of acres. The soil tests can be taken by the producer, or by the staff of HSWCD. Equipment will be available to borrow to pull the samples. A lime spreader will be available for rent to apply the appropriate amendments to the soil. The lime spreader will be available to all Harrison County producers to rent, but a discount will be available for producers who have a recent soil test and for those farming in the Muskingum River Watershed.

### **Watershed Protection Along the Clear Fork**

APPLICANT: North Central Ohio Land Conservancy (NCOLC)  
COUNTY: Richland  
APPROVED GRANT: \$20,000

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

NCOLC requested PWM grant funding for its Healing Land and People Program along the Clear Fork Valley Scenic Trail in Richland County along land owned either by the Richland County Park District or NCOLC. Using labor and hand tools, non-native invasive species will be removed along with the installation of erosion control structures. To accomplish this work, NCOLC hires and trains recovering drug addicts, convicted felons, and their young adult children.

## **Comanita Property Acquisition (Tuscarawas River)\***

APPLICANT: Northern Tuscarawas Land Trust (NTLT)  
COUNTY: Tuscarawas  
APPROVED GRANT: \$290,000

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

NTLT requested funds to acquire 185 acres of land adjacent to the Tuscarawas River and downstream of Dover Dam to conserve this property and place deed restrictions to prohibit construction and development, and to become part of Camp Tuscazoar property.

*\*This project was approved by the MWCD Board of Directors and is contingent upon applicant receiving other sources of grant funding for their project.*

## **Hellbender Salamander Water Quality Monitoring and Breeding Habitat**

APPLICANT: Rural Action  
COUNTY: Coshocton  
APPROVED GRANT: \$50,000

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Rural Action requested funds for the Hellbender Salamander water quality monitoring and breeding habitat improvement project. The goal of this project is to enhance the conservation status of Eastern Hellbenders in the Walhonding River Watershed and contribute information on Hellbender population and reproductive ecology. Specifically, the project will (1) gain insight on limiting water quality factors associated with Hellbender population success, (2) use artificial nest boxes to improve habitat and monitor Hellbender populations, and (3) increase engagement with stakeholders including landowners and the Ohio Hellbender Partnership.

## **Flood Damage Reduction Planning**

APPLICANT: South Licking Watershed Conservancy  
District (SLWCD)  
COUNTY: Licking  
APPROVED GRANT: \$200,000

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

SLWCD requested funds to prepare a planning study to identify measures and funding requirements pertaining to flood damage reduction and environmental protection for the portion of the South Fork Licking River Watershed within SLWCD boundaries. The planning study and findings will serve as the basis for updating the Official Plan for the SLWCD, which is based on a 1980 study and addendums. The planning study will also identify measures for inspecting and maintaining stream channels within the SLWCD boundary, for the purpose of preserving the flood carrying capacity and preventing large-scale channel bank erosion.

## **South Fork Licking River Debris**

APPLICANT: City of Heath  
COUNTY: Licking  
APPROVED GRANT: \$48,400

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The City of Heath requested financial assistance for 46 locations of debris removal along the South Fork Licking River.

## **Jerome Fork Log Jam Removal**

APPLICANT: Ashland SWCD  
COUNTY: Ashland  
APPROVED GRANT: \$1,712

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Ashland SWCD requested financial assistance for the removal of log jams along the Jerome Fork Creek.

Photo: Brian Gratwicke, via Flickr.  
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### **Pittman Park Log Jam**

APPLICANT: Bethlehem Township  
COUNTY: Stark  
APPROVED GRANT: \$34,000

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Bethlehem Township requested financial assistance in the removal of a log jam at Craig Pittman Memorial Park.

### **Wills Creek-Moore Log Jam Removal**

APPLICANT: Guernsey County Community Development Corporation (CDC)  
COUNTY: Guernsey  
APPROVED GRANT: \$14,904

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Guernsey County CDC requested financial assistance in removing a log jam in Wills Creek.

### **Coshocton County Various Sites Debris Removal**

APPLICANT: Coshocton County Engineer  
COUNTY: Coshocton  
APPROVED GRANT: \$27,100

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Coshocton County Engineers requested financial assistance in removing six debris removals located in Coshocton County.

### **Lake Fork Log Jam Removal**

APPLICANT: Ashland SWCD  
COUNTY: Ashland  
APPROVED GRANT: \$13,375

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

Ashland SWCD requested financial assistance in removing a log jam from Lake Fork.

## **Successful Cover Crop Program Continues**

Through the cooperative working agreement between MWCD and the Ohio Department of Agriculture and partnering with the soil and water conservation districts within the watershed, landowners applied for assistance to plant cover crops on 55,193 acres. Through a review and ranking process, 41,817 acres were approved for the program and 33,539 acres were planted on 305 individual properties.

The program keeps a green growing crop throughout the year that protects the soil from erosion, retains moisture, holds nutrients for the next crop, and helps with soil health and water quality.

To date nearly 200,000 acres have been planted, with a total of over \$2.7 million dollars allocated since 2012.

Other Best Management Practices under this partnership initiated in 2021 included assistance for livestock exclusion fencing, education and outreach opportunities, critical area seedings, field buffers, and nutrient management planning.







## Support Ongoing for Carroll and Harrison County SWCDs

MWCD supports a watershed specialist through the Carroll and Harrison SWCD offices. These counties hold four MWCD lakes on the eastern side of the district.

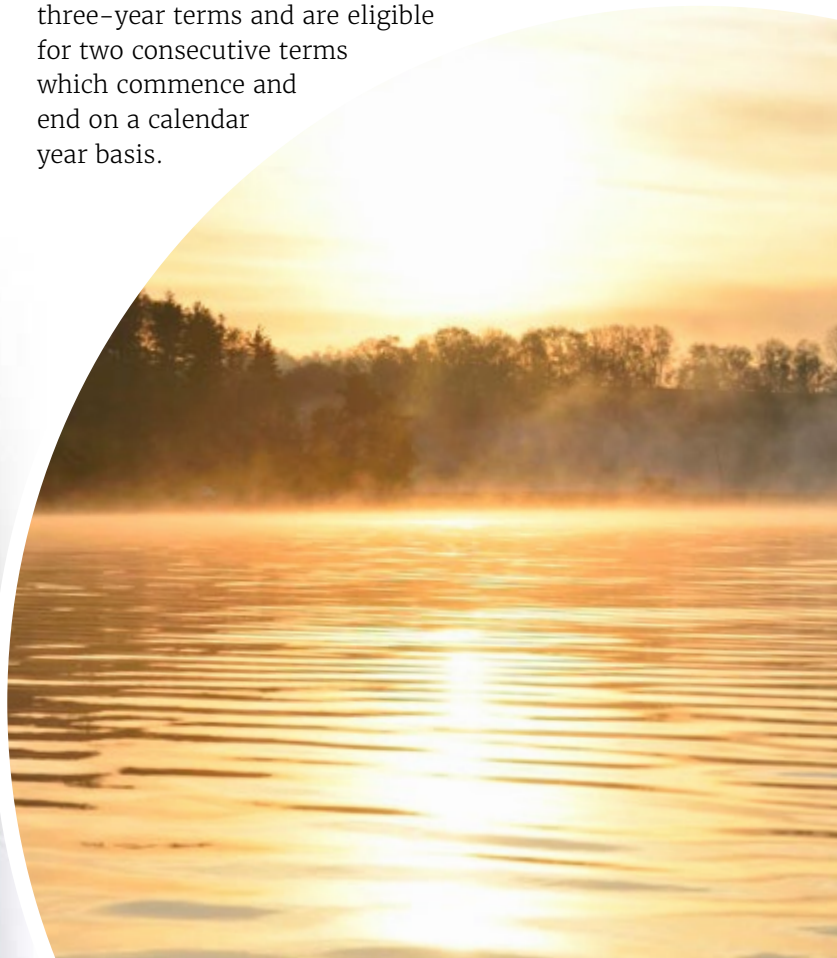
The watershed specialist monitors the water quality of the headwater streams of the lakes, assists local producers with best management practices and technical assistance, and promotes watershed education throughout the counties. The position also coordinates with local stakeholders and assists with programs and water quality projects within the watershed.

In 2021, the watershed specialist applied for two Partners in Watershed Management Grants on behalf of the two SWCDs and both grant applications were funded.

## DAC Provides Public Support, Input

The Development Advisory Committee (DAC), created in 1992 to provide advice and guidance on economic development, conservation, and recreation programs, was realigned under the leadership of the Executive Director in 2021.

Appointments to the DAC reflect broad geographic representation and a diversity of interests that support the mission of the MWCD. Members serve staggered three-year terms and are eligible for two consecutive terms which commence and end on a calendar year basis.







## Legislative Day Held at Tappan Marina, Park

The MWCD held a Legislative Day at the new Tappan Lake Marina and Tappan Lake Park in 2021, hosting elected officials, legislative staff, economic development representatives and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The event included updates and briefings on the activities and important work happening within the watershed in addition to tours of some of the recent accomplishments at Tappan Lake.

“As a political subdivision of the State of Ohio, MWCD is often impacted by the legislative actions at all levels of government,” said Craig Butler, MWCD Executive Director. “We strive to have positive working relationships with our elected officials and their staffs and regional and state economic development professionals.”

Attended by 35 people, the event provided better understanding of our work regarding conservation, recreation, water quality, natural resources and land management practices, engineering operations, as well as economic impacts and employment opportunities.



## Rangers Receive Ohio Collaborative Certification

MWCD Rangers joined the ranks of nearly 75 percent of Ohio's Law Enforcement officers by receiving the Ohio Collaborative Law Enforcement Agency Certification. The Ohio Collaborative is an independent body that establishes Professional Law Enforcement Standards for the state.

“Our 34 Rangers work countless hours to ensure the safety of not only the guests who visit the MWCD lakes, but also the surrounding communities,” said John Maxey, MWCD Chief Ranger. “We hold our Rangers to high standards and offer the most up-to-date training to make certain they know how to handle a wide variety of situations they may face throughout their day.”

The Rangers also received Gold Recognition by the Lexipol Connect Policy Recognition Program for their implementation of key metrics that have contributed to effective public safety policy management techniques. The Connect Recognition Program is designed to help public safety agencies address the critical need to achieve excellence in policy and training management procedures based on national best practices.





## **Bounty on the Bridge Initiated at Atwood**

The inaugural Bounty on the Bridge event, held in October at Atwood Lake Park, was an exclusive dining experience featuring the Buckeye Career Center's culinary arts, floral design, and woodworking programs, preparing decorative centerpieces, commemorative cutting boards, and a four-course dinner. Over 90 people enjoyed the event, which benefited the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Foundation.

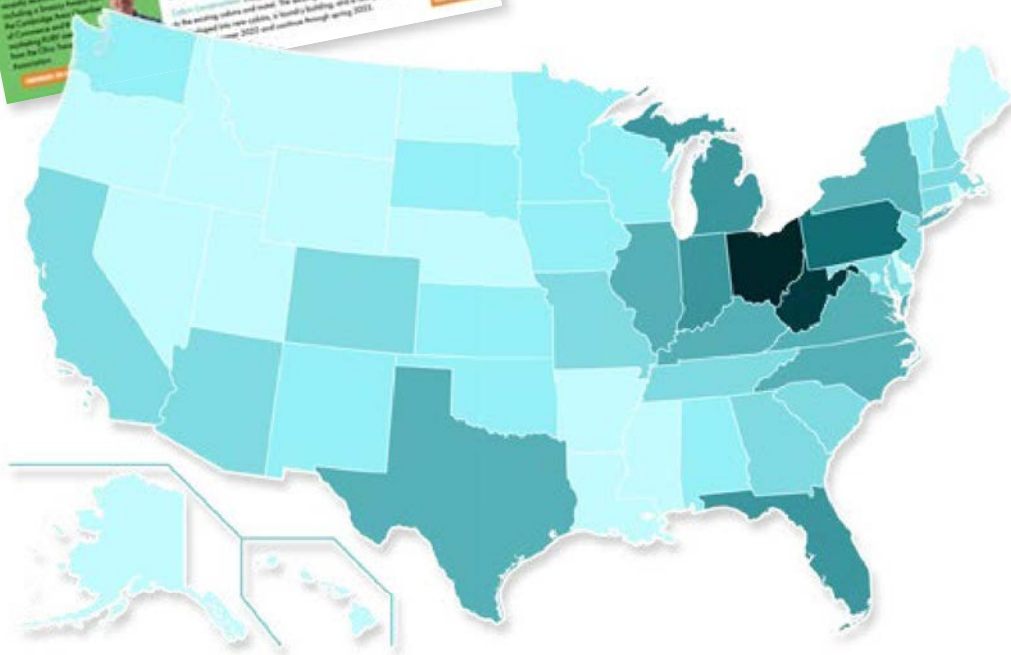






## MWCD Press Releases & Newsletters

In 2021, the MWCD Marketing & Communications Department released four editions of its newsletter, LakeViews, to keep property owners and residents in the district informed about MWCD news, projects, and events. Additionally, 32 press releases were provided by MWCD in 2021.



## Reservation Totals

The MWCD received over 32,000 reservations combined from all fifty states for cabins, camping sites, dock slips, and other activities in 2021.

### Top 15 States By Reservations

Ohio	27,998
West Virginia	1,525
Pennsylvania	1,029
Florida	185
Michigan	184
Indiana	130
New York	91
Kentucky	67
Texas	66
North Carolina	58
Virginia	51
Illinois	51
Maryland	42
Tennessee	39
California	39





# STRATEGIC PLANNING ROOTED IN HISTORY, SUCCESSSES OF 2021

Without strategic direction, an organization is rudderless.

MWCD has a history of developing strong strategic plans to guide the operations and expenses of the organization, honoring our original mission and understanding where today's stakeholders feel the District needs to be positioned.

In 2012, and again in 2017, MWCD Executive Leadership and the Board of Directors utilized valuable input from key internal stakeholders to develop a planning process to ensure that all important issues would be considered when setting priorities. These strategic plans have guided major MWCD activities, such as maintaining dams, improving cottage areas, completing shoreline and dredging projects, while investing millions of dollars to upgrade MWCD's parks and marinas.

In 2021, MWCD began planning the next iteration of the strategic plan which will build upon the success of previous plans with the goal of charting a course for the next five years. Certainly, we will continue work on enduring priorities; however, a renewed and expanded focus will be placed on conservation, water quality, and community water infrastructure challenges.

Furthermore, MWCD is committed to working diligently to ensure long-term financial stability to serve the over 200 municipalities and more than 2 million residents that call the Muskingum River Watershed home.







## Atwood Activity Center Undergoing Renovation

The Atwood Activity Center is undergoing an exterior and interior renovation, with new siding, a new roof structure, a new covered outdoor patio, the addition of a central gathering area, and reorganization of the existing kitchen and retail areas. The Nature Center is also being reorganized and renovated, with construction expected from Spring 2022 through Spring 2023.



## Seneca Marina Undergoing Improvements

Seneca Marina is seeing the reconstruction of the existing deck and a new permanent pavilion structure for outdoor dining. A new sloped concrete accessible walking path to the lower-level marina will also be constructed. A 500-foot shoreline/waterfront project includes a retaining wall, a lighted concrete sidewalk along the shoreline for access to the docks, and four new dock abutments. Construction began in late fall of 2021 with final completion expected in late spring of 2022.



## Tappan Project Will Welcome Visitors

Construction of a new welcome center will provide an accessible and inviting entrance to Tappan Lake Park, to efficiently enable visitors to reserve a campsite and shop for camping items and souvenirs. The building, which will resemble the Atwood Lake Park Welcome Center seen here, will be designed to house the park's administration and Ranger staff and is expected to open in the spring of 2023.



## Cottage Importance Recognized

In 2021, MWCD began examining potential development areas for additional cottages throughout the watershed. Analyzing environmental impacts, particularly to conservation efforts, careful consideration is being given to each property.

MWCD managed 1,204 cottages sites in 2021 at Atwood, Tappan, Seneca, Pleasant Hill, Charles Mill, Leesville, Piedmont, and Wills Creek. The cottages serve many as vacation homes, weekend getaways, or forever homes by providing an escape from the stresses of everyday life with the beauty of picturesque landscapes and relaxation with an array of recreational opportunities.

MWCD is committed to adding facilities and amenities that will become a model for outdoor recreation, with the hope that future results will leave a legacy for future generations to enjoy the benefits of the Muskingum River Watershed.



### 2021 COTTAGE LEASES

Atwood — 365  
Charles Mill — 211  
Leesville — 103  
Piedmont — 91  
Pleasant Hill — 96  
Seneca — 166  
Tappan — 146  
Wills Creek — 26  
**TOTAL — 1,204**

### HIGHLIGHTS OF LEASING AND DOCKING/SHORELINE ACTIVITIES

- 1,204 cottage sites were under lease
  - 67 new leaseholders
- About 30 percent of lessees are full-time residents across all lakes
- Staff processed about 248 new construction permits
- Nearly 500 other projects/permits including:
  - Tree permits
  - Firewood permits
  - Inspections
- 80 lease conferences were held with new leaseholders as well as education of local realtors
- More than 120 docking construction permits were initiated
- Over 3,800 docking decals were processed across three main user groups:
  - Cottage lessees (1,851)
  - Docking associations
  - Two club site leases (1,960)



OVER  
**57,000**  
ACRES OF LAND  
UNDER MANAGEMENT

## Coshocton Forest Permanently Preserved

In 2021, Western Reserve Land Conservancy, Ohio Public Works Commission, and MWCD worked together to permanently preserve an additional 934 acres of forest in Linton Township, Coshocton County. The Coshocton Forest Extension property connects the 1,827-acre Coshocton Forest Property acquired in 2020 and the original 3,807-acre Wills Creek Lake property.

With this additional land purchase, MWCD has ensured the land will forever remain open for hiking, birdwatching, nature study, fishing, hunting, and more, while also contributing to the \$56.5 million tourism industry in Coshocton County.

This acquisition highlights the value of MWCD's long-term view on conservation. This land, through tree planting efforts and natural forest succession, has returned to a true natural resource for all Ohioans after decades of strip mining. This property provides an array of unique habitats supporting many species of birds, mammals, reptiles, and plants, some of which are rare in Ohio and listed as Species of Special Concern.

The project also presents outstanding opportunities for connectivity of protected area and linkage to public outdoor recreation areas. In addition to creating a 6,586-acre block, all owned and managed by MWCD, the property is the "missing link" that further connects to ODNR-managed AEP Conesville Public Recreation Lands establishing over 10,000 acres of natural area open for recreational opportunities.

MWCD currently manages over 57,000 acres of land and water in the Muskingum River Watershed, and will own and manage the Coshocton Forest property going forward. MWCD intends to manage the property for the preservation and enhancement of healthy sustainable forests and waters, along with the conservation of valuable natural resources. At the same time, the property will be managed to continue to provide and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy.





## Forestry Efforts Include Invasive Species Control

Timber stand improvement projects were completed for more than 335 acres of grapevine control and other invasive species control projects in 2021. Grapevines can be extremely damaging in trees; they tend to bring down trees especially during icy and windy conditions.

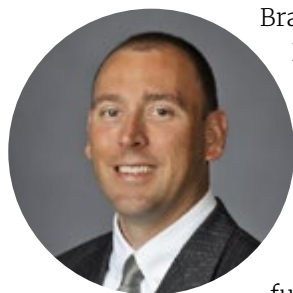
MWCD's goal is to focus on removing vines in areas where we have some of our best trees. Invasive trees and shrubs can quickly invade a particular area and out compete native species of trees and plants. A focused effort has been to control these species where future disturbances may occur or where native trees are being stunted by high invasive densities.

Forestry staff also had two reforestation projects in 2021. Around 775 trees were given away to participants at Atwood, Seneca, and Piedmont Lakes to be planted on MWCD cottage leased lands. The purpose of the giveaway was to reforest areas that lost trees due to disease, storm damage, natural decline, or park renovations. Shelters were used to help protect the trees from deer and mowing, promoting growth by acting like a mini greenhouse. Additionally, about 10,000 trees were planted on 22 acres at the old Atwood Lake golf course.

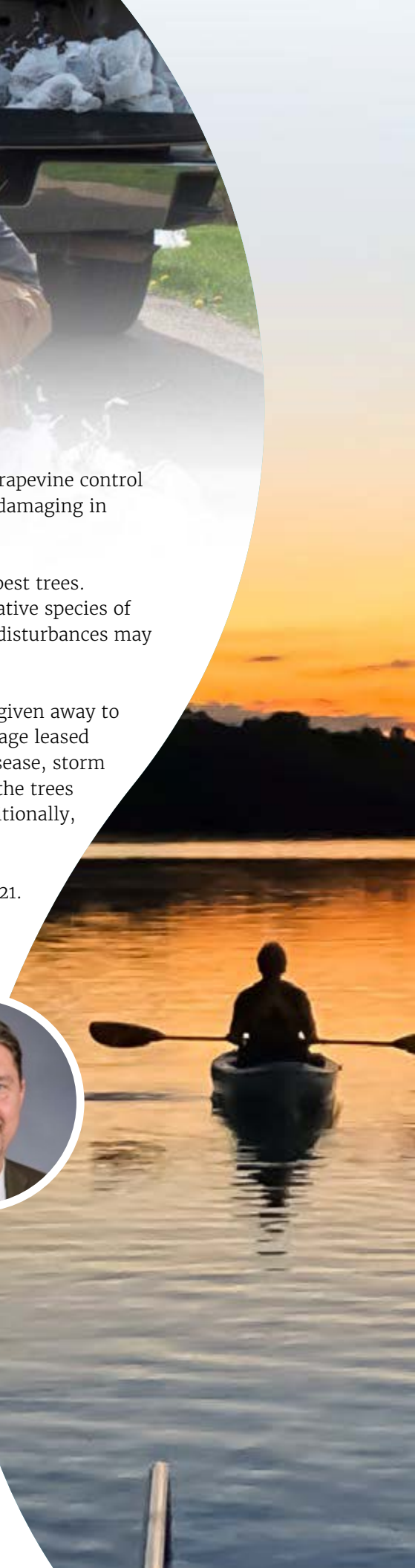
Preparations for trees to be planted in 2022 on 35 acres at Tappan Lake began in 2021.

## New Positions Meet Evolving Goals

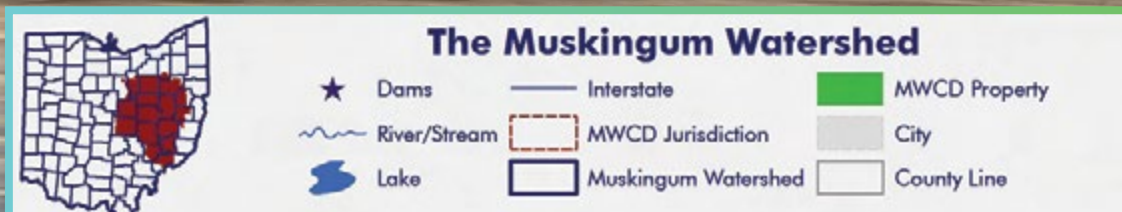
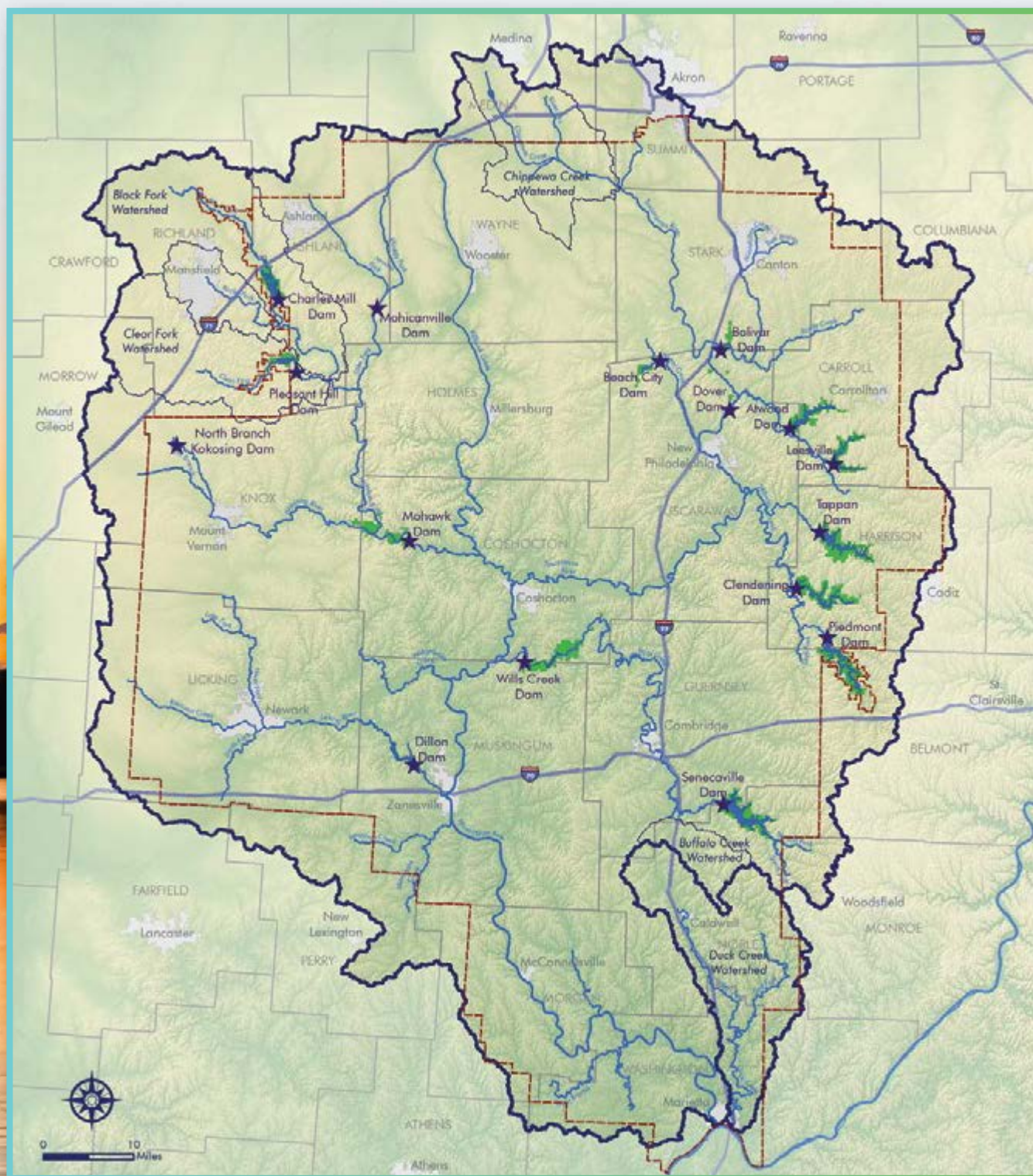
Matt Thomas has been named Chief of Conservation, having previously served as the Water Quality Coordinator. Thomas is responsible for defining and maintaining metrics and criteria by which MWCD's conservation efforts will be assessed. Furthermore, Thomas oversees and manages the day-to-day conservation operations of the organization including land and water quality, watershed management, conservation education, and sustainability practices of the District.



Brad Janssen has been named Chief of Natural Resources and Land Management, previously serving as a member of the Executive Team as Chief of Conservation since 2018. He is coordinating all land management activities under one program, providing better stewardship of the natural resources within the district and greater collaboration with conservation projects in future years.











# 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

This financial report is designed to provide our citizens, investors, and creditors with a general overview of MWCD's finances and to show MWCD's accountability for the money it receives. To see the complete financial statements, visit [www.mwcd.org](http://www.mwcd.org) or the State Auditor's website at [www.ohioauditor.gov](http://www.ohioauditor.gov).

## 2021 END OF YEAR CASH AND INVESTMENT BALANCES

12/31/21 Cash And Investment Balance	
Fund 1 - Improvement Fund	\$ 1,274,903
Fund 2 - Maintenance Fund	58,194,918
Fund 3 - Recreation Improvement Fund	3,253,381
Fund 4 - Bond Fund	100
Fund 9 - Maintenance Assessment Fund	13,368,858
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 76,092,161</b>

## 2021 SCHEDULE OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS (CASH BASIS)

Fund	2021 YTD Actual Revenue
001 Improvement Fund	\$ 986
002 Maintenance Fund	30,281,532
003 Recreation Improvement Fund	589,729
009 Maintenance Assessment Fund	6,050,458
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 36,922,706</b>

Fund	2021 YTD Actual Expenditures
002 Maintenance Fund	\$ 16,640,511
003 Recreation Improvement Fund	11,565,340
009 Maintenance Assessment Fund	5,302,021
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 33,507,871</b>

Department	2021 YTD Actual Revenue
10 Administrative	\$ 6,011,435
13 Human Resources & Safety	16,780
15 Finance	948,439
20 Engineering	291,937
60 Leasing	3,208,341
65 NATURAL RESOURCES	12,521,078
80 Parks & Recreation	10,662,373
85 Marinas	3,224,129
89 Rangers	38,195
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 36,922,706</b>

Department	2021 YTD Actual Expenditures
10 Administrative	\$ 1,689,575
11 Information Technology	839,086
12 Public Information	237,476
13 Human Resources/Safety	569,523
14 Legal	261,680
15 Finance	671,710
20 Engineering	14,632,407
50 Conservation	692,047
60 Leasing	884,896
65 Natural Resources	1,315,746
80 Parks & Recreation	8,234,626
85 Marinas	2,224,339
89 Rangers	1,254,761
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 33,507,871</b>

Activity	2021 YTD Actual Revenue
15000 Easements & Right of Ways	\$ 986
21000 Use of Water Assets	167,853
21002 Use of Water Assets	32,666
23000 Land & Building Rental	30,948
24000 Farm Operations - Sharecrop	148,227
27000 Assessment	5,855,534
28100 Shoreline Protection	66,127
29100 Mineral Operations - Oil and Gas	11,829,154
33000 Timber Harvesting	302,842
36000 Pine Pulpwood Operations	71,949
48000 General Park Facilities	209,776
50000 Water Systems	30,800
51000 Fishing Rights	62,647
51500 Special Clean Up Operations	16,780
51600 Lake Patrol Operations	38,195
52000 Marina Operations	2,651,088
52100 Marina Operations - Camping	573,040
53000 Cottage Sites	2,581,759
53100 Club Sites	59,780
53200 Multiple Docks	510,916
54002 Sites Lake Sewer System	49,110
54003 Mifflin Water System	2,100
54009 Seneca Chestnut Grove Sewer	24,600

Activity	2021 YTD Actual Revenue
54012 Park Sewer System	866
55000 Vacation Cabins	878,294
56000 Beach Facilities	98
56100 Park Refreshment Stands	27,868
56300 Boat Rentals	44,766
56500 Activity Centers	97,690
56700 Vending Machines	28,465
57000 Park Camping	8,766,956
57100 Trailer Pump Out	26,091
57200 Camper Trailer Storage	253,800
57500 Firewood	36,728
58000 General Park Facilities	214,265
58100 Park Shelters	21,979
58800 Special Events	55,499
58801 Alive	149,111
80000 Interest on Investments	948,089
81000 Miscellaneous Income	16,871
81100 Bad Check Charges	350
81500 Construction Permits	8,375
84700 Capital Credit Refunds	13,038
86200 Misc Revenue - Taxes	16,630
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 36,922,706</b>

Appropriations Grouping	2021YTD Actual Expenditures
Personnel	\$ 10,606,496
Materials & Supplies	1,936,496
Publicity & Advertising	221,823
Utilities	1,520,580
Health Insurance Laser	601,110
Gas & Oil And Service	431,646
Contracts	14,298,451
Resale	529,049
Operating Equipment	1,041,211
Real Estate Taxes	405,152
Other	1,915,857
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 33,507,871</b>

If you have questions about this report or need additional information, contact James Crandall, MWCD CFO at (330) 343-6647 or [jcrandall@mwcd.org](mailto:jcrandall@mwcd.org).





## OUR MISSION

Responsible stewards  
dedicated to providing  
the benefits of flood reduction,  
conservation and recreation  
to the Muskingum River Watershed



## OUR VISION

Respected and valued Leader,  
Employer and Partner  
in Flood Reduction,  
Conservation and Recreation

### CORE VALUES

<b>SERVICE</b>	We take the extra step to understand the needs of our customers, external stakeholders and each other, focusing on solutions to provide the best experience possible.
<b>TEAMWORK</b>	We leverage our collective knowledge and work as a team together to advance our mission and improve the organization.
<b>EXCELLENCE</b>	What we do, we do well, keeping our standards of service and our work performance at a high level.
<b>WITH INTEGRITY</b>	We work with each other, our customers and partners openly and sincerely in an ethical and professional manner.
<b>ACCOUNTABILITY</b>	We do what we say we are going to do with a positive attitude and a willingness to grow, learn and challenge ourselves and each other.
<b>RESPECT</b>	We treat others with courtesy and dignity as we would like to be treated.
<b>DEDICATION</b>	We have passion for our mission and we are committed to our work and the role we play in our organization.
<b>SAFETY</b>	We foster a culture of safety to ensure protection of our customers, our partners and each other.



**MAIN OFFICE**  
1319 Third Street NW  
New Philadelphia, OH  
44663

**MAIN OFFICE ANNEX** (Engineering and Recreation)  
2050 Reiser Avenue SE  
New Philadelphia, OH  
44663