

# Lake Views

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## Positive Changes

Many changes have been realized in the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) organization since the Utica shale play became a major force in oil and gas exploration and production. Southeast Ohio, where 6 out of the 10 MWCD lakes are located, has become the hotbed of Utica shale activity starting in 2010. Realizing the potential threats and immense opportunities put forth by the potential to lease thousands of acres of deep mineral rights in the Utica Shale play, MWCD developed a 5-year Strategic Plan in 2012. The changes in the MWCD organization and programs are a result of thoughtful and deliberate planning and actions in following the Strategic Plan.

This issue of LakeViews focuses on these positive changes and expanded programs in the MWCD organization and how operations all focus on the MWCD mission, that being:

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

The overall strategy of the 2012 Strategic Plan focused on the needs and expectations of the external stakeholders with goals to improve MWCD's performance in the perception of the stakeholders through continued stewardship of fiscal and natural resources, improving the capability of our employees and managing in a way



*MWCD Board President, Joanne Limbach (left), reviews progress on the Strategic Plan with Executive Director, John Hoopingarner (right). The 5-year Strategic Plan was approved in 2012. The 4-year review shows that all high priority initiatives have been addressed.*

to ensure operational excellence. This "balanced" approach yielded objectives in key high priority strategies:

1. Stakeholder focus
2. Operational excellence
3. Stewardship of resources

The Strategic Plan identified 21 high priority initiatives and we are pleased to announce that all initiatives have been completed or the programs have been developed and are perpetuated with appropriate and adequate funding.

**Positive Changes,**  
~ continued on page 2

**OFFICE HOURS:**

Mon-Thurs 7 am - 5 pm

Friday 8 am - 5 pm

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Theodore R. Lozier, P.E.  
Chief of Conservation

~ **Positive Changes**, continued from page 1

The results of completing the high priority initiatives can be summarized in the following successes:

**Stakeholder Focus**

1. A new MWCD brand was developed which not only included a new logo but also a heightened focus on excellence in customer service.
2. A customer feedback program has been initiated and can be found on the "Fishing for Feedback" tab on the MWCD web page. This program allows us to address our customers' needs in real time and continuously improve customer services.
3. Through customer surveys and benchmarking notable park and campground facilities throughout the country, a Master Plan to modernize the 5 major MWCD parks (Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Atwood, Tappan and Seneca) has been developed and is in implementation phase. Construction of the \$161 million capital improvement plan at the MWCD parks will be realized over the course of the next 5 years. For status updates and construction progress at the MWCD parks visit our website at [www.mwcdcip.org](http://www.mwcdcip.org).

**Operational Excellence**

4. The long list of major deferred maintenance projects at the parks and recreational facilities has been addressed. These projects include sanitary sewer upgrades, water treatment plant upgrades, new restrooms, and many other improvements.
5. The 10 MWCD reservoirs which are 80+ years old can now be properly maintained through robust water quality testing programs, scheduled shoreline stabilization activities and a large scale dredging program.

**Stewardship**

6. As responsible natural resource stewards, a team of experts was assembled to study and review Utica Shale mineral and water resource development. Industry experts made a critical analysis of potential environmental impacts and leasing strategies. This resulted in leases and agreements with heightened safety and environmental protections for not only MWCD properties but also neighboring properties. These agreements now serve as models for other private and governmental property owners. A sample deep mineral lease with the protective covenants is found on the MWCD web page along with a sample temporary water withdrawal agreement.
7. As responsible financial stewards and due to the revenue generated from mineral and water resource development, the **maintenance assessment was reduced by 50% in 2014** for all 500,000 assessed property owners throughout the district and remained at that level in 2015. At this time the MWCD cost-share obligation to the US Army Corps of Engineers for the maintenance and upkeep of the 80+ year old dams and flood control system in the District can still be met through subsidies from MWCD oil, gas and water revenue and through reduced project costs realized in final plans and construction of the dam maintenance projects. MWCD will review distribution of mineral resource revenue quarterly as oil and gas royalty income fluctuates.

The strategic plan also calls out other initiatives that lead to enhanced internal operational excellence. Now that the high priority initiatives have been achieved or have been established and are on-going, a focus on enhancing internal operations has moved to the top of the list. The MWCD team realizes achieving operational excellence is a continuous on-going effort and we pledge to maintain this focus as we continue on this journey. After all, our stakeholders deserve it!



All High Priority Initiatives of the 5-year Strategic Plan are 100 % complete or the targeted initiatives have commenced and are on-going programs. The updated logo is part of the branding plan to promote a consistent image and identity to District stakeholders.



As a result of the Strategic Plan, a team of experts was assembled to evaluate the potential threats and opportunities afforded through the Utica Shale play where MWCD has significant property holdings. Based on the analyses by the team and the 80+ year history of traditional oil and gas leasing, MWCD leased deep mineral rights while also securing extensive protective environmental covenants in the leases. The terms of the leases allow MWCD staff to review development plans and operations on adjoining and MWCD properties to ensure compliance of the environmental covenants. The pad shown here is on adjoining properties near Clendening Lake



Managing erosion in the permanent reservoir areas will extend the ability of the reservoirs to effectively serve as part of the flood reduction system. Nearly 500 shoreline stabilization projects throughout MWCD's 350 miles of shoreline have been identified. The shoreline stabilization near the Atwood Amphitheater, shown here, was completed during the 2015-2106 winter drawdown.



Development of a dredging program was one of the strategic initiatives successfully completed and initiated. Tappan Lake dredging operations, shown here, will remove close to 400,000 cubic yards of sediment which will re-establish valuable flood protection storage and prolong the life of the reservoir.



Deferred maintenance and capital improvements at MWCD recreational facilities are identified as High Priority initiatives in the Strategic Plan. Upgrades and installation of new restrooms in select parks, marinas and campgrounds are part of the planned improvements. Installation of a pre-fabricated restroom, near Clendening Marina, is shown above.





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



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## 2016 Park Events Schedule Now Available

2016 PARK EVENT SCHEDULES are now available at [mwcd.org](http://mwcd.org).

Reserve your summer camping and recreation  
experience through the website!

**The LOTTERY FOR SEASONAL CAMPERS IS MARCH 19.**

Visit the website at [mwcd.org](http://mwcd.org) for more details.

### NEW THIS YEAR...

Most parks have the ability to push text notifications of schedule updates or other important communications throughout the year.

### NEW THIS YEAR...

Most parks have the ability to push text notifications of schedule updates or other important communications throughout the year. Sign up for one or multiple parks by the following:

Text	ATWOODEVENTS	to 888777	for Atwood Lake Park updates
Text	CMEVENTS	to 888777	for Charles Mill Lake Park updates
Text	PHEVENTS	to 888777	for Pleasant Hill Lake Park updates
Text	SENECAEVENTS	to 888777	for Seneca Lake Park updates
Text	TAPPANEVENTS	to 888777	for Tappan Lake Park updates