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Mission Statement

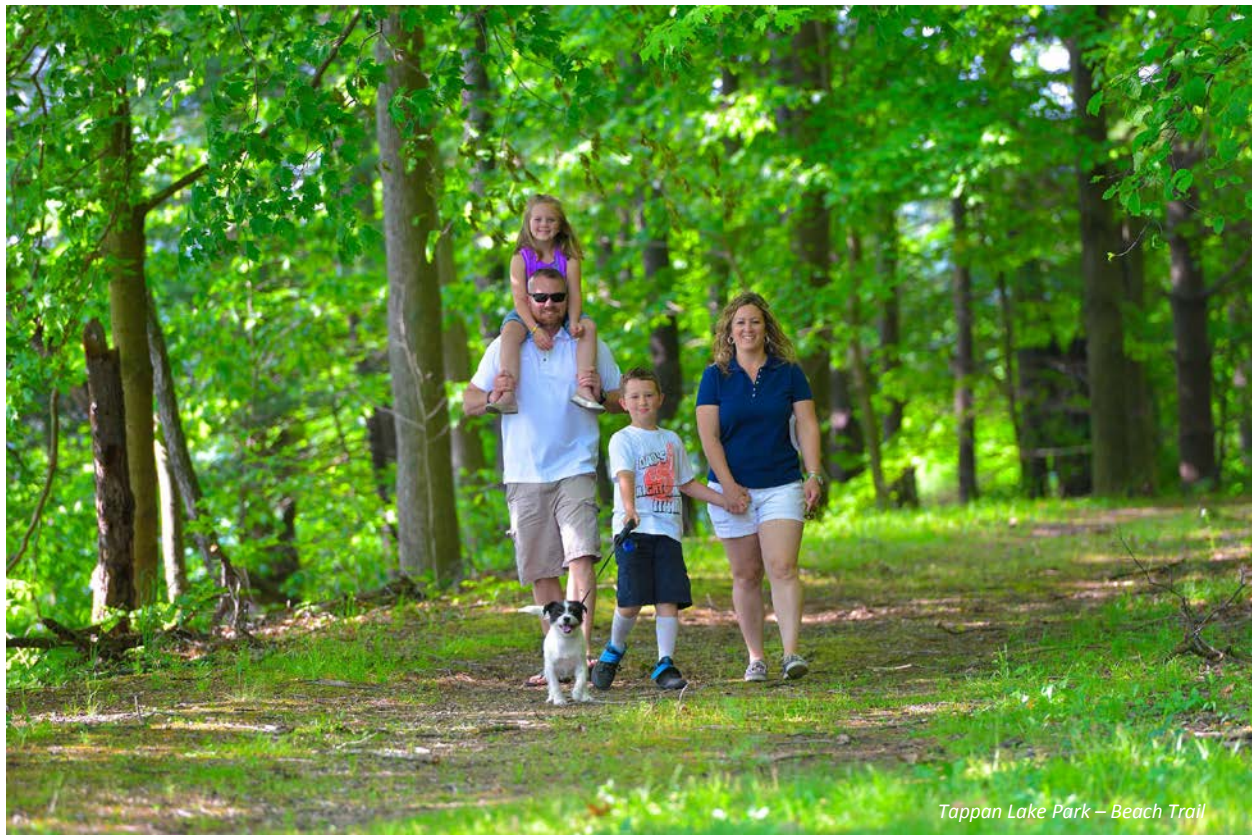
Responsible stewards dedicated to providing the benefits of flood reduction, conservation, and recreation in the Muskingum River Watershed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction and Background	4
A. Board of Directors Goal	5
II. Trails Blueprint	6
A. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats Analysis	6
B. Benchmarking Survey	6
C. Administrative Plan	7
D. Conceptual Trails Plan	8
1. Conceptual Trails Plan Maps	9
E. Action Plan	10
1. Short-term Actions	10
2. Long-term Actions	11
III. Appendices	
A. Benefits of Trails	12
B. SWOT Analysis	13
C. Benchmarking Survey Summary	14
D. Potential Partners and Stakeholders	16
E. Existing Regional Trail Systems	17
F. Existing Local Trails Systems	21
G. Public Participation	22
H. Funding Opportunities	23



Trails make our communities more liveable and increase property values. They connect us to our neighbors, stores, places of interest, and even to our jobs. They improve the economy through tourism and civic improvement, preserve and restore open space, and provide opportunities for physical activity to improve fitness and mental health.



The 2017 Ohio Resident Outdoor Recreation Survey indicates Ohioans participate in hiking and biking on trails more than any other major outdoor recreational activity¹.

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) has featured trails since the development of its recreational facilities began in the 1950's. All parks eventually offered trails near or adjacent to their respective campgrounds. The Buckeye Trail, the nationally-known, 1,400-mile long-distance trail that circles Ohio, was started in 1959 and includes links between Seneca, Piedmont, Clendening, Tappan and Leesville lakes. The MWCD and the Buckeye Trail Association (BTA) have enjoyed a strong partnership for many years and are working to develop even more connections between the Trail and MWCD lakes and facilities.

The development of trails has recently been gaining more attention and support. In 2012 as part of the MWCD Parks Master Plan, a survey was distributed throughout the watershed to solicit feedback from the public. New trails were one of the top amenities requested. Scores of other parks and recreation surveys have yielded similar responses. The 2013 Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan shows trails are increasingly being used by Ohioansⁱⁱ. The 2017 Ohio Resident Outdoor Recreation Survey indicates Ohioans participate in hiking and biking on trails more than any other major outdoor recreational activity.

There is strong interest in trails in Ohio both legislatively and administratively. 2018 has been declared by the 132nd General Assembly as Ohio's Year of the Trails. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) has committed to compiling a comprehensive online inventory and map of all trails and trail events. ⁱⁱⁱ ODNR also plans to update state's comprehensive trail plan in 2018.

While the MWCD Parks Master Plan was being developed, the growing interest in trails at Atwood Lake spurred the creation of the Atwood Lake Trail Master Plan, commissioned and funded by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Foundation in 2012. The Plan is the culmination of a year-long effort with the public and key stakeholders. The Atwood Lake Trail Master Plan includes numerous



proposed trails in and around Atwood Lake and connections to Carrollton and the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail in Zoarville.

The plan also resulted in the formation of the Atwood Lake Trail Advisory Committee (ALTAC). The ALTAC has been instrumental in the

development of the first two phases of the Atwood Lake Trail Master Plan, including the beautiful concrete deck trail bridge linking the Atwood Marina West and outside campgrounds to Atwood Lake Park and its new Welcome Center. The ALTAC continues to coordinate the implementation of the Master Plan, which will add to the nearly five miles of existing trails at Atwood Lake.

Outside interest in trails has by no means been limited to the Atwood Lake area. Pleasant Hill Lake Park has a working relationship with the Ohio Horseman's Council (OHC), whose members have planned, built, and maintain 12 miles of equestrian trails on MWCD property that now connect to trails in the Mohican State Forest and Malabar Farm State Park. The resulting system of 88 miles of continuous trails is used by equestrians and hikers alike. The partnership led to the development of the popular horse

camp at Pleasant Hill Lake Park, as well. The OHC has expressed interest in developing equestrian trails at other MWCD locations as well.

In 2014, an internal Trails Workgroup was established to consider the growing number of public requests for new trails throughout the MWCD. As more and more requests were submitted, it became evident that the best way to address them was to develop a comprehensive trail plan that would establish the guiding principles for trail development and maintenance. In 2015 the Trails Workgroup recommended the development of such a plan to MWCD Executive Management.

A. 2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS GOAL

The MWCD Board of Directors showed their support by making the development of a comprehensive trails plan a 2016 Goal:

MWCD will develop a Trails Blueprint by December of 2016 that will address not only various types of trails, but also linkages between communities and our lakes, between MWCD lakes, and between regional trail systems and MWCD lands. The development of trails was one of the higher priorities identified by customers surveyed as part of the parks master planning process. A Trails Blueprint Development Team will be chartered and begin by the end of the second quarter. The activities and processes developed and implemented by the internal trails workgroup of 2014 and 2015 will be utilized to aid in the development of the blueprint.



Johnsons Woods State Nature Preserve – Wayne County

II. TRAILS BLUEPRINT

In June of 2016 the MWCD established the Trails Blueprint Team to develop the Trails Blueprint. The Trails Blueprint includes a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats Analysis, a Benchmark Survey, an Administrative Plan, a Conceptual Trails Plan, and an Action Plan. The Blueprint provides strategies and actions that, when implemented, will result in a comprehensive trails network in the Muskingum Watershed and beyond.

A. STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS ANALYSIS

The Trails Blueprint Team performed a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis to gain a better understanding of the factors that could impact the success of the Trails Blueprint. The MWCD's strengths include its abundant land and water resources, its strong partnerships throughout the watershed, and a high level of internal and external support. Weaknesses include staff time constraints and the current lack of an administrative framework. Trail development would provide real opportunities to enhance local economies, develop new partnerships, and increase the use of MWCD facilities. Threats include lack of awareness of the benefits of trails, misconceptions regarding problems associated with trails, and not-in-my-backyard issues. *(The complete SWOT Analysis is included in Appendix B.)*

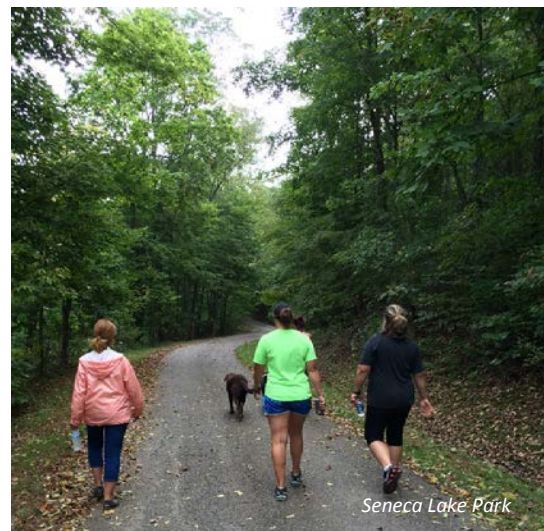
B. BENCHMARKING SURVEY

The Trails Blueprint Team created a benchmarking survey to evaluate and compare the operations of different trail groups. The survey included questions concerning trail maintenance, challenges and solutions, creative funding sources and budgets, volunteer roles, and marketing strategies, and was shared with trail professionals and groups associated with hiking, biking, equestrian, water, mountain biking, and ATV trails. The survey was circulated through the National Recreation and Parks Association, Ohio Parks and Recreation Association, and key individuals identified as current or potential partners.

Thirty-one responses were received from trail professionals in Ohio, Kentucky, Iowa, Utah, Oregon, Virginia, Montana, Maine, and Ontario, Canada. The organizations in Ohio included Stark County Park District, Five Rivers Metroparks, Cleveland Metroparks, Great Parks of Hamilton Co., ODNR Ohio State Parks & Forestry, Summit Metroparks, and the Buckeye Trail Association. The results revealed that:

- 84% of organizations have a Trails Master Plan or are in the process of developing one.
- 94% rely on volunteers to assist with planning, building, maintaining, leading programs, marketing, and other tasks
- 68% have a dedicated annual trail budget.
- 68% use trail user surveys.
- Property acquisition, funding, staffing/ volunteer limitations, and long term maintenance were the most common obstacles faced.

(A complete summary of the survey results can be found in Appendix C.)



C. ADMINISTRATIVE PLAN

An Administrative Plan establishes a framework for the implementation of the Trails Blueprint. The Trails Blueprint Team evaluated three administrative options:

- Option 1. An internal MWCD committee serves in an advisory capacity to executive management and begin executing the Trails Blueprint Action Plan.
- Option 2. The MWCD utilizes a consultant to administer and implement the Trails Blueprint. An internal MWCD committee acts in an advisory capacity to the consultant and executive management.
- Option 3. A Trails Coordinator position is created within the MWCD to administer and implement the Trails Blueprint. The Trails Coordinator works with a trails advisory committee, executive management, and internal and external partners to implement the Blueprint.

The Trails Blueprint Team recommends Option 3. A Trails Coordinator could be dedicated to implementing the Trails Blueprint. Option 1 does not allocate enough staff resources for the task, while Option 2 could be more expensive, and may not provide adequate dedication to the project.

Trails Coordinator

Duties of the Trail Coordinator may include:

- Guiding the implementation of the Trails Blueprint by working with a Trails Advisory Committee, MWCD departments, and outside partner groups.
- Preparing an annual trails budget
- Coordinating fundraising and grant-writing efforts
- Developing and administering a trails volunteer program

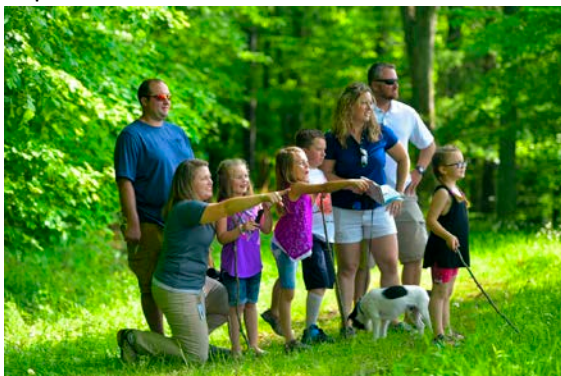
Supporting Positions

As the Trails Blueprint is implemented, supporting positions may become necessary, including:

- A Trail Crew to maintain and construct trails
- Interns to assist in mapping, collecting GPS information, and trail inventories
- Trail Volunteers to build and maintain trails, support programs, and act as “trail ambassadors”

Trails Advisory Committee

It is recommended that a Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) be created. A TAC could provide recommendations and feedback to the Trails Coordinator for the implementation of the Trails Blueprint. The TAC could provide perspective from all departments of the MWCD to ensure trail development matches organizational plans and priorities. The committee may consist of representatives from MWCD departments and could include members from external trail and community groups.



D. CONCEPTUAL TRAILS PLAN

The real essence of the Trails Blueprint is the Conceptual Trails Plan, a general concept and layout of existing and proposed trails. The Conceptual Trails Plan includes bike routes and bike lanes on existing roadways linking communities to proposed trails. The maps also include “concept areas” where multiple trail types or special use areas could be implemented such as mountain bike or equestrian trails.

The Conceptual Trails Plan is not a detailed representation of the precise location of proposed trails, type, construction methods, or sources of funding. Instead, it is a vision with many components beginning with comments like – “Wouldn’t it be great to have a trail from Charles Mill to Mansfield?”, or “We would like to have a safe way to walk from the park to the local ice cream place”, or “How can we connect all of the lakes by trail?” The Conceptual Trails Plan is only the first step in District-wide trail development; it will be followed by additional public input, project evaluation, prioritization of specific trail projects, and ultimately trail design and construction.

The Conceptual Trails Plan encompasses the entire 8,000 square-mile Muskingum River Watershed and adjacent areas, and includes hiking, bicycling, multi-use, mountain bike, horse, and water trails. Trail development is proposed at three different levels: reservoir, area, and statewide.

At the reservoir level, trail development and enhancements were proposed within and around MWCD reservoirs, including the five major parks (Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca and Tappan) and four marinas (Clendening, Piedmont, Seneca, and Tappan). These trails would provide access and connections to unique and scenic land features, viewpoints, and natural areas, and hiking/biking opportunities for park and marina guests, cottage area lessees, and lake residents. Existing trails may be improved and/or redesigned, while new trails may be considered in the undeveloped areas around each reservoir.

Four areas were designated in the Trails Blueprint: the Charles Mill and Pleasant Hill Area; the Mohawk and Wills Creek Area; the Northeast Muskingum Watershed Area; and the Southeast Muskingum Watershed Area. The Conceptual Trails Plan proposes trail development at this level connecting MWCD facilities with nearby communities and local trail systems, such as county park district trails and water trails.

At the statewide level, the Conceptual Trails Plan depicts Ohio’s major statewide trails vis-à-vis the MWCD lakes and parks. The statewide map illustrates the potential for connectivity between the MWCD lakes and parks and connections to major statewide trails, including the Buckeye Trail and the Ohio to Erie Trail.



To develop the Conceptual Trails Plan, existing and currently planned trails were inventoried at the levels described above. Input from the public, stakeholders, MWCD staff, local communities and

agencies, and potential trail partners was solicited, and public meetings were held on a regional basis as well. Input was also gathered at informational presentations made to MWCD staff, the Development Advisory Committee, and the Board of Directors. *(A complete listing of public meetings is included in Appendix G.)*

Using this internal and external input, and trail inventory information, a Conceptual Trails Plan was developed that envisions improvements to existing trails, the development of new trails, and connections to other trail systems, local communities, unique natural areas, MWCD facilities, and local points of interest. The Conceptual Trails Plan proposes trails not only on MWCD property, but connections to nearby communities and trail systems that would be completed in partnership with local governments and organizations.

1. Conceptual Trails Plan Maps

The Conceptual Trails Plan is illustrated through a series of maps organized at the reservoir, area, and statewide levels, showing existing trails, local communities and points of interest, public lands, MWCD facilities, and proposed trails and connections. These maps include data from many sources, including counties, municipalities, park districts, and state and local agencies. The MWCD collected these data so that the conceptual trails plan would be as comprehensive as possible. However, these data are not all inclusive and the MWCD cannot guarantee the accuracy of any data derived from outside sources. There may be more proposed and existing trails than those depicted. The data collected are included solely for planning purposes.

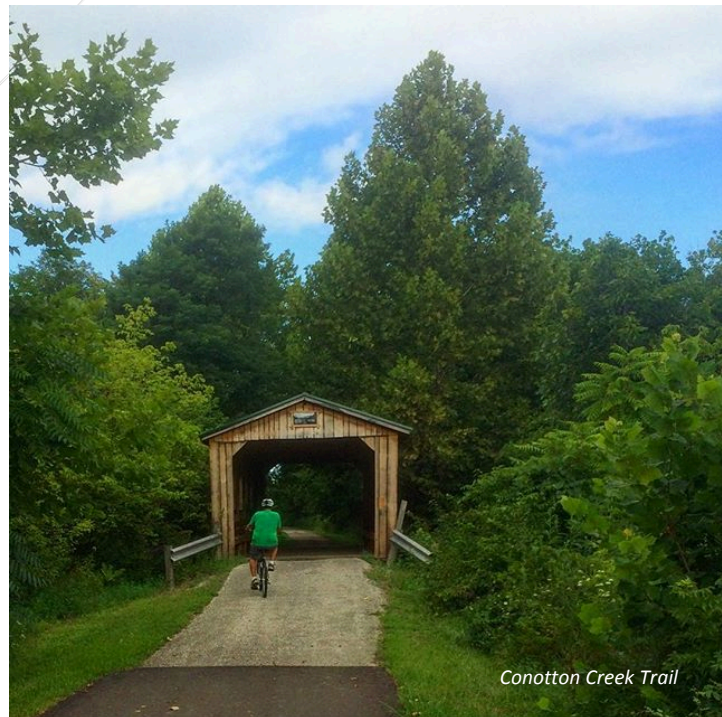
Reservoir Maps

- Atwood
- Beach City
- Bolivar
- Charles Mill
- Clendening
- Dover
- Leesville
- Mohawk
- Piedmont
- Pleasant Hill
- Seneca
- Tappan
- Wills Creek

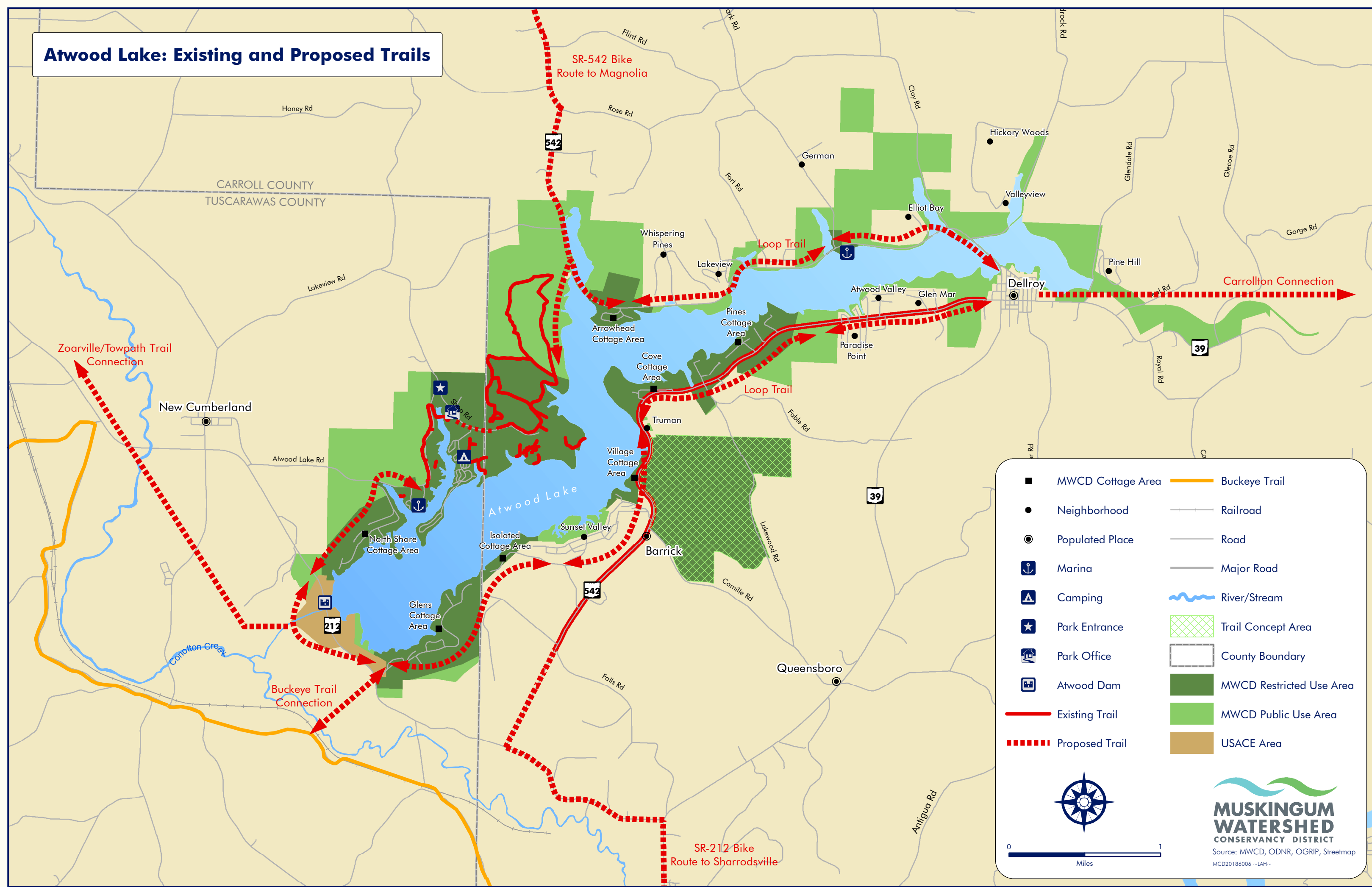
Area Maps

- Charles Mill and Pleasant Hill
- Mohawk and Wills Creek
- Northeast Muskingum Watershed
- Southeast Muskingum Watershed

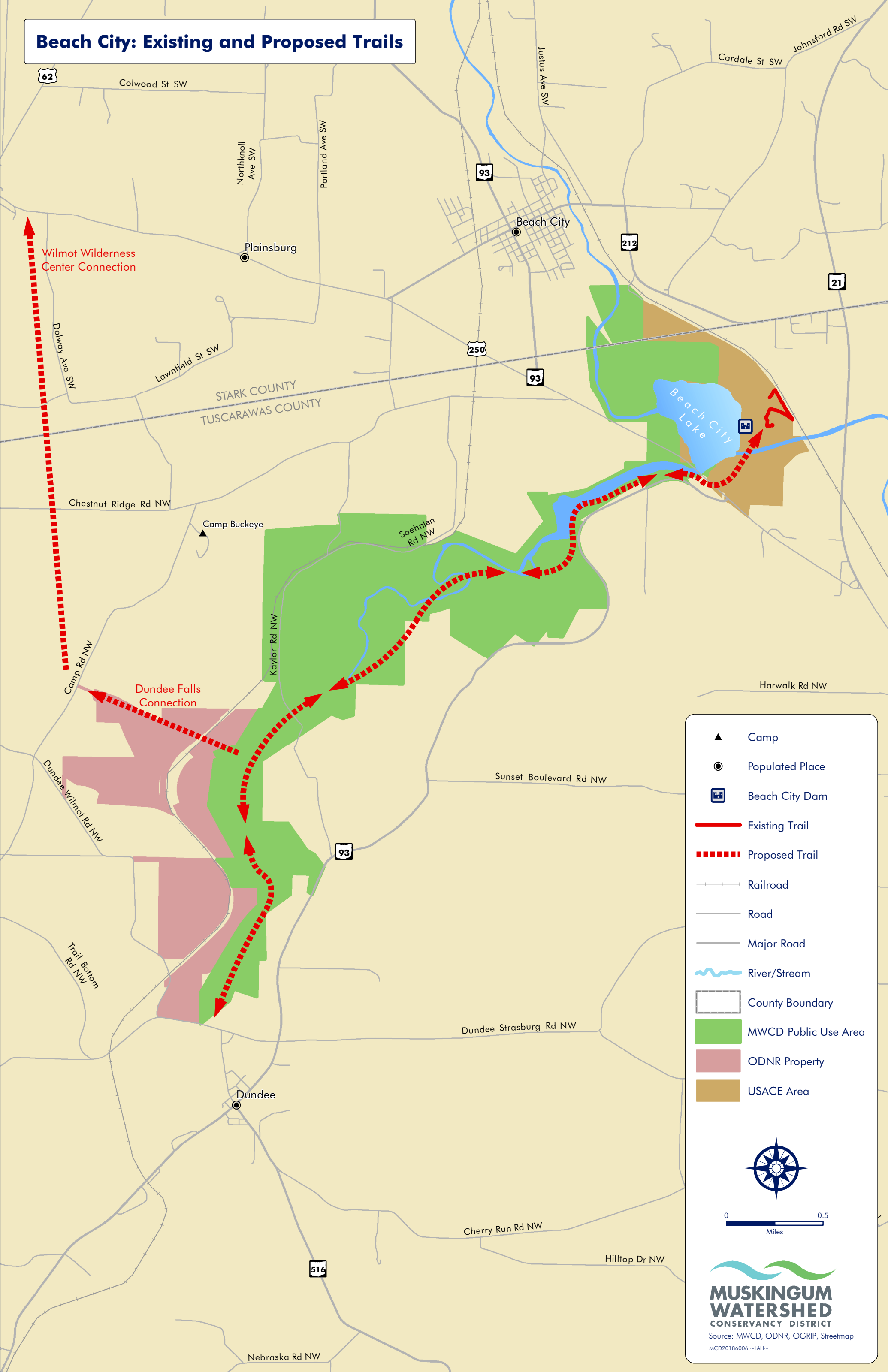
Statewide Map



Atwood Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



Beach City: Existing and Proposed Trails



▲ Camp

● Populated Place

🏰 Beach City Dam

— Existing Trail

--- Proposed Trail

— Railroad

— Road

— Major Road

~ River/Stream

▭ County Boundary

■ MWCD Public Use Area

■ ODNR Property

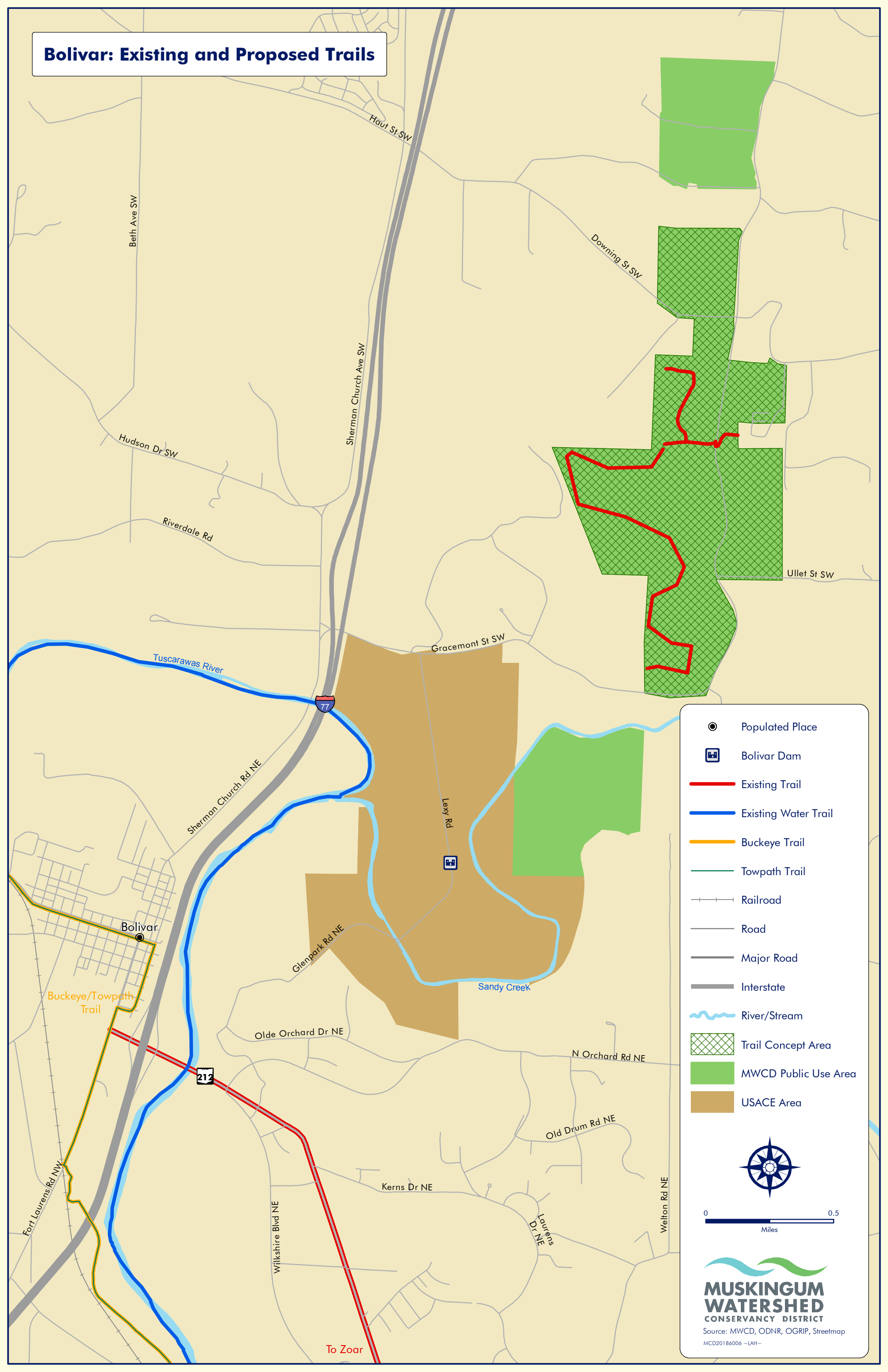
■ USACE Area

0 0.5
Miles

**MUSKINGUM
WATERSHED**
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 ~LAH~

Bolivar: Existing and Proposed Trails



- Populated Place
- 🏰 Bolivar Dam
- Existing Trail
- Existing Water Trail
- Buckeye Trail
- Towpath Trail
- Railroad
- Road
- Major Road
- Interstate
- River/Stream
- ▨ Trail Concept Area
- MWCD Public Use Area
- USACE Area



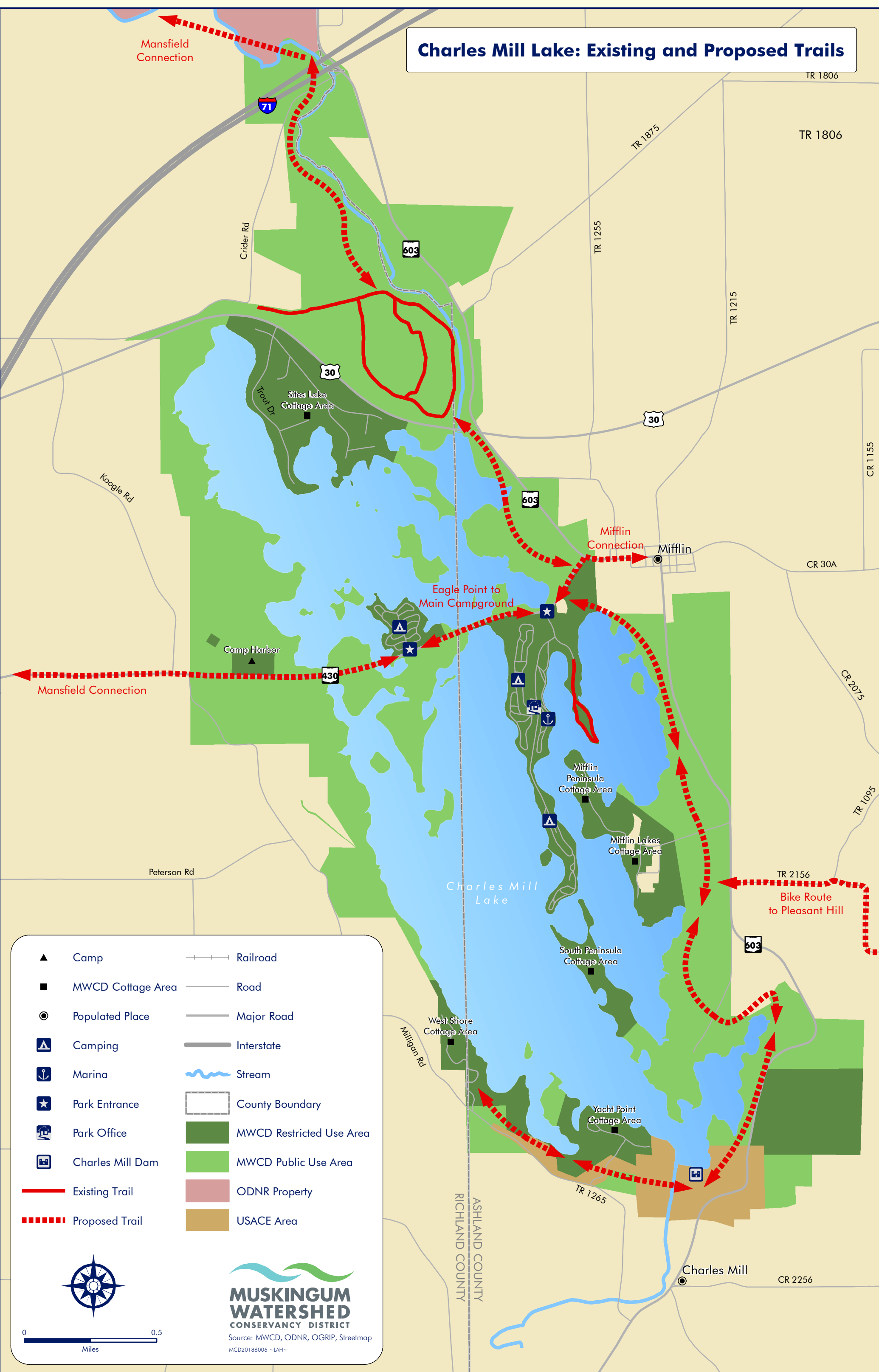
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Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
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To Zoar

Charles Mill Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



Camp

MWCD Cottage Area

Populated Place

Camping

Marina

Park Entrance

Park Office

Charles Mill Dam

Existing Trail

Proposed Trail

Railroad

Road

Major Road

Interstate

Stream

County Boundary

MWCD Restricted Use Area

MWCD Public Use Area

ODNr Property

USACE Area

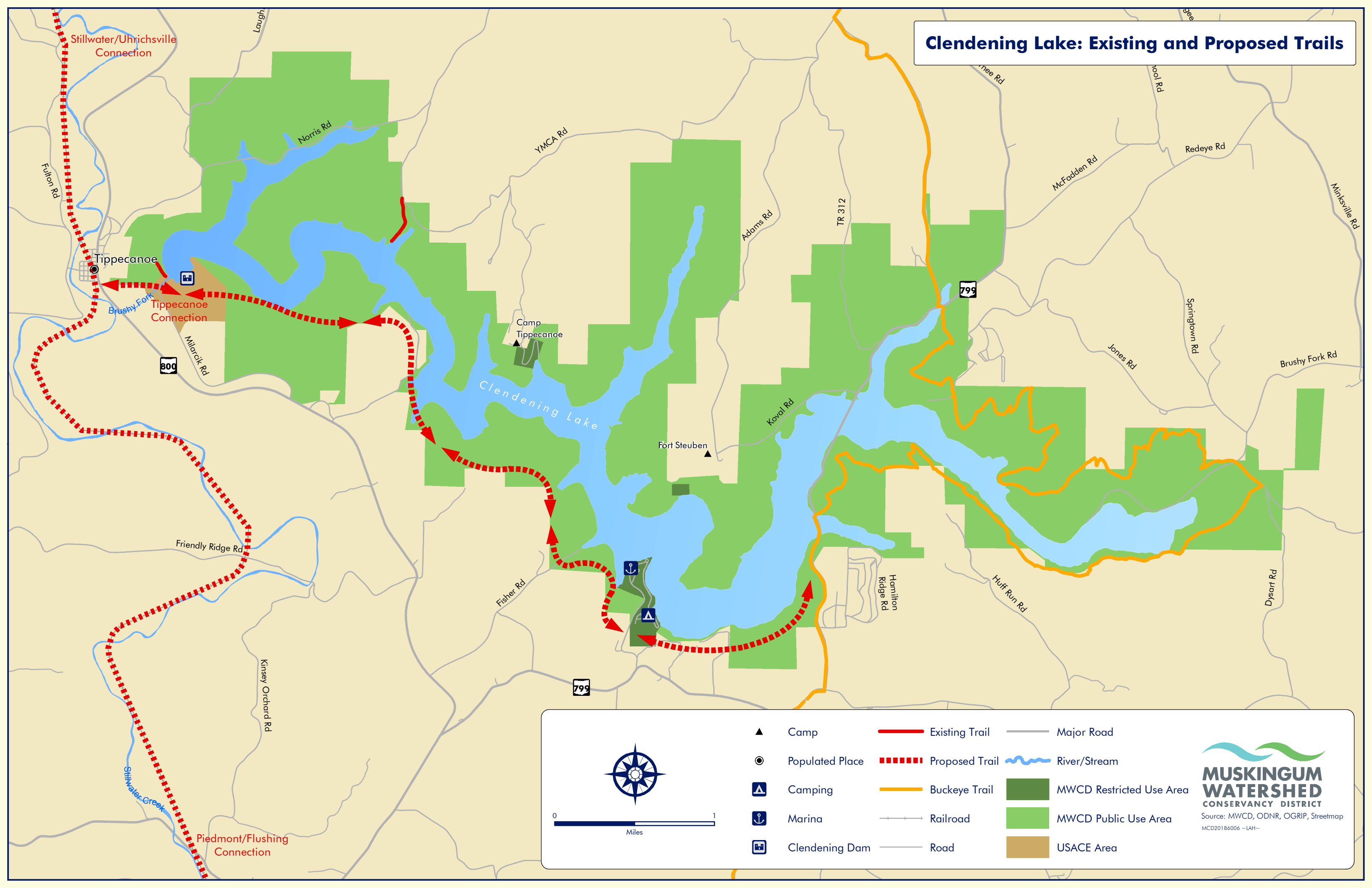
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CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Source: MWCD, ODNr, OGRIP, Streetmap
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RICHLAND COUNTY
ASHTAND COUNTY

Clendening Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



0 1
Miles



- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|----------------|---|--------------------------|
| ▲ | Camp | — | Existing Trail | — | Major Road |
| ● | Populated Place | — | Proposed Trail | — | River/Stream |
| ⛺ | Camping | — | Buckeye Trail | ■ | MWCD Restricted Use Area |
| ⚓ | Marina | — | Railroad | ■ | MWCD Public Use Area |
| 🏠 | Clendening Dam | — | Road | ■ | USACE Area |



















Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 ~LAH~

Dover/Zoar Area: Existing and Proposed Trails





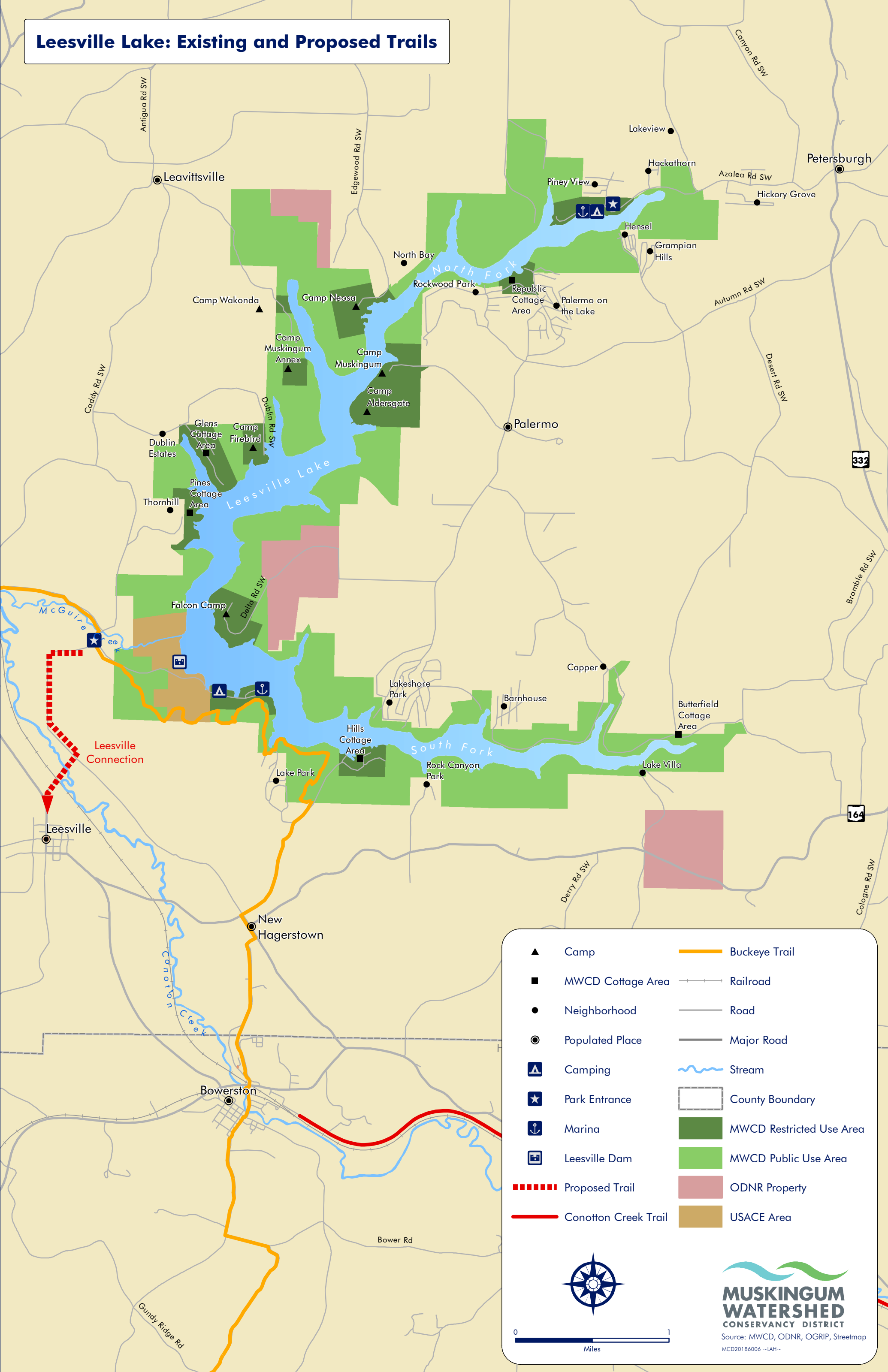
	Camp		Existing Water Trail		Road
	Populated Place		Buckeye Trail		Major Road
	Dover Dam		Towpath Trail		River/Stream
	Existing Trail		North Country Trail		MWCD Public Use Area
	Proposed Trail		Railroad		USACE Area



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Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 ~LAH~

Leesville Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



▲

Camp

■

MWCD Cottage Area

●

Neighborhood

⦿

Populated Place

⛺

Camping

★

Park Entrance

⚓

Marina

🏠

Leesville Dam

⋯

Proposed Trail

—

Conotton Creek Trail

—

Buckeye Trail

—

Railroad

—

Road

—

Major Road

~

Stream

▭

County Boundary

■

MWCD Restricted Use Area

■


MWCD Public Use Area

■


ODNR Property

■

USACE Area



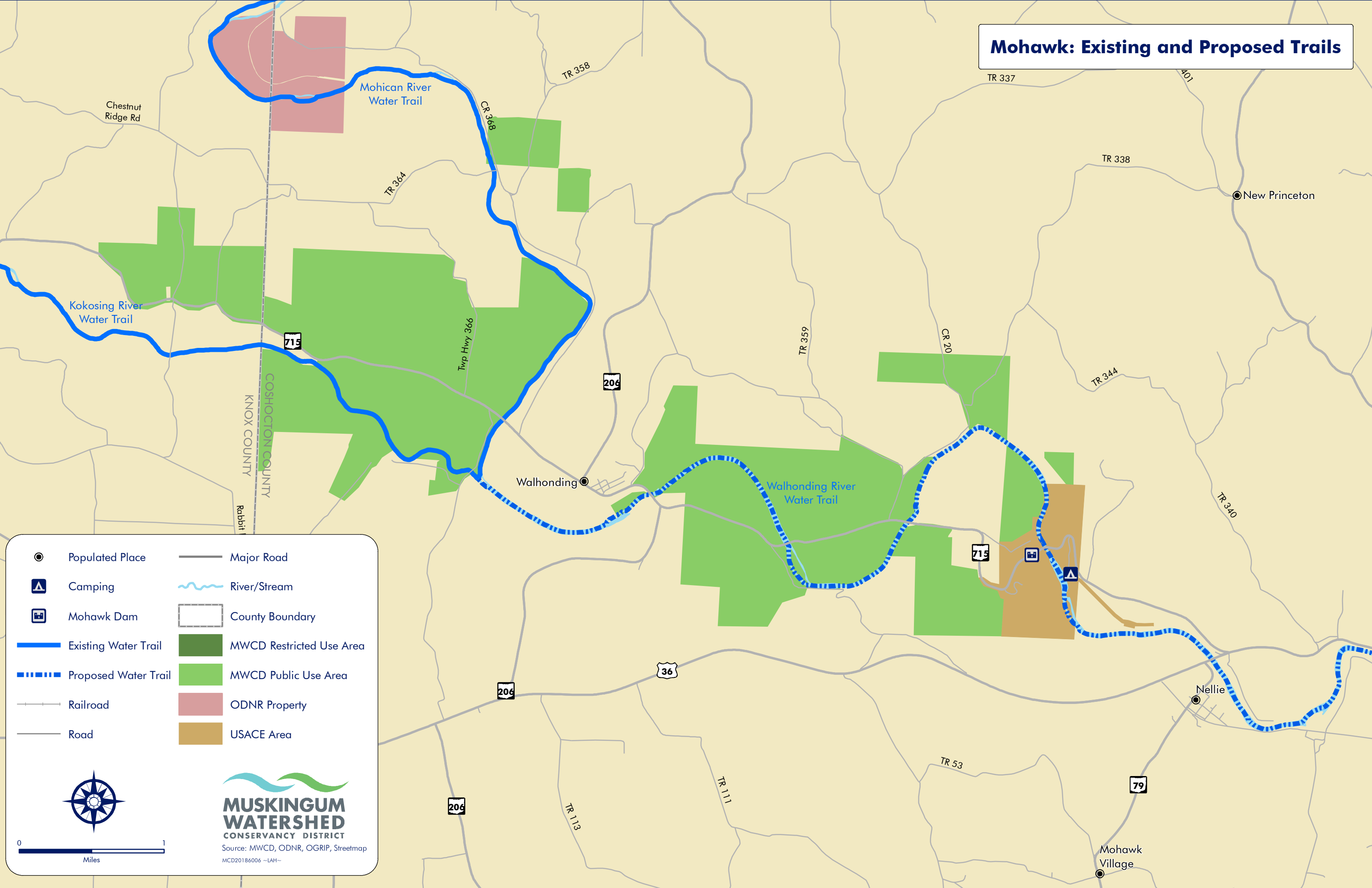
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Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 ~LAH~

Mohawk: Existing and Proposed Trails



Populated Place

Camping

Mohawk Dam

Existing Water Trail

Proposed Water Trail

Railroad

Road

Major Road

River/Stream

County Boundary

MWCD Restricted Use Area

MWCD Public Use Area

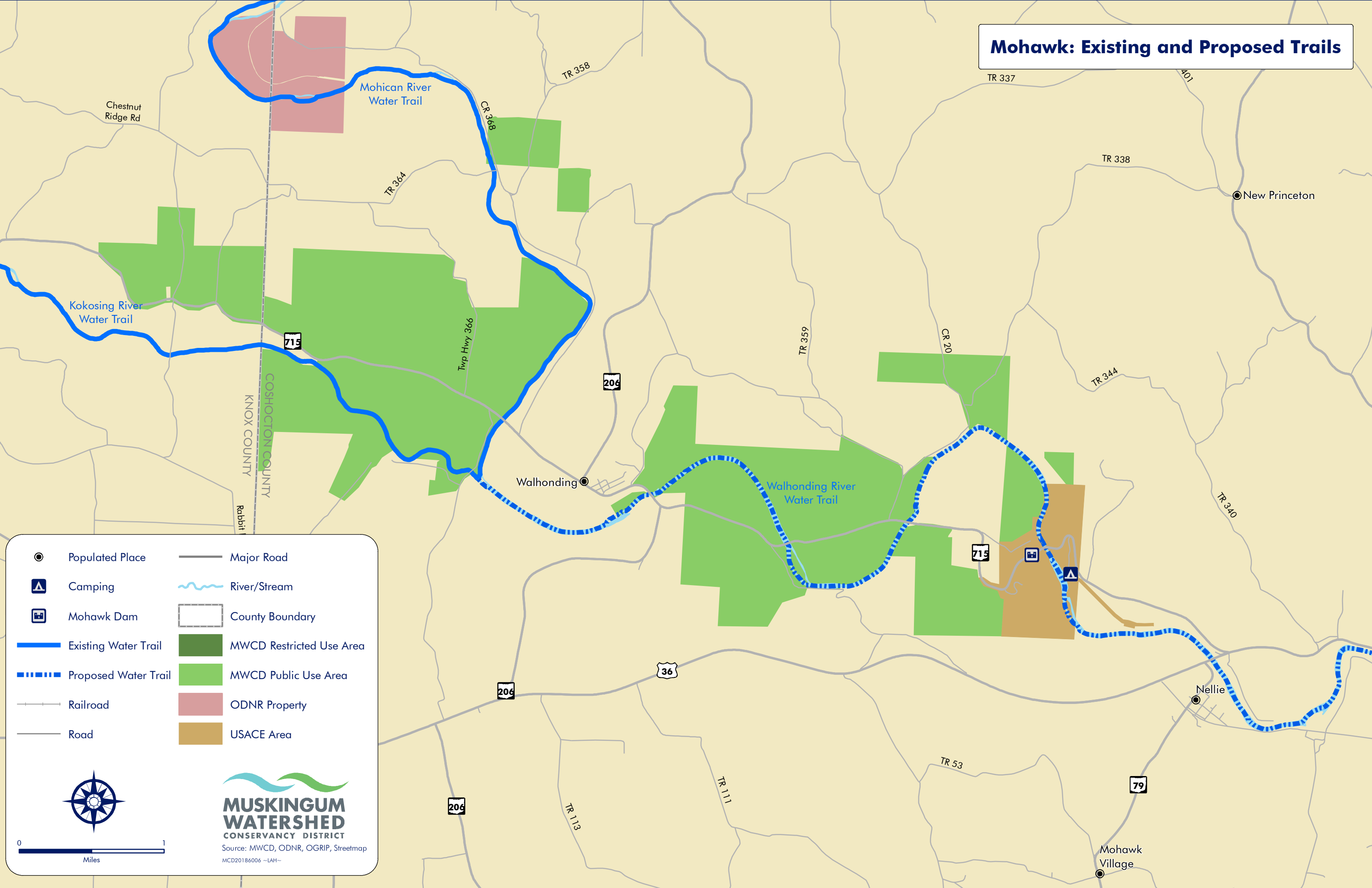
ODNR Property

USACE Area

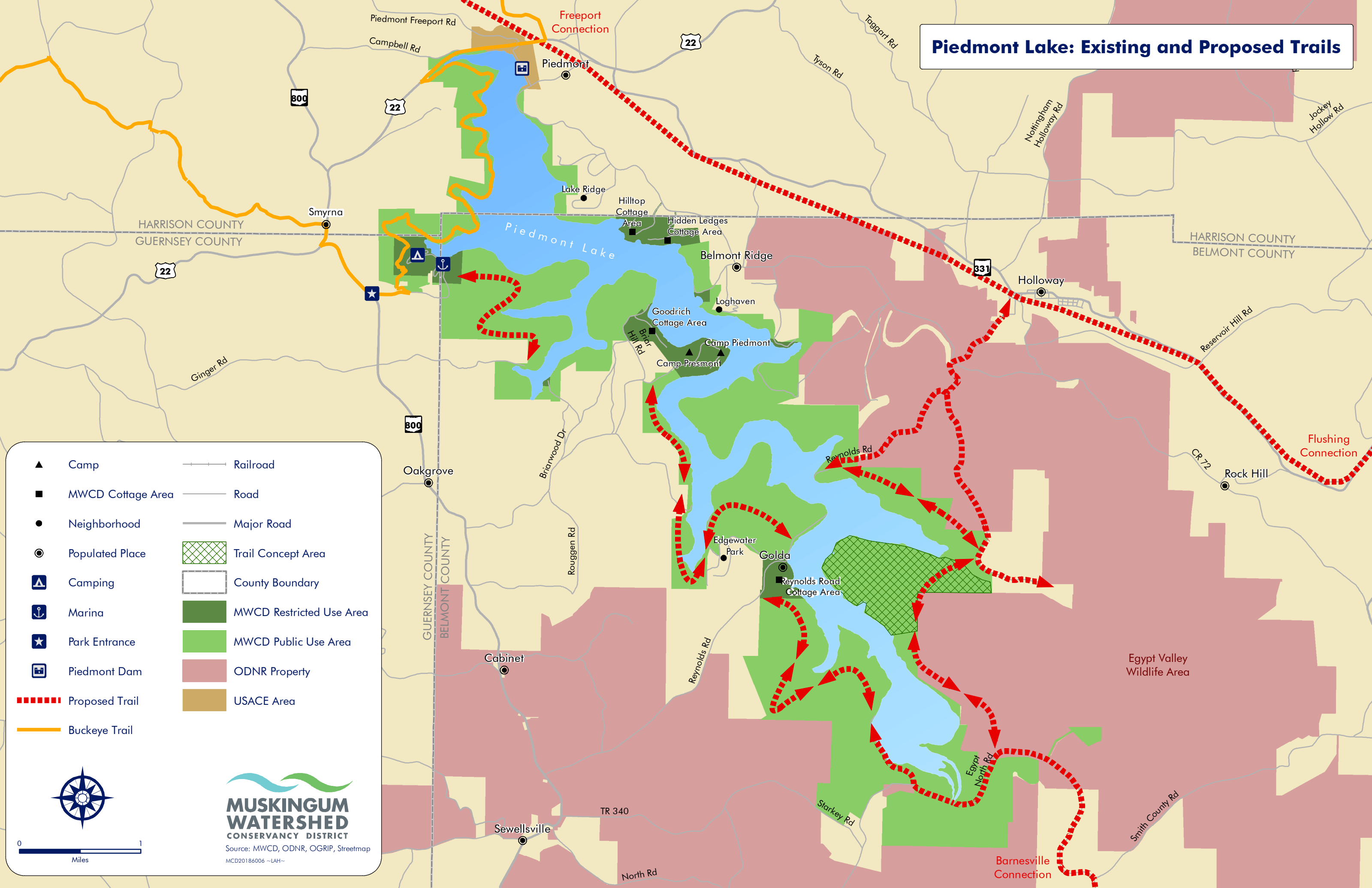
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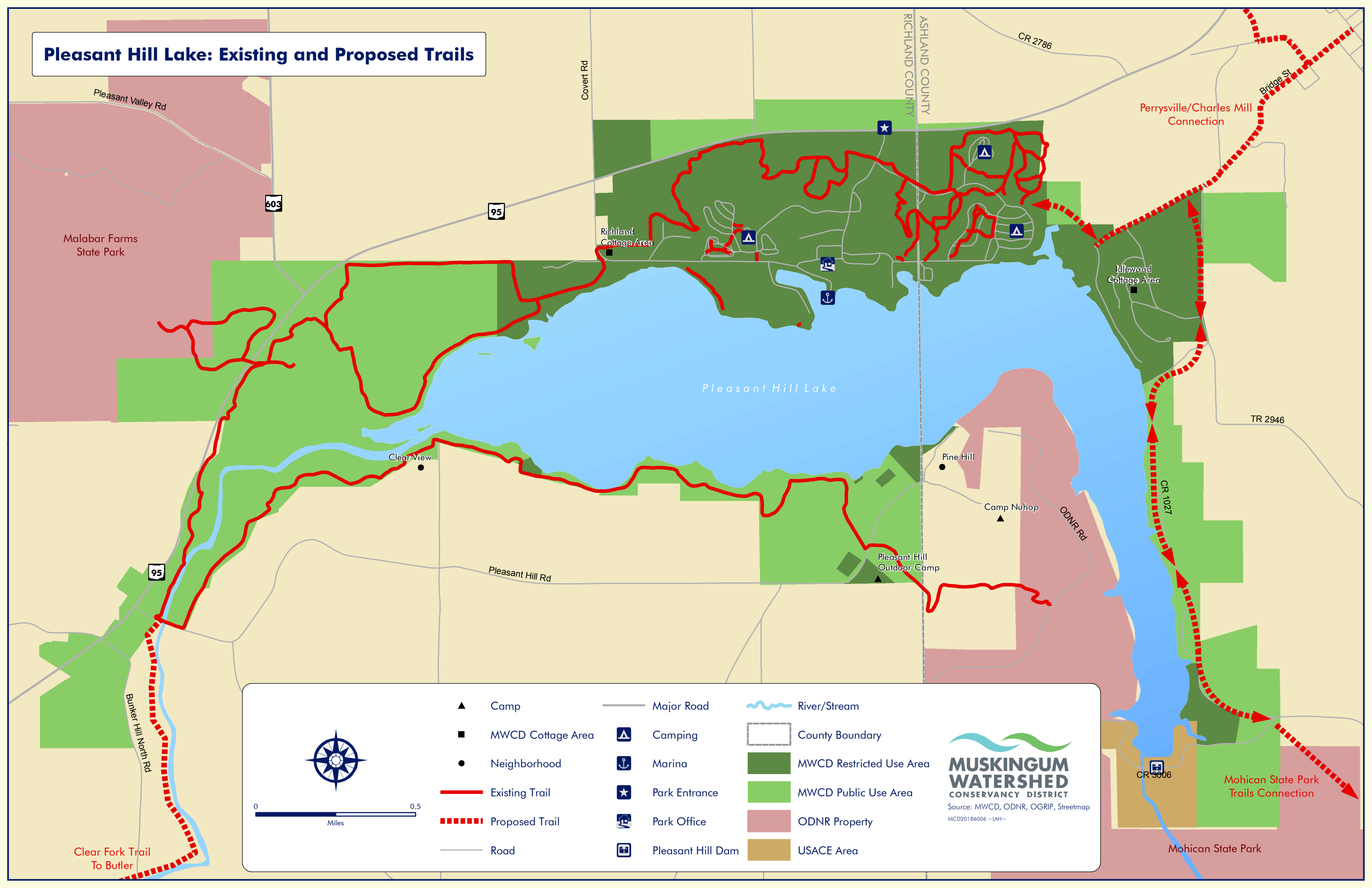
Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
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Piedmont Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



Pleasant Hill Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails





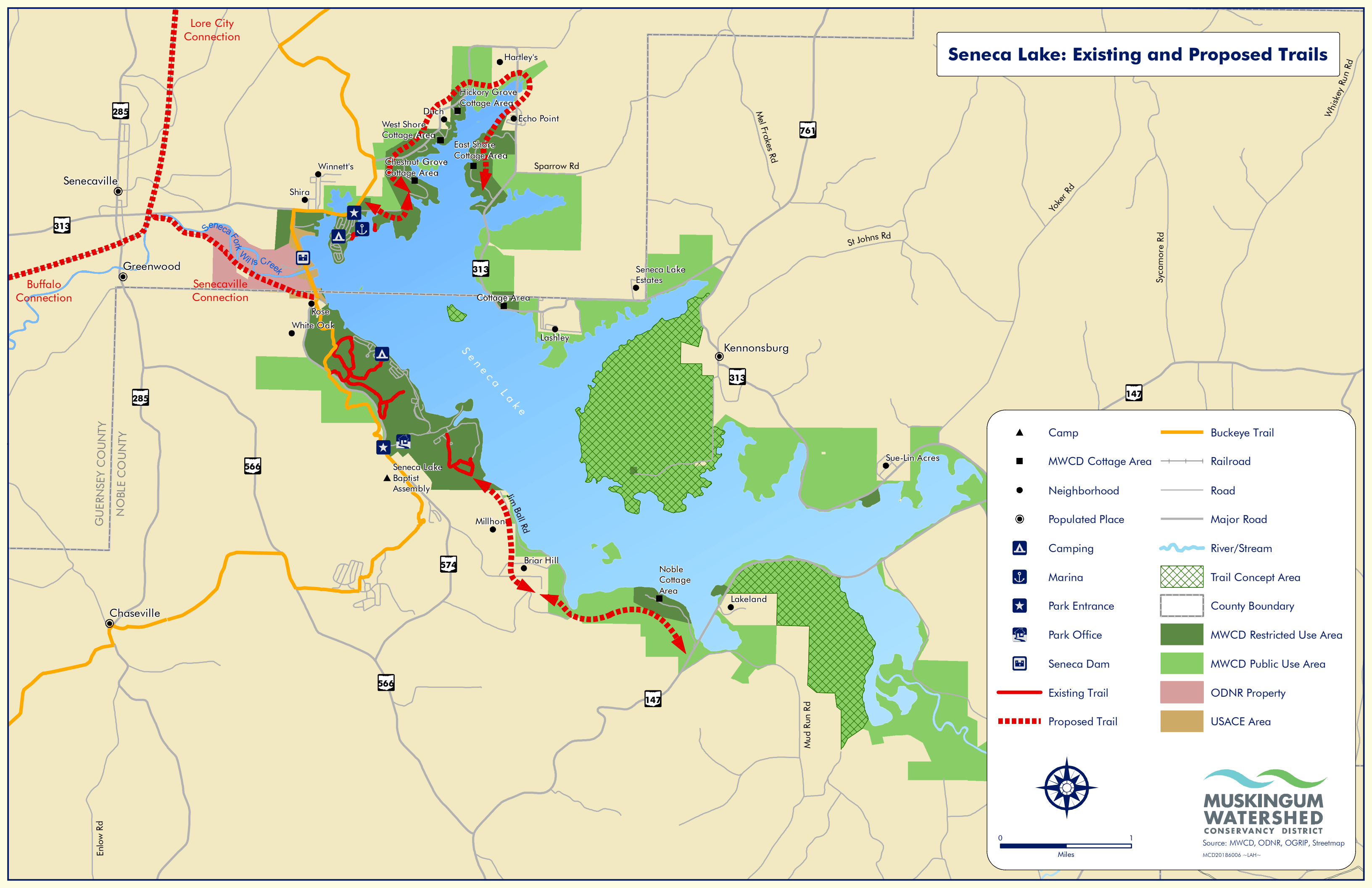
▲	Camp	—	Major Road		River/Stream
■	MWCD Cottage Area		Camping		County Boundary
●	Neighborhood		Marina		MWCD Restricted Use Area
	Existing Trail		Park Entrance		MWCD Public Use Area
	Proposed Trail		Park Office		ODNR Property
	Road		Pleasant Hill Dam		USACE Area



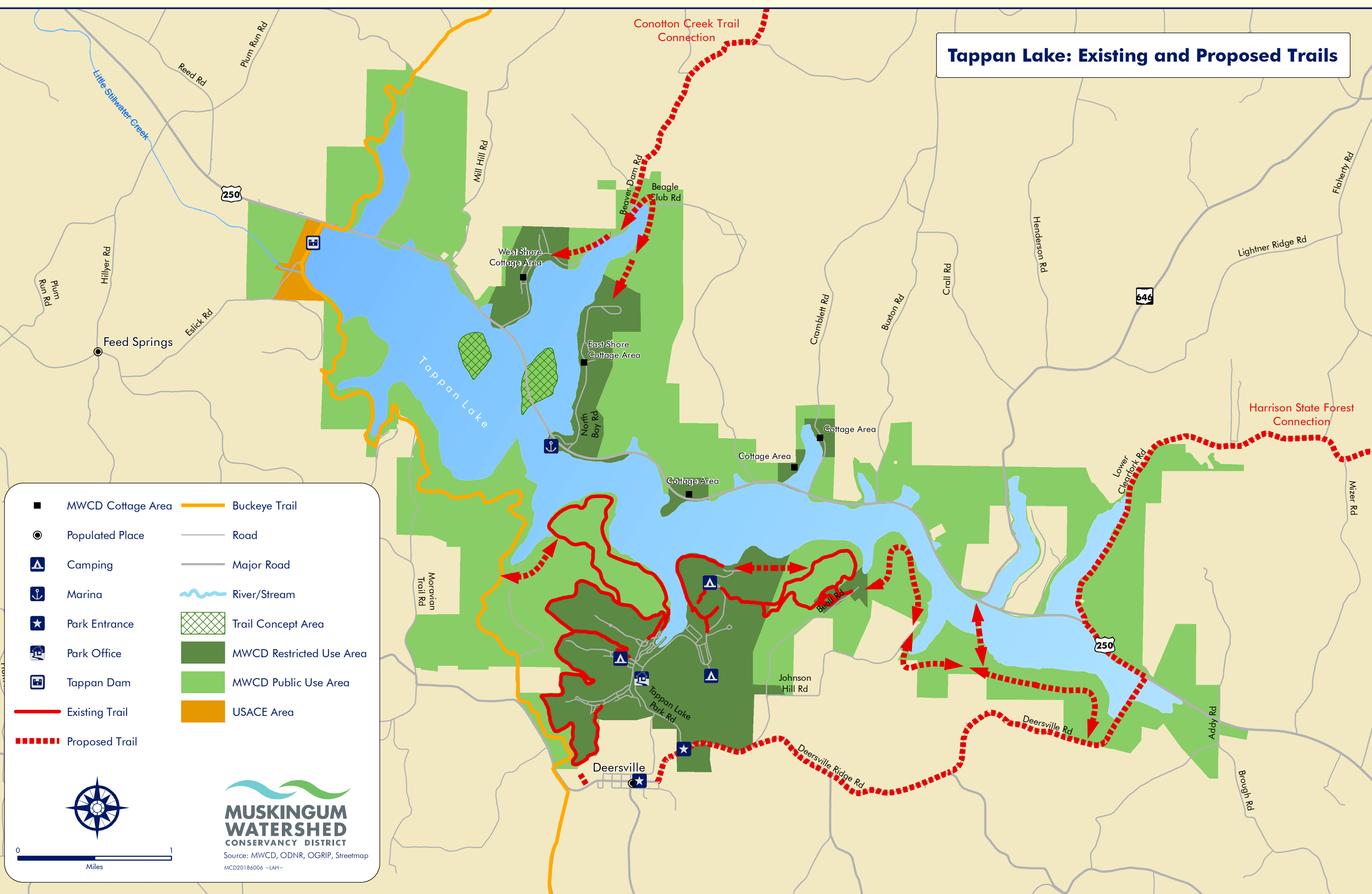
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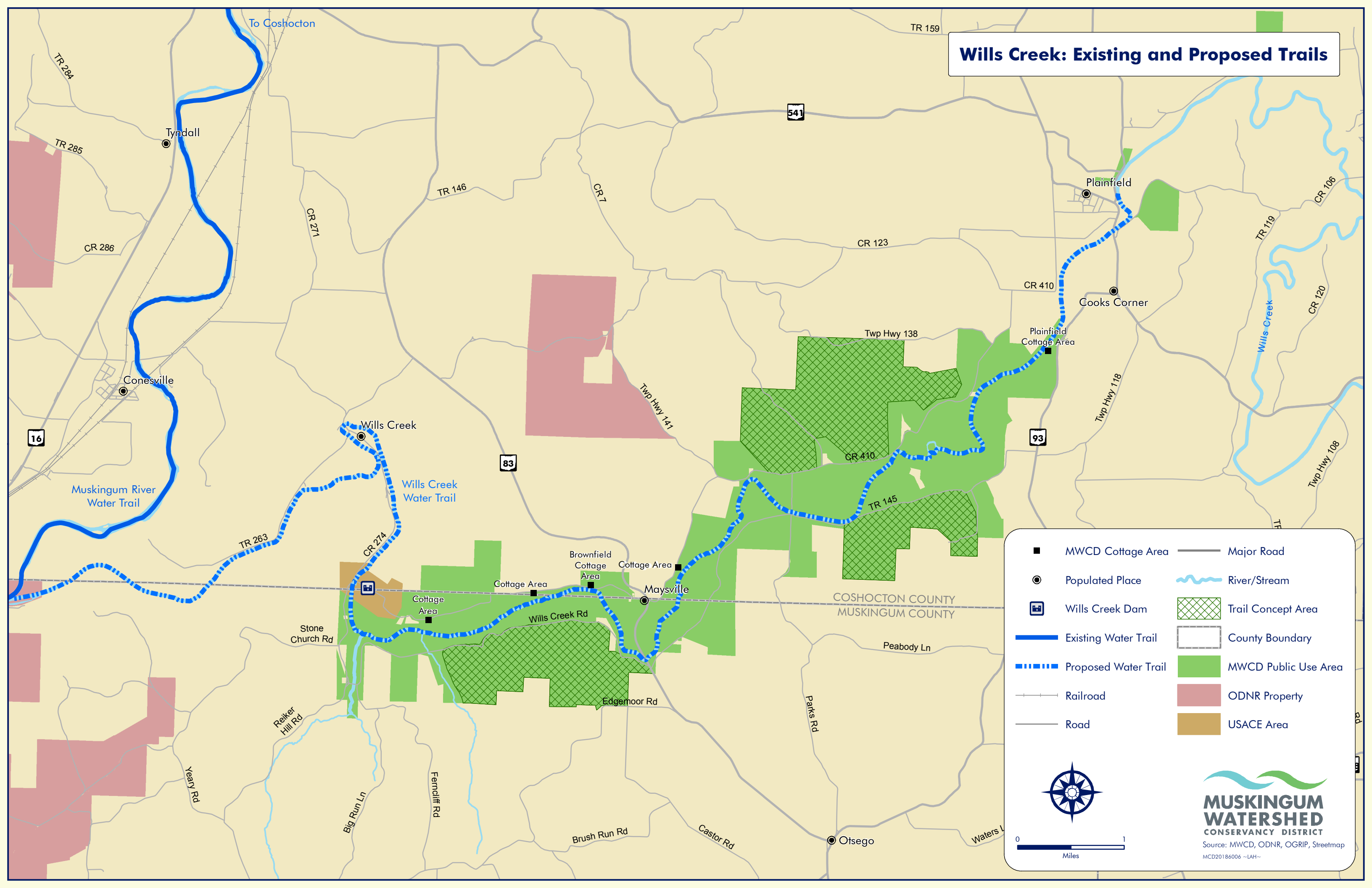
Seneca Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



Tappan Lake: Existing and Proposed Trails



Wills Creek: Existing and Proposed Trails

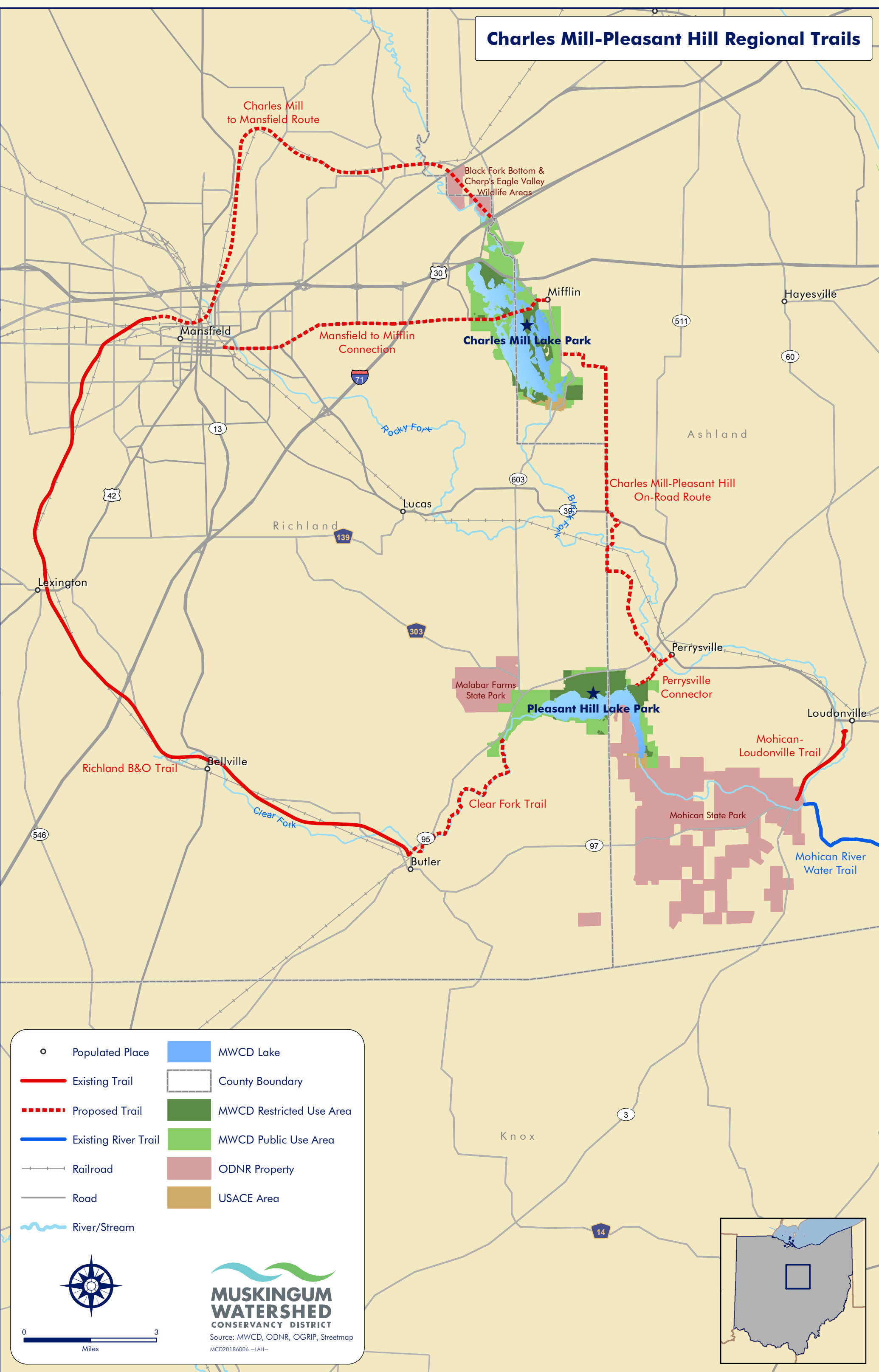


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|-----------|----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| ■ | MWCD Cottage Area | — | Major Road |
| ● | Populated Place | ~~~~~ | River/Stream |
| ■ | Wills Creek Dam | ▨ | Trail Concept Area |
| — | Existing Water Trail | --- | County Boundary |
| - - - - - | Proposed Water Trail | ■ | MWCD Public Use Area |
| + | Railroad | ■ | ODNR Property |
| — | Road | ■ | USACE Area |

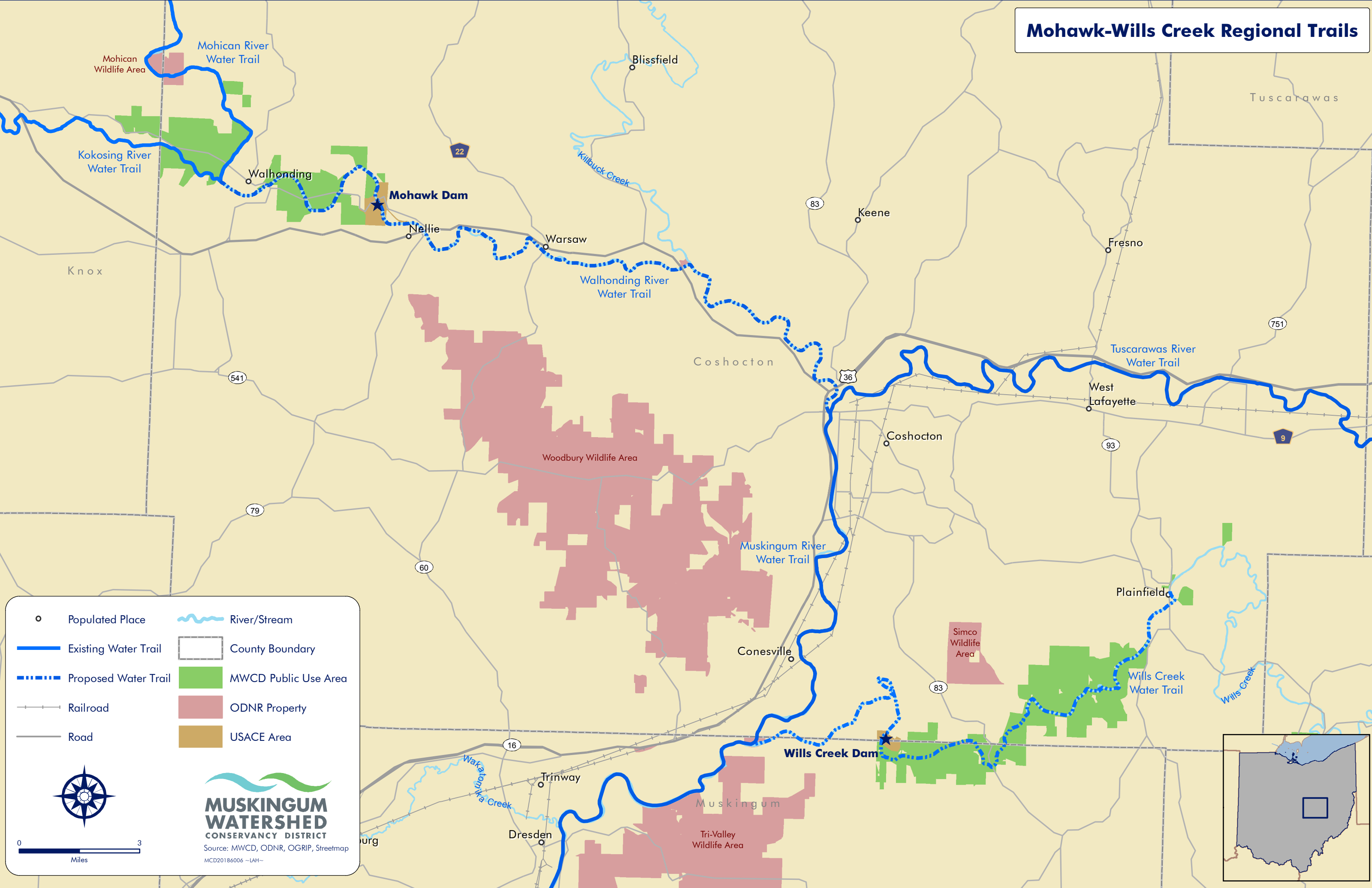


Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 --LAH--

Charles Mill-Pleasant Hill Regional Trails



Mohawk-Wills Creek Regional Trails



Populated Place

Existing Water Trail

Proposed Water Trail

Railroad

Road

River/Stream

County Boundary

MWCD Public Use Area

ODNR Property

USACE Area

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CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
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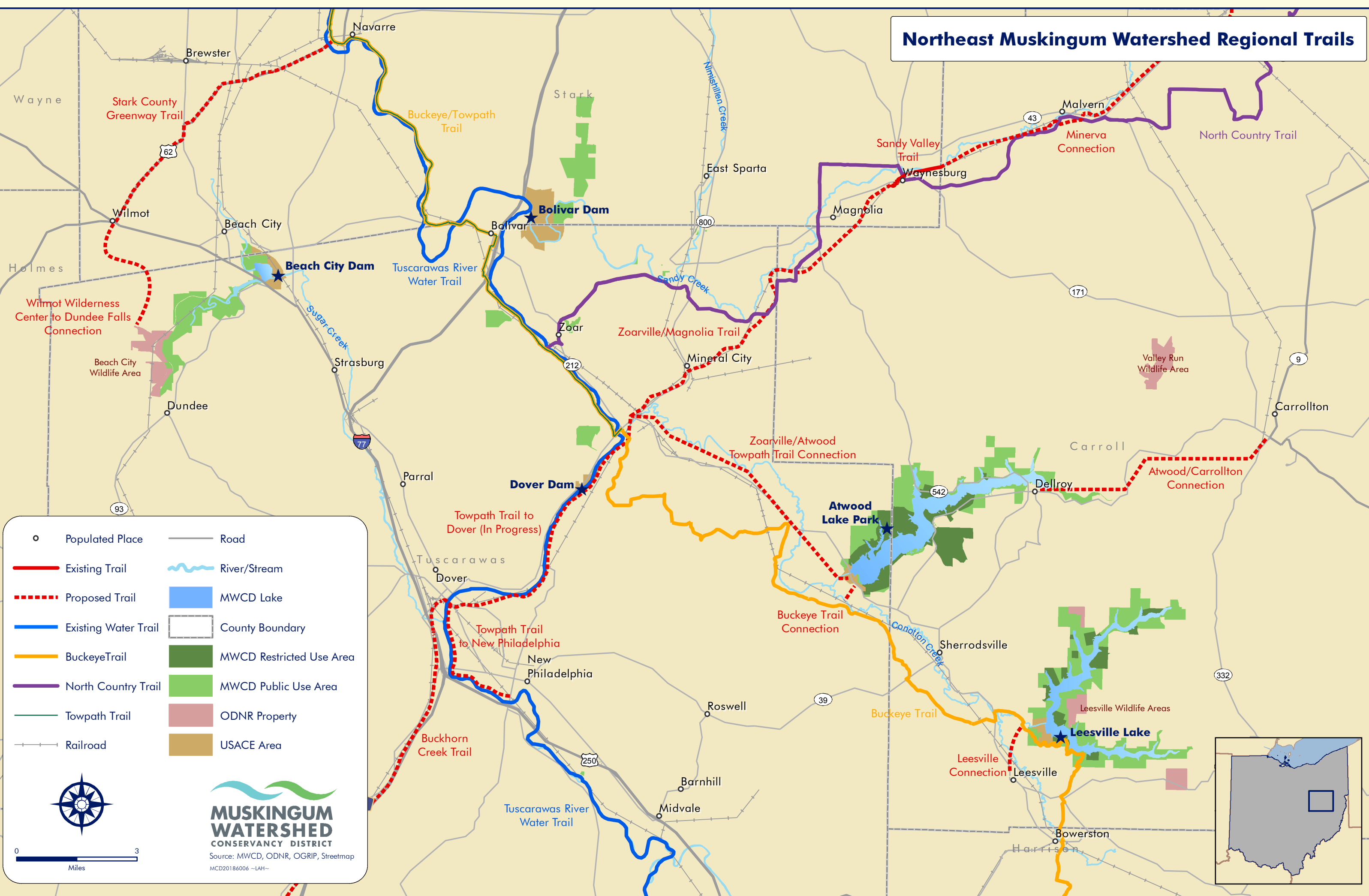
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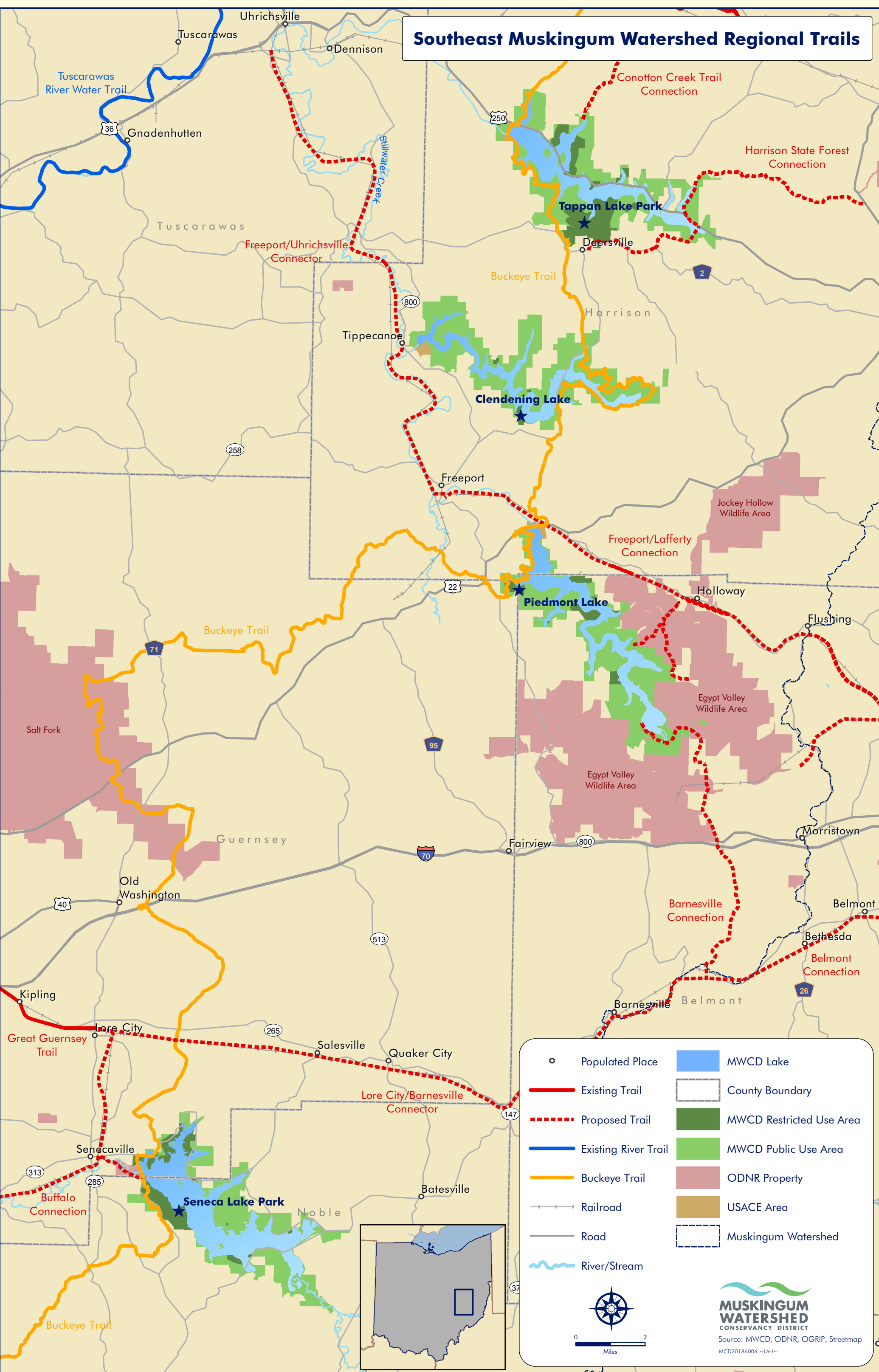
Miles

An inset map of the state of Ohio with a blue rectangle highlighting the location of the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District in the western part of the state.

Northeast Muskingum Watershed Regional Trails



Southeast Muskingum Watershed Regional Trails



- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| Populated Place | MWCD Lake |
| Existing Trail | County Boundary |
| Proposed Trail | MWCD Restricted Use Area |
| Existing River Trail | MWCD Public Use Area |
| Buckeye Trail | ODNR Property |
| Railroad | USACE Area |
| Road | Muskingum Watershed |
| River/Stream | |



0 2
Miles

**MUSKINGUM
WATERSHED**
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 -LAH-

Ohio Statewide Trails

- Buckeye Trail
- North Country Trail
- Ohio to Erie Trail
- Ohio & Erie Towpath
- Interstate
- Parks
- Urban Area
- Lake
- Muskingum Watershed
- County Boundary



MUSKINGUM
WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

Source: MWCD, ODNR, OGRIP, Streetmap
MCD20186006 --LAH--

E. ACTION PLAN

The Action Plan includes both short-term and long-term strategies for implementing the Trails Blueprint.

1. Short-Term Actions (0 – 5 years)

- Establish an appropriate administrative framework
- Complete an inventory and assessment of existing trails on MWCD lands
- Establish a trails geographic information system (GIS)
- Continue working in partnership on regional trail initiatives
- Complete early action projects, including trail connections between the Clendenen and Piedmont Marina campgrounds and the Buckeye Trail
- Perform an initial prioritization of proposed trails
- Develop preliminary trail maintenance and development cost estimates
- Upgrade/install consistent and uniform trail signage
- Water Trail development on lakes and the Tuscarawas River.

Administrative Framework

An administrative framework, which may involve a combination of staff, volunteers, and a trails committee, will be needed to implement the initiatives listed above.

Inventory

The Buckeye Trail Association is under contract with the MWCD to conduct a comprehensive inventory of existing trails on MWCD lands. The trail inventory includes information regarding trail conditions, maintenance or design needs, and signage.

Trails Geographic Information System

The MWCD should continue to build its trails geographic information system (GIS), which could include a comprehensive geodatabase for existing and proposed trails throughout the Muskingum Watershed. The GIS could be an invaluable tool for implementing the Trails Blueprint. The GIS could also enable the development of internal and external web-based applications and provide interactive mapping features.



Regional Trail Initiatives

The MWCD should continue to support the development of the Tuscarawas River Water Trail in collaboration with Rural Action, a regional non-profit organization, and other partners. This support includes funding for development of maps and signage to help users of the Tuscarawas River Water Trail.

The MWCD is also providing funding and support to the Buckeye Trail Association to improve the connectivity of the existing trail to campgrounds at Piedmont and Clendenen. Similar opportunities exist at Atwood, Leesville, Tappan and Seneca. These connections should enhance the use of the trail and

MWCD facilities. In addition, the MWCD has completed a donation of buildings at Tappan Lake for the Buckeye Trail Association's use as a regional trail maintenance and administrative center.

The MWCD is also an active member of the Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition (IHTC), a multi-state, 1,400-mile network of shared use trails connecting major cities such as Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Washington, D.C. The MWCD should continue to partner with agencies to work on the Cleveland-to-Pittsburgh Corridor of the IHTC, including the large gap between New Philadelphia, Ohio and Wheeling, West Virginia. This area is primarily within the Muskingum Watershed near Clendening, Piedmont, and Tappan lakes.

Prioritization Plan

The following factors could be considered with an initial prioritization of proposed trails:

- Initial installation and long term maintenance costs
- Availability of funding
- Level of support by potential trail users
- Connectivity with:
 - MWCD parks, marinas, cottage areas, docking associations, and boat clubs
 - Local communities, points of interest, parks, preserves, and outdoor recreation areas.
 - Local and regional trail systems
- Safety considerations
- Potential to provide ADA accessibility

2. Long-Term Actions (5 years and beyond)

- Begin upgrading existing trails and developing long-term maintenance plans
- Start design and construction of new trails
- Continue to solicit public input on trail development
- Continue working with partners on regional trail initiatives
- Establish volunteer corps for trail building and maintenance
- Establish long-term funding mechanism for trails program
- Develop marketing plan for trails



APPENDIX A – BENEFITS OF TRAILS

Economic

- Increased value of nearby properties
- Attractive to businesses – helps retain existing businesses
- Promotes job growth, especially for businesses that serve trail users (bicycle shops, canoe/kayak and outdoors shops, restaurants, ice cream parlors, breweries, lodging, etc.)
- Increased sales tax and business patronage through tourism and travel
- Reduced medical costs for families and employers
- Reduced costs for road maintenance

Environmental

- Protect environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat from development
- Connect people and nature, and provide opportunities for education
- Active transportation promotes improved air and water quality
- Greenways provide natural floodplains

Health, Wellness & Safety

- Increases level of physical activity
- Helps combat obesity, especially child obesity
- Promotes healthy living
- Reduces stress and improves mental wellness
- Reduced crime through self-policing
- Provides safe route for walking and cycling

Quality of Life

- More opportunities for recreation
- Provides connections to nature and natural areas
- Communities with trails more desirable for millennials and families

Cultural/Historical

- Can preserve historical monuments and celebrate historical legacy
- Connects people to heritage by preserving historic places and providing access to sites

Social

- Opportunities for interaction between users of all backgrounds
- Opportunities for events
- Connects communities
- Community pride and identity

Transportation

- Provide viable transportation routes to employment centers, schools, recreation areas, stores and businesses, and family
- Improved mobility in areas lacking public transportation options
- Reduced congestion on roadways
- Provide safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists into and inside park

APPENDIX B – STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Strengths

- Land resources for trails in an area with abundant outdoor recreational facilities and opportunities
- Staff experience in Forestry, Land Management, Parks & Recreational, Mapping/GIS, Planning, Engineering, Fundraising/Development, Public Relations/Marketing.
- Nearby large metropolitan areas and regional trail systems
- Existing MWCD park/marina/public access infrastructure
- High level of internal and external support for trails
- Strong partnerships already established
- It is easier to develop trails on land that MWCD already owns.

Weaknesses

- Staff time constraints
- Competing MWCD land uses
- Administrative structure and funding mechanisms for trails are not yet in place
- Lack of consistent trail information and marketing




















Opportunities















- Connect to nearby trails and regional trail systems
- Develop new partnerships
- Enhance regional economic development
- Attract new user groups
- Increase visibility and use of MWCD facilities
- Act as regional trail advocate

Threats

- Competing with other trails and recreational opportunities
- Development and competing land uses
- Competition for funding
- Political and NIMBY (Not-in-My-Backyard) Issues
- Lack of awareness of trails and their benefits, misconceptions regarding perceived problems

APPENDIX C – BENCHMARKING SURVEY

6. May we follow up with an email or phone call, if necessary?		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		100.00%	31
No		0.00%	0
7. What types of trails are included in the trail system that you work with? (check all that apply)		Response Percent	Response Total
Hiking		87.10%	27
Biking		83.87%	26
Mountain Biking		48.39%	15
Equestrian		54.84%	17
ATV		6.45%	2
Designated Water		35.48%	11
Other		12.90%	4
8. Is there a trails master plan developed? (choose one)		Response Percent	Response Total
Yes		45.16%	14
No		12.90%	4
In Progress		38.71%	12
Other		3.23%	1
9. Do you have digital data available for the trail system? (check all that apply)		Response Percent	Response Total
.kml		0.00%	0
.shp		0.00%	0
GPS		50.00%	12
Other		29.17%	7
10. What department, division, or group has primary responsibility for the trails? (choose one)		Response Percent	Response Total
Recreation		23.33%	7
Conservation/Natural Resources		16.67%	5
Trail Crew		10.00%	3
Administration		6.67%	2
Other		43.33%	13

11. What methods have you used to secure public input?			
12. Briefly describe the staff roles and responsibilities for trail planning, building, and maintenance.			
13. What roles do volunteers have in your trail system? (check all that apply)		Response Percent	Response Total
Planning		37.93%	11
Building		48.28%	14
Maintenance		89.66%	26
Cleanup		86.21%	25
Programs		55.17%	16
Marketing		34.48%	10
Other		17.24%	5
14. What is your annual trails budget? (choose one)		Response Percent	Response Total
We have no dedicated budget		13.79%	4
Depends on charitable contributions		13.79%	4
Under \$20,000		10.34%	3
\$20,001 - \$50,000		10.34%	3
\$50,001 - 100,000		6.90%	2
\$100,001 and up		24.14%	7
Other		20.69%	6
15. What grants have been used to provide funding for your trail projects?			
16. Describe any opportunities that you have had to cost share with other trail partners.			
17. Describe any current plans for trail expansion.			

APPENDIX D – POTENTIAL PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

- Akron Metropolitan Area Transportation Study
- Ashland County Park District
- Beech Creek Botanical Gardens
- Buckeye Council – Boy Scouts
- Buckeye Hills Regional Council
- Buckeye Trail Association
- Camp Tuscazoar
- Carroll County Park District
- Cities in Muskingum Watershed
- Cleveland Area Mountain Bike Association
- Colleges and Universities
- Columbiana County Park District
- Conotton Creek Trail
- Coshocton County Park District
- County and Local Health Departments
- Counties in Muskingum Watershed
- Crawford County Park District
- Dawes Arboretum
- Docking Associations
- Eastgate Regional Council of Governments
- Economic Development & Finance Alliance of Tuscarawas County
- Fairfield County Historical Parks
- Girl Scouts
- Guernsey County Community Development Corporation
- Harrison County Commissioners
- Harrison County Economic Development
- Harrison County Outdoors Club
- Healthy Tuscarawas
- Heart of Ohio Council – Boy Scouts
- Holmes County Park District
- Hospitals and Health Care Providers
- Huff Run Watershed Restoration Partnership
- Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition
- International Mountain Bicycling Association
- Knox County Park District
- Licking County Park District
- Local bicycle and outdoor adventure shops
- Marinas
- Medina County Park District
- Muskingum Watershed Conservancy
- Foundation
- National Park Service
- North Country Trail
- Ohio & Erie Canalway Coalition
- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
- Ohio Department of Transportation
- Ohio Horseman's Council
- Ohio Mid-Eastern Governments Association
- Ohio River Valley Boy Scout Council
- Ohio Valley Trail Association
- Pennsylvania Environmental Council
- Portage County Park District
- Rails to Trails Conservancy
- Richland County Park District
- Richland County Regional Planning Commission
- Rural Action
- St. Clairsville Park Place
- Stark County Area Transportation Study
- Stark Parks
- Summit Metroparks
- Sustainable Wildlife Area Restoration Movement
- Townships in Muskingum Watershed
- Tuscarawas County Park Department
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- Villages in Muskingum Watershed
- Wayne County Park District
- Wayne National Forest
- The Wilderness Center
- The Wilds
- Youth Camps
- Zeisberger Trails and Parks
- Zoar Community Association

APPENDIX E – EXISTING REGIONAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

Buckeye Trail^{iv}

The Buckeye Trail is a statewide trail system 1,444 miles long. The first 20 miles were dedicated on September 19, 1959 in Hocking County. Over the next two decades the trail grew to over 1,444 miles under the auspices of the Buckeye Trail Association. It was completed near Deer Lick Cave in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area in 1980. The trail comes near or passes through Muskingum Watershed Conservation District lands and lakes, including Atwood, Bolivar, Clendening, Dover, Leesville, Piedmont, Tappan, Seneca and Zoar. The trail is primarily a footpath, but certain portions may be designated for use by horses and other non-motorized users. It travels concurrently with many local or regional trails, with certain portions located on roads.



Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath Trail^v

The Ohio & Erie Canalway is a National Heritage Area — designated by Congress in 1996 — to help preserve and celebrate the rails, trails, landscapes, towns and sites that grew up along the first 110 miles of the canal that helped Ohio and our nation grow.

The 81+ mile Towpath Trail runs through the heart of the Canalway. The historic Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad and the nationally designated America's Byway offer alternate travel options through the National Heritage Area.

The Buckeye Trail, the Ohio To Erie Trail, and the National Trail coincide with the Towpath Trail along large segments of the Towpath Trail. Many other local trails link in with the Towpath trail to form a network of trails connecting numerous communities. The Towpath Trail comes near MWCD lands and reservoirs at Bolivar, Dover, and Zoar.



North Country National Scenic Trail^{vi}

The North Country National Scenic Trail (NCNST) is 4,600 miles long and stretches across seven states. The NCNST is a part of the National Trail System managed by the National Park System, and enters Ohio from Pennsylvania in the Little Beaver Creek Watershed. The trail heads west following Beaver Creek State Forest and Beaver Creek State Park along the abandoned Sandy and Beaver Canal Towpath.



The trail passes through the Village of Lisbon, an early settlement in the Ohio country. The trail generally follows the route of the Sandy and Beaver Canal through Columbiana, Carroll, Stark and Tuscarawas Counties, and joins with the Buckeye Trail outside the historic Village of Zoar. Just past the village the two trails converge on the Ohio and Erie Canal Towpath across the Tuscarawas River.

In Eastern Ohio, the trail heads south through the Muskingum River Watershed. Leesville, Tappan, Clendening, Piedmont, Salt Fork, Seneca, and Wolf Run Lakes offer lakeshore vistas of the forested hills of the Appalachian Plateau. The NCNST follows the route of the Buckeye Trail for over 800 miles, taking in eastern, southern, and western Ohio before departing the Buckeye Trail to head for southern Michigan.

Wayne National Forest^{vii}

The Wayne National Forest, part of the US Department of Agriculture, has three large units in southern Ohio. Two of these units, the Marietta and Athens Unit, are within or adjacent to the Muskingum Watershed. The Ironton Unit is located outside the Watershed. All three units have recreational hiking, biking, horseback riding and camping. The Marietta Unit also has equestrian trail systems, but no off-road vehicle trails. The Ironton and Athens Units have off road areas that can be accessed by the public, but not the Marietta Unit. The North Country National Scenic Trail runs through the Athens and Marietta Units but not the Ironton Unit. The closest MWCD area to the Wayne National Forest is Seneca Lake.



Ohio to Erie Trail^{viii}

A primarily off-road 326-mile recreational trail from the Ohio River to Lake Erie, the Ohio to Erie Trail spans the state of Ohio from Cincinnati to Cleveland. Generally, the trail follows lands formerly occupied by railroads and canals. The collection of regional trails connects four of Ohio's metropolitan cities, a dozen large cities and numerous small villages – all done on easily accessible, paved trails that are primarily separated from highways and automobiles.

There are 18 local/regional trails that come together to form the Ohio to Erie Trail. Each of the trails has its own unique aspects and each varies in length, with the Little Miami Scenic Trail in southern Ohio and the Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath being the two largest with about 50 and 100 miles respectively. Within the Muskingum Watershed, the Ohio to Erie Trail includes the following trails:

Heart of Ohio Trail (Knox County)^{ix}

Mohican Valley Trail (Knox County)^x

Kokosing Gap Trail (Knox County)^{xi}

Holmes County Trail (Holmes County)^{xii}

Sippo Valley Trail (Stark and Wayne counties)^{xiii}

Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath Trail (Cuyahoga, Summit, Stark, Tuscarawas counties)^{xiv}



Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition^{xv}

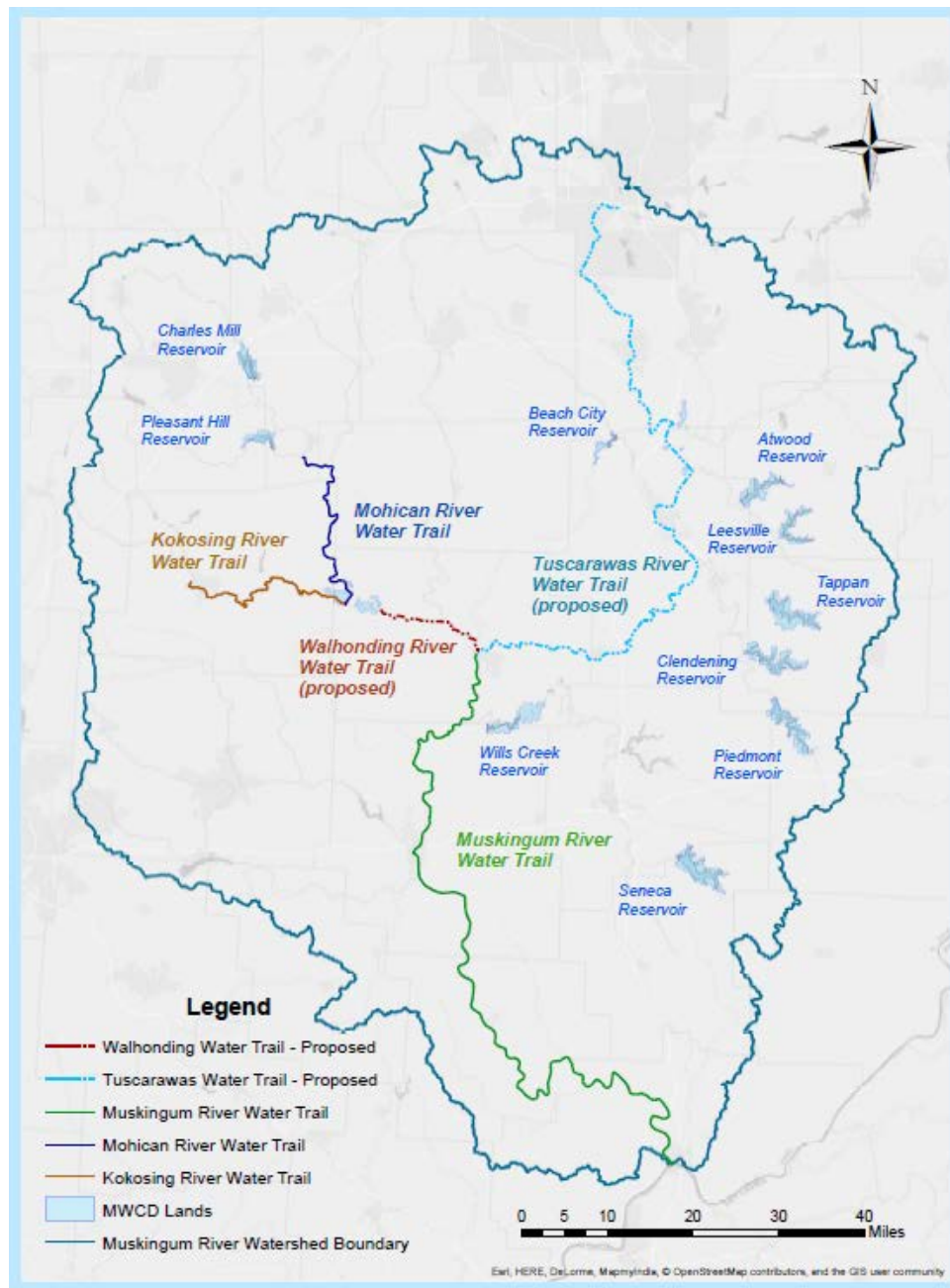
The Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition is a group of trail builders and supporters collaborating to complete and connect a system of more than 1,400 miles of shared use trails. The goal is to connect the four-state trail network so that local and visiting trail users can walk and bike from trail to trail, city to city, and town to town.

The eastern lakes of the MWCD coincide with the Cleveland-to-Pittsburgh portion of the coalition. Several trail routes have been proposed to connect MWCD lakes to this trail system. The MWCD plays an active role with the coalition, and serves on the steering committee for the coalition.



Water Trails

The Ohio Department of Natural Resources is the state agency that officially designates water trails in Ohio^{xvi}. Designation brings funding for map/brochure printing and signage as well as a variety of educational, economic, and environmental benefits. Ohio has ten state-designated water trails and seven proposed water trails. Three of the designated water trails – Kokosing River, Mohican River, and Muskingum River – are in the Muskingum Watershed. Two of the proposed water trails, the Tuscarawas River and the Walhonding River, are also located within the Muskingum Watershed.



APPENDIX F – EXISTING LOCAL TRAIL SYSTEMS

Many counties and communities within the Muskingum Watershed have developed local trails and have created trail master plans. Local trails include footpaths, paved bike routes, horse trails, and multi-use trails. The trail plans are in various stages of development and implementation, and many of the proposed trails are conceptual.

Counties and municipalities in the Muskingum Watershed with trails plans:

- Ashland County Park District^{xvii}
- City of Ashland^{xviii}
- City of Athens^{xix}
- Carroll County Park District
- Village of Carrollton, *Village of Community Trail Plan, 2010*
- Coshocton County^{xx}
- Fairfield County^{xxi}
- Guernsey County Community Development Corporation^{xxii}
- Harrison County^{xxiii}
- Holmes County Park District^{xxiv}
- Knox County Park District^{xxv}
- Licking County Park District^{xxvi}
- Medina County Park District^{xxvii}
- Richland County Park District^{xxviii}
- Stark Parks^{xxix}, *Trail and Greenway Plan, 2014*^{xxx}
- Summit Metroparks^{xxxi}
- Tuscarawas County, *Tuscarawas County Trail & Green Space Plan, 2016*^{xxxii}
- Wayne County Park District^{xxxiii}
- City of Wooster^{xxxiv}

APPENDIX G – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Trails Blueprint Team hosted several public meetings throughout the watershed to collect input on trail development in the Muskingum Watershed. The Team also gathered input from MWCD staff, Board of Directors, and Development Advisory Committee members.

- January 20, 2017 – MWCD Board of Directors
- January 27, 2017 – MWCD Development Advisory Committee
- March 21, 2017 – Atwood Lake Park
- March 23, 2017 – Seneca Lake Park
- March 28, 2017 – Tappan Lake Park
- March 30, 2017 – Pleasant Hill Lake Park
- June 6, 2017 – Atwood Lake Park
- June 6, 2017 – Seneca Lake Park
- June 8, 2017 – Tappan Lake Park
- June 8, 2017 – Charles Mill Lake Park



Public meeting, Tappan Lake Park

APPENDIX H – FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Grant Opportunities

- Clean Ohio Conservation Fund, Ohio Public Works Commission^{xxxv}
 - Eligible projects include land acquisition for conservation purposes and riparian enhancement. May be used for public access improvements, including trails and trailheads.
- Clean Ohio Trails Fund, Ohio Department of Natural Resources^{xxxvi}
 - Eligible projects include construction and development of recreational trails; purchase of land or interests in land for recreational trails; construction and development of trailhead facilities such as parking, shelters, and restrooms; engineering and design of trails.
- Recreational Trails Program, Ohio Department of Natural Resources^{xxxvii}
 - Eligible projects include rehabilitation, development, maintenance, and land acquisition for recreational trails and related facilities
- Transportation Alternatives Program, Ohio Department of Transportation^{xxxviii}
 - Eligible projects include bike lanes, signed routes, separate paths, grade separations, parking facilities, safety and educational activities for bicycles and pedestrians, and preservation of unused railway corridors for creating shared use trails.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund, Ohio Department of Natural Resources^{xxxix}
 - Eligible projects include recreational trails and support facilities, including trail bridges, trailheads and restrooms; purchase of linear corridors for trails or greenways.
- NatureWorks, Ohio Department of Natural Resources^{xl}
 - Eligible projects include land acquisition and purchase of linear corridors for trails or greenways; recreational trails and support facilities, including trailheads and restrooms; reconstruction or rehabilitation of outdoor recreational facilities.
- Muskingum Watershed Conservancy Foundation^{xli}
 - The Thomas W. Hudson Charitable Endowment Fund supports projects and improvements at Atwood Lake. The Bike & Hike Fund supports the development of trail infrastructure projects throughout the Watershed. The Charitable Endowment Fund supports the development of recreational facilities, including trails and related facilities, within the Watershed.
- Local Foundations
 - Ashland County Community Foundation
 - Barberton Community Foundation
 - The Community Foundation for the Ohio Valley
 - The Community Foundation of Mount Vernon and Knox County
 - Coshocton Foundation
 - The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio
 - Guernsey County Foundation
 - Harrison County Community Foundation
 - Licking County Foundation
 - Marietta Community Foundation
 - Muskingum County Community Foundation
 - Reeves Foundation
 - Richland County Foundation
 - Stark Community Foundation
 - Timken Foundation
 - Tuscarawas County Community Foundation
 - Wayne County Community Foundation

Other Private Sources

- Local health systems
- Outdoor recreation equipment retailers/manufacturers

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- ⁱⁱ Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, 2013,
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- ^{xi} Kokosing Gap Trail, www.kokosinggaptrail.org/TRAIL/map_hi.pdf
- ^{xii} Holmes County Trail, <http://holmestrail.com/maps>
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- ^{xiv} Ohio and Erie Canalway Coalition, www.ohioanderiecanalway.com/Main/Map.aspx.
- ^{xv} Industrial Heartland Trails Coalition, <http://ihearttrails.org/>
- ^{xvi} Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Watercraft,
<http://watercraft.ohiodnr.gov/watertrails>
- ^{xvii} Ashland County Park District, <http://ashlandcountyparks.com/>
- ^{xviii} City of Ashland, www.ashland-ohio.com/departments/parks-and-recreation/parks-maps-and-more
- ^{xix} City of Athens, www.athensbicycle.com/about/bike-paths-and-rail-trails-pg108.htm,
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- ^{xx} Coshocton County, www.visitcoshocton.com/things-to-do/sports-outdoors/gardens-hiking-trails
- ^{xxi} Fairfield County, www.fhta.org/maps.html
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- ^{xxiii} Harrison County, www.harrisoncountyohio.org/trails
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- ^{xxxiii} Wayne County Park District, www.waynecountytrails.org/TrailMaps.htm
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<http://www.pwc.state.oh.us/GSCdefault.html>
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