

Lake Views

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SUMMER 2025 | VOLUME 44 - ISSUE 2

Conservancy District Breaks Ground on New Headquarters

On March 24, MWCD broke ground on a new facility in New Philadelphia that will consolidate its central office operations in a single location. The new facility is expected to be opened toward the end of next year.

MWCD has proudly represented the region for nearly 92 years and is honored to call New Philadelphia home.

The main office building located on 3rd St. NW in New Philadelphia has served the organization well; however, after an addition and several upgrades over the years, the building is no longer large enough to hold a growing staff as well as the equipment used to maintain our lands, parks, and marinas. Staff including administration, human resources, finance, public information, engineering, information technology, safety, conservation, natural resources, recreation, marketing, and programming are currently divided between three locations.

"The community's support for this project has been overwhelming and we appreciate that so many local leaders were on hand to celebrate the start of it. Not only will it help MWCD streamline central office operations by having everything under a single roof instead of divided between three different locations, but, more importantly, this building will serve as a model for sustainable construction," said Ron Dziedzicki, MWCD board chair.

"We are thrilled about MWCD's continued investment in our community and the benefits its lakes, parks, and marinas bring to the economy of all of eastern Ohio," said Joel Day, City of New Philadelphia mayor. "This project not only strengthens our city's connection to MWCD's mission but also provides valuable public amenities, such as expanded trails and a dedicated space for natural resources education and community meetings. I can't wait to see it completed and all the great things that will happen here."

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Summer Fun Has Officially Begun at MWCD!

Even with cooler-than-usual spring temperatures, excitement is heating up across MWCD. The 2025 recreational season is officially underway, and we are excited to welcome visitors back with brand-new amenities that offer more ways than ever to enjoy the outdoors.

With ribbon cuttings recently held at both Tappan Lake Park and Seneca Lake Park, we are celebrating some of our most exciting park enhancements to date, each one designed to bring people together through nature, play, and shared experiences.



New at Seneca Lake Park:
Splash, Play, and Explore!

The All-New Seneca Splash Pad

On May 23, we celebrated the completion of a \$1.8 million project at Seneca Lake Park, bringing exciting new recreational opportunities to the community. This new area is thoughtfully designed with families, fun, and connection in mind.

At the heart of the new space is our state-of-the-art splash pad, featuring:

- 38 interactive spray features
- Over 2,600 feet of underground waterlines
- A truly impressive engineering achievement that will bring endless joy to children and families for many summers to come

More Than Just Water Play

Surrounding the splash pad are additional amenities to round out the fun:

- Two new pickleball courts
- A basketball court perfect for pick-up games and community bonding
- A storybook trail that brings nature and imagination together, encouraging little ones to explore and learn outdoors.

The new features at Seneca Lake Park and Tappan Lake Park reflect MWCD's continued commitment to enhancing outdoor recreation and creating spaces where memories are made.

Whether you're splashing in the water, riding the pump track, enjoying a trail, or simply soaking up nature, there's something for everyone this summer across MWCD parks.

Plan your visit today and learn more about what's new at: www.mwcd.org

Let's make this a summer to remember!



Tappan Lake Park: A New Hub
for Movement and Community

Introducing the Pump Track

On May 24, we were thrilled to unveil our brand-new Pump Track! This \$475,000 investment brings high-energy excitement for all-ages with features that include:

- A tot track for beginner riders
- BMX bike rentals for kids and adults alike
- Built for movement, laughter, and community connection

The New Amenities Area – \$1.6 Million of Play, Nature, and Gathering

Next to our new Welcome Center is our expansive new Amenities Area, featuring:

- Basketball and pickleball courts
- A wildflower and pollinator habitat trail
- A cozy community fire pit
- A nature-based playground highlighted by a 6-foot bear sculpture, nearly twice the size of the average American black bear! It has already become a must-see photo stop and memory-maker for visiting families.

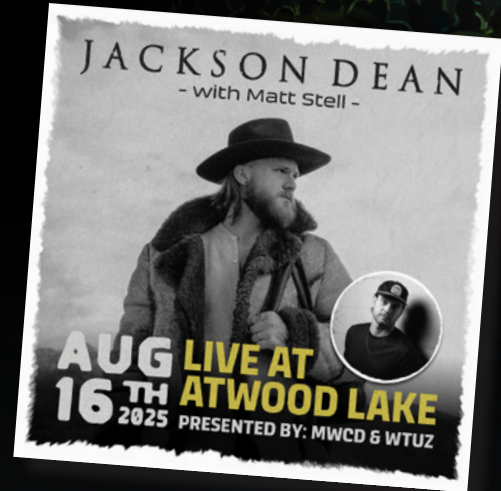


Country Waves at Atwood Lake Returns with Jackson Dean and Matt Stell

Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and WTUZ Radio 99.9 FM are proud to announce that Country Waves is back at Atwood Lake Park on Saturday, August 16! This year's lineup features Jackson Dean, along with Matt Stell. Mark your calendars for Saturday, August 16 and buy your tickets today.

Enjoy food vendors and beer tent at 4:30 pm and live music starting at 5:30 pm, Matt Stell at 7:00 pm, and Jackson Dean taking the stage at 8:30 pm. Jackson Dean is one of country music's most compelling rising stars, known for his raw, high-energy live shows and gravel-toned vocals, and bursting onto the scene with his PLATINUM debut single "Don't Come Lookin'," plus "Fearless (The Echo)" and "Heavens to Betsy." Matt Stell is a dynamic performer, bringing heart, grit, and charisma to every show with back-to-back No. 1 hits - "Prayed For You," "Everywhere But On," and "Breakin' in Boots."

Take advantage of the convenience of having a place to stay right at the concert venue by making plans to spend the weekend at Atwood Lake Park. Enjoy all the amenities the lake has to offer, including hiking trails, swimming beach, programs, boat rentals, restaurants, playgrounds, and picnic areas. Relax on your campsite until it is time for the concert and then return to the campsite afterwards, avoiding the traffic rush. Take advantage of the convenience of having a place to stay right at the concert venue!



Country Waves is presented by 99.9 FM WTUZ - Z Country and Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. Thanks to our sponsors, including our presenting sponsor, Ferris Chevrolet, Buick; as well as Atwood Lake Boats, Aultman Health, TMK Valley Propane, and Gilland Body Shop.

Grab your friends, bring your boots, and get ready for a night of unforgettable music under the stars! Get your tickets today at mwcd.org/concert

New Headquarters Cont.

In addition to MWCD's administrative offices, the approximately 35,000-square-foot building will feature a meeting area for up to 125 people, which will allow for further engagement with residents and lake users. A separate building will contain a service garage for MWCD's vehicles, a water lab, and a sign shop. The site will include trails that connect to the existing trail system at the Kent State University - Tuscarawas Tolloty Technology Incubator and a new dog park for public use.

Designed with sustainability in mind, the facility will retain stormwater for landscape irrigation and the service building will generate some of its own electricity via rooftop solar panels. The site will also be equipped with four electric vehicle (EV) charging stations.

"For more than 90 years, MWCD's public mission has been a powerful motivator for the people who choose to work here and share their talents to support our work for Eastern Ohio. In addition to being a

more productive place for the team to work together, this facility is a symbol of MWCD's further investment in the region we serve. I'm grateful for the support we have received as we start this initiative, and I look forward to bringing it online soon so it can serve as a hub for community engagement, education, and collaboration," said Craig Butler, executive director.

Construction is expected to be completed by fall 2026, with MWCD staff moving in shortly thereafter.



Make Your Plans for Summer Fun!

Programs are offered each week throughout the season, May through September, at Atwood, Charles Mill, Pleasant Hill, Seneca, and Tappan Lake Parks. Additional programs are scheduled at Clendening and Piedmont Lakes. Programs are open to campers, community members, and daily visitors.

Vendor Days at the Lake

Enjoy vendors, food trucks, music, and activities at the beach. Each date will feature different vendors and family-friendly activities. To become a vendor, call 330-343-6647.

- **Second Saturdays at Tappan Lake Park:** June 14, July 12 (featuring Car Show), August 9, September 13
- **Market in the Park at Pleasant Hill Lake Park:** June 21, August 2
- **Market in the Park at Atwood Lake Park:** August 23



Some programs require pre-registration. Program details can be found online at www.MWCD.org/events

Go Kayaking

Choose from a variety of kayak programs at MWCD lakes. Try kayaking for the first time or explore a lake on a guided tour, all while learning to be safe. Compete for a chance to win a kayak at one of our Poker Paddles, or paddle under the stars on a guided Meteor Shower or Moonlight Kayak tour. Find the perfect kayak event to float your boat!



Watch a Movie at the Lake

Bring your family or friends to watch a movie on the BIG screen outdoors at the lake. Movies are scheduled throughout the summer. Due to copyright restrictions, movie titles are posted at each park or message the park on Facebook.



Take a Hike

MWCD lakes offer a variety of hiking trails for beginners or experienced hikers. Get outside on your own or join a guided hike. Guided hikes include nature hikes, night hikes, and scavenger hikes. View hiking maps at www.MWCD.org/trails.

Attend a Day Camp

Get the kids outdoors this summer. Day camps are designed to provide a fun and safe place for kids, ages 8-16, to explore nature, have fun, and learn a new skill. Each camp is designed with a special theme and age-appropriate activities for a full day at the lake. Day camp themes include Adventure Camp, Messy Play, Magic School Bus, Outdoor Cooking, and Creative Crafts Day Camp. Registration is required for all day camps.



Watch Fireworks Over the Lake!

Fireworks shows begin at dusk and can be viewed from land or water.

- **Tappan:** July 4
- **Atwood, Charles Mill, & Seneca:** July 5
- **Pleasant Hill:** July 19

Princess in the Park

This perennial favorite returns to Atwood Lake Park September 6 and Pleasant Hill Lake Park September 14. Dress in your royal finest and enjoy an enchanted day at the lake! Each princess will participate in a craft, royal tea party and snack, face painting, and horse-drawn carriage ride through the park. Space is limited and registration is required. Register at www.MWCD.org/tickets.



Protecting Our Watershed: Conservation Initiatives in the Tappan Lake Region

By Matt Thomas, Chief of Conservation

The Conservation Department's top priority remains focused on protecting water quality and this commitment can be highlighted in many ways.

Over the past 10 years, MWCD has heavily invested in maintaining the health and recreational use of Tappan Lake. Some projects have focused directly on Tappan Lake with the dredging of sediment from shallow areas. Other projects have focused further upstream by purchasing adjacent land when available. We are currently in the planning phase of a \$1.17 million ecological restoration project next to Tappan Lake. This project will protect water quality by removing excess nutrients, restore ecological stream function and construct wetlands that trap sediment and filter runoff before it reaches the lake.

Agricultural Assistance Strengthens Soil Health and Education

MWCD's Agricultural Assistance Program actively supports farmers within the Conservancy's jurisdictional boundary of Belmont and Harrison Counties.

In Harrison County, over 1,300 acres of farm fields have consistently received financial support for planting cover crops every year since 2009.

This is an effective method to prevent erosion, improve soil health, and reduce nutrient runoff, but there are associated costs. MWCD works closely with the Ohio Department of Agriculture and local Soil and Water Districts to administer our cover crop program that identifies priority areas and reduces costs to farmers.

Our Agriculture Assistance Program also supports educational events or workshops. For example, in 2022 we supported an agricultural initiative designed to help local producers navigate the many costs and benefits of implementing soil saving and soil health conservation practices on their land.

Strategic Planning Helps Unlock Federal Funds

The Muskingum River Watershed, covering over 8,000 square miles of Ohio, is a diverse and viable network of lakes, streams, rivers, and wetlands.

Another way to understand and effectively manage this large watershed is to divide it into a collection of many smaller watersheds, or subwatersheds, that each drain only a few square miles. Subwatersheds are assigned their own unique number code for ease of tracking. Think of this as a zip code for small, local watersheds.

By organizing all these subwatersheds in this way it provides managers with a useful tool needed to identify water quality issues and to develop a plan to address those impairments. These plans, called Non-Point Source Implementation Strategies (NPS-IS), operate on this small subwatershed level.

There are federal funds available now to help communities deal with water quality issues like erosion, bacteria levels, and other contaminants in

those subwatersheds, but we need to have a solid science-based plan in place first.

Of the 302 subwatersheds that make up the Muskingum River Watershed, only about 5% have received funding through this EPA program. We recognize this is not enough and are working closely with Ohio EPA (OEPA) to provide the support needed to assess water quality issues, gain stakeholder insight and feedback, and provide the funding necessary for the development and actual writing of NPS-IS plans.

Last year we awarded \$63,000 for the development of seven plans, two in the Tappan Lake area. These plans will be available for final OEPA review later this year.

Looking ahead to 2026, we have prioritized six areas within the Muskingum Watershed based on a variety of criteria such as public drinking water sources, persistent water quality impairments, warm water habitat protection, and proximity to MWCD lakes. Our goal is to fund another 10 plans in these priority areas. MWCD will also help connect local stakeholders and encourage applicants to combine adjacent watersheds, where possible, to maximize the impact and efficiency of resources available.

Real-Time Water Quality Monitoring for Public Drinking Water Protection

Many of us know Tappan as a fantastic lake for boating or fishing but it also serves as the primary public water drinking source for the Village of Cadiz. MWCD and the Village are partners as part of a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan to provide additional long-term environmental monitoring of Tappan Lake. Our efforts, in cooperation with OEPA and Cadiz, are focused mainly on algal bloom detection and monitoring the severity of blooms when they appear.

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MWCD Reaffirms Conservation as a Priority Core Mission

MWCD continues to demonstrate visionary leadership in environmental stewardship through a long-standing and impactful partnership with the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO). Rooted in shared values and a commitment to Appalachian Ohio's prosperity, this partnership began with MWCD's Former Executive Director John Hoopingartner serving as a founding FAO board member. Under the leadership of MWCD's current Executive Director Craig Butler, it has since grown into a regional force for conservation, sustainability, and community-driven impact.

In 2023, MWCD made a landmark \$5 million investment to establish the MWCD Fund for Environmental Stewardship, the largest environmental endowment FAO had received to date. This fund is now a cornerstone of FAO's Environmental Stewardship Pillar of Prosperity, which also benefits from support from organizations like Nicolozakes Trucking & Construction Inc., Ohio CAT, and American Electric Power.

First Grants Spark Regional Innovation and Impact

The first awards from this fund were announced earlier this year, with over \$160,000 in grants awarded to support conservation, water quality, and environmental education across the region. Highlights include:

- **Community Grants:** Five projects totaling \$20,000, including \$5,000 to the Big Love Network to distribute starter forests in southeast Akron—an area with the region's lowest tree canopy per capita.
- **Fellowship Award:** Rebecca Eagle-Malone, PhD of Malone University received a \$10,000 fellowship to develop the "Let's Get Environmental" science camp for Carrollton Middle School students, promoting environmental literacy and career exploration.

- **Research Investments:**

Seven projects totaling nearly \$116,000 were funded, including:

- ▶ **Rising Appalachia:** \$21,000 to create metrics and collaborations to improve biodiversity and land-use conservation in Athens, Hocking, Meigs, and Vinton counties.
- ▶ **The Ohio State University:** \$19,951 to pilot wildlife monitoring at Tappan Lake in Harrison County to establish baseline species data and support long-term ecological planning.

A Proposal to Expand the Partnership: Investing in the Future

Building on this momentum, MWCD's Board of Directors approved a new \$5 million investment to expand the reach and capacity of the Environmental Stewardship Fund. FAO and MWCD have developed a strategic proposal that allocates:

- **\$3 million to:**
 - ▶ Establish a Research Collaborative that convenes researchers and policymakers to guide water quality studies.
 - ▶ Fund innovative conservation research aligned with MWCD's 2025 goals.
 - ▶ Expand community-based environmental grants, fellowships, and scholarships.
- **\$2 million to:**
 - ▶ Strengthen the administrative support FAO provides to its affiliate foundations—including those in Guernsey, Harrison, Morgan, and Noble counties, the African American Community Fund, and the Southeastern Ohio Health and Wellness Foundation.
 - ▶ Support services ranging from fiduciary management to marketing and program planning, empowering local communities to thrive.



FOUNDATION FOR
APPALACHIAN OHIO

This additional support will enable FAO to sustain and grow its ability to assist grassroots initiatives, advance data-driven environmental strategies, and ensure strong local leadership in Appalachian Ohio's conservation efforts.

Leading the Way in Environmental Philanthropy

With this investment, MWCD became a lead investor in FAO's Pillars of Prosperity campaign. The Environmental Stewardship Pillar currently stands at \$7 million—just \$3 million shy of its \$10 million goal, which would generate \$500,000 annually for environmental programming.

This expanded partnership goes beyond just funding — it's about making a real difference. By reaffirming its core mission to conserve and protect, MWCD is demonstrating what meaningful environmental leadership looks like.

A Shared Vision for Generations to Come

MWCD and FAO's partnership has already transformed lives and landscapes. As we look to the future, this new phase of collaboration will ensure that Appalachian Ohio's natural resources are preserved, studied, and celebrated for generations to come.

Together, we are turning a shared vision into lasting impact—for our environment, for our communities, and for our future.

Conservation Cont.

To help fill the information gap and to provide a more frequent monitoring of lake conditions, MWCD has deployed a state-of-the-art water quality buoy in Tappan Lake. This buoy is equipped with sensors that collect and transmit real-time data to MWCD’s website.

This new investment in sensor technology, paired with our robust water sampling program, ensures that credible data is available to the public, resource managers, and researchers.

These coordinated, collaborative, and focused efforts strengthen the mission of MWCD by effectively blending conservation practices with community partnerships. As we look toward our 2025 goals and beyond, the focus remains clear: protect our waters, support our agricultural heritage, and sustain the health of the Muskingum Watershed for generations to come.

MWCD Offers Unique Employment Experiences

By Michael Mahaffey, Deputy Chief of Human Resources

MWCD is not just a place where nature thrives—it’s a vibrant workplace that values dedication, community, and stewardship of the environment. With a mission rooted in flood reduction, conservation, and outdoor recreation, MWCD is an ideal employer for those who love nature and making a positive impact.

MWCD employs approximately 130 full-time staff members who work year-round to manage over 60,000 acres of land and water resources. However, as the camping and recreation season kicks into gear, our workforce expands dramatically. During the peak season, MWCD’s team balloons to almost 300 employees, thanks to the addition of seasonal staff who play a vital role in delivering exceptional experiences to visitors.

Our seasonal employees are at the heart and soul of our parks and marinas. Whether it’s welcoming guests at the gate, maintaining facilities, or taking care of boaters at our marinas, these team members are on the front lines, ensuring that visitors feel valued and cared for. Their dedication to customer service and commitment to maintaining a clean, safe, and enjoyable environment make them indispensable.

Seasonal positions at MWCD offer unique opportunities for individuals seeking hands-on experience in recreation management, customer service, and environmental stewardship. Our full-time staff members, many of whom started as seasonal employees, reflect MWCD’s commitment to professional development and career advancement. For many of our seasonal staff, it is their first job. The professional atmosphere and culture of learning help these staff members prepare for their future careers, whether at MWCD or somewhere else.

If you are passionate about the outdoors, customer service, and being part of a dynamic team, consider joining the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District. Whether as a full-time staff member or a seasonal team player, you’ll be making a difference in our parks, marinas, and community. Explore our employment opportunities and become a part of our mission to conserve, enhance, and responsibly manage the region’s natural resources. mwcd.org/employment

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NEED A SPEAKER FOR YOUR NEXT EVENT?

Is your civic, social, or community group looking for speakers for upcoming meetings? How about providing information for a discussion about the MWCD or any of its many programs?

MWCD can provide the details by supplying a speaker and presentation for those in attendance.

For details, topics, or to book a date, contact Ethan Zucal at MWCD at (330) 556-4814 or by emailing at ezucal@mwcd.org.