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MUSKINGUM
WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT

SUMMER 2026 | VOLUME 45 - ISSUE 2

MWCD Launches \$1 Million "Connecting Communities" Grant Program to Expand Outdoor Recreation Access

MWCD is pleased to announce the launch of its new Connecting Communities Grant Program, a \$1 million initiative designed to expand public access to outdoor recreation across its 18-county region.

Funded through MWCD's oil and gas revenue, the program represents a strategic reinvestment of natural resource development back into the communities of the Watershed. This initiative reflects MWCD's long-standing commitment to investing in outdoor spaces that improve quality of life and support communities, and will focus on capital projects that create outdoor recreational infrastructure, including trails, playgrounds, waterfront access, and park improvements.

"Connecting people to the outdoors is fundamental to our mission," said Pete Novotny, MWCD Chief of Recreation. "This program is about more than building trails or parks, it's about strengthening communities, improving quality of life, and ensuring that every resident in our watershed has access to meaningful outdoor experiences close to home."

The program focuses exclusively on permanent, high-impact projects beginning at \$25,000 that provide measurable public benefit and long-term access to outdoor recreation. Eligible applicants include Ohio political subdivisions such as municipalities, counties, townships, and park districts, as well as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations located within MWCD's service area.

In addition to the primary grant program, MWCD will offer a Small Opportunity Grant for smaller, time-sensitive projects. These awards will range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and will be available on a rolling basis to support immediate community needs.

**For additional information and to apply, visit
www.mwcd.org/communitygrant**





From Surface to Depth: How We Monitor Our Lakes

By Dana Ohman, Chief of Conservation and Bailey Miller, Conservation Technician

The MWCD Conservation Department conducts ongoing water quality monitoring across the Watershed to better understand and protect our lakes. This includes routine sampling of nutrients, conducting vegetation surveys, monitoring *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*) at beaches, and the use of data buoys that continuously collect information about lake conditions.

What is a Water Quality Data Buoy?

The “buoy” part is easy—it is brightly colored, floats on the water, and is anchored in place. The “data” part is where things get interesting.

Each buoy is equipped with specialized sensors that provide real-time information about both water and weather conditions.

What Do These Measurements Mean?

These measurements show how a lake functions and stays healthy, similar to how a doctor checks your health through blood tests.

- **Temperature**
How warm or cold the water is
- **Dissolved Oxygen**
The amount of oxygen available for fish and aquatic life
- **pH**
Whether the water is acidic or basic (7 is neutral)
- **Conductivity**
Indicates the presence of dissolved minerals and nutrients
- **Turbidity**
How clear or cloudy the water is
- **Chlorophyll**
Indicates the presence of algae
- **Blue-Green Algae (Cyanobacteria)**
Potentially harmful algae
- **Fluorescent Dissolved Organic Matter (fDOM)**
Organic material in the water



Why This Data Matters

Collecting this data allows MWCD to better understand how lakes respond to changing conditions throughout the year. For example, shifts in temperature, turbidity, and conductivity can signal when stormwater runoff is entering the lakes, often carrying sediment and nutrients from the surrounding landscape. The vertical chain of sensors shows how lakes naturally form layers during warmer months, with warm, well-mixed water near the surface and cooler, lower-oxygen water deeper down. The boundary between these layers, known as the thermocline, plays an important role in aquatic life and overall lake function. In addition, monitoring chlorophyll and algae-related measurements helps identify when conditions may be favorable for harmful algal blooms (HABs) to develop.

While each of these measurements offers valuable insight on its own, they become especially powerful when viewed together, allowing us to build a more complete picture of overall lake health and how it changes over time.

How This Data Supports Our Mission

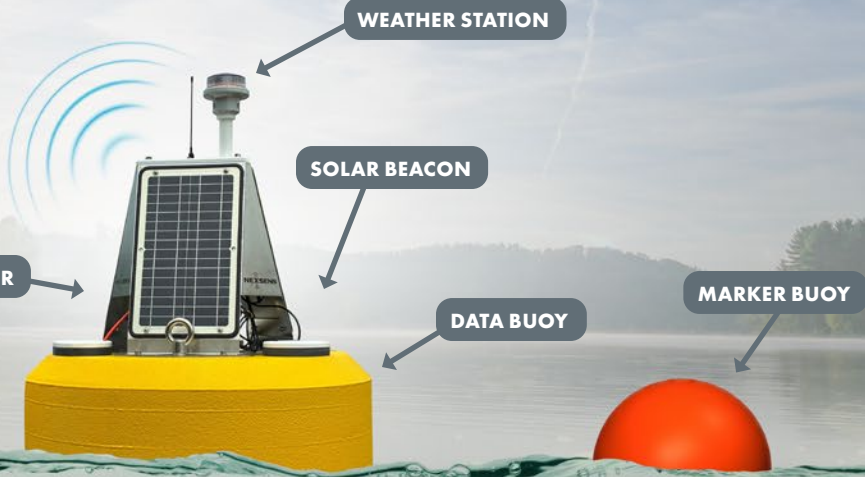
Data collected by MWCD’s buoys supports the District’s core missions of flood reduction, conservation, and recreation by tracking how stormwater runoff affects lake conditions and overall water quality. The information helps guide restoration efforts, supports partner research, and identifies areas of concern across the Watershed. It also provides real-time insights for lake visitors, helping swimmers, boaters, and anglers make informed decisions.

Above the water surface

A weather station collects data while the data logger and solar beacon transmit the data.

Weather station collects data such as:

- **Barometric pressure**
The weight of the air in the atmosphere pressing down.
- **Air temperature**
- **Wind speed and direction**

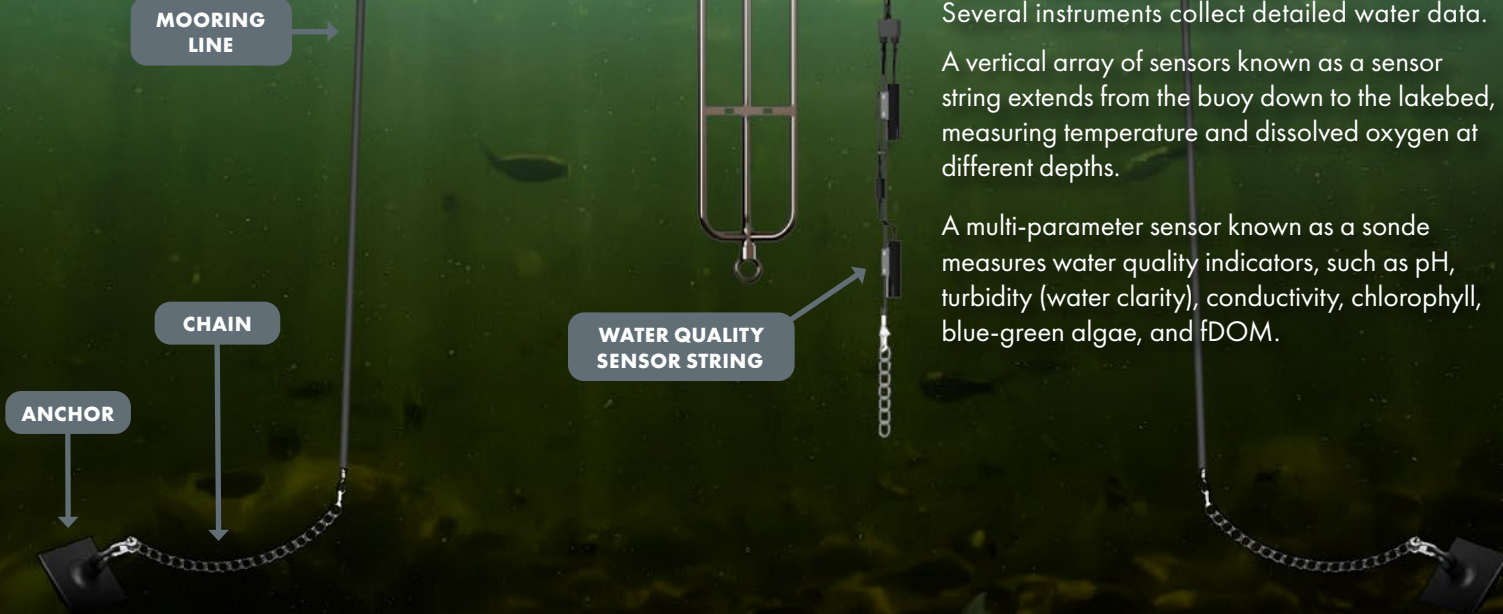


Below the water surface

Several instruments collect detailed water data.

A vertical array of sensors known as a sensor string extends from the buoy down to the lakebed, measuring temperature and dissolved oxygen at different depths.

A multi-parameter sensor known as a sonde measures water quality indicators, such as pH, turbidity (water clarity), conductivity, chlorophyll, blue-green algae, and fDOM.





Make Your Plans for Summer Fun!

Enjoy weekly programs and special events June 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, making MWCD lakes the perfect place to spend your summer outdoors. Learn more at MWCD.org/calendar.

Shop Local at Market in the Park

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

- Tappan Lake Park – June 20, July 25, and September 12
- Pleasant Hill Lake Park – June 27 and August 29
- Atwood Lake Park – August 15



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

Attend a Day Camp

Kids can enjoy unforgettable outdoor adventures at the lake this summer! Day camps provide a safe and engaging environment for ages 8-16, to explore nature, have fun, and learn a new skill. Camp themes include Archery & Adventure, Messy Play, Magic School Bus, and Campfire Cooking. Registration is required online for all day camps.

Adults can experience the fun of summer camp too at our new Outdoor Adventure Camp for Adults on September 26 at Pleasant Hill Lake Park. This is your chance to try something new, enjoy a day outdoors, and connect with others at the lake.

Car Enthusiasts—Come Enjoy Summer Car Shows

All makes and models are welcome. Showcase a classic car, truck, motorcycle, or custom vehicle, plus enjoy food trucks, vendors, and music with DJ Spikeman.

- Seneca Lake Park – August 2
- Tappan Lake Park – August 8
- Atwood Lake Park – August 15





Watch Fireworks Over the Lake

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

- July 2 – Atwood
- July 3 – Tappan
- July 4 – Seneca
- July 25 – Pleasant Hill
- August 1 – Charles Mill

Meet a Princess

Princess in the Park returns this fall at Charles Mill Lake Park September 12 and Atwood Lake Park September 27. 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. Make your princess dreams come true at the lake! Space is limited and registration is required at MWCD.org/tickets.



Go Kayaking

Looking for adventure on the water? MWCD offers a variety of kayak programs for beginners and experienced paddlers alike. Try kayaking for the first time, join a guided lake tour, paddle under the stars during Moonlight or Meteor Shower tours, or compete in a Poker Paddle for a chance to win a kayak. 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

Outdoor enthusiasts can also explore the many hiking trails at MWCD lakes, perfect for beginners and experienced hikers alike. Guided hikes include nature hikes, night hikes, and scavenger hikes. View hiking maps at MWCD.org/trails.





New Quarry Trail at Clendening Lake

On Friday, April 24, MWCD celebrated the grand opening of the new Quarry Trail at Clendening Lake Dam with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by community members and outdoor enthusiasts.

Located at the Clendening Dam in Tippecanoe, Ohio, the new 1.3-mile intermediate natural-surface loop trail was officially unveiled as a scenic and educational hiking destination. During the event, MWCD Chief of Recreation Pete Novotny described the Quarry Trail as a unique opportunity for visitors to explore local history while enjoying panoramic views of Clendening Lake, mature forests, dramatic rock formations, and seasonal wildflowers.

Following the ceremony, MWCD staff guided attendees on a hike along the newly opened trail, showcasing its diverse terrain, large trailside boulders, and elevated lake views. The guided tour also highlighted the historical importance of the former Halderman Stone Quarry, which once supplied sandstone throughout Ohio for foundation stones, mill stones, and pulp stones before being decommissioned in 1906.

Today, the former quarry site has evolved into a thriving natural habitat, where a distinctive microclimate supports a rich variety of native vegetation and wildflowers, making the Quarry Trail both a recreational and historical attraction for visitors.



Construction Update: Clendening Lake's New Marina and Guest Cabins

Clendening Marina

Construction is nearly complete on the new 3,400-square-foot marina building at Clendening Lake that will allow staff to better serve guests and improve retail offerings. The facility includes exterior-accessible restrooms, a sales area, office space, and storage areas. Demolition of the existing marina building is scheduled to occur following the boating season.

The current Clendening Marina remains open, and visitor and guest services continue to be available during the transition to the new facility. A ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held June 26 at 2:00 pm. Follow the Muskingum

Watershed Conservancy District and Clendening Marina Facebook pages for further information.

Clendening Cabins

Construction has begun on three new cabins at Clendening Lake. The project includes two two-bedroom cabins with lofts and one one-bedroom cabin with a loft. All three cabins will feature

fireplaces. Construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Follow www.mwcd.org for more information about reservations and construction progress.

The new Clendening Marina



Boating Tips for Safety on the Water



Boating safety is essential for preventing accidents and ensuring an enjoyable experience on the water. Every boater should wear a properly fitted life jacket, as it can save lives during unexpected emergencies. Before heading out, it is important to check weather conditions, inspect the boat for any mechanical issues, and make sure all required safety equipment is onboard, including fire extinguishers, navigation lights, and first aid supplies. Boaters should also follow navigation rules, avoid operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and maintain a safe speed to prevent collisions. Staying alert and respecting other watercraft, swimmers, and wildlife helps create a safer environment for everyone enjoying lakes and rivers.

Some of the more common violations we see each year include:

- Bow riding
- Personal Flotation Device requirements
- Capacity plate violations (too many people onboard)



Play it safe! Contact your local MWCD park or marina office today to schedule your boat safety inspection.

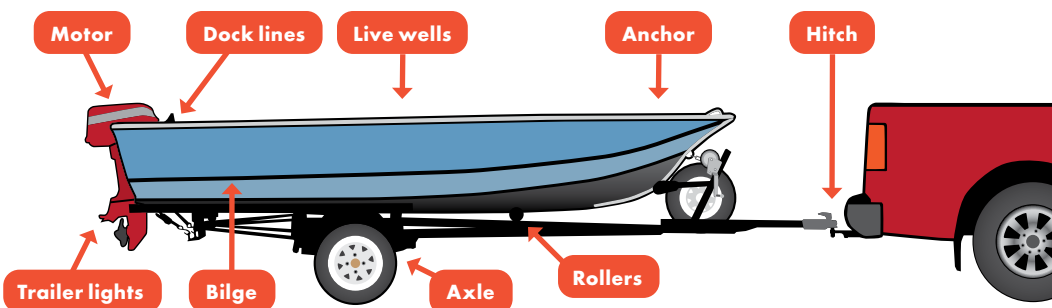
CLEAN YOUR GEAR

Help prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

- Check** for and remove plants, mud, and aquatic life before transporting.
- Drain** water from boat, live well, bilge, and bait bucket before transporting.
- Clean** boat and gear with hot water, or **Dry** everything for at least five days.



Check these areas:



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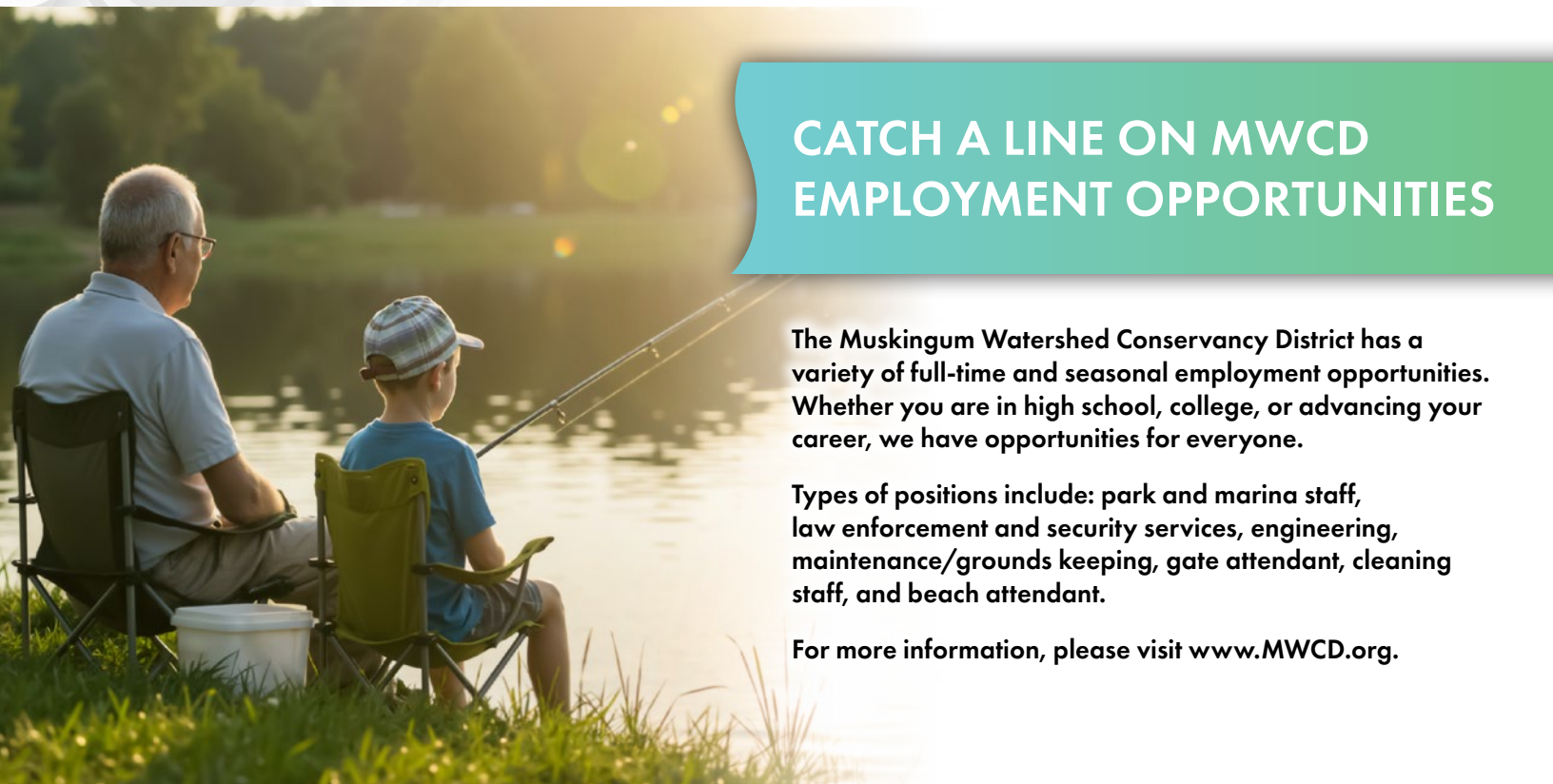


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CATCH A LINE ON MWCD EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District has a variety of full-time and seasonal employment opportunities. Whether you are in high school, college, or advancing your career, we have opportunities for everyone.

Types of positions include: park and marina staff, law enforcement and security services, engineering, maintenance/grounds keeping, gate attendant, cleaning staff, and beach attendant.

For more information, please visit www.MWCD.org.