



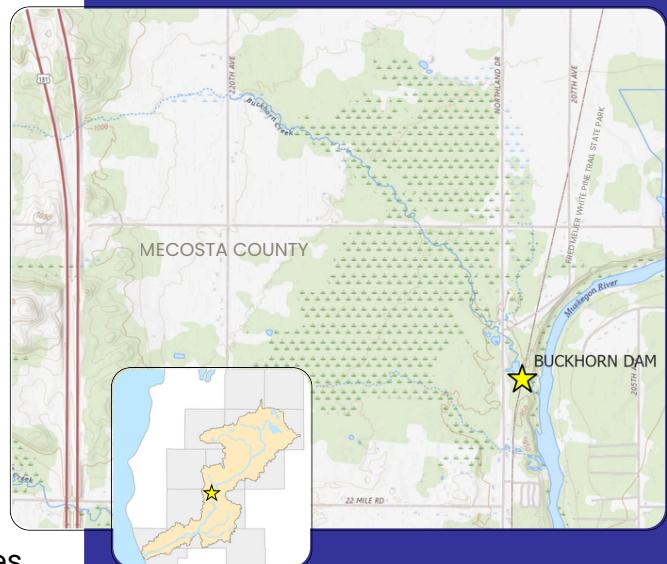
Buckhorn Creek

Dam Removal & Bridge Replacement

Buckhorn Creek is a unique, steep gradient stream. The removal of this dam will result in a high bridge over an exceptionally scenic, pure Michigan creek. The newly installed bridge will be a popular stop along the White Pine Trail as visitors take in the beautiful sounds and scenery of free-flowing water.

Why This Project Matters

- Fish passage and refuge, providing access to 2.4 miles of cold-water resources for the 20,000 trout stocked annually at Paris Park.
- Conservation and restoration of natural stream habitat.
- Encourage year-round recreational enjoyment – cycling, fishing, hiking, snowmobiling, and more.
- Tourism and related revenue as the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail and Paris Park are enhanced.
- Emergency access to improve safety.
- Infrastructure improvement as a 100-year-old dam is replaced with modern infrastructure.
- The completed project will feature great views from the bridge!



Project Goals

- Complete removal of a 100-year old dam.
- Restoration of natural stream function and connectivity for a healthy Buckhorn Creek.
- Installation of a new, modern bridge overlooking scenic Buckhorn Creek along the Fred Meijer White Pine Trail.

About the Project

In 2018, the Director of the Mecosta County Parks Commission urgently contacted the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly (MRWA) when the deck on the 100-year-old, failing Buckhorn Creek Dam adjacent to the popular White Pine Trail collapsed. He was aware that MRWA and the Michigan DNR had interest in removing the dam to improve water quality and open fish passage between the main stem of the Muskegon River and the cold waters of Buckhorn Creek. With the safety concerns of the failure, dam removal became a priority. In addition to habitat restoration and dam safety, this project is valuable for scenic and recreational reasons, and will maximize the State's significant investment in trout stocking at Mecosta County's adjacent Paris County Park.

Work to remove the Buckhorn Dam began in 2021 with \$60,000 in project design and engineering funding from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project quickly grew in scope and cost, as there are several public utilities involved, wetland constraints, and DNR standards for trail construction. The White Pine Trail is a major thoroughfare for cyclists, foot traffic, and snowmobiles at this location. As such, the DNR requires a bridge that can support emergency vehicle access to the nearby recreational areas as well as the weight of a trail groomer in wintertime.



To restore the Buckhorn Creek, MRWA is raising \$2.2 million for dam removal and bridge replacement. To complete this important and valuable project, MRWA is seeking an additional \$350,000. The project is shovel-ready. MRWA and its partners are eager to see complete dam removal, bridge replacement, and full restoration of Buckhorn Creek in 2026.

Committed Funding

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	\$60,000
MI DNR – Parks	\$704,700
MI DNR Fisheries	\$156,199
National Fish & Wildlife Fdn. (NFWF)	\$104,720
NFWF / DNR America the Beautiful	\$366,184
Mecosta County Parks	\$8,000

Pledged Funding

Great Lakes Fisheries Trust	\$200,000
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Pending Funding

State of MI Appropriations Ask	\$250,000
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Remaining to be Raised

\$350,000



How can you help?

The Muskegon River Watershed Assembly has been dedicated to the protection, conservation, and restoration of the Muskegon River Watershed since 1998. Our work relies on the help and support of the people!

- Volunteer & Participate** – Join us for monitoring, educational workshops, citizen science projects, and other fun events!
- Donate** – Fund restoration, education, and community projects.
- Share** – Spread the word and grow our support.



For more information or to make a donation of support today, contact the Muskegon River Watershed Assembly.

(231) 591-2334 · info@mrwa.org