



For Immediate Release
Date: August 31, 2022

Contact: Lindsey Rehtin
Contact Number: (859) 578-9898

Northern Kentucky Water District Completes Ambitious Reservoir Restoration Project

Fort Thomas, KY – The Northern Kentucky Water District undertook an ambitious project at its water treatment plant in Fort Thomas, Kentucky. Two large reservoirs located at the site serve as water storage for normal operations as well as for emergencies that may disrupt pumping from the Ohio River. The goal of the project was to remove mud that had accumulated in the reservoirs over the last 55 years.

Originally built in 1889, the bottom of each reservoir is 50 feet at its deepest point and lined with cut sandstone blocks placed before modern machinery was available. There have been very few modifications to the reservoirs over the years.

Water is pumped from a building located along the river into the reservoirs before undergoing treatment, a process that over time allows some of the dirt naturally contained in the river to settle to the bottom of the reservoirs. For nearly 80 years, the reservoirs were periodically drained, and the settled mud flushed into the adjacent creek. This practice was eventually stopped, which meant other methods had to be developed.

Over the past 30 years, the District used several different methods to remove mud without taking the reservoir out of service. Several types of dredges were used, but these methods were not able to stay ahead of the amounts of mud being brought in from the river.

The District determined that draining the reservoirs and using earth moving equipment was the best way to clean the reservoirs. After meeting with contractors experienced in similar operations, the District decided to lead the project in-house and use staff to operate the excavators. The District contracted with trucking companies to haul the mud to sites approved by the Kentucky Environment & Energy Cabinet to accept the material. Approximately 6,250 loads of mud were hauled away from the site in dump trucks (about 130,000 tons).

“Each year, NKWD includes in its budget amounts for maintaining and enhancing its facilities”, said Joe Koester, Chair of NKWD’s Board of Commissioners. “We are very pleased to have completed this phase of the reservoir restoration project in-house, so that it will continue to provide our customers with safe, clean, reliable water at a reasonable cost for years to come.”

(more)

Northern Kentucky Water District (NKWD) serves approximately 84,875 customer accounts, or nearly 300,000 people in Campbell and Kenton Counties, portions of Boone, Grant and Pendleton Counties, and the Greater Cincinnati Northern Kentucky International Airport.

District Completes Ambitious Reservoir Restoration Project, page 2

During the project, District staff discovered a surprise from water works employees who last cleaned the reservoirs, who had written their names and the date of the last cleaning in June 1967 on the sidewall. After nearly 24 months of being out of service, the first reservoir is completely clean and is scheduled to be filled this week.

“The District employees are amazing. Without hesitation, these professionals worked with their staff to create a plan and execute a relatively seamless restoration process, with minimal impact to the communities’ water supply,” said Lindsey Rechten, President / CEO of Northern Kentucky Water. “We are very proud of their efforts and their continued contribution to community health and sustainability.”

The District plans to begin cleaning the second reservoir early next year. It has been determined that the second reservoir does not contain as much mud as the first, so it is anticipated the cleanup process will be shorter in duration and this reservoir will be back in service quicker. Hopefully, Staff will find another hidden message from past employees in the next reservoir.

(Photos also provided as .jpg attachments.)



(Left to right): Before: Reservoir 1 showing mud near upper bank before cleaning began; **After:** Reservoir 1 showing District employees marking end of Phase 1 with group photo at the bottom of the reservoir, August 17, 2022; and the June 1967 “signature”.

###