

# HANDSHAKE PROGRAM

Partnership Webinar  
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Handshake Program Coordinators  
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*"The views, opinions and findings contained in this report are those of the authors(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation."*



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# Today's Webinar

- History of the Handshake Program
- Program Accomplishments
- FY 22: Application Process



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# Program History/Purpose

- Program originated in 2004
- Resulted from Partners Conference in Los Angeles
- Created to encourage community engagement
- Promote mutually beneficial activities



L to R: Cori Brown, Phil Bengé, Greg Miller, Jeff Boutwell, Debra Stokes, Dick Otto, Mike Hosey, Chris Gallagher, and Mark Wilms



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# Program History/Purpose

- Requires a formal agreement to achieve a mutually beneficial project (not just two people informally shaking hands)
- This is NOT a grant or granting program, although it looks very similar. It is an internal partnership stimulator.



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Eligibility

Handshake funds are administered through a challenge partnership agreement. The authority for the challenge partnership program provides opportunities for public and non-Federal groups and individuals to contribute to and participate in the operation and/or management of RECREATION FACILITIES and NATURAL RESOURCES at Corps water resource development projects.

EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 12



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# Basics

- Corps facilities and resources maintained at 100% Corps expense
- Agreement with a non-federal public or private entity
- Within current spending authorities and in approved OMP
- \$250,000 total program available in FY 22
- \$25,000 maximum individual request



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# Investment (FY 04 – FY21)

**Handshake Funds: \$ 3,149,168**  
(204 project recipients)

**Corps Offices: \$ 2,942,409**

**Partners: \$ 10,048,051**

**Total : \$ 16,389,628**

**\*61% was contributed by  
Partners from a total of 619**

**Total Projects: 204**



# *Why Partner? & Why Handshake?*



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# Handshake Partnership Program Timeline

**Applications Period Begins** **July**

**Application Deadline** **\*SEP\***

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**Recipients Announced** **Nov**

**Agreement Deadline** **Aug**

**Expend Funds** **2 yrs**

– funds will be transmitted to District/Project via FAD



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Application Information

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>

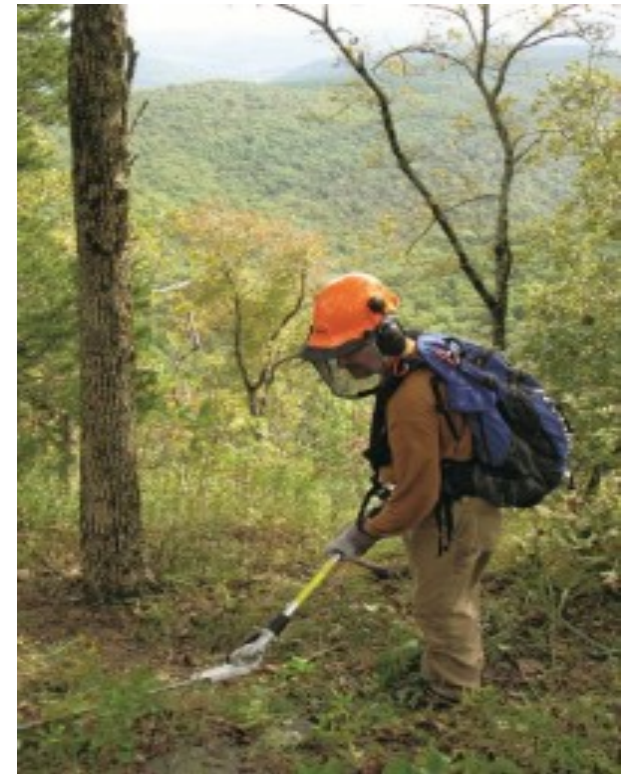


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# How To Prepare a Winning Handshake Application

- Applications
- Evaluation Criteria
- Scoring
- Handshake Program



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Plan Ahead

- Partnerships take time
- September may seem like a ways off but it will come quickly.
- Determine your project
- Work with prospective partners
- Identify needs and each partner's contribution



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Program Future

- Total program: \$250,000 (up to \$25,000 per project)
- Quarterly reporting: Funded projects will have to provide a status update every quarter.
- Incentive Points:
  1. This project will support youth participation in natural resources and outdoor recreation. (100 points).
  2. This project will support diversity, equity, and inclusion goals to increase access to a quality recreation experience which includes a safe and healthful environment for a diverse population. This project will help the Corps conserve natural resources and provide recreation opportunities that contribute to the quality of American life. (100 points).



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# NEW!!! – CORPS FOUNDATION BONUS

## CORPS OF ENGINEERS NATURAL RESOURCES EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Corps Foundation is a non-profit, 501(c) (3) dedicated to supporting USACE Recreation and Natural Resources Management programs. The Corps Foundation exists to support these programs and as such, their focus centers on goals of nurturing partnerships and contributions. As an added incentive, the Corps Foundation will provide a \$5,000 bonus to one selected Handshake Project.



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# NEW!!! – CORPS FOUNDATION BONUS

This bonus funding is in addition to and separate from Handshake funds provided by USACE Headquarters.

The Corps Foundation bonus will be provided to the selected Handshake Project through one of the following ways.

- The Corps Foundation purchases items specified in the handshake project proposal that the \$5,000 bonus funds will be used for. The project will provide the vendor information, website, ordering form, etc. filled out and ready for the Foundation to pay with a credit card.
- The Corps Foundation gives money to one of the partners identified in the Handshake project to purchase the items specified for the \$5,000 bonus.
- The Corps Foundation provides a check/cash directly to the winning project. Donations will need to be processed through the Treasury and RM to set up an account to use the funds at the project. Coordination on the Corps Foundation Bonus funds will occur after the Handshake Projects are selected.



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Applications

- Describe the partnership and the work to be accomplished.
- Include the basic who, what, when, where, how.
- Include:
  - Who will accomplish each task
  - Are there:
    - New facilities
    - Renovations to existing facilities
    - Research
    - Visitor services
    - Cultural or natural resources preserved
    - Educational or interpretive products created



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Applications

A good application includes a description about

- the partners,
- the project, and
- the overall benefit of the partnership to the project

It must also tell us why the proposed project is valuable. Don't assume we already know.



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Specifically address how the project will meet the following six evaluation criteria

## Longevity / O&M

- Partnership Value
- Environmental Stewardship Value
- Recreational Benefit
- Communication and Education Value
- Innovativeness

Projects that can show benefits in multiple categories compete better.



Rathbun Lake



# Handshake Partnership Program

**Longevity/ O&M** - What is the life span of the product and the benefit to the Corps?

- What is long term benefit of the project?
- How long do you estimate it will be around?
- What is long term cost?
- Will there be on-going maintenance required?
- By whom?
- Will the project be removed or closed if maintenance is required but not funded?
- Longer term benefit and less O&M compete better



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b. Partnership Value - What is the significance of the partner and their contribution to the project (i.e. critical partner, matching dollars, materials, in-kind services, etc.)?

- This category incorporates both the value of the partner and the value of their contributions.
- More partners compete better because there is a stronger partnering benefit and more potential contribution.
- The value of the partner to the COE makes the application more attractive.
- **Higher % of partner contribution compete better**



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Recreational Benefit - Does the project improve the overall recreational experience for the project's users? Does it provide opportunities for various user types?

- What experiences are created?
- Who benefits?
- Are there multiple user groups?



•The more diverse and multi-functioning the recreation experience can be, the better the application.



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Environmental Stewardship Value – How does the project contribute to the natural world, and the improvement of the Corps' natural and/or cultural resources?

- Pollinator projects
- Invasive species control
- Aquatic & fisheries habitat improvements
- Wildlife habitat improvements
- Trails
- Research
- Improvements to the natural environment usually score higher



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Communication and Education Value – This includes both effort and impact of that effort through interpretation, outreach, education and public information?



- It is important to show the effort in education
- It is important to show the impact of the efforts.
- Is there interactivity or is everything static?
- Explain how the benefits of the project are conveyed to the public and how the project improves the USACE image.



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Innovativeness: Describe the innovative nature of the partnership or the project.

Why is this partnership or project important and unique?

- What makes this idea so different?
- Why is it special?
- Is the partnership innovative or is it the project?

Explain the difference if there is one.

- Convince the reader, “Wow, that is different.”



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Application suggestions:

Don't *assume* the reader knows what you know.

Project diversity is good, but not required.

Provide the information in an easy to read format.

Follow directions.

Don't *assume* the reader knows what you know.



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Scoring:

Each application is evaluated and scored 1-10 for each criteria, then weighted.

- Longevity / O&M (15%)
- Partnership Value (20%)
- Recreational Benefit (20%)
- Environmental Stewardship Value (20%)
- Communication and Education Value (15%)
- Innovativeness (10%)

Maximum score for each application is 200 points per evaluator (usually 8 evaluators).



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Scoring:

Each PAC member evaluates all applications and submits scores to coordinator.

Scores are combined to get total score (1,600 maximum)

Then bonus points are added...

**AND**

Points are deducted (not following directions).



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# Handshake Partnership Program



Projects are ranked in the order of total score.

Funds are disbursed according to evaluation score ranking until expended.

It is possible that the lowest ranked funded project will not receive all requested funds.



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Manage Expectations

In 2017 there were:

15 applications submitted

9 were selected to receive funds (60%)

In 2018 there were:

18 applications submitted

7 were selected to receive funds (38%)

In 2019 there were:

15 applications submitted

6 were selected to receive funds (38%)

In 2020 there were:

16 applications submitted

9 were selected to receive funds (56%)

In 2021 there were:

22 applications submitted

13 were selected to receive funds (59%)



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# Handshake Partnership Program

- Is the Handshake Program the right fit for this project or this year?
- If so, start NOW, hopefully your partners are already on board.
- Determine your project – its not too late, but waiting longer makes the process much harder
- Work with prospective partners
- Identify needs and each partner's contribution



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# SUBMITTING APPLICATION

## Application Deadline:

Close of Business **30 September 2021**

Application packages must be coordinated with District and Division offices prior to being submitted and must be sent from the Division coordinator via e-mail to Phil Manhart, [Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil](mailto:Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil). (217) 343-4662



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# Handshake Partnership Program

GOOD LUCK!

If there are questions, contact us.

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