



THE recreation RETREAT

HQ Update—Recreation Backlog Data and Park Ranger Safety Survey

POC: Ryan Hartwig, Recreation Program and Business Line Manager

As the fiscal year draws quickly to a close and we prepare for the upcoming “new” year, there are two important efforts that we don’t want to get lost in the shuffle.

1 Recreation Backlog Data. We are rapidly approaching the home stretch of the effort to identify ALL backlog for assets associated with the recreation program. *Why is this so important?* The simple answer, there is a window of opportunity to influence a significant investment in our recreation portfolio. Back in April, HQ CW directed a consistent process for capturing the backlog for assets within the Recreation community. This process is being conducted in support of a very near-term requirement of the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations’ Report for the Energy and Water Development and Related Agencies Appropriations Act of 2021. The Committee requires a report from the Recreation Task Force very soon and efforts to develop the backlog are drawing to a close at the end of October.

USACE is following a similar process employed by the National Park Service after a congressional committee had asked the same backlog information from them. The Park Service conducted a significant study and updated their Facility Management Software System (FMSS) which operates similarly to our Facility and Equipment Management System (FEM). The study found that NPS had an estimated \$12B in backlog maintenance needs and the result of their effort was significant: The Great American Outdoors Act, which will provide NPS \$1.9B per year over five years to make significant enhancements and repairs to recreation infrastructure in National Parks. We cannot know how the Committee will use our backlog information, but the gravity of the request should not be underestimated. As we approach the final stage of this effort, the focus needs to be on complete and quality data. The investments described in this data are expected to serve as the definitive source of requirements for the foreseeable future.

2 Park Ranger Safety Survey. The 2022 USACE Park Ranger Safety Survey is now open through September 15th.

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YOUR Thoughts

We are looking for contributors and ideas!
*If you have a topic, success story, lesson learned, or helpful suggestion—let us know.
Send to: Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil

The Recreation Retreat is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This online publication is produced quarterly with the purpose of providing its readers information about the USACE Recreation Program. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Mention of specific vendors does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or any element thereof. Managing Editor: Tara Whitsel. Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil

*Campaign Hat Photo Credit:
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE*

This Issue:



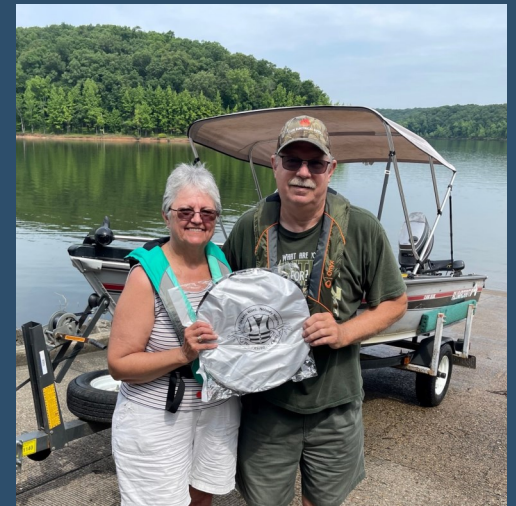
Ranger Recognition
Small Unmanned Aircraft

Water Safety Partnership that with Your Help, is Saving Lives

POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager

The National Water Safety Program partners with the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (The Corps Foundation) to enhance and promote our water safety campaign that targets adults, which is the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign. For several years the Corps Foundation has received Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund grants, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard, that is used towards the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign.

This year grant funds were used to purchase dry bags and vehicle windshield sunshades. These items were then donated to the National Water Safety Program which distributed them out to USACE lakes to use in their "I Got Caught" initiatives. The dry bags were distributed to 71 lakes and vehicle windshield sunshades to 18 lakes that requested the items to use in their "I Got Caught" initiative. The dry bags and sunshades are only given to adults that are caught wearing life jackets. On numerous occasions the lakes that received these products have mentioned how well received they are by our visitors.



Photos (Left to Right, Top to Bottom): Tionesta Lake, Wappapello Lake, John W Flannagan Lake, Proctor Lake, and Raystown Lake.



The Corps Foundation also used grant funds this year to purchase water safety billboard ad spaces near Lake Lanier, Lewisville Lake, Hartwell Lake, Lake Texoma, and J. Percy Priest Lake that were in place in July. These lakes were chosen because they had the most water-related public recreation fatalities in recent years. Purchasing billboard advertising to promote water safety is considered a necessary expense for the O&M of USACE projects and is a relatively inexpensive as many USACE lakes have already discovered.

Water Safety Partnership Continued

The billboard graphic artwork was created by the National Water Safety Program. Artwork created by the National Water Safety Program that you can use is available on the National Water Safety Program's webpage, https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-Water-Safety_Program/, which PleaseWearIt.com redirects to, and on the NRM Gateway in the Water Safety Graphics Library, <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/water.cfm>.



The National Water Safety Program's social media pages, Please Wear It on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, are managed in cooperation with The Corps Foundation. They are an excellent resource for water safety social media posts that you can share on your social media pages. Posts are made on Please Wear It every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday throughout the year and additionally on Saturday from Memorial Day to Labor Day.

These are just a few examples of the great things that the Corps Foundation is doing to help and support us. The Corps Foundation recently received another three-year grant from the U.S. Coast Guard to help promote and enhance the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign, so more good things are coming to help us encourage more adults to wear life jackets.

 www.facebook.com/PleaseWearIt

 www.twitter.com/PleaseWearIt  www.instagram.com/PleaseWearIt



In case You Missed It—Water Safety Photo Contest

The 2021-2022 USACE National Water Safety Photo Contest is open to all USACE employees and volunteers. The contest deadline is 31 January 2023. This is an excellent opportunity to showcase your photographs and talent. Winning photographers will receive some outstanding items that can be used to promote water safety. Photos taken in 2021 and 2022 can be submitted and must have been taken at a USACE project or off-site at an event/program involving USACE. Photos in all categories except for the non-water related recreation category should depict the promotion of water safety, demonstrate safe water practices, and/or showcase water-based recreation. Photos will be judged for clarity, composition, originality, visual impact, and topic.

2021-2022 Categories:

1. USACE Employees in Action (includes water safety mascots)
2. USACE Partners or Volunteers in Action
3. Commercial Boating
4. Water Recreation
5. Non-water Recreation

Contest guidelines can be found in the NRM Gateway water safety section at this link <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/photos.cfm>.

Contest entries must be sent to your National Water Safety Committee Division Representative and can be sent at any time up until the deadline of 31 January 2023. Division Representative contact information can be found on the NRM Gateway in the Water Safety Section under Committee Members. <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/members.cfm>

Photo (Bottom): Lake Lanier— I Got Caught Picture

The “Small” Unmanned Aircraft Systems: Black Warrior and Tombigbee Lakes Experience

POC: David White, Park Ranger, 334-289-3540

The small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS), aka drones, have been gaining popularity across the country in many organizations. As more and more are starting to take note, it is important to realize it is just another tool in the USACE toolbox. Like any other tool there is a time where it is the only thing that will work, and a time when maybe something else is a better fit. The right tools in the right hands are capable of being great assets to the role in which they are needed.

At the project level, the sUAS program can assist with numerous programs such as: recreation, environmental, navigation, shoreline, engineering, and surveying & mapping. This is a broad generalized list and that is on purpose. When you bring in the sUAS program, you will notice it begins to fill roles you were not thinking about when you first investigated implementing a sUAS at your project. Understanding what you are wanting to accomplish and what the restrictions of the sUAS will allow you to maximize the impact this program can have to your project.

Since the inception of the program here at Black Warrior and Tombigbee Lakes offices, we have been able to apply the sUAS to a various array of applications. Primarily we have been utilizing the sUAS for updating aerial imagery. We fly autonomous flights over the desired area to capture imagery. Then upload those images into a software that stitches the pictures together to create a large orthomosaic image. This orthomosaic can be processed into a 2d image or a 3d representation of the area depending on the need. This has been used for invasive species detection (Photo 1), beach restoration, siltation/erosion monitoring, seasonal or annual imagery for comparisons, and facility maintenance planning. This tool is key in obtaining images for hard-to-reach areas. One hard-to-reach area this platform has enabled us to access are areas after aerial herbicide treatments for efficacy documentation (Photo 2). Being on a river system, navigation is a primary mission at our project. Our sUAS program has assisted navigation by capturing images of a riverbank stabilization project, dredge disposal area estimations, and collecting photographs of dewatered lock structures during maintenance (Photo 3). Inspections of storm damage, rockslides, near spillways/dams, or other hazards, where it is too dangerous to send people, is a beneficial use of this platform as well.



Photo 1: Cogongrass grows in a circular pattern and is easily identifiable within this native grass plot. From the ground level, finding these Cogongrass patches can be difficult as the native grass can grow to 8-10 feet tall. Photo 2: Images of herbicide efficacy following an aerial application to our backwater areas. Multiple images can be taken from a single point. This decreases labor hours on this task and allows for broader coverage.

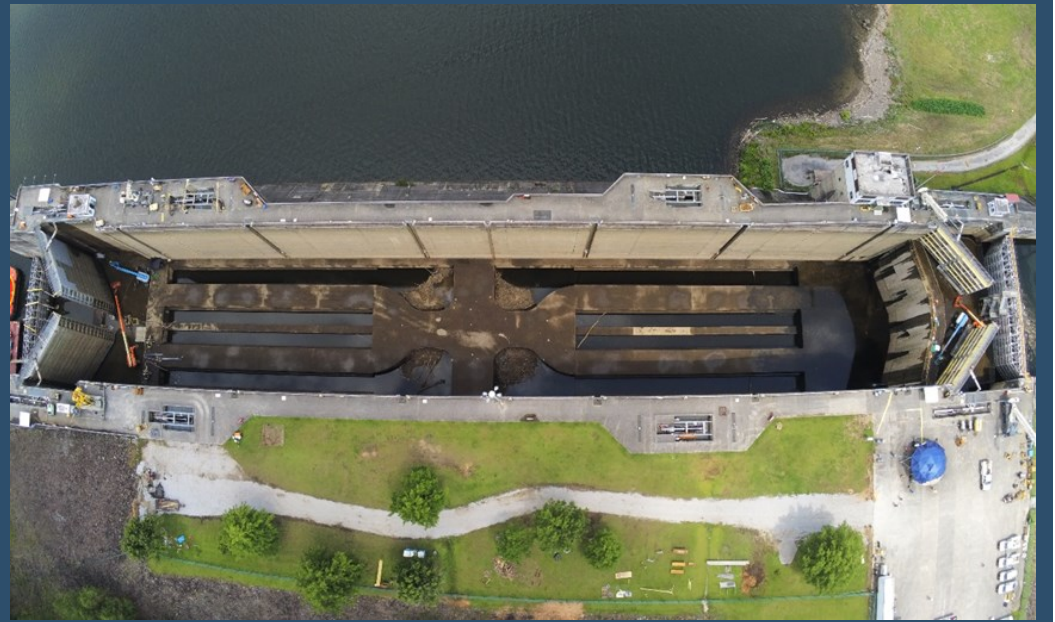


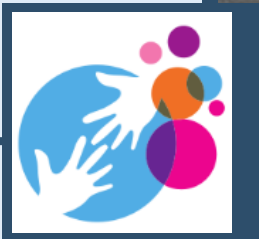
Photo 3: Bankhead Lock dewatered during lock maintenance.

“Small” Unmanned Aircraft Systems Continued

The sUAS can give you a bird’s eye view of the area to determine if it is safe or if it needs to be addressed by workers. Inspections of towers, roofs, etc., can be performed quickly; however, some inspections may be required to be done in person. Public outreach, via social media or other methods, can be assisted through the use of sUAS. Scenic or informative aerial pictures and videos can all be posted to a social media page to attract new followers. Utilizing the unmanned aircraft, we were able to video the effects of a recreation vessel (surplus vessel with a mannequin) that came too close to the fixed crest spillway (Photo 4).

These are just some of the uses that we have applied our sUAS program to improve product quality, add a new data set, increase safety, or expedite a process. With more software being developed for post processing, more applications will surface. Realize that there are restrictions and limitations. The operators must be able to always see the sUAS, max altitude of 400 feet above ground level, weather limitations, airspace, and unable to fly over people are just a few of the limiting factors. The sUAS is a great tool when applied properly to numerous USACE missions.

Help Us— Help You!



Keeping your important files easily accessible for future reference is a good knowledge management practice. Do you have older files that you cannot open with the current version of Microsoft Office? A quick way to convert is to open the file in MS-TEAMS, which gives you an option to save as a compatible version. This is especially helpful for PowerPoint files since the Legacy File Converter available through ACEIT only works for Word and Excel. See this article for additional information on legacy file conversion using MS-TEAMS.

https://servicenow.eis.usace.army.mil/nav_to.do?uri=%2Fkb_view.do%2Fkb_view.do

Note that link is only accessible from a CAC enabled device



Photo 4: A surplus vessel was used to create a water safety video on the hazards of a fixed crest spillway. The sUAS was able to capture shots from locations that were unsafe for personnel.

In case You Missed It—Every Kid Outdoors

POC: Ryan Hartwig, Recreation Program and Business Line Manager

We are very excited to announce the kickoff of the Every Kid Outdoors program for 2022-23 School year. This program offers current and/or rising 4th graders free day use access to all Federally Managed Recreation areas. This age group has been selected as these are formative years to get our nation's youth involved in outdoor programs and allow students to discover our Natural Resources and history for free. Ordering information can be found attached and below.

IMPORTANT NOTE: these passes may be ordered immediately, however, they may NOT be issued to students until September 1, 2022.

On behalf of the HQUSACE Operations and Natural Resources Management teams, I'd like to encourage your participation and request your focused leadership in supporting this worthwhile program. Providing our future societal members a safe and enjoyable experience outdoors is increasingly important, sometimes it just takes this little nudge to help the discovery along! USACE has historically been a leader in this program, please help ensure we keep that status.

Please contact myself or Jason Owen (jason.w.owen@usace.army.mil) if you have questions.

Ranger Recognition

Park Rangers make a difference in the lives of our visiting public on a daily basis. This is just one example. Please continue to share and appropriately “upward” report Rangers making a significant difference through USACE’s Visitor Assistance Program. We want to be able to share with others!

Natural Resources Specialist/Park Ranger Elizabeth “Liz” Anderson, was recently recognized as SWL’s Hero of the Week.—

On Saturday July 2, 2022, while on routine park patrol on Norfolk Lake, Park Ranger Anderson received a call regarding a young girl who had sustained injuries from a boat propeller. The girl was loaded into the vessel and transported to the closest park where Park Ranger Anderson was first on scene and awaiting their arrival. Upon assessment, Park Ranger Anderson realized the victim’s injuries were very severe and consisted of significant lacerations on both legs and feet. Park Ranger Anderson immediately began performing critical first-aid measures on the victim by applying trauma dressings to her injuries. Park Ranger Mason Smith arrived on scene and assisted Park Ranger Anderson with the process by applying bandages. When EMS arrived on scene, USACE Park Rangers had the victim ready to be loaded into the ambulance where she was transported a short distance to an awaiting Air Evac helicopter, and then to the hospital.

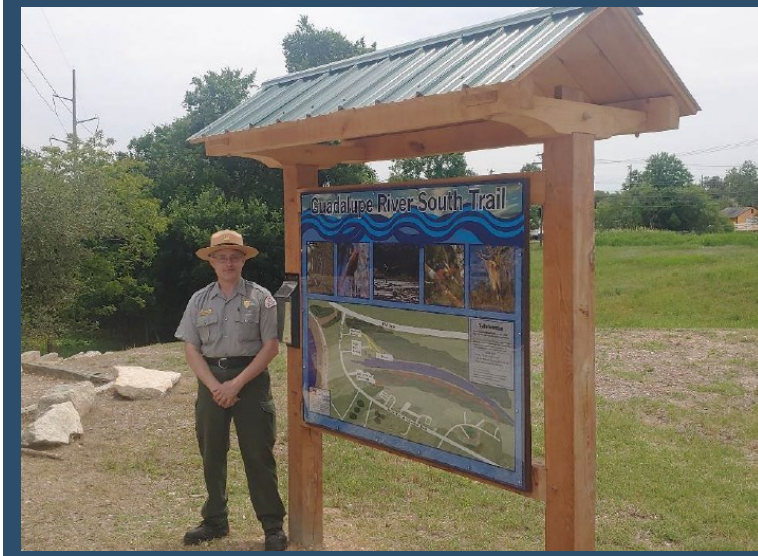
Unrelated to the above accident, Park Ranger Anderson recently coordinated a head/neck/spinal injury training for Park Rangers at the Mountain Home Project Office. A certified instructor taught the various possible spinal injuries and proper procedures to follow until EMS arrives. On Sunday July 3rd, while on boat patrol on Bull Shoals Lake, Park Rangers Kevin Patterson and Trevor McIntyre received a 911 call about an injured water skier. Park Rangers Patterson and McIntyre were first on scene and upon assessment realized that the victim likely had a spinal injury. Because of their recent training, the Park Rangers were able to assist the victim and stabilize the C-spine until EMS arrived, where they assisted with placing the victim on a backboard and into the ambulance. All of this is a direct result of the training that Park Ranger Anderson had recently coordinated.

Park Ranger Anderson is a certified CPR/First Aid/Blood Borne Pathogen (BBP) instructor and was an EMT in her past employment. She has a great passion for public safety and teaching others these important skills.



Canyon Lake—Trail Partnership

The Texas Master Naturalist Lindheimer Chapter in partnership with Canyon Lake personnel and volunteers installed a kiosk and sign. This trail area is maintained and cleaned by the local Lindheimer Chapter. The trailhead is located at the base of Canyon Dam at the far end of the southernmost parking area. The trail is nearly a one-mile long scenic walk along the bald cypress-lined banks of the Guadalupe River. Many of the trees along this trail are very large and estimated to be over 100 years old.



Automated Fee Machines

Piney Woods Region

— Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Piney Woods region began implementing changes from the 35 individual gate attendant contacts to volunteer park hosts and automated fee machines to collect day use fees. Machines started taking payments on Oct. 1, 2020 and have been in continuous operation. In FY21, eight machines were utilized 36,505 times by customers totaling \$293,60 in collections. A portion of this utilization included USACE Annual Pass Vouchers. Visitors purchased 447 vouchers at Lake O' the Pines and 2,783 at Sam Rayburn where historically only 1,800 passes were sold prior to the fee machines. Total day use sales have increase on average by 30-40% with the implementation of fee machines.



Sam Rayburn Reservoir— Over a summer weekend in July, Seasonal Park Ranger Justin Coleman and Natural Resources Specialist Ethan Lum performed visitor assistance duties by checking vehicles present at all public day use area to ensure that day use fees had been paid via automated fee machines. Together, they issued over 30 warning citations and made numerous personal contacts with vehicle owners to educate them on the importance and process of utilize the fee machine and properly paying the required day use fee. During their efforts, they also made 110 direct water safety contacts while engaging with the park visitors.



Incase You Missed It

Please see the latest issue of Workamper News. This information has also been posted on the NRM Gateway: <https://gateway.erdcdren.mil/nrm/volunteer/workamper-issues.cfm>

USACE has a contract with Workamper that provides each project:

- One ad of up to 100 words in each of the 6 issues of Workamper News.
- Four 2-week Hotline ads (up to 100 words) per year that run online for immediate needs.
- 6 issues of Workamper News magazine mailed to the project that include Wanted ads for volunteers and contractors seeking opportunities.
- Access to Workamper News online.
- Access to an applicant resume database for volunteers/contractors seeking opportunities.
- Ability to create an employer tour to show off your Workamping environment.



In case You Missed It— New to R1S & Tread Lightly Grant Opportunity

New to R1S—We're excited to make you aware of a new opportunity available to our field projects participating in the Recreation One Stop (R1S) program. As of June 1, R1S developers activated a donations module inside the R1S system which will allow a customer to make a donation to the facility's parent project when making a reservation. These funds will be tracked separately from rec fees and ultimately end in a special account for the project's use under our recreation donation authorities. A few things to note here:

- Visitors to Recreation.gov will be informed of the authority and ability to accept donations in support of projects and programs and donate if they choose.
- Donations can only be made when making a reservation on Recreation.gov, and cannot be made through the call center, app, or in person; although the R1S team is looking at ways to expand the program and give customers more options.
- Donations are tax deductible. Visitors will receive confirmation of their donation along with a thank you letter which will serve as their proof of donation for tax purposes.
- Funds will be tracked separately from other transactions and distributed monthly.
- The Recreation.gov vendor (Booz Allen Hamilton) will withhold a three percent service fee from the full amount of the donation to cover their administrative support costs.

This new opportunity fits well with our goals of utilizing non-appropriated funds to help support our program, and allows our users to see their donation stay on site for the facilities they love. Please share this news with your community. If you have questions, you may contact Jason Owen, Recreation One Stop Agency Program Manager for USACE, at Jason.W.Owen@usace.army.mil.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters

July 27 at 7:00 AM

To visitors of our recreation sites throughout the nation, did you know [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) recently launched a feature which will allow you to conveniently give back to the lands and waters you love? Now, when you make a reservation at a USACE-operated park through [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov), you can make a donation which will directly support the lake or river project you are visiting. As a government agency, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does not actively solicit donations but is authorized to accept them when voluntarily offered. With [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov), visitors who willingly want to support their public lands have the option to donate money to a specific USACE recreation area. These donations have no impact on your [Recreation.gov](https://www.recreation.gov) reservation and will directly fund the chosen recreation site to support programs and their overall recreation mission.

(Photo: Tionesta Lake, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Pittsburgh District, by Ranger Joel VanOrd)



Please share this news with your community. If you have questions, you may contact Jason Owen, Recreation One Stop Agency Program Manager for USACE, at Jason.W.Owen@usace.army.mil.

Quadratrec 50 for 50 Cleanup Program—Join Tread Lightly! and Quadratrec in their campaign to complete one stewardship project in each state that enhances or improves off-road or public land's access. <https://treadlightly.org/quadratrec50/>

Tread Lightly! and Quadratrec recognizes that one of the best ways to promote responsible outdoor recreation is to support enthusiasts in the stewardship of their favorite areas. These Tread Lightly! grants are designed to help individuals and groups organize clean-ups, trail maintenance work days and other small stewardship projects. The average grant is under \$500. These funds can be used for everything from feeding volunteers to purchasing equipment, trash bags, dumpster rental, fuel used at the project location, signage, and tools.

Grants are eligible to active Tread Lightly! Member Clubs. If you have a local OHV group that might be interested in applying for one of these grants and being featured as one of the 50/50 Cleanup projects on USACE lands, please forward this message to them so that they may apply. Grant applications and supporting material are due by 5:00 PM Mountain time on March 31st 2023. <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f67e6bff5a15430ca023a42472167f02>. Applicants must submit: 1. Online grant application, 2. Media plan, 3. Letter of permission and support from the land manager/owner, 4. Photos of trail and/or area

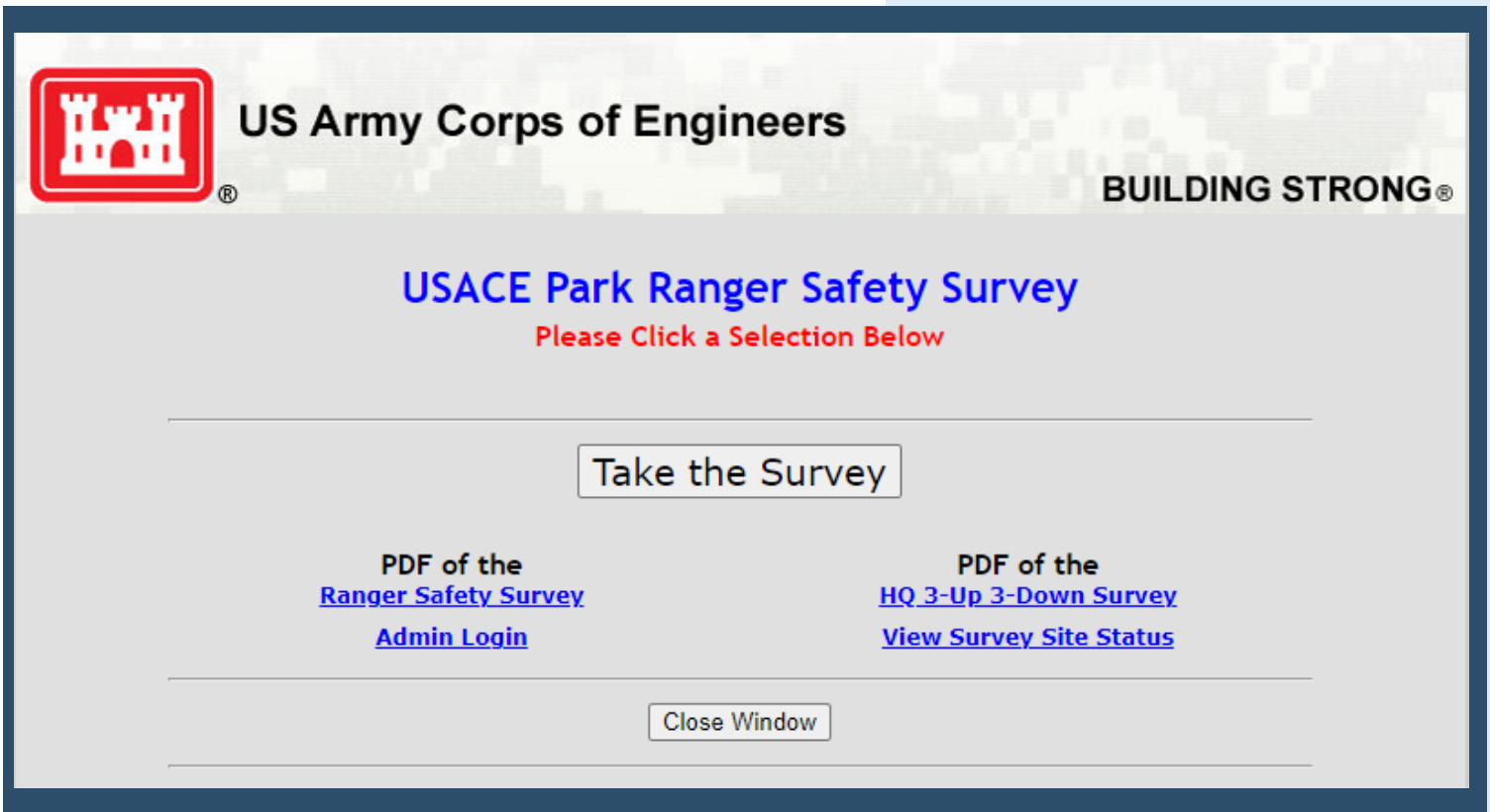
Please contact Evan Robbins at Tread Lightly! for more information. evan@treadlightly.org

HQ Update Continued

All Park Rangers, Natural Resource Specialists, and Natural Resource Managers (who wear the uniform), and who work under the Natural Resource Management (NRM) program, are highly encouraged to participate. The survey is important for collecting feedback from the Park Ranger community to identify critical trends concerning Park Ranger and visitor safety along with the effective operation of our Visitor Assistance and Natural Resources Management programs.

Don't Forget About

Don't forget about the call for proposals for the FY 23 Handshake Partnership Program. The program is in its twentieth year and offers an additional funding source (i.e., seed money up to \$25,000 per project) to USACE facilities for worthwhile partnership projects.



US Army Corps of Engineers BUILDING STRONG®

USACE Park Ranger Safety Survey

Please Click a Selection Below

Take the Survey

PDF of the [Ranger Safety Survey Admin Login](#)

PDF of the [HQ 3-Up 3-Down Survey View Survey Site Status](#)

Close Window

The survey takes approximately 10 to 20 minutes to complete and is available at: <https://cfapps.mvr.usace.army.mil/rangerapp/default.cfm>

When you access the survey, select the email certificate when prompted. Even though it is CAC enabled, the survey is anonymous and no personally identifiable information is captured. Immediately following the survey, are additional questions concerning body armor and improvements to your training programs. If, and only if, an employee does not have a CAC or access to a USACE computer, paper copies of the surveys are available on the main menu at the above link for employees. Individuals who complete the paper survey should mail or fax the document to their representative on the Park Ranger Community of Practice (CoP) Advisory Board. A list of the Advisory Board members is available at <https://gateway.erdc.dren.mil/nrm/smartbook/index.cfm?Code=Topic&Prog=rangerCoP&Id=0>

If you would like additional information on the requirements to complete the request for recreation backlog data, please do not hesitate to reach out to your district and division recreation business line managers along with your HQ team.

The Handshake Program provides an excellent opportunity to leverage local partnerships with USACE dollars outside of the usual O&M budget to help complete recreation and environmental stewardship projects that benefit both lands, waters, and visitors.

Electronic applications with district and MSC coordination must be sent from the MSCs to Mr. Phil Manhart, Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil, representative on the Partnership Advisory Committee, NLT 30 September 2022.

The memo, application instructions, and a copy of the application are posted on the NRM Gateway Handshake Program page at <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>

A final webinar on the Handshake Partnership Program will be held on August 25th from 3:00—4:00 EST.