



US Army Corps of Engineers®

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# Bridging the Gap

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2018

## Corps Foundation Wins Public Lands Alliance National Partner Award



By Heather Burke

On February 28, 2018 the Corps Foundation was awarded the Public Lands Partner Award at the Public Lands Alliance conference in Palm Springs, CA. This award recognizes exemplary partners and their

achievements to protect and preserve our public lands and enhance the experiences of our visitors and users. Since the inception of the Corps Foundation in 2006, the organization has been steadily increasing its capacity and successes during a decade of service. In particular, the achievements over the past three years exhibit a marked rise in the Foundation's abilities to gain new funding sources, create products for the public, develop

tools for USACE NRM staff to help them engage partners, and an enhanced role in advocacy efforts. Their passion for providing healthy, sustainable natural resources for the public is paramount to the success of the Corps Foundation. Each of these dedicated individuals are truly deserving of the Public Lands Partner Award and so much more.



## Twisted Oliver Bike Trails

Great Lakes & Ohio River Division, Louisville District, Barren River Lake, KY

By Dan Taylor

Barren River Lake has always provided beautiful land and water to explore, with a multitude of recreational opportunities. Mountain biking was one of the few things that the project was missing, until a rewarding partnership began with Southwest Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (SW KyMBA). SW KyMBA approached the project about possible locations at Barren River Lake where new trails could be established. This was the start of a beautiful journey with SW KyMBA, a chapter of the International

Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA).

Together, we identified a few areas as prime locations for trail development, with the first trail being located at Port Oliver Recreation Area. Project staff worked closely with SW KyMBA President Chip Winger to lay out a trail corridor on the 27 acre site that would be challenging, but also family friendly. Once the corridor was established and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed, construction began on the trail in late 2016.

SW KyMBA was instrumental in providing the volunteer labor to construct the trail. Through the use of hand tools and occasionally a mini-skid steer from Nolin River Lake, KY the volunteers sculpted a trail that is worthy of the moniker, "Twisted Oliver." The group spent the majority of their Saturdays in late 2016 and through the early summer of 2017 working tirelessly to bring this new recreational opportunity to Barren River. The trail had a soft opening in July 2017 and will have a grand opening this spring.



Mountain biker enjoys new trail bridge

## “Building Futures” for Local Youth

Mississippi Valley Division, St. Louis District, The Rivers Project, IL

By Kimberly Rea

The Rivers Project Office, serving parts of both Missouri and Illinois, is always seeking opportunities to leverage resources while providing support and value to the local communities we serve. The YouthBuild USA partnership provides valuable

volunteer service to the Rivers Project, while giving back to the public with completed projects. The partnership also supports youth (ages 16-24) as they seek their GED and earn valuable skills they can use in the workforce or as preparation for college.

This partnership has provided great value and has helped to reduce backlog maintenance while improving recreation facility features. The projects completed to date include rehabilitating a trail overlook, repairing interior walls in the National Great Rivers Museum, and planting native plants in the museum's parking lot islands. Current work includes boat dock refurbishment and com-

pleting the outdoor entryway ceiling at the Riverlands Sanctuary Orientation Center. Using traditional methods to complete this work would cost taxpayers thousands of dollars. The Youth Build USA staff oversight of the program ensures that finished work meets the high standards set by the program. Program youth also get to see the value that their work has to the local community.

YouthBuild USA has a network of 260 urban and rural YouthBuild USA programs in 46 states, providing great potential partnership opportunities for other USACE projects. These local groups can provide a wide variety of service projects for the betterment of their communities.

YouthBuild USA works to refurbish the outdoor entryway at the Riverlands Sanctuary



## You Never Know Where a Partnership Will Take You

North Atlantic Division, Philadelphia District, Blue Marsh Lake, PA

By Scott Sunderland

Almost forty years ago a small, local chapter of the National Campers and Hikers Association asked to hold their annual conservation weekend at Blue Marsh Lake. Today it has become our annual Take Pride in Blue Marsh day, with over 20 organizations and up to 400 volunteers taking part. The National Campers and Hikers Association has developed into the Family Campers and RVers Organization. There are several original

members of the club that still participate. Volunteers build picnic tables and trail bridges, while others work on projects such as trail maintenance, park beautification, bird box construction, litter pickup and the ever-important job of serving lunch to the hungry crowd. Lunch is provided by local businesses and prepared by the Family Campers and RVers. Take Pride weekend is the only time we allow overnight camping at the Project. Groups that camp out ask for the same spot each year, and several of the groups have adopted sections of trail that they return to repair each year. They have a strong sense of pride and ownership in Blue Marsh Lake.

A single partnership in 1981 has become an event recognized at the state level in 1989 and 1992, and at the national level in 1982, 1985, and 1988; winning a national award in 1989. Over the years, the staff at Blue Marsh Lake have been recognized as Silver award winners by the Federal Executive Board for this public partnership. The day requires a lot of preparation and effort by the staff at Blue Marsh Lake, but the sense of community and the fellowship that has developed, not to mention the work that gets done, is well worth the effort.

# Natural Resources Training and Education Partnership

Northwestern Division, Walla Walla District, Dworshak Reservoir, ID

By Paul Pence

For the past two years, Dworshak Project has partnered with the Clearwater Basin Youth Conservation Corps (CBYCC) under the USACE Cooperative Agreement authority for natural resources training and education. The CBYCC is a partnership effort between various community organizations and government agencies including the USDA Forest Service, Idaho Department of Labor, and USDI Bureau of Land Management. This program was piloted in 2013 and has been growing every year to include new crews, geographic areas, and partners. USACE saw the impacts of this valuable program and started to budget for a project. The cooperative

agreement has been awarded to the CBYCC since 2016.

The missions of both the USACE Natural Resources program and the CBYCC are very similar. The programs expose youth to natural resource career opportunities while working alongside technical specialists on projects that maintain public lands and parks. The CBYCC uses USACE funds to establish a paid program offering local youth an opportunity to experience the outdoors in a work-place setting while also providing a fun learning environment and exposure to traditional skills.

The CBYCC crew based out of Orofino, ID works on a variety of projects including building a

horse trail bridge, lakeshore campsite rehabilitation, forest measurements and fuels reduction, weed management, and recreation sign installation. For Projects like Dworshak that rely heavily on partners and volunteers, "the work crews are a real force-multiplier", said Gus Garbe, Lead Ranger at Dworshak. "They help provide quality recreation and natural resource management while exposing youth to the outdoors."



CBYCC crew hard at work

# Economy Act for Invasive Reptile Control

South Atlantic Division, Jacksonville District, Lake Okeechobee, FL

By Nelson Colon

Jacksonville District is in the final stages of executing an Economy Act Agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service - Wildlife Services (USDA APHIS-WS) for invasive reptile control on Central and Southern Florida Project lands around Lake Okeechobee. The service is needed to control invasive reptiles that are damaging USACE property and structures and posing a risk to human health.

USDA APHIS-WS utilizes

in-house manpower to perform the work, including site assessments of the areas being impacted by invasive animals to determine population levels, as well as the best methods of removal and invasive animal control. This includes capturing, trapping and humanely euthanizing invasive reptile species including iguanas, red headed agamas, tegu lizards, monitor lizards, Burmese pythons and other invasive reptiles. In certain circumstances, USDA can also use firearms to take animals that are difficult to trap. USDA reports information related to captured animals,

including species, location, time, size, sex, nest or den locations, and weather conditions.

As an agency, the USDA has similar objectives as USACE to reduce the populations of invasive species. They have a long history of controlling wildlife populations that are causing negative impacts, and unique expertise and ability not available within the USACE.

USDA APHIS-WS has the ability to ensure that the work is performed humanely, in a timely manner and that the animals are not returned to the wild or to the pet trade.



Captured Iguanas



# Sonoma's Interpretive Equestrian Trail

South Pacific Division, San Francisco District, Lake Sonoma, CA

By Joel Miller



**Park Ranger Poppy Lozoff leads an interpretive equestrian ride**

Lake Sonoma, situated in the wine growing region of Sonoma County, California has developed a unique partnership to provide guided horse-back rides in

conjunction with the project's marina.

Lake Sonoma used a variety of partnership tools working with the marina lease holder, sub-lease, and the district real estate, legal and environmental departments to attract an equestrian rental and guide operation called "The Ranch at

Sonoma." This equestrian facility required the construction of a barn/sales area as well as stables resembling a western town. The large footprint of these structures would limit parking. To deal with this challenge, the park developed a MOU allowing The Ranch at Sonoma to use an underutilized adjacent parking lot to accommodate their projected clientele. In return, The Ranch at Sonoma agreed to maintain all of the trails that they use and assist in developing new trails through planned volunteer work parties at the lake. As of this date, Lake Sonoma has developed and improved trails at the park that offer

sweeping panoramic views of vineyards in the valley far below. Equestrians pass through a cathedral-like stand of redwoods emerging into the light with a striking view of Lake Sonoma. All of this has been made possible by service hours provided by The Ranch at Sonoma volunteers.

Using pack stock from Yosemite National Park, Lake Sonoma park rangers offer interpretive guided rides and trail patrols in cooperation with The Ranch at Sonoma. A MOU and volunteer agreements gave USACE the ability to partner with for-profit businesses to make this partnership possible.

# Table Rock Lake Expands Pollinator Habitat

Southwestern Division, Little Rock District, Table Rock Lake, MO

By Trista Stevenson

With their recent Handshake Award and their partner Missouri Master Naturalists, Table Rock Lake is setting out



**Pollinator beds in front of Dewey Short Visitor Center**

to improve its pollinator habitat at the lake's Dewey Short Visitor Center.

With the Handshake Partnership award, the project plans to restore five acres of xeriscape gardens to pollinator gardens. With the help of the Missouri Master Naturalists they have added three large pollinator beds in an area infested with Bermuda grass and plan to add more in the future. These pollinator gardens we will be able to provide more opportunities for environmental



**Missouri Master Naturalists working on pollinator beds.**

education and interpretive programs including wildlife watching and plant identification for local schools, and visitors at the Dewey Short Visitor Center.



# NATIONAL AWARDS

## 2017 National Excellence in Partnerships Award

Mark Twain Lake Friends of Recreation & Environmental Stewardship Council

The FOREST Council is a USACE cooperating association comprised of 15 partners including Whitetails Unlimited, NRCS, Quail Forever, Forrest Keeling Nursery, Missouri Department of Conservation, Hannibal Career and Technical Center, National Association of Active and Retired Federal Employees, Back Country Horsemen of Missouri, National Wild Turkey Federation, Ducks Unlimited, Mark Twain Lake Sailing Association, Monroe R-1 FFA, NE Missouri Electric Power Cooperative, Missouri Society of Professional Engineers, Western Illinois University, and the Mark Twain Lake Visitor and Educational Resource Committee, that have come together to support the environmental stewardship and recreation

missions of Mark Twain Lake.

In addition to their support of special events, the FOREST Council has assisted in the development of the Northeast Missouri Environmental Stewardship Demonstration Area, the Joanna Trail restrooms, the Frank Russell Pond Pavilion, the Frank Russell Equestrian and Outdoor Adventure Campground, the Frank Russell Pond Barrier Free Access and Fishing Facilities, and the Mark Twain Archery Park.

The Excellence in Partnerships Award, sponsored by the Corps Foundation, recognizes exceptional contributions by a partner providing substantial support to the USACE Recreation and Environmental Stewardship programs.



Back Country Horseman install grill



Hannibal Career & Technical Center faculty complete construction

## 2017 National Volunteer Award

Will & Judy Carter, Saylorville Lake, IA



Seeding a pollinator bed

The National Volunteer Award, sponsored by the Corps Foundation, was created to recognize the extraordinary service provided by volunteers, draw attention to their vast skills and contributions, and encourage an attitude of stewardship and responsibility in caring for USACE lands, facilities, and resources.

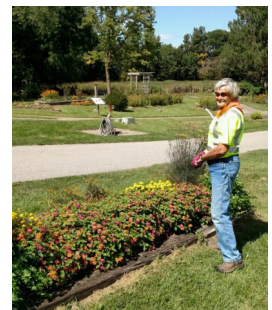
This year's award winners are Will and Judy Carter of

Saylorville Lake in the Rock Island District.

Mr. and Mrs. Carter have donated over 9,250 hours of volunteer service in a 12 year period. Their efforts in prairie and pollinator habitat enhancement, tree planting, and public education have been instrumental to the enhancement of habitats, improving the visitor experience, and strengthening public outreach at Saylorville Lake.



Will mowing food plots



Judy's butterfly garden

# Partnership Advisory Committee Team Members



- HQ** Heather Burke – HQUSACE
- SAD** Miriam Fleming - Chair - SAD (Carters Lake)
- MVD** Stacy Sigman - MVD (Lake Ouachita)
- LRD** Allison Walker - LRD (Nashville District Office)
- SPD** Taylor Saia - SPD (New Hogan Lake)
- NWD** Heath Kruger – NWD (Omaha District Office)
- SWD** Jason Knight – SWD (Tulsa District Office)
- NAD** Scott Sunderland – NAD (Blue Marsh Lake)

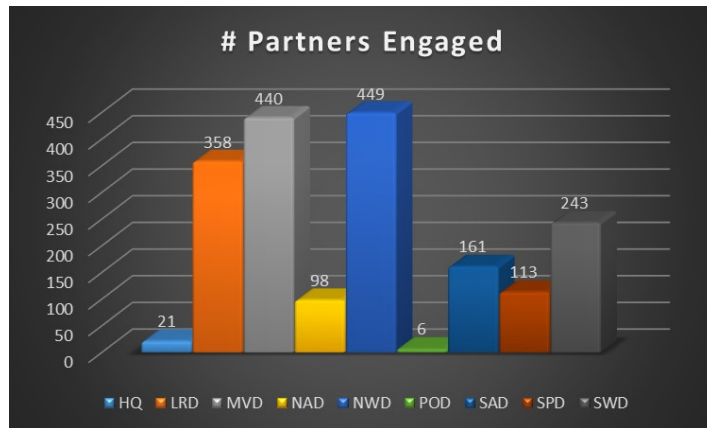
## FY 17 Partnership Program Accomplishments

**Total partners: 1,889**

**USACE projects with partnerships: 303 of 403 (74%)**

**Total value of partnerships: \$65,077,327**

(USACE: \$7.9 million investment/  
Partner leveraged investment: \$57.1 million)



‘Bridging the Gap’ is an electronic publication produced biannually by the USACE Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information about partnerships and volunteer programs around the country. For more information, or to submit stories for future editions, contact your PAC team representative listed above.