



Bridging the Gap

Volume 5, Issue 2

September 2021

'Bridging the Gap' is an electronic publication produced biannually by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 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 representative.

Civilian Inmate Labor Program

Heather Burke, National Partnership Program Manager, HQUSACE

The Civilian Inmate Labor Program (CILP) benefits both the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and corrections systems by providing meaningful work for inmates and providing a source of labor at no direct labor cost to USACE Civil Works projects to accomplish tasks that would not be possible otherwise due to staffing and funding constraints.



In May 2020, the Chief of Engineers delegated authority to Division Commanders for the approval of inmate labor agreements that do not deviate from the approved model agreements. Unfortunately the COVID-19 pandemic put the program on hold. As conditions hopefully improve in 2022, now is the time to start reaching out to federal, state, or local corrections facilities near your projects to discuss potential work programs and start developing the necessary agreements to have in place when conditions warrant.



Check out the [CILP Gateway page](#) to learn how you can utilize CILP at your projects for services such as environmental protection, constructing or repairing roads, clearing, maintaining and reforesting public lands, building levees, providing repair and maintenance work, and constructing or repairing any other public works.

NRM Gateway Spotlight: MOUs and MOAs

Did you know that the USACE Natural Resources Management (NRM) program has signed more than 40 national Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) with partners nationwide? You can find a list of these agreements on the [National MOUs/MOAs page](#) on the NRM Gateway. On this page, there are links to various organizations and the agreements.

Natural Resources Management Gateway
to the future . . .

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Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOA)

MOUs and MOAs are used to coordinate the Corps' authorized activities with another entity. These "agreements to agree" or umbrella agreements are often used interchangeably though they are distinctly different. MOUs tend to be used for simple common-cause agreements which are not legally binding. MOAs, on the other hand, establish commitments that establish a "conditional agreement" where the transfer of funds for services are anticipated.

the Difference between MOUs and MOAs
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defines a "general area of understanding" within both parties' authorities and no transfer of funds for services is anticipated. MOUs are common goals and nothing more. Thus, MOUs do not contemplate funds transfers and should usually include language that states something similar to "This is not a funding commitment, by signing this agreement the parties are not bound to take any action or fund any initiative." An MOU may be used to outline the operation of a program so the parties can stay in the same way. For example, two agencies that have similar goals may agree to work together to solve a problem or support each other's activities by using an MOU. The MOU is more than a formalized handshake.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) is a "conditional agreement" between two or more parties where the transfer of funds for services are anticipated. The MOA is preparation of a support agreement/reimbursable order form that defines the support, basis for reimbursement, the billing and payment process, and other terms and conditions precedent. MOAs often establish common legal terms that will be read into every reimbursable order that follows. MOAs do not obligate any funds themselves, but they are for future service and cite one of the appropriate authorities to do so.

Note that neither MOUs nor MOAs can be used independently to receive services or obligate funds beyond those separately authorized, and that any MOU or MOA with other parties should be made in accordance with USACE District policies and authorizations.

- National MOUs/MOAs
- Local MOUs/MOAs
- Success Stories
- HQUSACE Project Planning MOUs/MOAs
- FAQs
- Sample Templates
- HQUSACE Regulatory Program MOUs/MOAs
- Civilian Inmate Labor Program

From the main MOU/MOA page there are also local agreements, success stories, sample templates, and details about the CILP with associated approved model agreements.

Want to know more about the various types of partnerships featured in this newsletter?

*Visit the NRM Gateway Partnerships page!
corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/partners/partners.cfm*

USACE and Friends of Lake O' the Pines Sign Cooperating Association Agreement

Adapted from article by Trevor Welsh, Social Media Manager, Fort Worth District



USACE Lake O' the Pines staff and Friends of Lake O' the Pines board members at signing ceremony

Lake O' the Pines staff reached a milestone with the Friends of Lake O' the Pines Association August 5, 2021, with the signing of a long-awaited Cooperating Association Agreement.

The main purpose of the association is to assist USACE in its interpretive, scientific, and conservation programs while ensuring, improving and developing recreational opportunities such as hike and bike trails, and other opportunities to improve environmental and recreational enjoyment of Lake O' the Pines.

"This partnership has been wildly beneficial already," said Tim Macallister, Fort Worth District Operations Chief. "With the help of this incredible Friends Group, we can provide a better recreation experience to our visitors. Another major benefit I see is the ability to bridge the gap between USACE and the public. We can double our efforts of getting water safety, sober boating, and responsible recreation messages out to keep our guests safe while they are enjoying everything Lake O' the Pines has to offer."

Even before the agreement was finalized, the Friends Group took the initiative of developing a disc golf course at Lakeside Park, which has gained popularity through the Friends group [Facebook page](#). "The Lakeside disc golf course idea was born in one of our initial interest meetings about 2 years ago," said Becky Rockwell, President of Friends of Lake O' the Pines. "Lakeside was the perfect area to use because of its day use status and available space. The course has been designed and built primarily with volunteer labor with keeping professional caliber course design in mind. The baskets were purchased by the Corps of Engineers through their America the Beautiful Fund – sourced by America the Beautiful pass sales, which offers their agency designated funds for projects such as this. A huge thank you to David Gilliland and Roger Geiger for many hours of volunteer work and dedication to this project. Many other volunteers and Corps employees were also involved in bringing the course to fruition. The informational markers, kiosks and other finishing touches are not yet in place, but the course is installed and playable."

"I took a tool kit template that was developed by The Corps Foundation and wrote the first draft to fit our association," Ricky Maxey, Lake O' the Pines Park Ranger, said. Jennifer Linde, Natural Resource Specialist with the district's Operations Division said, "One main benefit of having a cooperating association agreement, is that as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization, they can conduct fundraising activities and apply for grants that USACE, as a federal agency, may not be able to apply for and use those funds for projects that benefit the lake recreation and environmental stewardship programs. These agreements are also a good way to build and maintain positive relationships with local communities. I'm hoping, now that we have one agreement, that we can use this as an example for other lakes to enter into similar agreements with local groups."

"Friends of Lake O' the Pines will greatly benefit from the agreement by gaining the ability to host more activities and events on lake property that involve raising much needed operating funds," Rockwell said. "We are gaining the ability to operate with a broader scope independently and in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers to help educate, improve, and expose the public to the outdoors along with the fun personal and family experiences it can provide. In these interesting times where budget cuts for recreational resources keep getting larger, we feel this is more important than ever."

To learn more about Friends of Lake O' the Pines, visit <https://friendsoflotp.com/>
To learn more about Lake O' the Pines, visit <https://www.swf-wc.usace.army.mil/lakeopines/>

Grow a Partnership Through a Garden

Ryan Braaten, Lead Park Ranger, Table Rock Lake, Little Rock District



Table Rock office garden

For nearly 20 years, Table Rock Lake has partnered with Master Gardeners of the Ozarks to fulfill the NRM mission in providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences. One of their main projects has been to maintain the beautifully manicured pollinator and flower garden that surrounds the lake's project office.

Associated with the University of Missouri Extension, master gardeners work closely with USACE to create annual planting strategies, obtain quotes, and provide volunteer labor to weed, dig, prune, plant, water, and mulch. At the same time, these dedicated gardeners learn how to improve the

quality of life and enhance the economy and the environment through horticultural education.

Once vibrant colors of spring flowers start to emerge, bees buzz, hummingbirds zoom, and butterflies flap their wings as they flit about from flower to flower. In the lush leaves of milkweed, a monarch caterpillar is seen munching along preparing to take final transformation. A child giggles as they experience the outdoors, chasing a dragonfly. The garden is full of life; life that would otherwise be missing if it weren't for the efforts put forth through the partnership with the Master Gardeners of the Ozarks.



Master gardener volunteer



Monarch butterfly nectaring in the Table Rock Lake pollinator and flower garden

In FY20 alone – despite the pandemic – Master Gardeners of the Ozarks provided 127 hours of service equivalent to approximately \$3,450 value to USACE. Some 400 flowers were planted, seven cubic yards of mulch were spread, and hundreds of pesky weeds were pulled. This partnership is highly valued and will hopefully continue for at least another 20 years. If you would like to see the updated MOU for this partnership and others, check out the NRM Gateway Partnerships [MOU page](#).

Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association WinterFest in Crosslake, MN

Jason Hauser, Natural Resource Specialist, Crosslake, St. Paul District

Cross Lake Staff and volunteers participated in the 18th Annual WinterFest on February 6, 2021. Four volunteers were from the Paul Bunyan Scenic Byway Association (PBSBA), a 501(c)(3) cooperating association that has partnered with USACE since 2004. PBSBA oversees a 54-mile stretch of highway encompassing five small towns in Northern Minnesota and is engaged in local economies and tourism.

The Association donated \$804 in soup ingredients and supplies, contributing 18 hours in preparation and serving the soup at the Cross Lake Recreation Area. The group prepared 20 gallons of vegetable beef soup in a cast iron cauldron over a wood fire, serving over 200 people during the Soupfest competition.



WinterFest booth



PBSBA volunteer serving soup

Wind chills in the morning were -30 F below zero! PBSBA had to get creative knowing that the weather was not going to be pleasant. They created a windbreak out of plywood that was decorated with water safety information to protect the cooking fire (and daring participants) from the bitterly cold wind. From the cauldron, a Dutch-oven was filled full of soup and then transferred to the nearby heated portable ice fishing shelter where PBSBA volunteers served. Guests also received water safety materials with their cup of vegetable beef soup. The group took 3rd place in the amateur division of the contest.

PBSBA also donated 4 life jackets, valued at \$320 to winners of a water safety coloring contest organized by USACE staff, featuring Bobber the Water Safety Dog. The contest artwork was created by a local high school student. A local newspaper donated and printed a full-page contest advertisement in the paper the week prior to Winterfest.

Contestants of all ages and throughout the upper Midwest submitted their artwork which was judged by USACE staff.

Event Results:

- \$3,274 donated supplies and services from partners.
- 18.5 volunteer hours contributed
- 200 water safety contacts made
- 31.5 hours of labor contributed by USACE

PBSBA holds monthly meetings at the Cross Lake Office during the summer months. They also contribute to USACE through campground firewood sales, donating 50% of the profits back annually. Additionally, they participate in other local events, partnering with USACE during a kid's fishing derby, a community chili contest, and an annual Wounded Warrior camping event.



USACE Joins ParkPassport App

Heather Burke, National Partnership Program Manager, HQUSACE

USACE has partnered with the National Park Trust, National Park Service and NOAA Marine Sanctuaries to be featured on the ParkPassport mobile app. The app features:

- A Park Finder map to discover state and local parks, USACE lakes and rivers projects, National Parks and Monuments, National Marine Sanctuaries, and Marine National Monuments. Each location includes a brief description, contact information, link to recreation.gov reservations, photos, and virtual visit resources.
- A Digital Passport to collect badges for visiting different parks in person or virtually online and badges for a variety of outdoor activities such as biking, bird watching, camping, boating, hiking, dog walking, outdoor service project, paddle sports, swimming, etc. Badges can even be added from parks visited on previous trips.
- Photo sharing to upload and share park images.
- More than 600 virtual resources and experiences have been added, including virtual tours, Junior Ranger badges, live webcams, educational videos, and more.
- Ability to invite friends to join and share outdoor experiences.



The app is free and can be downloaded by the public from the Apple App Store and Google Play to a mobile device to discover outdoor places all year long. [Check out this site](#) to learn more about the app and watch a short tutorial on how it works.

Mark Your Calendars!

Have you attended the PROSPECT Partnerships in NRM class yet?
Here are the upcoming classes for FY 22:



- **Session 1:** Virtual Class. October 25 – 29, 2021
- **Session 2:** Allatoona Lake, Cartersville, GA. May 2 – 5, 2022
- **Session 3:** Seattle District Office, Seattle, WA. August 8 – 11, 2022
- **Session 4:** Willamette Valley Project, Eugene, OR. September 19–22, 2022

Other important dates:

- **October 1–November 14:** FY 21 NRM Assessment Partnerships module data entry
- **October 4:** FY 21 NRM Assessment Partnerships Module webinar, 1:00 Eastern
- **October 22:** FY 21 NRM Assessment Partnerships Module webinar, 11:00 Eastern
- **November 3:** Excellence in Partnerships/Volunteer of the Year Award webinar, 11:00 Eastern
- **November 8:** FY 21 NRM Assessment Partnerships Module webinar, 3:00 Eastern
- **December 3:** Excellence in Partnerships/Volunteer of the Year award applications due

USACE Conducts Environmental Restoration Via Handshake Program at Francis E. Walter Dam

Steve Rochette, Public Affairs Office, Philadelphia District

The Francis E. Walter Dam was constructed approximately 60 years ago. During the construction process, millions of cubic yards of sediment and rock were excavated from two nearby borrow areas to build the earthen embankment of the dam.

For the past 11 years, USACE, Pheasants Forever Chapter 803, and other non-profit organizations have worked to reclaim and restore these borrow areas by removing invasive species and planting native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat.



Prepping the borrow area for planting

These environmental stewardship activities have been made possible with funding from the USACE Handshake Program and numerous hours of manual labor by volunteers and the F.E. Walter Dam staff. “These borrow areas were stripped down to bedrock and were essentially a barren landscape,” said Dave Williams, the Northern Area Facilities Manager for the Philadelphia District. “We’ve made significant progress in creating and maintaining habitat in these areas.”

In 2018 and 2019, USACE and partners continued ongoing efforts to restore sections of a 26-acre borrow area through Handshake Program funding. Partners cleared invasive plant species, placed topsoil, lime and fertilizer, and planted a food plot with brassica, clover, oats, turnips and other tubers. Previous efforts include planting warm season grasses to provide adequate cover for wildlife and creating several check dams in suitable areas to retain a year round water supply.

Pheasants Forever Chapter 803 has been a key partner throughout the process. Ross Piazza, a Pheasants Forever partner, said the concept started with the realization

that there was ample land that could serve as suitable habitat. Each year, USACE and partners have tried to improve additional areas in the previously barren landscape. The results have been remarkable. “This place has been transformed as far as habitat. Many different species have benefitted, but the area has become a mecca for pheasant hunting,” said Ross.

The F.E. Walter Dam staff also works with Pheasants Afield, another non-profit organization. Each year, the group rears approximately 300 day-old pheasant hatchlings on the property to supplement the Pennsylvania Game Commission’s stocking program.

Since 2008, Pheasants Forever in cooperation with USACE, has held an annual Youth Hunt on F.E. Walter Dam property. The event focuses on educating adolescents on firearm safety, proper hunting techniques, and conservation. After the event, participants have a cook-out at a nearby pavilion built by F.E. Walter Dam staff.



Annual youth hunt volunteers

Dam Operator Jared Quinn has worked at the dam for the past seven years, but grew up nearby and has been coming to the project area to fish and hunt for most of his life. He said the changes and transformation to the borrow areas have been impressive.

The staff at F.E. Walter Dam has worked with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Wild Turkey Federation, American Chestnut Tree Foundation, and Quality Deer Management Association on a variety of efforts to improve habitat and manage the health of the forest. “It’s great to have partners— we keep each other on track with the various initiatives,” said Dave Williams. “It’s been a pleasure to work with all of them.”

Lake Lanier Partnership Helps Improve Water Safety Outreach

Ernest Noe, Chief Ranger, Lake Sydney Lanier, Mobile District

The Friends of Lake Lanier recently helped make a partnership connection with a local boy scout that was looking for an Eagle Scout service project. Lleyton Leonard is a senior at Chamblee Charter High School and is an active boy scout with Troop 514 in Lawrenceville, GA.

“My scout leader Ed Fleeson suggested doing something with the Corps of Engineers that would help the public and promote safety; the idea really intrigued me,” Leonard said. “Through my research, I found out that the Corps has 11 parks on Lanier with life-jacket loaner stations with a total of 14 stations. With more than 23,000 visitors each year, Buford Dam Park is the most visited park around the lake. It made perfect sense.”

Leonard built two new wooden life jacket loaner stations from scratch, with a modern design including a roof that will help keep the life jackets out of the weather and extend their life. He also installed signage with tips and instructions in both English and Spanish.

Leonard’s research led him to connect with Friends of Lake Lanier, a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization that was founded to provide



Eagle Scout Lleyton Leonard at one of his PFD loaner stations, with USACE and Friends of Lake Lanier staff

support and services to parks, campgrounds, waterways, properties, and jurisdictions managed by USACE at Lake Lanier. The Friends group works closely with the Lanier project staff and were instrumental in identifying a need and helping to get the service project completed.

“Lleyton has been such a joy to work with on this project,” said Connie Howell, who serves on the board of the Friends group. “We talked about what was needed and how important it was to ensure that people who come to the lake have access to life jackets. He immediately undertook the project – designing and building two new life-jacket loaner stations – and saw it through.”

Leonard completed the service project in September of 2020 and was able to obtain the Eagle Scout rank. “I’ve always dreamed of becoming an Eagle Scout, and now it’s a reality. It has been a lot of hard work, but also has been very rewarding.” His hard work and commitment to partnering will help make the beaches of Lake Lanier safer and more enjoyable for years to come.

For examples of life jacket loaner stations around USACE, visit the [NRM Gateway](#).



Huntington District SCA Interns Help with Natural Resource Management

Mike McCoy, Natural Resources Specialist, Huntington District

In 2020, Huntington District recruited eight Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns across six lake projects, who contributed over 4,000 hours of public service during their internships. Each SCA intern's primary responsibility was to assist the project staff with an assortment of NRM tasks including trail marking, conducting water safety programs, revamping interpretive signs, delivering programs within the campgrounds, and other natural resource management tasks.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought USACE many new challenges in managing a huge spike in visitation while maintaining proper safety protocols. The SCA interns worked

One specific example of innovation by the SCA students was the team at Alum Creek creating several educational, fun videos on NRM topics including invasive species, native trees, Leave No Trace, and water safety. They also helped create their very own Alum Creek Web Ranger series. The videos were a



jointly with park rangers and become the face of USACE by being out in the public recreation areas during peak summer visitation times.

The most critical tasks they performed related to visitor assistance, communicating with the public about the lake, informing the public of the rules and regulations, and problem solving while helping to promote a safe and family-friendly atmosphere for lake guests. As such, rangers and interns worked hand-in-hand on patrols of the recreation areas, courtesy vessel inspections, and water safety outreach.



huge success, reaching hundreds of people in the local community.

Another example of the success of the SCA program in Huntington is intern Brian Carson, who interned at Burnsville Lake. Brian's specific achievements included serving as the assistant manager of the volunteer program, planning volunteer events, and repairing and painting the project office. Brian also coordinated with the Glenville State College Forestry Club to host an eleven-mile trail cleanup event. Brian's most impactful individual achievement included designing and installing new landscaping around the project office. Brian subsequently reseeded the disturbed area and poured a concrete pad and sidewalk around the project office to enhance the outdoor recreation area.

Following the end of Brian’s internship, he was recruited into the Pathways program at Sutton Lake and then recruited to fill the permanent ranger position at Burnsville Lake in May 2021.



SCA interns perform a variety of duties



Huntington District is thankful for all of their outstanding SCA interns and their commitment to public service as stewards of our natural resources. The following were the 2020 SCA interns: Evan Bell and Tucker Green at Alum Creek Lake; Jesse Medley at Bluestone Lake; Jennifer Braden at Dillon Lake; Zachariah Dingess at RD Bailey Lake; Daniel Hoard at Summersville Lake; Jessica Smith at Sutton Lake and Brian Carson at Burnsville Lake.

The partnership between the SCA and USACE has been a huge success across Huntington District for the past four years. In that short time, the Huntington District has recruited seven of the SCA interns and placed them in permanent Natural Resource Specialist/Park Ranger positions. Huntington District staff at all levels have been inspired by their dedication and commitment to protect the natural resources for future generations to enjoy.



Meet Your PAC Team Members!

- Heather Burke: HQUSACE
- Scott Sunderland – Chair: NAD (Blue Marsh Lake)
- Francis Ferrell: SAD (Falls Lake)
- Allison Walker: LRD (Nashville District Office)
- Phil Manhart: MVD (Lake Shelbyville)
- Taylor Baughn: SPD (Lake Mendocino)
- Heath Kruger: NWD (Through December)
- Jennifer Linde: SWD (Fort Worth District Office)
- Tennille Hammonds: Emeritus (RPEC)