



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
441 G STREET NW
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

FEB 13 2017

CECW-CO-N

MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDERS, MAJOR SUBORDINATE COMMANDS AND DISTRICT COMMANDS, AND CHIEFS, OPERATIONS DIVISIONS

SUBJECT: 2016 Excellence in Partnerships Award Selection

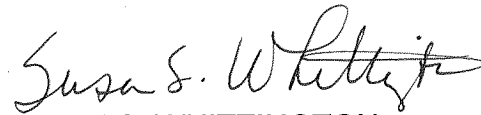
1. I am pleased to announce that the Okaw Valley Community Unit School District 302 (Okaw Valley) in the St. Louis District (MVD) has been selected as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recipient of the 2016 National Excellence in Partnerships Award.
2. This innovative partnership immerses students from the Okaw Valley Middle and High school into natural resource management and environmental stewardship practices at Lake Shelbyville. Students from these schools assist Corps staff with active projects twice a month. These hands-on projects include invasive species removal, park cleanups, fence installation, facilities preservation, fisheries management, building accessible hunting blinds, trail sign installation, and playground improvements. The partnership with Okaw Valley School District has evolved from its roots in volunteerism and now includes two agricultural leases encompassing 40 acres on USACE managed land. These two outdoor classrooms provide access to approximately 500 students for applied learning in a natural setting; conducting experiments, putting natural resource management practices into place, and techniques in fostering land stewardship.
3. Okaw Valley is investing in student's future, providing work and life skills that will allow them every opportunity to be successful in business and as members of society. This partnership has been a catalyst for positive action in the Lake Shelbyville community. Okaw Valley students and faculty are the newest and most influential advocates for sharing the Corps mission with future generations. This partnership reflects the great leadership and determination that Okaw Valley, the Lake Shelbyville Project and the St. Louis District share.
4. All of this year's nominees for the Excellence in Partnerships Award made significant contributions to their partner projects and demonstrate amazing work being done all across USACE. Two partners deserve special mention for their efforts, the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (NWD) and the Lake Lanier Association (SAD).

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5. The Excellence in Partnerships Award is co-sponsored by the Corps Foundation in recognition of exceptional contributions to the recreation and environmental stewardship programs at Corps projects. The award will be presented to Okaw Valley Community Unit School District 302 in the spring/summer of 2017.

6. My point of contact for this award is Ms. Miriam Fleming, who can be reached at 706-334-2044.



SUSAN S. WHITTINGTON

Acting Chief, Operations and Regulatory Division
Directorate of Civil Works