



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

S: 05 December 2025

CECW-CO-N

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

SUBJECT: Request for Nominations for the 2025 Excellence in Partnerships Award and National Volunteer of the Year Award.

1. I am pleased to request your nominations for an outstanding partner for the Corps of Engineers Excellence in Partnerships Award and outstanding volunteer(s) for the Corps of Engineers National Volunteer of the Year Award. These awards will be presented in 2026 at the award recipients' locations.
2. The Excellence in Partnerships Award recognizes exceptional contributions by a partner supporting the Recreation and/or Environmental Stewardship programs. The award recipient is selected based on accomplishment of management objectives, improvements in public awareness/education, and involvement of other partners.
3. The National Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes the extraordinary service provided by our outstanding volunteers. The award distinguishes individuals and/or couples/families who give their talents and time beyond the normal call of duty whose service to the Corps resulted in the significant enhancement to one or more of the Corps business lines.
4. Nomination packages must be routed through each District to the Major Subordinate Command (MSC) and electronically forwarded in accordance with the enclosed criteria and instructions to Mike McCoy, CELRH-ORK-N, no later than 05 December 2025. A selection committee will review the nominations and provide me with recommendations for final selection.
5. More information, visit: <https://corpslakes.erdcdren.mil/partners/awards.cfm>
6. The point of contact for this activity is Heather Burke, National Partnership Program Manager, who can be reached at [heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil](mailto:heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil) or 678-972-3824.

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JEFFREY F. KRAUSE  
Chief, Natural Resources Management



## Excellence in Partnerships Award Nomination Criteria

**Purpose of the Award** – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Excellence in Partnerships Award was created to recognize outstanding contributions of any partner organization which has participated in the Corps recreation or environmental stewardship activities and/or projects.

**Eligibility** – Corps partners who have provided substantial support to operations in the recreation and/or environmental stewardship arena. If your project won this award in the previous year, you must wait a full year before submitting another nomination package.

**Definition** – A Partner is any group or organization whose partnership with the Corps results in the enhancement of and contributions to the Corps mission, particularly in-regard to natural resources management. A formal agreement (such as an MOU, challenge partnership agreement, Economy Act, cooperative agreement, or cooperating association agreement) is not required to compete for this award.

**Nomination Package** – The nomination package will include the following:

- Corps project name
- Corps point of contact
- Partner's name
- Partner's point of contact
- Corps project mailing address
- Corps project phone number
- Introduction
- A narrative describing the nominee's accomplishments:
  - Should be a concise description of the nominee's project(s) or efforts that shows why the partner should be recognized.
  - Must address the criteria described below to enable the review committee to easily compare nomination packages.
- A citation that provides a summary of achievements which may be read at the award ceremony.
- Application requirements:
  - a maximum of four pages of narrative
  - up to four additional pages of support material, including photographs or news articles may be attached.
  - Please include one slide that briefly describes the partner's efforts and accomplishments and includes photographs of the partnership in action (example attached).

**Nomination Criteria** – Nominations will be judged on the following criteria:

(1) Accomplishment of Management Objectives - Accomplishing management goals and objectives and has assisted the Corps in accomplishing work items that could not have been accomplished without the partnership.

(2) Improvement in Public Awareness/Education - Enhancing the public's awareness of the Corps Recreation and/or Environmental Stewardship missions. Providing members of the public with significant opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values and attitudes related to Corps projects and public lands in general.

(3) Involving Other Partners - The partnership has increased community involvement and understanding of the Corps role in serving the Nation.

The nominee's efforts should have been completed within the **preceding two calendar years** and should result in the completion of field level products, projects or programs.

**Citation** – The nomination package must include a citation of no more than 750 characters summarizing the achievements by the partner that will be read at the award ceremony.

**Spotlight Slide**- Please include one slide that briefly describes the partner's efforts and accomplishments and includes photographs of the partnership in action (example attached).

**Nomination Process** – Each MSC can submit a total of one nomination for the Excellence in Partnership Award. Nomination packages assembled according to the enclosed information will be forwarded electronically by COB 05 December 2025 **from each MSC Rec/ES business line manager** to Michael L. McCoy, at [michael.l.mccoy@usace.army.mil](mailto:michael.l.mccoy@usace.army.mil)

The Partnership Advisory Committee will review the nominations and provide recommendations to the Chief, Natural Resources Management HQUSACE. The winner will be honored in 2026 and will receive a plaque provided by the Corps Foundation to be displayed at the partner's location.



**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
2025  
Excellence in Partnerships Award Nomination**

**Please review instructions before completing application!**

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**Corps project name:**

**Corps point of contact:**

**Partner's name (to be inscribed on award or certificate):**

**Partner's point of contact:**

**Corps Project mailing address:**

**Corps Project phone number:**                -                -

**District:**

**Division:**

**Introduction: (Briefly Describe the Project setting and your Partner's mission)**

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**Describe the nominee's accomplishments using the criteria below.**

**(1) Accomplishment of Management Objectives.** Accomplishing management goals and objectives and has assisted the Corps in accomplishing work items that could not have been accomplished without the partnership. Address how the nominee has demonstrated any of the following topics:

- Project/partnership ties into greater regional or national goals and initiatives of USACE
- Identify a specific management goal that the partnership meets
- Demonstrates improved cost-benefit/efficiencies through the partnership  
Operations and Maintenance costs reduced by the partnership
- Snowball effect- initial project led to more partnership successes

**(2) Improvement in Public Awareness/Education.** Enhancing the public's awareness of the Corps Recreation and/or Environmental Stewardship missions. Providing members of the public with significant opportunities to acquire the knowledge, values and attitudes related to Corps projects and public lands in general. Address how the nominee has demonstrated any of the following topics:

- Projects impacts reach a regional or national audience
- Uses a variety of programs or a unique outreach method
- Demonstrates actions by the public as a direct result of the project/partnership
- Engaged other partners or schools/universities to increase public education
- Partnership/project model used and sought out by others

**(3) Involving Other Partners.** The partnership has increased community involvement and understanding of the Corps role in serving the Nation. Address how the nominee had demonstrated any of the following topics:

- Project/partnership involves other partners in addition to the nominee
- Nominee received grants or other alternative funding, materials, supplies, or resources
- Leads to regional or national impacts beyond the initial USACE location
- Involves a non-typical partner/new partner

**Citation.** Provide a summary of achievements/proposed citation that may be read at the award ceremony

**Spotlight Slide.** Please provide one slide that briefly summarizes the partners work as well as photographs of the partnership (example attached).



## PARTNER NAME- PROJECT



- Provide a brief summary of the partnership
- Include highlights such as:
  - Partnership type
  - Other partners involved
  - Volunteer hours/donated materials in the FY
  - Management objectives accomplished
  - Any outreach/public awareness
- Please include 1 or 2 photos of partnership in action



### MISSISSIPPI RIVER WATER TRAIL ASSOCIATION – RIVERS PROJECT



The Mississippi River Water Trail Association (MRWTA) supports the Rivers Project by developing, supporting, and enhancing safe and inclusive paddling opportunities on the Mississippi River. Throughout their 20-year partnership, the MRWTA has donated over 20,000 volunteer hours, \$180,000 in professional services, and \$50,000 of materials and equipment donated, bringing their total partnership value to over a half million dollars. The USACE partnership with the MRWTA has resulted in:

- Conservation of the 121-mile Mississippi River Water Trail, working with communities, organizations, and agencies toward the shared goal of healthy rivers and people for recreation paddlers, including access points and island campsites.
- Volunteers working alongside USACE Park Rangers, bolstering annual special events and providing educational outreach.
- Developing relationships with numerous other partners to include the Missouri White Water Association, St. Louis Canoe and Kayak, and the Missouri Paddling Coalition.
- Serving diverse audiences through accessibility improvements to include an accessible kayak launch, training scholarships, transportation assistance, equipment loans and free programming to underserved groups.





## National Volunteer of the Year Awards Nomination Criteria

**Purpose** - The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers created this award 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 Corps lands, facilities, and resources. The intent of the award is to distinguish those individuals, couples or family units who give their skills, talents, and time beyond the normal call of duty and whose creditable service to the Corps has resulted in the significant enhancement to one or more of the Corps business lines. The purpose is to identify volunteers who have exceeded expectations and set a higher bar of performance.

**Eligibility** - This award may be given to an individual, couple or family unit who has provided substantial support to operations in the recreation and/or environmental stewardship arena. Exemplary work performed may include such things as improving conditions for the resources, park facilities, operations, or visitors; addressing backlog maintenance items; developing community partnerships; or providing a positive, supportive work environment. The work performed can take place over multiple years, and at one or more projects. In addition to the general criteria outlined, the nomination must clearly identify how the nominee's work has fulfilled a project's needs, has had a positive impact in the USACE, and has made a lasting contribution.

Note: Outstanding organizations that volunteer for the Corps should be submitted for the Excellence in Partnership Award, not the National Volunteer of the Year Award. If your volunteer is part of or leads a partnership organization, your nomination package must focus on the work of the individual and not everything that the partnership accomplished as a group.

For consideration, all nominees must have performed some of their **qualifying volunteer work during the previous fiscal year**. Nominees, such as hosted workers who have received payment other than incidentals from another source for their work are not eligible for the awards. Corps employees who volunteer during their non-duty hours are also not eligible.

**Nomination Criteria** - Selections will be made based on 3 criteria areas:

- (1) Support and dedication to the Corps missions – The nominee(s) service has supported one or more of the Corps missions and raised public awareness of the Corps mission in the local community.
- 2) Accomplishments and Impact – The nominee(s) has exceeded program goals through their improvements and contributions in accomplishing management objectives.
- 3) Collaboration and partnerships – The efforts of the nominee(s) built partnerships,



boosted public interest, and increased community support and involvement.

A winner cannot receive this award multiple times. Submissions will be rated based on the narrative which supports the criteria and references/support documents.

**Citation** – The nomination package must include a citation of no more than 750 characters summarizing the achievements by the partner that may be read at the award ceremony.

**Nomination and Selection Process** – Each MSC can submit a total of three nominations to be considered for this national award. The nominations should include the following:

1. Completed nomination form
2. Narrative addressing the 3 award criteria (maximum of three pages on the fillable form)
3. Up to four additional pages of photographs or articles that showcase/ demonstrate the nominee's efforts or accomplishments

In the event that a nominee has served at multiple MSCs and both MSCs would like to submit a nomination package for the same volunteer(s), the two (or more) MSCs can combine efforts and submit one multi-MSC nomination package.

Nomination materials must be received by 05 December 2025 and should be submitted electronically **by the MSC Rec/ES business line managers** to Michael L. McCoy, at Michael.l.mccoy@usace.army.mil. MSCs will ensure all necessary nomination materials are complete and forward their top three regional selections.

The Partnership Advisory Committee will review the nominations and provide recommendations to the Chief, Natural Resources Management HQUSACE. The winner will receive a plaque and volunteer coin provided by the Corps Foundation, which will be presented by their Division or District Commander or other delegated representative.





**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
National Volunteer of the Year Award  
2025 Nomination Application**

**PART I: NOMINATION INFORMATION**

**A. Name of Nominated Individual, Couple or Family Unit:**

\*Name to be inscribed on award or certificate:

**B. Nominee Contact Information:**

Street Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone:

Email:

**C. Nomination Submitted by:**

Corps POC Name:

Corps Lake/Project Name:

Address:

Phone:

Email:

Relationship to Nominee:

**PART II: VOLUNTEER PROJECT/ACTIVITY INFORMATION**

**A. Site location(s) where volunteer work was performed:**

Corps Lake/Project Name(s):

Address:

City, State, Zip:

Phone Number:

District:

Division:

**B. Is the project or volunteer activity ongoing? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No**

If no, how long did event/ project/activity last? \_\_\_\_\_ Days \_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_ Years

Did some of the activity occur between October 1, 2024 and September 30, 2025?

☐ Yes ☐ No

\*If no, the volunteer or group does not qualify for an award this year.

Was the volunteer activity entered in the FY 25 CWBI-OPS Volunteer update?

☐ Yes ☐ No

**C. Type of Volunteer Activity**

Please select primary event/project/activity purpose. Select any that apply.

- ☐ Habitat Restoration
- ☐ Soil/ Water Conservation
- ☐ Education/ Interpretation/ Outreach
- ☐ Research/ Monitoring/ Studies
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Species Management
- ☐ Historic/ Cultural Restoration Improvement
- ☐ Clean-Up/ Maintenance
- ☐ Host/ Site Steward/ Visitor Center
- ☐ Administration
- ☐ Other- Please specify

**D. Volunteer Information**

Total number of volunteers in the family unit:

Total volunteer hours in FY 2025:

Total volunteer time at the project (hours and months/years):

**PART III: VOLUNTEER PROJECT/ACTIVITY NARRATIVE**

The nominee(s) will be evaluated on the following criteria: Mission; Accomplishments; Impact; and Collaboration. Each criterion must be addressed in the narrative.

**1. Support and Dedication to the Corps Missions.** Describe how the nominee's service supported one or more of the Corps missions (Recreation, Environmental Stewardship, Hydropower, FRM, Navigation). When doing so, list the mission being addressed and how they have supported specifically. Describe how their service raised public awareness of the Corps missions in the local community.

**2. Accomplishments and Impact.** Summarize what the volunteer did. Include major goals and their resulting accomplishments, improvements and contributions in accomplishing management objectives. Describe any challenges the nominee faced and overcame. Summarize the impact and benefits of the nominee's service on the lake/river project site, natural resources and/or community. How did the nominee address a real, identified need? Describe any unique or innovative service or creative solutions and programs provided by the nominee. Quantify whenever possible (i.e. number of miles groomed, bags/lbs. of trash collected, etc.). Include specific examples of ways the volunteer exceeded regular job duties and work that was accomplished that otherwise would not have been completed.

**3. Collaboration and Partnerships.** Briefly describe the collaborative or partnership efforts associated with the nominee's project/activities. Please indicate any funding sources and/ or in-kind donations received from this nominee's project/activities. Describe how the nominee's efforts have built partnerships, boosted public interest, or increased other community involvement.

**Citation.** Provide a summary of achievements/proposed citation that may be read at the award ceremony.