



US Army Corps
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Cooperating Association Toolkit



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Stacy Sigman, Lake Ouachita Field Office Resource Manager

Alana Mesenbrink, Natural Resource Specialist, Libby Dam

Chris Rapenchuk, Miami River Area Operations Manager

Charlie Fenwick, Park Manager, Success Lake

Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation

Rachel Garren, Special Programs Director

Marilyn Jones, Board of Directors

Nancy Rogers, Communications Team

Cooperating Association Toolkit



Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation,
doing business as The Corps Foundation,
is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization

Corps Foundation Mission

The Corps Foundation engages the public to ensure the environmental health and recreational enjoyment of our nation's lakes, lands, and waterways administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

- National nonprofit advocacy for USACE NRM program
- Articles of Incorporation: December 2006
- IRS 501(c)(3) designation: January 2007
- Signed MOU with the Corps: October 2007

Corps Foundation Vision and Goals

VISION: An involved public enjoying and supporting Corps lakes, lands and waterways.

GOALS:

- Well informed public
- Involved public
- Strong partnerships
- Healthy, sustainable, accessible natural resources



Why was the Corps Foundation Created?

- Support projects through donations and grants
- Inform stakeholders of the value of USACE program
- Facilitate partnerships/grow local friends groups
- Serve as connection/ hub for partner groups
- Advocacy





TOOL KIT FOR DEVELOPING A
COOPERATING ASSOCIATION
PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S.
ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



Toolkit for Developing a Cooperating Association Partnership with USACE

The Toolkit Will...

- Clearly define the difference between a cooperating association and a friends group
- Briefly discuss the benefits of a USACE cooperating association partnership
- Provide information to interested community groups and established nonprofits on becoming a new cooperating association with USACE
- Assist with getting started and building the agency/nonprofit relationship
- Define the roles of the two organizations and clarify responsibilities

The Toolkit Will (cont.)



- Provide information about tax status review
- Discuss other considerations while establishing a cooperating association relationship with USACE
- Include an overview of lessons learned and success factors
- Cover ethics considerations for USACE employees

Benefits of a Cooperating Association

- Associations can purchase materials, equipment, programs, exhibits, services, and publications to be used at the project.
- Fundraising, sponsoring, collaborating
- Associations can be advocates for USACE. Some can lobby if they are established with that mission.
- Can hire support staff to help USACE missions

Today the Panel Will Discuss...

- **Getting Started-** How Lake Sonoma developed their new Cooperating Association, how members were recruited and what new projects have been completed through the partnership.
- **Benefits of a Cooperating Association-** Show how the Friends of Caesar Creek has worked with USACE to enhance the project.
- **Lessons Learned-** Alana Mesebrink will discuss some very important factors that will ensure success of your cooperating association and a few pitfalls that must be avoided.

Cooperating Associations: Case Studies

1. The Good: Reinvigorated & Start ups
- 2 The Bad: Inherited
- 3 The Ugly: Neglected





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“The Bad”

Original Lake Sonoma-CA





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“The Good”

Board Members from all User Groups



Top 10 Things to Make Your CA Great

- Have all major user groups on your board
- Have an up to date CA Agreement that allows for maximum support of the park and its missions.
- Go to every Board Meeting (Yes, that means the Park Manager and Park Rangers)
- Communicate your needs and listen to their concerns.
- Try new things and enjoy the power of saying YES.



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Top 10 Things to Make Your CA Great Cont...

- Have a gift shop/sales outlet = take home value
- Fund Raise. Find someone great at it.
- Support staff morale—coffee & danish at the VA Refresher
- Support your volunteer village and program. Dividends are too numerous to count.
- When you have enough \$\$, encourage them to pay for Executive Director; volunteers burn out.

Friends of Caesar Creek

FOCC began in 1985, with \$300 and 30 members, now FOCC has 65 members with a average balance of \$112,000.

- They support the educational, scientific, and historical activities of the region by offering various workshops and programs and operating regional interest book carts and educational materials at the Caesar Creek Lake Visitor Center.

FOCC Partner for Handshake Award

Construction of a new playground facility at the existing recreation area at Caesar Creek Lake Visitor Center.



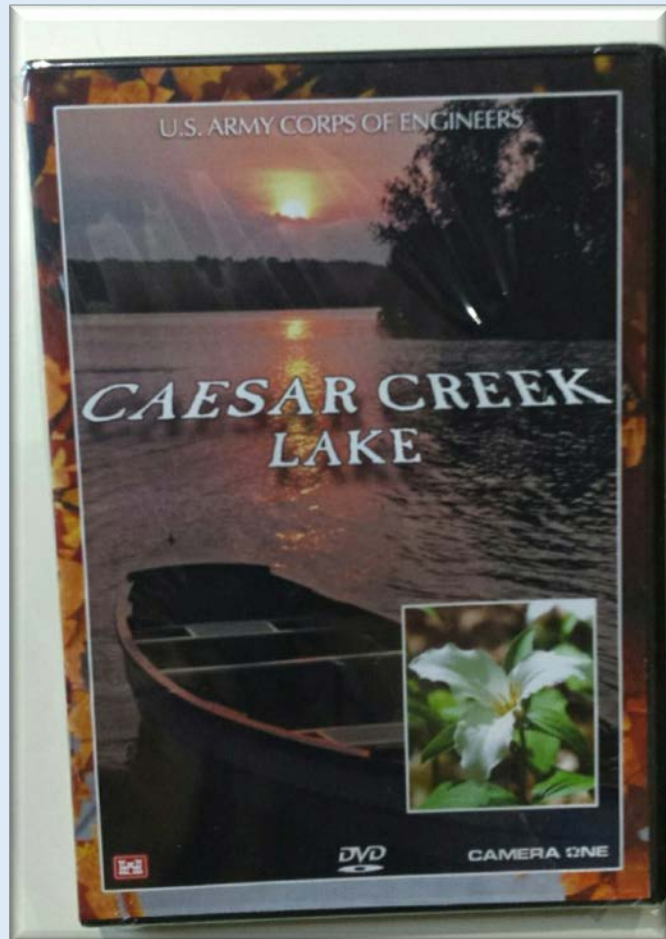


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FOCC Partner for Fitness Trail Handshake



In 2014 FOCC donated a \$50,000 visitor orientation film that was professionally produced by their contractors.





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Libby Dam Cooperating Association

LESSONS LEARNED:

- Be realistic in expectations
- Start small and dedicated
- Initial success can rely on significant staff involvement
- Have a system of checks and balances
- Rome was not built in a day



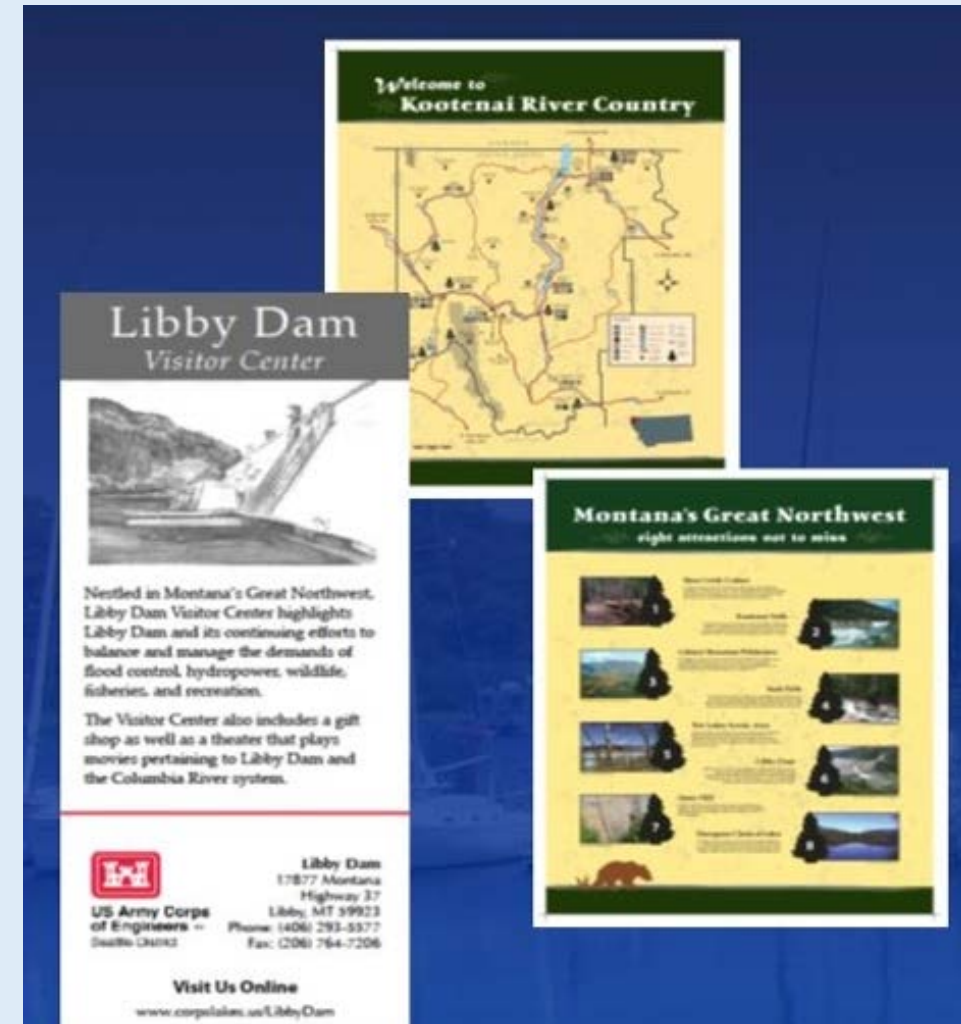


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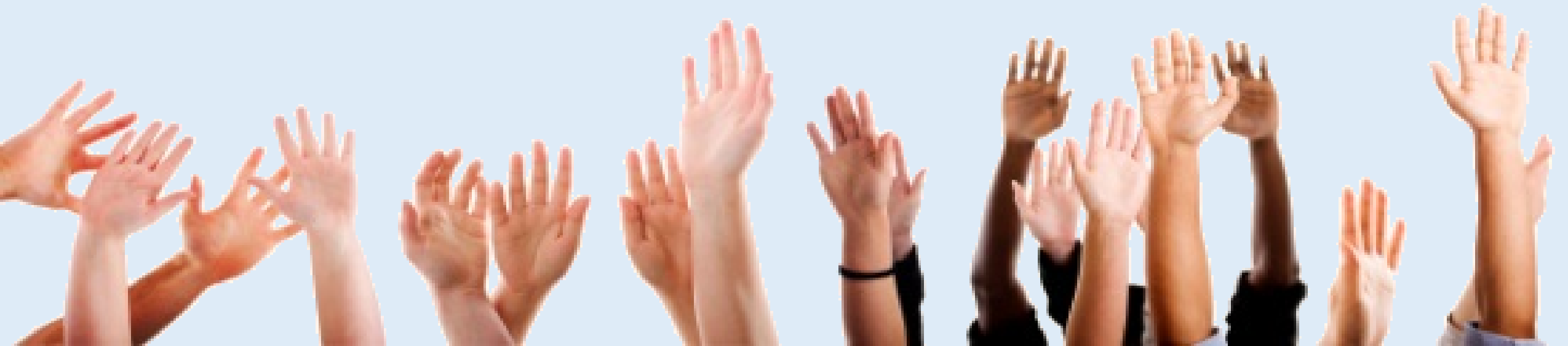
Libby Dam Cooperating Association

Factors for success:

- Don't be too big for your britches
- Use association as an avenue for promotion and assistance
- Retired educators make great board members
- Accommodate your board



Any Questions for the Panel?





TOOLKIT:

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/coopassoc/coopassoc.cfm>

The Corps Foundation: www.CorpsFoundation.org