

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fiscal Year 2014
Handshake Program Application**

Please review instructions before completing application!

Corps Lake/Project Name:**Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area**

Handshake Proposal Title:**Mount Morris Dam Nature Trail**

Corps POC Name:**Tom Wenzel**

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A. Eligibility checklist:

1. Will the Handshake funds be spent on Corps facilities and resources that are being fully maintained by the Corps? * **Yes** **No**

2. Will the Challenge Partnership agreement be with a non-federal public or private entity(ies)? * **Yes** **No**

3. Is the proposed activity within current authorities and contained in the annual or 5-year work plan in the approved lake project OMP? ** **Yes** **No**

**If "No" to any of the above questions the proposal cannot be authorized under the Corps' challenge partnership authority.*

B. Handshake Funding Program Request (maximum \$30,000): \$4000.00

C. Cooperative Agreement Bonus: Challenge Partnerships that include a Cooperating Association with which your project/district has entered into a Cooperative Agreement are eligible to compete for an additional \$5000. You must include a copy of the signed agreement with your proposal. (Reference Chapter 9 of ER and EP 1130-2-500 for information on cooperating associations).

D. Incentive Points Category: Check the box if your application qualifies to receive bonus points on the evaluation score for partnering with three or more partners. A summary of the partners' contribution to the Handshake Project should be included in the financial worksheet below.

- Application includes 3 partners (25 bonus points)
- Application includes 4 partners (40 bonus points)
- Application includes 5 partners (50 bonus points)
- Application includes _____ partners (50 bonus points for the first 5 partners plus 10 points for each additional partner)

E. Describe your partnership and the proposed project:

Your project will be evaluated on the following categories: Sustainability, Partnership Value, Recreation Benefit, Environmental Stewardship Benefit, Communication and Education Value, and Innovativeness. Please address each in your description.

Description:

Handshake funding is requested to complete development of an interpretive multi-use trail as part of a larger management plan referred to as the Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project, on ~ 40 acres of federal property at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area. The USACE at the Mount Morris Dam began actively managing this area in 2011, following recommendations from a Level II Environmental inventory. To date, management has consisted of invasive species reduction, habitat restoration, and most recently, development of a multi-use trail. Prior to dam construction (1940s), the plot was privately owned farm pasture. Following federal procurement, the area became a meadow, popular for bird and wildlife watching. After several decades, invasive plant species such as Autumn Olive, Tartarian Honeysuckle, and Tree of Heaven began to dominate the area. By leveraging partners and volunteers, Natural Resource managers at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation area have been successful at reducing the occurrence of invasive species, and reverting a portion of the area to old meadow habitat. The Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project has already increased critical habitat acreage for local butterfly and pollinator bee populations. A multi-use trail was added to the Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project and included in an updated Operations Management Plan (OMP) with the idea that including more diverse recreation opportunities would generate multiple stakeholders who would then be highly vested in stewardship. Volunteers from multiple partners helped begin installation of a multi-use trail which encircles the meadow, and will eventually interpret the environmental stewardship objectives. Trail users will be educated on the importance of the project while enjoying a recreational activity. Since the trail connects directly to a branch of the Finger Lakes Trail system, a sustainable audience of users already exists. Even with trail development underway, the trail has provided recreational opportunities for birdwatchers, disabled hunters (during special disabled hunts), hikers, and trail-runners. Interpretive signage along the trail will showcase local wildlife, and describe the benefits of the stewardship work being performed (e.g. invasive species reduction and habitat improvement). The strategy of engaging multiple stakeholders began to payoff in 2011 when USACE entered into an MOU with the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (GVEP) to continue habitat restoration work and to begin preliminary nature trail construction. In 2012 and 2013, USACE also successfully solicited volunteers from the nearby State University of New York (SUNY) Geneseo campus to assist with environmental stewardship work and trail development. USACE will continue to use volunteers from GVEP, SUNY Geneseo college students (Outing Club), and members of the Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) to finish construction of the nature trail. Funding through the Handshake Program will facilitate the design, purchase and installation of a series of interpretive signs which will complete the multi-use trail.

Sustainability: Visitation at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area has increased significantly over the past half-decade. Along with rising visitation, there has been an increased interest in outdoor recreational opportunities, and use of existing hiking trails at the project has increased. The multi-use trail component of the Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project will offer several outdoor recreational opportunities to a variety of users over the entire year. Once constructed, maintenance and upkeep will be minimal and can be accomplished without an increase in funding above current levels. Upkeep will consist of trail raking, brush clearing, mowing, and re-painting of trail markers as needed. These types of activities have proven relatively easy to recruit volunteers for and multiple partners are already on-board and eager to assist. The multi-use trail is intentionally linked to the Finger Lakes Trail System as a spur for a couple of reasons. For starters, the Finger Lakes Trail Conference, who maintains the larger Finger Lakes Trail system, has an existing lease agreement with USACE at Mount Morris Dam which obligates them to maintain a portion of the trail in exchange for office space. This project partner has been elemental in trail design and will play an important role in continued maintenance. Also, the link to the existing Finger Lakes Trail guarantees a hiking audience who is mindful of trail etiquette and who

already provides volunteers for trail maintained efforts. This multi-use trail is expected to be a popular, long standing fixture in the recreation area for 20 or more years. Project O&M costs will be primarily comprised of labor for mowing the trail. Polycarbonate (Lexan) interpretive panels will be used which are proven to work very well in an outdoor environment and last 15-20 years before requiring replacement.

Partnership Value: The Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project has proven beneficial not only to USACE, but also to project partners. In 2011, USACE and the Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (GVEP) entered into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to work on habitat improvement and trail development at the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area. GVEP is a vocational school where students learn various skills and trades including the hands-on aspects of environmental conservation such as equipment operation, forestry practices, etc. The students of the GVEP conservation program benefit from hands-on, real work experience, completing valuable conservation projects alongside a USACE NRM specialist.

The State University of New York (SUNY) Genesee Outing Club's mission is to organize events which provide students with a chance to get outdoors and be active. Often the club requires members to give back to the outdoor recreation community by soliciting volunteers to commit to service projects related to outdoor recreation. The SUNY Genesee Outing Club is interested in a long term relationship with USACE to maintain the multi-use trail for future generations of Outing Club members.

The Finger Lakes Trail Conference (FLTC) manages over 900 miles of trail in New York State. USACE partners with FLTC on trail operation and maintenance initiatives and offers FLTC office space in exchange for trail maintenance services through an active lease. The FLTC benefits by working with USACE and other project partners getting their message out to potential members, especially those who are interested in trail upkeep and maintenance. The proposed multi-use trail loop will add an additional 1 mile as a spur to an existing branch of Finger Lakes Trail (FLT). These three partnerships have been and will be providing 80% of the physical labor to construct this nature trail and will provide 50% or more of the physical labor to maintain the trail once finished.

Environmental Stewardship Value: Personnel at the Mount Morris Dam, operating under the USACE Environmental Operating Principles (EOP's) and in concert with recommendations from a level II environmental inventory, started work on the Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project in 2011. USACE has been managing this parcel of property to decrease the propagation of invasive species and to recreate old meadow habitat. To date, approximately 10ac of property has been reverted to meadow that had previously been completely overrun by invasives. Multiple species of songbirds including yellow warbler, blue-winged warbler, indigo bunting, and eastern bluebird utilize this newly restored area. Wild Turkey have also returned to the area and one was harvested from this area during a special handicapped hunt offered in 2013. White-tailed Deer frequent the area as well. Predators such as red fox, red-tailed hawk, American kestrel, and coyote use the area for hunting. In addition to the 40 plus species of birds that have been recorded in the area, numerous butterfly and moth species can be seen frequenting the numerous native wildflowers in the habitat improvement area.

Invasive species being managed include autumn olive, tartarian honeysuckle, tree-of-heaven, garlic mustard, and black swallow-wort. The removal of the invasives has opened up the area for apple and pear trees which were cultivated long ago, to once again produce fruit, which now provides a sustainable and attractive food source for wildlife. Native wildflowers and plants such as Bee Balm (Bergomot), Cone Flower, Milkweed, Common Mullein, and Toad Flax (Butter and Eggs) have come back strong. These plants support many pollinator species such as hummingbird, butterfly, and bee populations.

The multi-use trail will include interpretive panels to convey to the visitor the role USACE plays in environmental stewardship.

Recreational Benefit: As project visitation has increased, more visitors have expressed interest in participating in outdoor recreation opportunities. The new multi-use trail will offer a 1 mile (45 minute) loop through varied habitats of meadow, shrub/scrub land, and forested communities. This diversity will appeal to bird, butterfly, and animal watchers. The trail will also provide year-round recreational opportunities including hiking, bird/wildlife

watching, skiing, snowshoeing, geocaching, and trail-running. Inclusion of interpretive signage along the trail will not only educate users about USACE environmental stewardship, but it will also craftily entice them to search for wildlife along the trail. The multi-use trail is linked as a spur to the Finger Lakes Trail which can be followed for literally hundreds of miles if the visitor desires to continue on. The great benefit of the newly installed loop is that it offers a concise easy to follow choice for people of all ages and abilities. Visitors will reap the health and fitness benefits associated with outdoor recreational opportunities and will be encouraged to continue to experience the great outdoors.

Communication and Education Value: The Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project would further enhance the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation area by offering a look into our natural world. The trail and habitat restoration area will provide a great spot for existing educational programs conducted at the Mount Morris Dam such as the Nearer to Nature Day Camp. Through the use of interpretive panels, the Corps environmental stewardship mission will be conveyed, and users will be educated on the problems associated with invasive species and to offer visitors the chance to learn about and see local wildlife. The multi-use trail will also be used to encourage kids to explore nature which is in line with the Get Outdoors and Let's Move initiatives. This nature trail will offer school groups more educational options to compliment project dam tours that are already very popular. This multi-use trail will compliment the Mount Morris Dam and Recreation Area's Visitor Center, playground, picnic shelters, and other recreation features. This project will convey the message to the general public and school groups that the Corps cares about the environment and is doing what it can to improve it. To showcase project completion and encourage volunteerism for continued maintenance, USACE will conduct a ribbon cutting ceremony in partnership with GVEP, SUNY Outing Club and FLTC.

Innovativeness: This Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project entwines a recreation component with habitat improvement and invasive species reduction initiatives. The incorporation of the multi-use trail has led to vigorous support, thereby developing a consistent base for volunteers and increasing the overall project sustainability. The interpretation along the trail will be non-traditional and designed to offer a new experience with each visit. Trail users will first encounter interpretive signage describing wildlife that can be seen in the area and encouraging users to be on the lookout. Once on the trail, panels shaped to look like real wild animals will be hidden in the environment. Users can search for wildlife and become accustomed to locating animals, increasing their chances of identifying real animals along the trail. The panels will be mobile but locked into place. Project partners will be able to sign out a key to exchange the animal locations along the trail every few months. No trail within a 50 mile radius of the project offers such innovative interpretation or the large variety of recreation options.

The Corps will:

Oversee plan development, operation and maintenance. Provide and operate any heavy equipment for multi-use trail construction and habitat restoration. USACE will also provide 6 interpretive panels/wildlife panels. USACE will also be responsible brush mowing the meadow habitat once a year.

The Partner(s) will:

Assist the USACE with implementation of the Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project. GVEP and FLTC volunteers will assist USACE with trail construction, trail maintenance and blazing, and habitat improvement. GVEP students will also utilize their lumber facility to construct benches, trail directional signage, and their greenhouse to grow native wildflowers to be transplanted along the nature trail, which will be used to replace invasive species. SUNY Geneseo Outing Club will help with routine trail maintenance and upkeep. They will also help with the coordination of volunteer efforts and volunteer recruitment. The SUNY Geneseo Outing Club is

also assisting with production of a trail map using GIS. GVEP students and SUNY Geneseo volunteers will also be assisting with the planting and transplanting of various native wildflowers and bushes.

Challenge Partnership Financial Work Sheet

Corps Project Name: Mount Morris Dam And Recreation Area

Work Project Title: Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project

POC Name: Thomas M. Wenzel

Address: 6103 Visitor Center Road City: Mount Morris State: NY Zip Code: 14454

Telephone: 585 - 658 - 4790 x2233

Location on Project: Mount Morris Dam Recreation Area

Partner Organization 1: Genesee Valley Educational Partnership

POC Name: Schuyler Daugherty

Address: 27 Lackawanna Avenue City: Mount Morris State: NY Zip Code: 14510

Telephone: 585 - 658 - 7811 x7835

Partner Organization 2: Finger Lakes Trail Conference

POC Name: Dick Hubbard

Address: 6111 Visitor Center Road City: Mount Morris State: NY Zip Code: 14510

Telephone: 585 - 658 - 9320 x

Partner Organization 3: SUNY Geneseo Outing Club

POC Name: Richelle Pennington

Address: 1 College Circle City: Geneseo State: NY Zip Code: 14454

Telephone: 631 - 617 - 2411 x

Proposed start date of work: Aug-14

Simple description of work to be accomplished through the partnership: Habitat improvement, invasive species reduction, creation of diverse recreation opportunities.

Double click on spreadsheet to access data entry fields:

| | Local Corps Office | Handshake Funds | Partner 1 | Partner 2 | Partner 3 | Total |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Salaries | \$2,000 | N/A | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$2,000 |
| Travel | \$0 | N/A | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Materials and Supplies | \$500 | \$4,000 | \$1,000 | \$100 | \$0 | \$5,600 |
| Equipment Use | \$1,000 | \$0 | \$1,000 | \$0 | \$1,000 | \$3,000 |
| Funds Contributed | N/A | N/A | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Personal Property | N/A | N/A | \$250 | \$0 | \$0 | \$250 |
| Volunteer | N/A | N/A | \$5,000 | \$500 | \$2,000 | \$7,500 |
| In-Kind Services | N/A | N/A | \$2,000 | \$1,000 | \$2,000 | \$5,000 |
| Other (explain below) | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |
| Total | \$3,500 | \$4,000 | \$9,250 | \$1,600 | \$5,000 | \$23,350 |
| Share of Total Cost | 15.0% | 17.1% | 39.6% | 6.9% | 21.4% | 100% |

Explanations: The \$4000.00 handshake funds would be used to purchase interpretive panels, paint, lumber and marking material for the multi-use trail. USACE salaries and labor are for project oversight, volunteer

recruitment and management, and operations and maintenance activities. USACE materials include hand tools and supplies used for trail construction. USACE equipment costs account for the use of project-owned equipment such as wood chipper, brush hog, and tractor. GVEP (partner 1) equipment and materials costs will be for directional signage, tool use, and equipment use back in the classroom shops. The FLTC (Partner 2) will be providing supplies and volunteer labor to paint trail markers along the trail path and assist with trail design. Both GVEP and FLTC in kind services are for assistance in designing the trail. The SUNY Geneseo Outing Club (Partner 3) is providing volunteer labor to help clear and maintain the trail, construct the trail, and to help with invasive species removal. The SUNY Geneseo Outing Club is providing in-kind services by mapping the trail system in GIS as part of a school project.

Mount Morris Dam & Recreation Area

Back Forty Habitat
Improvement Project
Area



Back Forty Habitat Improvement Area

Finger Lakes Trail

Multi-use Trail (new)

Interpretive or directional signs

Finger Lakes Trail Continues South to County Park

Finger Lakes Trail Continues South to Mount Morris Dam



Genesee Valley Educational Partnership (GVEP) Conservation Class working on Back Forty Habitat Improvement Project



Army Reserve Unit using Multi-use Trail for land navigation training

