

# How To Prepare a Winning Handshake Application

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Webinar Presentation

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Strom Thurmond



Philpott Lake



US Army Corps of Engineers  
**BUILDING STRONG**®

# Handshake Partnership Program Time Line

- Applications Period Begins July
- Application Deadline Sep

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- Recipients Announced Nov
- Agreement Deadline Aug
- Expend Funds 2 yrs
  - ▶ funds will be transmitted to District/Project via FAD



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Application Information

- Located on Gateway Partnership page
  - <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/partners/partners.cfm>



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Plan Ahead NOW

- September may seem like a ways off but it will come quickly.
- Determine your project
- Work with prospective partners
- Identify needs and each partner's contribution
- Is the Handshake Program the right fit?



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# Handshake Partnership Program

## Eligibility

Handshake funds are administered through a challenge partnership agreement. The authority for the challenge partnership program provides opportunities for public and non-Federal groups and individuals to contribute to and participate in the operation and/or management of RECREATION FACILITIES and NATURAL RESOURCES at Corps water resource development projects.

EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 12



# Handshake Partnership Program

New for 2017

- Total program: \$250,000 planned
- Invasive species control: Yes/No checkmark but must explain how the project meets this objective
- First Time Success: bonus points increased
- Pollinator projects: Replaces Cooperating Associations bonus funding
- Quarterly reporting: Funded projects will have to provide a status update every quarter.
- Conclusion: Short explanation to sum up the application
- Heath Kruger: new coordinator beginning FY17.



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Applications

- Describe the partnership and the work to be accomplished.
- Include the basic who, what, when, where, how.
- Include:
  - Who will accomplish each task
  - Are there:
    - New facilities
    - Renovations to existing facilities
    - Research
    - Visitor services
    - Cultural or natural resources preserved
    - Educational or interpretive products created



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Applications

A good application includes a description about

- the partners,
- the project, and
- the overall benefit of the partnership to the project

It must also tell us why the proposed project is valuable. Don't assume we already know.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Specifically address how the project will meet the following six evaluation criteria

- **Longevity / O&M**
- **Partnership Value**
- **Environmental Stewardship Value**
- **Recreational Benefit**
- **Communication and Education Value**
- **Innovativeness**

Projects that can show benefits in multiple categories compete better.



Rathbun Lake



# Handshake Partnership Program

**Longevity/ O&M** - What is the life span of the product and the benefit to the Corps?

- What is long term benefit of the project?
- How long do you estimate it will be around?
- What is long term cost?
- Will there be on-going maintenance required?
- By whom?
- Will the project be removed or closed if maintenance is required but not funded?
- Longer term benefit and less O&M compete better



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Longevity examples

Both the ABA/ADA compliant boat dock upgrade and fishing pier will be constructed of concrete with steel hand rails and will therefore be flood resistant.

It is expected that the platform will provide a stable eagle nesting place for 20+ years

The materials were chosen for the project to ensure a long lasting, low maintenance fence.

The shoreline stabilization rip-rap will not require any additional annual maintenance once it is installed.

The anticipated operative life span...is a minimum 30 years due to the durable nature and longevity of the components.



# Handshake Partnership Program

b. Partnership Value - What is the significance of the partner and their contribution to the project (i.e. critical partner, matching dollars, materials, in-kind services, etc.)?

- This category incorporates both the value of the partner and the value of their contributions.
- More partners compete better because there is a stronger partnering benefit and more potential contribution.
- The value of the partner to the COE makes the application more attractive.
- Higher % of partner contribution compete better



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Partnership Value Examples

Double click on spreadsheet to access data entry fields:

	Local Corps Office	Handshake Funds	SCA	Partner 1	Partner 2	Partner 3	Partner 4	Partner 5	Partner 6	Partner 7	Partner 8	Total
In-Kind Services	\$5,000	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,000	\$4,500	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$18,500
Travel	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$10,000	\$25,000	N/A	\$1,000	\$0	\$5,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$500	\$0	\$41,500
Equipment Use	\$0	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$15,000
Funds Contributed	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$4,272	\$4,272	\$1,282	\$1,068	\$0	\$5,126	\$2,777	\$6,408	\$25,205
SCA Intern/Crew	\$0	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$5,272</b>	<b>\$4,272</b>	<b>\$6,282</b>	<b>\$20,068</b>	<b>\$4,500</b>	<b>\$5,126</b>	<b>\$8,277</b>	<b>\$6,408</b>	<b>\$100,205</b>
<b>Share of Total Cost</b>	15%	25%	0%	5%	4%	6%	20%	4%	5%	8% #	6%	100.0%

The project will also serve to strengthen our existing partnerships by...

...this project will be yet another example of their involvement in the creation of new recreation opportunities.

These partners have made significant contributions to the project in volunteer hours, materials, and in-kind services.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Recreational Benefit - Does the project improve the overall recreational experience for the project's users? Does it provide opportunities for various user types?

- What experiences are created?
- Who benefits?
- Are there multiple user groups?



•The more diverse and multi-functioning the recreation experience can be, the better the application.



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Recreational Benefit Examples:

Even though low stream flows during non release times or drought conditions would prohibit or limit kayaking and canoeing, these access points would still be heavily used by anglers and picnickers wanting to participate in stream activities.

Improved fishing not only allows for more recreational activity but also drives tourism, and provides economic impact to area communities...

The revitalization of the area will provide critical opportunities for plant identification, bird and wildlife watching, lessons in wildlife attraction, photography, and quiet reflection with universal access...

The benefit to recreation will be a much safer and user friendly group picnic area.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Environmental Stewardship Value – How does the project contribute to the natural world, and the improvement of the Corps' natural and/or cultural resources?

- Pollinator projects
- Invasive species control
- Aquatic & fisheries habitat improvements
- Wildlife habitat improvements
- Trails
- Research
- Improvements to the natural environment usually score higher



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Environmental Stewardship Examples

The project also improves the Corps' Environmental Stewardship mission...

It is important to work proactively to keep additional invasive species from entering the lake and to prevent further spread of existing invasive species.

The projects will also drastically reduce sediment loads entering the lake in the areas where surface water interacts with the erosion prevention projects; improve the fishery and provide additional habitat for invertebrates, amphibians, reptiles, waterfowl and a variety of upland wildlife...

This project will improve the ecosystem through habitat restoration, invasive species eradication, fire risk reduction, and improve wildlife diversity.

It would be a great method to turn an environmental risk into an environmental benefit



# Handshake Partnership Program

Communication and Education Value – This includes both effort and impact of that effort through interpretation, outreach, education and public information?



- It is important to show the effort in education
- It is important to show the impact of the efforts.
- Is there interactivity or is everything static?
- Explain how the benefits of the project are conveyed to the public and how the project improves the USACE image.



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Communication and Education Examples:

Interpretive signs located around the course will provide educational, cultural, environmental and historical significance.

Wayside exhibits, signs, educational instruction, and existing bulletin boards will all be used to discuss the environmental stewardship mission, the flood control mission, efforts to improve water quality, and enlighten visitors on the other recreational possibilities.

It will be a site for interpretive programming involving paddling, water safety, exploring, birding and others...

...by promoting safety and knowledge on water related activities available around our lakes.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Innovativeness: Describe the innovative nature of the partnership or the project. Why is this partnership or project important and unique?

- What makes this idea so different?
- Why is it special?
- Is the partnership innovative or is it the project?

Explain the difference if there is one.

- Convince the reader, “Wow, that is different.”



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Innovativeness Examples

This type of project has never been attempted in our region where there are several different union groups working together as volunteers.

...is innovative because it attacks four different erosion sources at four different locations with four different specific solutions and provides a multitude of other recreational benefits at the same time.

This project has taken a different approach in the development of a partnership...

This project will provide conceptual to visual progression in educating the public on the environmental concept of erosion control..

This partnership will utilize common goals to help build stronger recreation and educational opportunities, benefiting all parties.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Application suggestions:

Don't assume the reader knows what you know.

Project diversity is good, but not required.

Provide the information in an easy to read format.

Follow directions.

Don't assume the reader knows what you know



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Scoring:

Each application is evaluated and scored 1-10 for each criteria, then weighted.

- Longevity / O&M (15%)
- Partnership Value (20%)
- Recreational Benefit (20%)
- Environmental Stewardship Value (20%)
- Communication and Education Value (15%)
- Innovativeness (10%)

Maximum score for each application is 200 points per evaluator (usually 8 evaluators).



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Scoring:

Each PAC member evaluates all applications and submits scores to coordinator.

Scores are combined to get total score (1,600 maximum)

Then bonus points are added...

AND

Points are deducted (not following directions).



# Handshake Partnership Program

The Incentive Point Categories for FY 16.

- Handshake applications from lakes or lake projects or offices that have never received handshake funding will be eligible to receive 200 bonus points.
- Handshake applications that include invasive species control will be eligible to receive 100 bonus points.



# Handshake Partnership Program

Projects are ranked in the order of total score.

Funds are disbursed according to evaluation score ranking until expended.

It is possible that the lowest ranked funded project will not receive all of requested funds.



# Handshake Partnership Program

The highest ranked application that includes a specific intent to improve pollinator habitat may be eligible for an additional \$5,000.

Pollinator habitat bonus has NO BEARING on evaluation score and ranking.

Does have a bearing on the funds disbursement.



# Handshake Partnership Program

## Manage Expectations

- In 2012 there were:
  - 36 applications submitted
  - 13 were selected to receive funds (36%)
- In 2013 there were:
  - 27 applications submitted
  - 11 were selected to receive funds (41%)
- In 2014 there were:
  - 26 applications submitted
  - 13 were selected to receive funds (50%)
- In 2015 there were:
  - 33 applications submitted
  - 13 were selected to receive funds (39%)
- In 2016 there were:
  - 23 applications submitted
  - 16 were selected to receive funds (70%)



# Handshake Partnership Program

- Is the Handshake Program the right fit for this project or this year?
- If so, start NOW, hopefully your partners are already on board.
- Determine your project – its not too late, but waiting longer makes the process much harder
- Work with prospective partners
- Identify needs and each partner's contribution



# Handshake Partnership Program

- GOOD LUCK!

If there are questions, email Allen Gwinn  
or call at 814-658-6810.

