

## **Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2009 Recipients**

**1. Name of Corps Project/Lake:** Allatoona Lake

**2. Handshake Project Name:** Allatoona Lake Visitor Center and Trail Improvement Project

**3. What has been accomplished?** Please provide photographs; before, during, and after!:

This partnership project had four goals; updating the Visitor Center at the Allatoona Lake Operations Project Management Office (OPMO), the improvement of the local trail system in the area, added interpretation to the area and cultural resource protection.

The first portion of the project to begin was the improvement and addition of trails in recreation areas around the Allatoona Lake OPMO. Approximately one mile of trails were added in the Historic Cooper's Furnace Day Use Area, just below the Allatoona OPMO. The newly constructed trails added to the three miles of trails that connected Cooper's Furnace Day Use, Coopers Branch #1 and Coopers Branch #2 Day Use Areas and the Allatoona OPMO. Much of the new trail follows the 19th century railroad bed that once led to the historic furnace. Between 2008-2010, over 445 hours of volunteer services were spent on construction and maintenance of the new trail addition. Directional signs, crosswalks, wood chips on parts of trails, trail map dispensers at all trailheads, and protective split rail fencing in several areas were added and completed by spring 2010. An additional small bridge was added in the summer 2010 which was contributed by a volunteer. Also, a gravel trail parking area near Coopers Branch #1, was expanded to meet growing needs.

In addition to the Corps Trail, the City of Cartersville, through a trails grant, funded construction of a half mile connector trail from their Pine Mountain Trail (4.38 miles) to the Corps' Laurel Ridge Trail. This project was completed late 2009. The City of Cartersville used approximately \$40,000 on the project which included trailhead and directional signs and connected four trails together for eight miles of continuous trails

The new trail addition completed by the Corps crosses closely behind the historic furnace. Cooper's Furnace is a 19th century iron furnace that is eligible for the National Historic Register. It is the only surviving structure of a thriving milling and iron manufacturing operation on the Etowah River between the 1850's-1860's. It had significant roles in the state of Georgia's iron manufacturing and railroad expansions as well as the American Civil War, including the famous Great Locomotive Chase. To protect the furnace and to increase public safety, the Allatoona Lake OPMO in August 2008 erected a split rail fence around 3/4 of the furnace to keep the public at a distance; the fourth side was already blocked to the public. Restricted area signs were added in the area with the overall concern being safety but allowing the public to enjoy the furnace at a distance. The split rail fence has been extremely successful and aesthetically looks much better than the chain linked fence that had been proposed.

Eight (8) 16' x 20' interpretive panels were placed in the Cooper's Furnace and Dam Overlook areas. The interpretive panels cover the history of the furnace, construction of the Dam, early railroads, the Great Locomotive Case as well as several panels that explain the environmental aspects of the area.

Finally, the aging mid-1980's video and photo displays at the Allatoona Lake Visitor Center were replaced. The Allatoona Lake OPMO partnered with Etowah High School, Canton, Georgia to create a new visitor information DVD that is viewed by visitors to the center. Over a two year period, students and staff in Etowah High School's broadcast and video production class produced a new video that covers basically the same subject matter as the older version but with updated information and more current footage and photographs. New segments covering water safety and the Corps Emergency Response Operations were added to the video which were lacking from its predecessor. Teachers and students involved with this project contributed \$21,000 in finished product, volunteer and In-Kind services. Two further partners were identified after the original Handshake Application. Professional photographers Brad Keshlear (retired Corps) and John Johnson contributed numerous volunteer hours and photographs to the visitor center to help renovate aging 1980's photo displays. Their generous contributions have completely revamped and changed the look of the Allatoona Lake Visitor Center. Further water safety and historical educational displays were added or replaced with the handshake funding.

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Handshake Program Funding Amount</b>	\$10,000
<b>Local Corps Office Funds</b> (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$10,000
<b>Partner's Contributions</b> (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
<b>Partners Name</b>	<b>Total Value of Contributions</b>
1 City of Cartersville	\$39,542
2 Cherokee County Schools/Etowah High School	\$21,250
3 Brad Keshlear Photography	\$5,000
4 John Johnson Photography	\$2,500
5	\$
6	\$

#### **4. Handshake Program Recipient Feedback**

*Please take this opportunity to provide feedback on all aspects of the Handshake Program and the Challenge Partnership Agreement authority. Your productive comments are important to the ongoing improvement of the program. Make sure to let us know how the Handshake funds have benefited your efforts to initiate and/or strengthen your partnerships.*

**A. Comments About Handshake Program:** To date the Allatoona Lake Project has utilized funding through the Handshake Program on three different projects. This project aided public services with improvements in and around the visitor center. Others projects are helping to improve declining ecosystems around the lake. Without the Handshake Program, these programs could not have been accomplished. The Program makes you think outside the box when coming up with ideas and builds and improves on partnerships in a time when funding is limited and decreasing.

**B. Comments About Challenge Partnership Agreement:** The supplied blank agreement is good for people that have never experienced or had little experience writing a MOU or Partnership agreement. The completed agreement went through our Office of Council for approval with little difficulty.

**C. Recommendations:** The Allatoona Project would love to be able to apply for Handshake Projects annually rather than biannually.



Cooper's Furnace before fence



Cooper's Furnace following addition of fence



Cooper's Furnace trail before



Cooper's Furnace Trail after with interpretive sign



Cooper's Furnace trail before



Cooper's Furnace Trail after



Cartersville trail connector trailhead off Cooper's Furnace trail



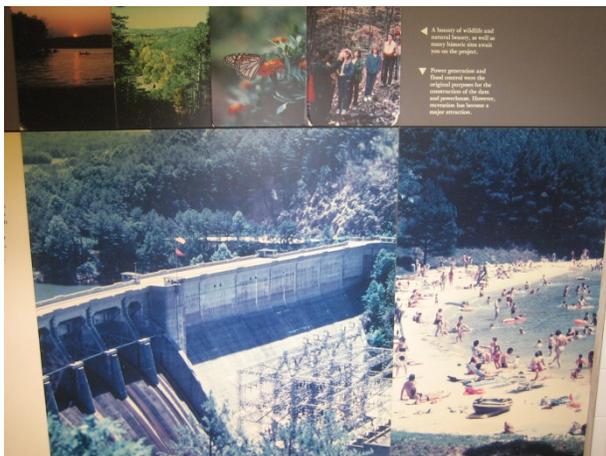
Trail identification signs, trailhead bulletin board, map holders, mulched area



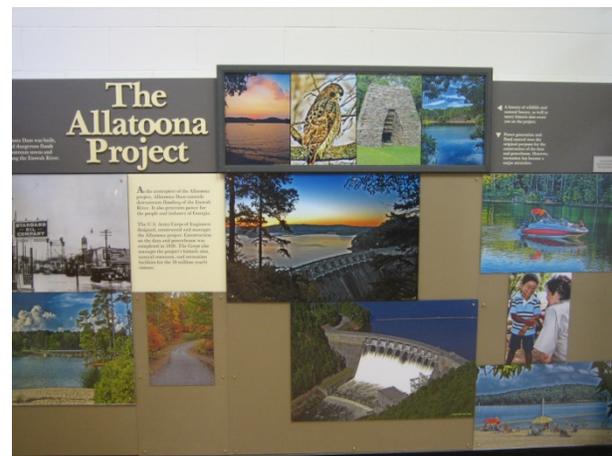
Trail crossing, directional signs, interpretive Sign, mulched area



Directional signs for trail, visitor center, river and furnace overlook



Front lobby recreation display Allatoona before



Front lobby display Allatoona Lake after



Wildlife display before



Wildlife display after



Display of children recreating before



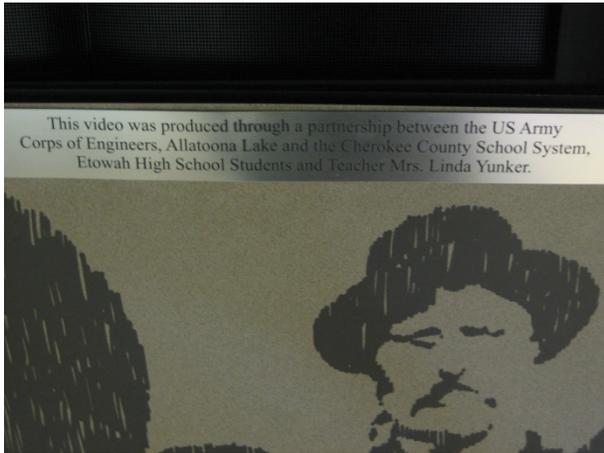
1 of 4 small display photos of children wearing life jackets after



Example of 1 of 8 Interpretive panels



Water safety mat displayed in visitor center lobby



Recognition plaque under visitor center video, Etowah High School and Linda Yunker



Rangers Chris Purvis and Ginger Bjornson presenting Linda Yunker the Commanders Award for Public Service, signed by Major General Todd Semonite