

Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2013 Recipients

1. Name of Corps Project/Lake: John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir

2. Handshake Project Name: Tailrace Park - Universally Accessible Canoe/Kayak Launch

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

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$25,000
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$13,903.83
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Roanoke River Basin Association	\$60,800
2	\$
3	\$
4	\$
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: The Handshake Program fosters a positive working relationship between the Corps, community, and local governments in accomplishing common goals that would otherwise be unobtainable.

B. Comments About Challenge Partnership Agreement:

C. Recommendations: Roanoke River Basin Association proved to be an outstanding partner. Partner choice is one of the most important aspects of this program.

5. Handshake Summary:

Please also include a separate one-page newspaper type article describing the project and the benefit to the Corps of Engineers and to the public as a result of this partnership project. Examples can be found on the gateway under Handshake Success Stories.

Tailrace Park - Universally Accessible Canoe/Kayak Launch

John H. Kerr Dam & Reservoir

2013 Handshake Partnership Report

The waters of the John H. Kerr tailrace will be much more accessible to paddlers, thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Roanoke River Basin Association-Upper Reach, and numerous volunteers and contributors.

Tailrace Park on the downstream side of the John H. Kerr Dam has been a popular fishing and wildlife viewing area for years. The flowing waters attract a wide range of aquatic birds and numerous species of fish. Buggs Island, by which Kerr Reservoir is locally known, is bracketed by the Liberty Hill Trail to the South and the Tailrace Park to the Northwest. The island itself is maintained as a waterfowl sanctuary by the Virginia Game Commission and is not actively managed but left in a natural state. The Liberty Hill trail is 1.25 miles in length and contains multiple areas of historical, archeological, and natural significance.



Tailrace Park has been improved through the addition of a variety of amenities including; bathrooms, a picnic shelter, wildlife viewing platform, and a paved walking path. Most of these improvements have been made to the “upstream” side of the area leaving the “downstream” side underutilized by visitors and thereby the perfect place to enhance.

[Overview of John H. Kerr Tailrace](#)

The idea to construct a canoe/kayak launch was a collaborative effort proposed by the Virginia Tourism Corporation, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Scott Murray, director of the Roanoke River Basin Association-Upper Reach and Scott Murray Land Planning Inc.. Mr. Murray has worked closely with disabled veteran organizations in the past and proved to be an excellent

partner through every step of the process. The mission of Upper Reach is to provide eco-tourism, recreational therapy, and environmental education. These goals mesh with the Corps mission, which is to manage and conserve natural resources consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.

The realities of the budgetary and fiscal environment have increased the importance of working with partners to pool resources and achieve common goals. One way that the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers seeks to do this is through the Handshake Partnership program. The key to this and any partnership is that partners remain involved and feel the others are contributing. This couldn't have been more apparent in the success of this project.



View from top of launch

The launch itself is an original design adapted from similar facilities used on slack water systems. High water levels from hydropower releases made these adaptations necessary to provide a safe and reliable launching platform for paddlers. The launch is composed of rugged, high quality materials which add to its sustainability and will keep maintenance to a minimum. An interpretive sign provides launch users with the history of the area, wildlife that may be encountered, and a map of potential paddling routes.



Parking lot view of canoe/kayak launch

The Corps funded construction of the "upper" portion of the launch area including a parking lot containing two ADA accessible spaces, two car spaces, one ADA van trailer space, and five trailer spaces, a tie down lane, and a paved walkway. The site, which was formerly covered in scrub brush, briars, and poison ivy, was cleared

and prepared with the help of paid contractors; Re-engineered Business Solutions (RBS), Ramsey Construction, and custom logger-Paul Nehme. The “lower” portion of the launch was conceived, planned, and constructed by Scott Murray and a multitude of volunteers. Funds for this



Downriver view from top of launch

portion of the launch were made available through the Virginia Tobacco Indemnification Commission, Virginia Tourism Corporation, and donations from private businesses. Generous donations of rip rap, materials, handrails, landscape trees, and a silt curtain were contributed by Vulcan Materials, Robco Manufacturing, Custom Steel, Bens Creek, and Rowboat Dock.

