

Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2013 Recipients

1. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Lake Ouachita

2. Handshake Project Name: ADA Accessible Fishing Derby Pond and Fishing Pier

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

In 2013, Lake Ouachita Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District entered into a handshake partnership agreement with the Lake Ouachita Citizen Focus Committee(LOCFC) and Mountain Pine Environmental and Spacial Technology (EAST) program. The partnership handshake grant funding made it possible to construct an ADA accessible pond and fishing pier at Avery Recreation area near Blakely Mountain Dam. The purpose of the ADA accessible Fishing Pond is to provide universal access for children to have a safe place to fish and enjoy the great outdoors while experiencing the benefits of protecting our natural resources.

The LOCFC, comprised of regional volunteers, was established in 2001 to assist the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in developing initiatives and providing input to enhance public opportunities at Lake Ouachita. Meeting monthly, the committee is comprised of 15 volunteer members, including fishermen, marina operators, retirees, avid campers, and environmentalists. This year marks their 14th anniversary. Over the first fourteen years, the LOCFC has made tremendous strides and positive differences for the benefit of visitors and tourism in the area. Operating on a shoestring without a budget, dues, etc., they continually utilize grants, partnerships and technology to complete many notable accomplishments towards support of our Recreation and Environmental Stewardship missions. The LOCFC assisted in planning of the ADA pond and fishing pier and also provided guidance to the volunteers constructing the pier.

The Mountain Pine Environmental and Spatial Technology Program (EAST) has partnered with Lake Ouachita Corps of Engineers on several projects including water safety videos, GIS mapping of water hazards, native aquatic plant propagation, and shoreline cleanups. These students provided initial planning of the pond location, and have assisted the Corps with propagation of native aquatic plants, but due to a change in the programs facilitator, they were unable to assist in completion of this project. The Corps of Engineers, Lake Ouachita, formed a partnership with students from the Lake Hamilton High School Fishing Team who donated their time to assist in construction of the ADA accessible pier, and the Lakeside High School Bridge Summer Program who assisted in clearing tree limbs and brush from the entrance roadway to the pond and pier area. Although the Lake Hamilton High School Fishing Team and the Lakeside High School Bridge Summer Program were not partners listed in the original handshake challenge partnership agreement, forming these two new partnerships was instrumental in clearing of the pond and pier area and assisting in pier construction.

For some children these derbies offer their first opportunity to bait a hook and cast a line. Fishing Derbies promote President Obama's "America's Great Outdoors Initiative" and Michelle Obama's "Let's Move Outside Initiative" by helping families re-connect with the outdoors and protect and enjoy the abundant Natural Resources we have at Lake Ouachita. With the help of the Lake Ouachita Citizen Focus Committee, the Mountain Pine Environmental and Spatial Technology (EAST) program, the Lake Hamilton School Fishing Team, and Lakeside Bridge Summer Program, construction of this pond and pier will benefit the community for years to come. The pond is a 1/2 acre embankment pond with 1/8 chain link netting fence for

containment constructed on Corps of Engineer property near Lake Ouachita Field Office with required site survey and permits. Pond was constructed in accordance with environmentally sustainable principles. The Pier was constructed with pressure treated lumber and composite decking and reinforced with galvanized steel which will last over 50 years with minimal maintenance. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission partnered with the Corps of Engineers in stocking catfish in the fishing pond prior to fishing derbies.

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$30,000
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$21,000
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee	\$15,000
2 Mountain Pine EAST Program	\$4,500
3 Lake Hamilton Fishing Team	\$5,000
4 Lakeside High School Bridge Program	\$2,500
5 Arkansas Game and Fish Commission	\$5,000
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 is a wonderful program to provide "seed" money for programs that would not have been possible without this supplemental funding. It fosters positive partnerships with a common goal of enhancing recreation opportunities.

B. Comments About Challenge Partnership Agreement: Although one of our partners was a little apprehensive about signing the agreement due to strong legal wording, after visiting with them, they agreed to sign. The program is a great avenue for partners to work on a project that will benefit the community.

C. Recommendations: None



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**®
Vicksburg District

News Release

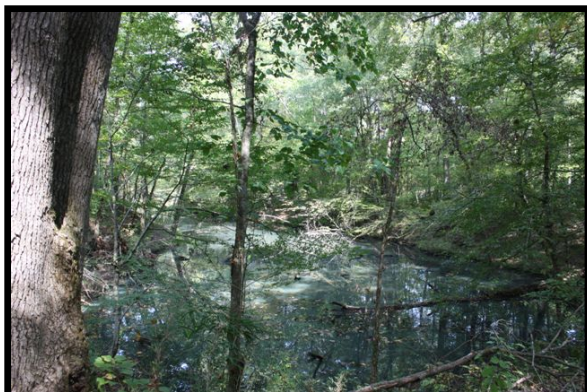
Lake Ouachita Field Office

For release: Immediately,

Contact: Amy Shultz, Park Ranger
Phone: (501) 767-2101 ext. 73075
Email: Amy.j.Shultz@usace.army.mil

The U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Lake Ouachita announces the completion of an ADA accessible pond and fishing pier located at Avery Recreation Area near Blakely Mountain Dam, Royal, Arkansas. The Corps Headquarters in Washington D.C. awarded funding in 2013 for this project as part of a Handshake Partnership Program which provides a source of seed money to enhance recreation projects and community partnerships.

Lake Ouachita has hosted many fishing derbies for children with disabilities over the years by positioning containment nets in coves in Lake Ouachita recreation areas. In years of abundant rainfall, the water level was up, and made placement of the nets very difficult. Many times, the stocked fish escaped under or over the net prior to the derbies. During periods of drought, a lack of water in the coves caused the opposite problem of not enough suitable shoreline for the children to safely fish. Also, the shoreline where the containment netting was placed has many tripping hazards, and has proven to be a wonderful habitat for water snakes. Due to the problems with the location, netting, and safety hazards, fishing derbies have not been held on Lake Ouachita in the past five years. Seeking a solution to this problem, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers proposed construction of an ADA accessible Fishing Pond with fishing pier to alleviate all these problems by providing a safe, comfortable place for users of all abilities to connect with the environment.



Avery before Pond Construction

The area chosen for the fishing pond and pier site was a slough near Avery boat ramp that was previously a swampy, unusable area. Chosen for its continual fresh water source, this area provided an optimal location for pond construction.



During Pond Construction and
Placing of net barrier



The Corps partnered with the Lake Ouachita Citizens Focus Committee, students from the Mountain Pine Environmental and Spatial Technology Program (EAST), Lakeside High School summer Bridge Program, and the Lake Hamilton High School Fishing team on planning, clearing, and construction of the Avery pond and pier.



Lakeside students work to clear
pond/pier area of limbs/debris!



Lake Hamilton School Fishing Team Volunteers work hard during ADA Fishing Pier Construction!



These partners assisted Corps of Engineers contract employees and Natural Resource Specialists to build the pond and pier to benefit fisherman for years to come.

Grant resources funded a large portion of the rip rap, heavy equipment rental, treated lumber, composite decking, and galvanized steel for construction of the pond and pier.



An inaugural fishing derby for First Step students will be held September 29, 2015 at 10:00am.

