

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fiscal Year 2017
Handshake Program Application**

Please review instructions before completing application!

Corps Lake/River Project Name: **Rend Lake**

District / Division: **St. Louis**

Handshake Proposal Title: **Rend Lake Visitor Center Accessible Trail and Pollinator Habitat**

Corps POC Name: **Cassie Magsig**

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A. 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
 4. Have all of the NEPA requirements been considered for this project? ☒ Yes ☐ No
 5. Did you participate in a Handshake Webinar in 2016 or review a 2016 Handshake Webinar on the Gateway? ☒ Yes ☐ No
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B. Handshake Funding Request (maximum \$20,000): \$20,000

C. Pollinator Habitat Bonus: Challenge Partnerships that are focused on improving pollinator habitat will be eligible to compete for an additional \$5000. The application must clearly demonstrate the intent of creating pollinator habitat as the primary project scope.

☒ This application qualifies for the Pollinator Habitat Bonus funding.

D. Incentive Points Category: Check the appropriate box if your application qualifies to receive bonus points on the evaluation score. The first category is for projects that are working to address invasive species management. The application must clearly identify how invasives are being addressed and managed. The second category is for Lake or River Projects that have never been chosen as Handshake recipients.

☒ Invasive Species Management (100 points).

☐ This Lake/River Project has never received Handshake funding (200 points).

E. Describe your partnership and the proposed Handshake Partnership Project:

Project applications will be evaluated on the categories below. Please complete each section as appropriate.

Summary Statement:

Handshake funding would support the creation of three pollinator and prairie gardens as well as the building of an accessible trail that would travel through the gardens and around an existing fishing pond. All will be placed in a minimally maintained field located on the Rend Lake Project Office/Visitor Center grounds and will be utilized for interpretation, recreation, and environmental stewardship purposes.

This work will be accomplished with support from eight local groups. The Garden Gate Club of Benton, the University of Illinois Master Gardener Program, and the Illinois Native Plant Society will be assisting with native plant advisement, garden designs, and garden planting. The Rend Lake College Agriculture Department will be assisting with the land preparation and seeding of the prairie and pollinator gardens. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) will be assisting with both pond assessment and fish stocking as well as assisting with making our "accessible outdoor opportunity" a success. The Laborers Union, Operators Union, and Plaster and Cement Mason Union will assist with the preparation and the building of the 1200 foot long accessible trail and fishing platforms.

Longevity / O&M description:

This project provides many new opportunities with minimal additional maintenance. In selecting the best structure for accessible fishing, low O&M costs and the use of sustainable materials were major factors considered. Using concrete to complete the trail and adding four concrete platforms for fishing off of the trail will provide us with great accessibility and a lifespan of 40+ years, compared to rock trails and wooden docks. The pollinator and prairie gardens will be planted with all perennial plants that are native to our area, allowing for an almost maintenance free landscape and interpretive area. The prairie grasses will be used to demonstrate how native prairie ecosystems function including the importance of fire in the system. This will be highlighted during Rend Lake's Annual Earth Day event. The material used for the interpretive signage and covered bench is rated for 20+ years. The majority of the maintenance involved will include finish mowing of the 4 acre field which will be completed through service contracts or volunteers, annual fish stocking performed by the IDNR, and annual removal of invasive species such as autumn olive along the hiking trail and tree lines.

Partnership Value:

This project will be beneficial for all involved. The Corps will receive free in-kind services from every group, volunteer hours from the Garden Gate Club of Benton and the Rend Lake College Agriculture Department, and materials and supplies (large mouth and white bass) from the IDNR. The garden club and the master gardeners are required to perform a certain amount of volunteer hours each year and this project will provide them the opportunity for hours and provide a new space for the master gardeners to hold learning seminars. This area will be used as the only "pollinator plots" that the students of Rend Lake College will be planting. They will learn the difference in preparing soil for native species compared to the crops they will be planting on the college grounds, and how they can make a difference on their farm lands for pollinator species. This project helps the unions show that they are part of the local communities and they are helping to make Southern Illinois a better place to live. The unions will also be utilizing their apprenticeship programs to complete this project, helping the apprentices learn their trade. The IDNR as well as the Illinois Native Plant Society will be able to provide additional quality fisheries habitat, assist with accessible trails, and increase the amount of pollinator gardens that are maintained in the state of Illinois. These partnerships are critical to completing this project since Rend Lake's labor force is small and funding for contractual work is limited. This project will serve as a template for future partnership opportunities.

Recreational Benefit:

The accessible trail and fishing platforms will provide the first Rend Lake, Corps managed area that was created specifically for providing persons with disabilities the opportunity to fish. Our team receives many inquiries for areas that are easy to get to and have access to the water for fishing for either themselves or their children with disabilities. The completion of this project would provide them with the outdoor recreational opportunity they are

looking for. This area would also be heavily used by the Interpretive Services team members for programming, nature hikes, nighttime owl prowls and bat walks, and much more. This area would be perfect host stations for presenters during the Rend Lake Annual Earth Day Event which is a two day event held to teach third and sixth graders about the importance of being good stewards. The prairies will be a great location for the presenters teaching about native prairie ecosystems, the pollinator gardens will be available for the master gardeners to teach students the importance of native plants and pollinators, and the fisheries biologist can utilize the pond to perform their fish and invertebrate ecology. There will also be three interpretive signs placed in the area to assist with self lead interpretive hikes. These signs will be placed to explain the lifecycle and importance of the monarch, nighttime pollinators, and prairie life. The University of Illinois extension office which hosts the local master gardeners covers 5 counties and the group holds the majority of their classes and seminars at locations 40+ miles away from our location. They have realized that this has deterred many potential members from participating and that there were many interested parties in our surrounding community. Along with our large multi-purpose room that is used by our partners, our Visitor Center area would make the perfect place and location for many of their classes. This would bring new volunteer opportunities as most of our individual volunteers are both master gardeners or master naturalists.

Environmental Stewardship Value:

A portion of this area is currently mowed twice per year, with autumn olive in the unmowed area as well as along the tree line of the mowed area. The equipment operators union will assist with the clearing of invasive species in the entire area allowing easy maintenance by mowing and for the gardens to be viewed from the main roadway. Our boundary line also runs approximately 800 feet from the open field area to an old roadbed and another small field opening. These areas will be opened up wider for trail hiking for those wanting to extend their visit from the pond area and funding will be used to remove autumn olive from these areas. We have future plans of planting the small open field in a food plot mixture for wildlife and teachings during Hunter Safety Field Class Days. The native plant prairies and pollinator gardens are in line with the "National Strategy To Promote The Health Of Honey Bees And Other Pollinators" and will take the place of the invasive species, be utilized to teach visitors the damage that can be caused by planting invasive species in their landscape, and of course the promotion of our pollinator friends. The gardens will also provide beautiful landscape for those enjoying our trail and driving past our office and visitor center. The pond will be assessed and stocked yearly, as it was 20 years ago, improving our fish habitat. The pond is not currently managed and does not draw many fisherman as the pond is not easily accessible.

Communication & Education Value:

This project will be a huge step in beginning new relationships with local partners and showing the community how we can work together to make their home communities greater. This work project itself will provide an educational value to all participating through hands on experience and research. By providing the accessible recreation opportunity, we are showing the community we care about their wants and needs. In addition to providing an accessible recreational area, it will be used primarily for interpretive programming and public events. We have felt the need to present even more ranger lead programs and this opens the door for so many, including several that we present as a part of our summer long Environmental Science Series and our spring and fall preschool programs. The opportunity for new STEM programming is endless and this will draw more people to our visitor center to learn what the Corps of Engineers has to offer.

Innovativeness:

This project is unique in what it offers and what groups will be coming together to make it happen. We have partnered with the local unions in the past to help complete a shelter project and their willingness to help with another project is proof that the first was a success for all. This will also be a great opportunity for the local students to work alongside experts from the master gardeners and plant society, showing them how rewarding it is to volunteer in their communities, and making connections with those that work in their choice careers. This project brings so many new opportunities together while allowing us to be models of good stewardship. This project would be a first of its kind for the lake.

Conclusion:

This project will help us create additional outdoor recreational and educational opportunities as well as increase critical wildlife habitat. The area will have minimal maintenance, provide accessible recreation, promote pollinators and native plant species, provide a location for interpretive services programming, remove invasive species, increase opportunities for special events, and promote future partnerships.

Double click on spreadsheet to access data entry fields and to enter Partner names. You MUST enter partner names into the spreadsheet:

	Local Corps Office	Handshake Funds	Garden Gate Club of Benton	U of I Master Gardeners	IL Native Plant Society	RLC Ag Dept.
Salaries	\$7,000	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$14,000	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment Use	\$2,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funds Contributed	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	N/A	N/A	\$2,000	\$1,200	\$0	\$2,400
In-Kind Services	N/A	N/A	\$500	\$1,600	\$2,300	\$900
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$23,000	\$25,000	\$2,500	\$2,800	\$2,300	\$3,300
Share of Total Cost	29.9%	32.6%	3.3%	3.6%	3.0%	4.3%
	62.5%					

	IDNR	Laborers Local 773	Operators Lcoal 318	Cement Masons Local 143	Partner 9	Partner 10
Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$600	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment Use	\$200	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funds Contributed	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
In-Kind Services	\$2,000	\$6,800	\$4,700	\$3,600	\$0	\$0
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$2,800	\$6,800	\$4,700	\$3,600	\$0	\$0
Share of Total Cost	3.6%	8.9%	6.1%	4.7%	0.0%	0

	Partner 11	Partner 12	Partner 13	Partner 14	Partner 15	Total
Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,000
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$39,600
Equipment Use	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,200
Funds Contributed	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$5,600
In-Kind Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$22,400
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$76,800
Share of Total Cost	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

Explanations:

The Corps will provide:

The Corps will provide technical oversight and planning over the entire project. The following will be the materials and services provided by the Corps during the execution of the project:

- Utilizing the Handshake funds, the Corps will purchase the 120 cubic yard supply of concrete (\$14,000), 20 lbs of native prairie and pollinator seed mixes along with the necessary fertilizer/lime (\$5,000), 3 interpretive signs plus a partnership recognition plaque (\$6,000).
- Utilizing O&M project funds, the Corps will procure 180 cubic yards of CA6 (\$4,500), an accessible covered bench to place along the trail (\$5,000), equipment for invasive species removal and hiking trail maintenance (\$4,000), remaining supplies and material such as wood for forms, nails, etc. (\$2,500)
- Coordination of activities and in-house labor (\$7,000)

The Partners will provide:

Partner1: The Garden Gate Club of Benton will provide in-kind services by assisting with prairie and garden designs. They will also provide volunteer hours by assisting with the small garden planting. (\$2,500)

Partner 2: The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Program Directors will provide in-kind services by assisting with prairie and garden designs. They will be using this as a teaching tool for those students going through the master gardener program and allowing volunteer hours for graduates. The master gardener graduates will be providing volunteer hours by assisting with the small garden planting. (\$2,800)

Partner 3: The Illinois Native Plant Society will also be providing in-kind services with their expertise of native plants specific to our area and soil types and will have a small group available during planting so that they are placed and planted correctly. (\$2,300)

Partner 4: The Rend Lake College Agriculture Department will provide in-kind services by the professors recommending soil treatments based on soil tests they take and by assisting the students on the proper amount of seed and treatment to broadcast. The students will provide volunteer hours by taking soil samples, preparing the grounds for the seed and treatment, and applying the seed and treatment. (\$3,300)

Partner 5: The Illinois Department of Natural Resources will be providing in-kind services by accessing the pond, performing fisheries management, and by providing correct specifications for the accessible trail and slabs. (\$2,000) Providing pond treatment and fingerling bass for stocking (\$600) and equipment to haul fish (\$200).

Partner 6: The Laborers Union will provide in-kind services by assisting the other trades with labor work needed for the job such as laying of concrete forms and clean up. (\$6,800)

Partner 7: The Operators Unions will provide in-kind services by preparing the grounds for the trail, removing invasive species, compacting the rock, and possibly hauling concrete. (\$4,700)

Partner 8: The Plasterers and Cement Masons Unions will provide in-kind services by assisting with the pouring and finishing of the entire concrete trail and slabs. (\$3,600)

Accessible Trail

Legend

