

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Fiscal Year 2020
Handshake Program Application**

Please review instructions before completing application!

Corps Lake/River Project Name: **Rivers Project Office**

District / Division:**St. Louis District/ MVD**

Handshake Proposal Title: **Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary Outdoor Classroom Amphitheater**

Corps POC Name:**Katelynn Dearth**

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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? (not in outgranted parks) 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. I am aware the Challenge Partnership Agreement must be reviewed and Approved by District Office of Counsel before sending to HQUSACE. Yes No
 6. If the full funding amount requested is not available, could a portion of this Handshake Project be completed with partial funding? Yes No
 7. I am aware that all government funds must be spent in accordance with FAR, DFAR and AFAR contracting laws and regulations, and that Handshake funds cannot be provided to the partner(s). Yes No
 8. Did you participate in a Handshake Webinar in 2019 or review a 2019 Handshake Webinar on the Gateway? Yes No
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B. Handshake Funding Request (maximum \$25,000): \$25,000

C. Incentive Points Category: Check the appropriate box if your application qualifies to receive bonus points on the evaluation score.

- This project will be completed with a national MOU partner with which the Lake or Project hasn't previously partnered. (100 points).
- This project reduces O&M cost to the Corps over the lifecycle of the proposed project or improves existing infrastructure. (100 points).

D. 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:

The Audubon Center at Riverlands (ACR) and the USACE Rivers Project Office are both located at the Corps-managed Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary (RMBS) in West Alton, MO. With the financial assistance offered through the Handshake Program, the ACR and USACE Rivers Project staff would install an amphitheater to maximize utilization of RMBS as an outdoor classroom. Education and outreach at the ACR and RMBS in FY19 reached approximately 13,000 students and families. Field trips to RMBS increased by 57% in 2018. ACR/RMBS is host the Audubon's RiverVision Leadership Project for underserved urban high school and middle school students, the annual Every Kid in the Park field days, YMCA youth summer camps, Ferguson-Florissant School District's Little Creek Summer Camp, Girl and Boy Scout programming, four annual festivals, and multiple community-focused educational outreach events. Current program planning is limited by the lack of structured space to accommodate groups. The addition of an amphitheater/outdoor classroom would allow ACR staff, USACE employees, and community members an opportunity to expand upon existing annual programs and provide the space for new programs and events to occur. An amphitheater is in the official master plan for RMBS to accommodate more guests as visitation continues to increase. The project would also reduce O&M cost to the Corps by reducing rental expenses for tents and chairs during large events.

Handshake Funding Cost Break Down:

Of the requested \$25,000:

- \$17,000 to contractor to clear the area, place the boulders, and lay the limestone screening. This cost was based on the estimation of three days of skid steer, mini excavator, dump truck, operators, and an additional laborer to be on site prepping the area and placing the boulders. This amount will also include the estimated cost of purchasing CA 6 crushed limestone and geo fabric to be laid underneath.
- \$6,000 will be used to install a rain garden and purchase native plants as soil conditions and funding permit.
- \$2,000 will be used to have appropriate signage developed to mark the amphitheater. One large UNICOR sign at entrance to access trail and one smaller sign acknowledging partnerships in amphitheater construction.

Longevity / O&M description:

Because the RMBS is located directly on the banks of the Mississippi River and subject to frequent flood events, the amphitheater is designed to be highly durable and have minimal maintenance needs. Rather than fixed bleachers or chairs, large cut boulders are planned for seating because they would not need to be removed or risk damage during flooding events. A similar design was installed at the Kaskaskia River Project in (year) and has held up well. To minimize mowing needs of the proposed amphitheater, limestone screening is planned along the two pathways to the site and between the rows of seating. Unlike the Kaskaskia project, which used grass aisles, the boulders will be placed in tight rows to minimize the overall footprint and therefore minimize the amount of limestone that may need to be replaced after a flooding event (see attached diagram). Having permanent outdoor seating installed will reduce the costs of chair rentals for large programs and event. Phase two of this project is planned to include the addition of a covering for the amphitheater for shade to further minimize the need for tent rentals. The project office plans to begin this phase after the installation of the amphitheater is completed so that exact size and site restrictions can be taken into consideration. Given the use of natural boulders, overall footprint may vary by several feet based on availability or stones and site conditions.

Partnership Value:

The Rivers Project Office has provided and will continue to provide paid staff to plan and implement this project if selected to receive Handshake Program funding. Native cottonwood and sycamore trees will be purchased by the Rivers Project, totaling \$1,000, to surround the amphitheater and provide shade, protection, and seclusion during programs. Total initial contributions account for 17.5% of the total project cost. The project office will maintain the amphitheater through vegetation maintenance contracts, and improvements, like the proposed canopy, could also be added over time. ACR will purchase the 40 cut boulders for seating valued at \$20,000 from

the comparable project completed at Kaskaskia with Handshake Program funding. Paid staff members have provided critical consultation and assistance in the planning of this proposal including several meetings and site visits. They will also provide volunteers to help with native plantings and maintenance of the landscaping after installation. This will account for 11.3% of the total cost. Central Stone has offered a rate of \$2,000 for the stones and delivery at wholesale price. They have also provided free consultation at two different quarries in order to find boulders that will be suitable for this project. This will account for 29.2% of the overall project cost. The St. Louis chapter of Wild Ones will be offering volunteers hours to provide consultation and installation of the rain garden and native plantings. This will account for 2% of the overall project cost.

Recreational Benefit:

This plan would tie into an existing project to provide universally accessible recreational opportunities at RMBS. In 2018, work was completed to add paved, accessible trails which now total a mile in length. The amphitheater will sit in between a loop of this new trail system and will be firm and stable, packed crushed limestone between the rows and on the pathways leading to the site, making the amphitheater itself universally accessible. All pathways will be a minimum of 36", not exceed running slope or cross slope maximums of less than 5% gradient. Packed crushed stone will also help minimize vegetation maintenance costs over time when compared to grass pathways and prevent runoff better than pavement or another non-permeable surface.

Environmental Stewardship Value:

The amphitheater will overlook Ellis Bay, Ellis Island, and Melvin Price Locks and Dam. This backdrop provides the ideal setting to tell the story of the Corps and the Mississippi River from the 9-Foot Navigation Project to the resulting environmental stewardship (ES) projects that have earned RMBS the designation of a "Globally Important Bird Area." This designation laid the groundwork for our continuing partnership with the Audubon Society and the educational programs they provide at RMBS. This amphitheater would also highlight and provide an opportunity for visitors to safely interact and view restored habitat and native landscaping completed through ongoing ES projects. The project includes the constructions of a small rain garden with native plants at the base of the amphitheater. This will catch rain falling within the project site, slowing sheet runoff, and serve as a demonstration of watershed-friendly landscaping to visitors. Native trees will also be planted around the amphitheater. This will protect the area from erosion as well as provide the ideal landscape for a secluded outdoor classroom. The educational programs offered by ACR are focused on exposing youths to public lands and careers in conservation while building the next generation of environmental stewards. This amphitheater will allow the ACR to expand upon existing programs and reach more students with these environmental programs.

Communication & Education Value:

The primary function of the proposed amphitheater will be to serve as an outdoor classroom. RMBS has become a field trip destination for many local schools and homeschool groups. ACR and USACE staff regularly host educational programming telling the Corps' story on the river in a way that fulfills the needs of school groups and academic requirements. The current indoor classroom seats only 25 people despite regularly hosting groups of over 100 students. This often requires staff to rely on chair and tent rentals to accommodate our school groups. Having a defined, outdoor space to interact with and host students would enhance their experience by allowing them to be immersed in an outdoor setting and provide the opportunity to invite larger groups on a more regular basis. Additionally, this space would be utilized for public programs and community groups, including the four annual festivals hosted at RMBS.

Innovativeness:

The restoration story of RMBS is unique and showcases the Corps' commitment to finding a balance between our role in river navigation, environmental stewardship, and providing recreational opportunities. The amphitheater would provide a much-needed location to tell this complex story in a holistic way. Additionally, the ACR/RMBS is growing in popularity as a group tour destination. The site is uniquely situated 20 minutes from a major metropolitan area (St. Louis, Mo.) and five minutes from downtown Alton, IL. Its 3,700 acres offer 8.5 miles of trail through multiple habitats and offer an enormous opportunity for land and water-based recreation. An amphitheater will allow for USACE and ACR staff to expand upon our use of innovative educational strategies such as living history presentations, performance art, educational programs, and the utilization of place-based learning techniques.

Conclusion:

Through collaboration between USACE and ACR, visitation to RMBS has increased dramatically since its opening. The demand for space for educational programs and public events exceeds our current infrastructure. This amphitheater project would resolve many of these issues. Care has been taken to include all stakeholders in the planning of this proposal and to take advantage of the knowledge within the Rivers Project team to ensure this plan will meet our needs and minimize long-term maintenance.

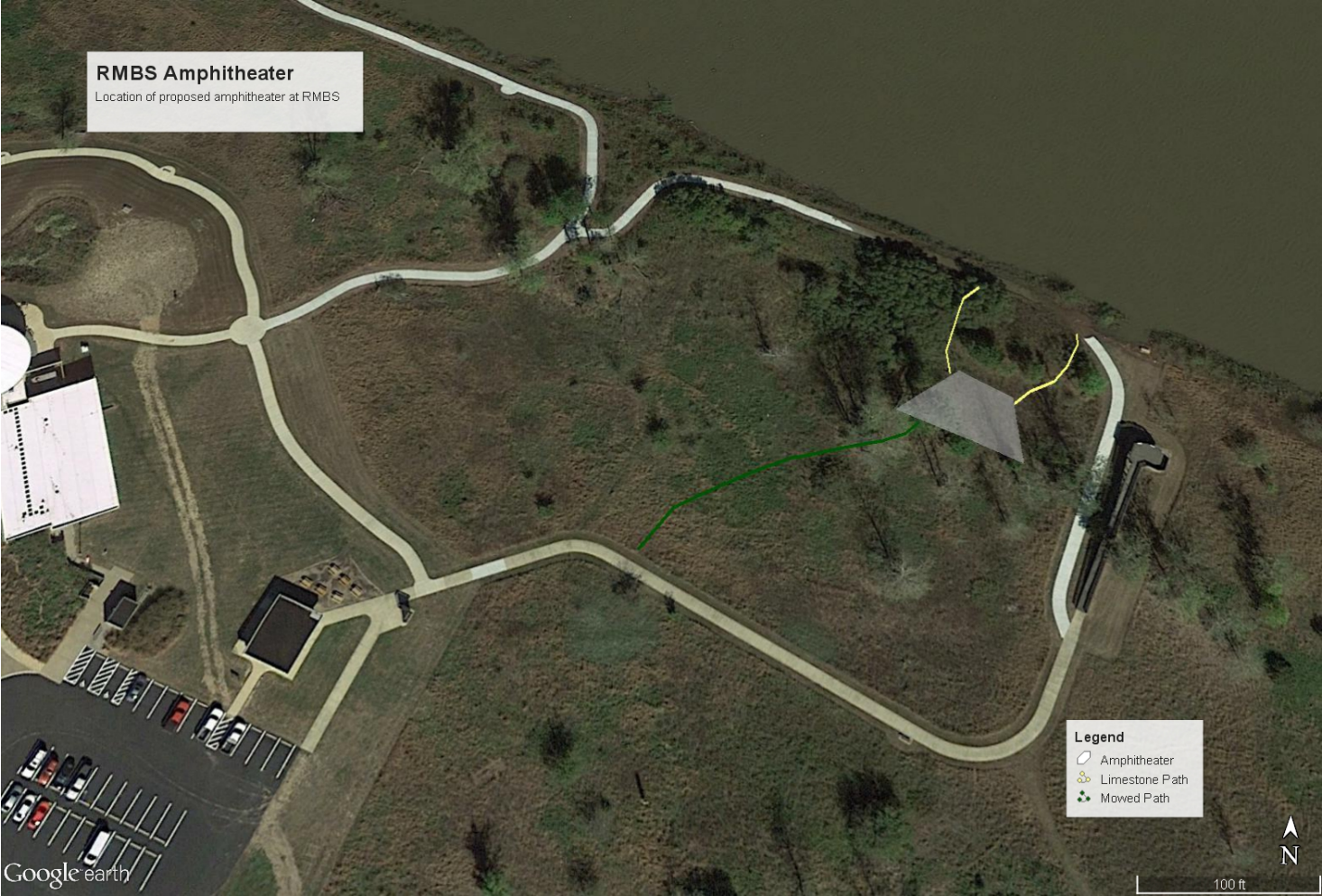
Double click on spreadsheet to access data entry fields and to enter Partner names.

You MUST enter partner names into the spreadsheet:

	Local Corps Office	Handshake Funds	Audubon Center at Riverlands	Central Stone	Wild Ones St. Louis Chapter	Total
Salaries	\$9,646	N/A	\$2,977	\$0	\$0	\$12,623
Travel	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$1,000	\$25,000	\$2,000	\$18,000	\$0	\$46,000
Equipment Use	\$0	\$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	\$1,900	\$0	\$1,221	\$3,121
In-Kind Services	N/A	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total	\$10,646	\$25,000	\$6,877	\$18,000	\$1,221	\$61,744
Share of Total Cost	17.2%	40.5%	11.1%	29.2%	2.0%	100.0%

Explanations: The Rivers Project Office has provided and will continue to provide paid staff to plan and implement this project if selected to receive Handshake Program funding. Native cottonwood and sycamore trees will be purchased by the Rivers Project, totaling \$1,000, to surround the amphitheater and provide shade, protection, and seclusion during programs. Total initial contributions account for 17.5% of the total project cost. The project office will maintain the amphitheater through vegetation maintenance contracts, and improvements, like the proposed canopy, could also be added over time. ACR will purchase the 40 cut boulders for seating valued at \$20,000 from the comparable project completed at Kaskaskia with Handshake Program funding. Paid staff members have provided critical consultation and assistance in the planning of this proposal including several meetings and site visits. They will also provide volunteers to help with native plantings and maintenance of the landscaping after installation. This will account for 11.3% of the total cost. Central Stone has offered a rate of \$2,000 for the stones and delivery at wholesale price. They have also provided free consultation at two different quarries in order to find boulders that will be suitable for this project. This will account for 29.2% of the overall project cost. The St. Louis chapter of Wild Ones will be offering volunteers hours to provide consultation and instillation of the rain garden and native plantings. This will account for 2% of the overall project cost.

Proposed Project Location



Proposed Amphitheater Diagram

