

Handshake Partnership Program Final Project Close-Out Report

1. Fiscal Year Selected as Winning Project: 2021
2. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Soo Locks (St. Marys River)
3. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: LRE
4. Handshake Project Name: Soo Locks Plaza (aka Lock Models Preserve the Past, Present the Future)
5. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: \$0
6. What has been accomplished? Please provide photographs; before, during, and after!: All project funds have been obligated through a contract action through DLA. The historic models have been restored, two of the three cases have been delivered and a third is in the works, we expect to have it onsite before the end of the year.

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$25000
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$54000
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Soo Locks Visitor Center Association	\$91000
2 Sault Area Tourism Bureau	\$2000
3 The Sault Events	\$2500
4 Great Lakes Shipwreck Historical Society	\$1000

6. 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.

I'm not going to lie, or sugar coat it, Handshake Challenge Partnerships are a LOT of work. It takes a lot of meetings with partners, through the entire process, describing the program, seeking their assistance, updating them on the project and sometimes explaining why things are delayed. Internally you have to run the gauntlet of the office of counsel and may even have to educate them on the legality of the program. With funds in-hand you have the challenges of contracting and keeping the project moving. Throughout the process you may experience moments of joy, despair and frustration beyond description but in the end – you are able to complete a project you never could have accomplished without this program. You will forge new connections with your community and all who were involved become invested in the success of your project and your facility. Totally worth it!

7. Handshake Summary:

Please also include a separate 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](#).

I am attaching a project update sheet. We will provide a press release and an article for the partnership newsletter when we have our final action on this project – the unveiling celebration in the early summer of 2025.

Soo Locks Plaza Project Update!

First off – we want to thank all our donors for their support of this project and their patience. This was a huge and complex project and as such, it experienced a few hiccups. Supply chain issues and price changes lead to several delays with contracts modifications and allocation of additional funds to keep the project moving. The departure of the primary points of contact for both USACE the contractor for new positions lead to further delays with no one in place to push the project along.



Restored part of 1893 model.

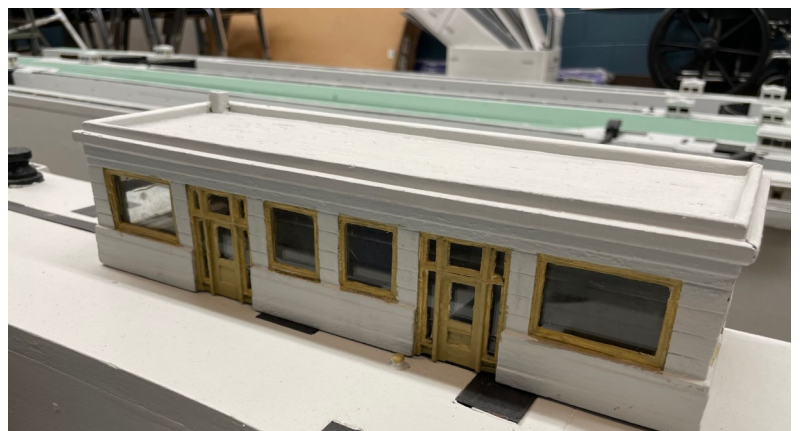


Lower operating gates of 1912 model.

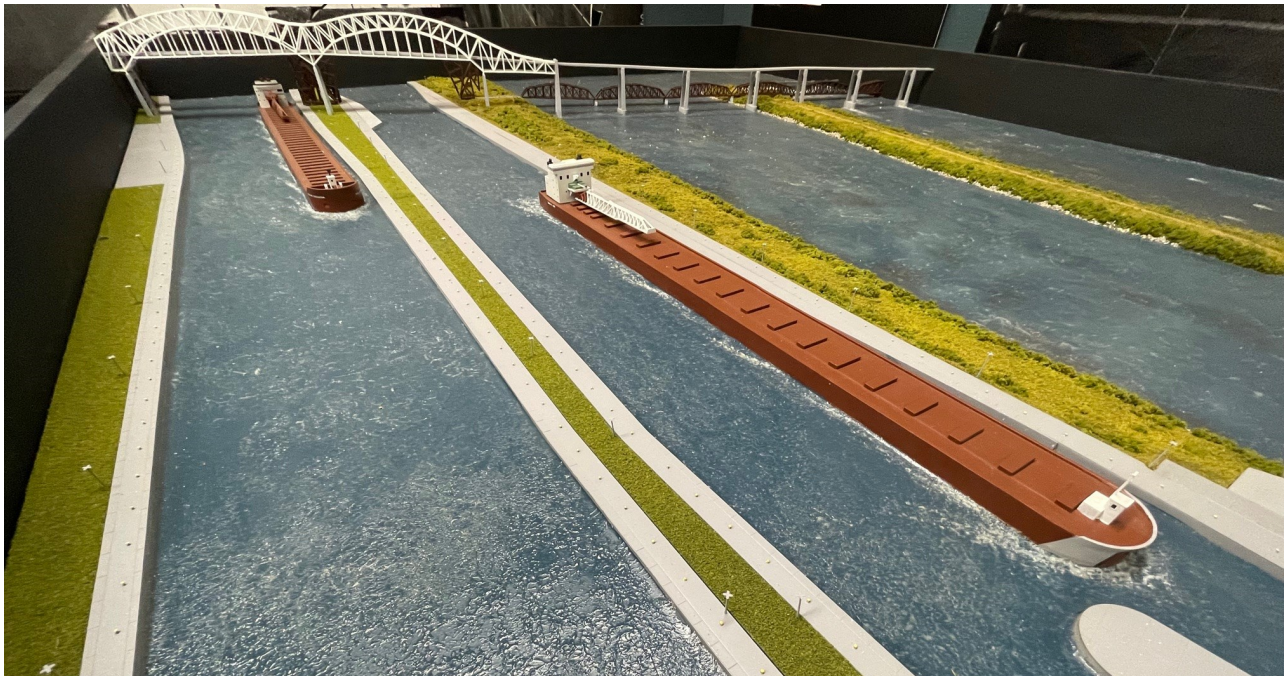
Though progress slowed, the project did not stop. The Soo Locks Visitor Center Association used the surplus funds it raised to take on the cost of restoring the historic models. Meanwhile USACE worked through its process and eventually got the project moving and on track for installation this year.

The restored historic models, have been safely stored in the Visitor Center theater awaiting their new cases. A newly commissioned model, showing the facility as it will with the new lock in place has also been stored in the theater for the past two seasons.

In June, the first of the three cases went into the plaza and had its glass installed. We expect the delivery of the second case and installation of two of the models in July. Delivery of the third and final case and installation of the final historic model should be complete by the



Detail of on operating shelter on the restored 1912 model.



A photo of the new model showing the upper approach canals as they will be in 2030.

end of the summer. The Corps hopes to have interpretive wayside exhibits installed this year as well.

We plan to complete the final piece of the project on June 26, 2025, the day before Engineers Day, with a celebration, officially naming the area “Soo Locks Plaza” and recognizing the many donors that made the project possible. We hope you can join us.



The Admin Building in the new model.



Workmen install glass in the first of three new model cases.

Thank you again for your support and patience and we hope to have more photos to share in the months ahead!