

Handshake Partnership Program Final Project Close-Out Report

1. Fiscal Year Selected as Winning Project: 2022
2. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Clendening Lake
3. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: Huntington-LRD
4. Handshake Project Name: Clendening Wetland Loop Trail and Wildlife Viewing Area
5. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: \$0.00
6. What has been accomplished?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Muskingum Region (MUR) Lower Tuscarawas (LT) Area was awarded a Handshake Agreement in FY2022. The Handshake included completion of a 1.1-mile wetland loop trail that takes visitors around the majority of the USACE property. The trail crosses the wetland in two locations via floating boardwalks and crosses through a new 0.75-acre pollinator field. Interpretive signs highlight different ecosystems and habitats throughout the property, and a permanent spotting scope allows visitors to overlook an osprey nesting platform, wetland, and Clendening Lake.

Our partners assisted with various portions of this project. The Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District donated floating boardwalks, American Electric Power installed an Osprey platform, and Ohio Prairie Nursery donated native seed for the pollinator field. Individuals from the Shenandoah K-8 school assisted with installation of wildlife shelters that were provided to us by the Ohio Bluebird Society, and the local YMCA camp on Clendening Lake allowed these students to stay in a cabin free of charge. Individuals from the Canton Audubon Society spent several days birdwatching and reporting their observations (> 90 species) on eBird to promote the site as a birdwatching destination. The Buckeye Trail Association and National Park Service North Country Trail Association provided trail development expertise and technical advice through phone calls and a site visit. Although not an official partner in our application, the Corps Foundation also provided \$4,300 that was used to help pay for interpretive signs

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$25,000
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$12,500
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District	\$7000
2 American Electric power	\$5300
3 Canton Audubon Society	\$1147
4 Ohio Bluebird Society	\$500
5 Buckeye Trail Association	\$713
6 North Country Trail Association	\$428
7 YMCA	\$1000
8 Shenandoah K-8	\$1142
9 Ohio Prairie Nursery	\$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.

This Handshake agreement was the first awarded to the Muskingum region of the Huntington District, so the program was new to our staff. Although this was the first time working on a Handshake application, we found the directions straight forward and easy to follow. Any questions we had were quickly answered by Mike McCoy or Philip Manhart. One area to consider adjusting is communication of funding distribution. The money was available months before I was notified. Overall, this is a great program and I plan on applying for it again soon.

7. Handshake Summary:

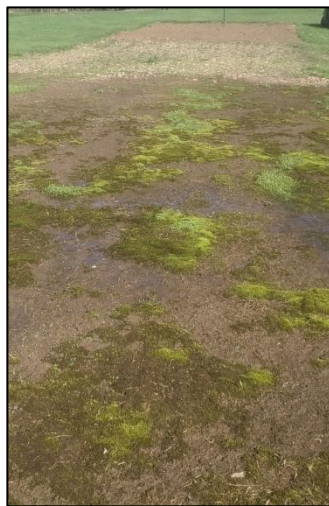
Please also include a separate newspaper type article describing the project and the benefit to the Corps of Engineers and to the public as a result of this partnership project. Examples can be found on the gateway under [Handshake Success Stories](#).

Included below.

Boardwalk Crossings



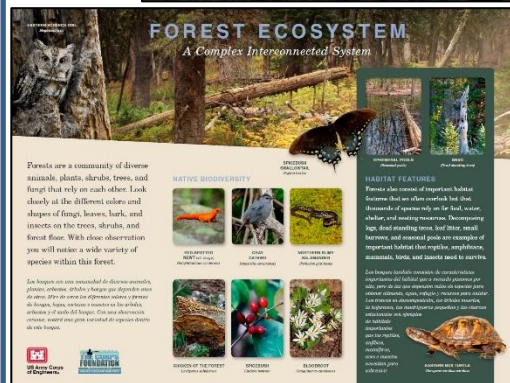
Pollinator Field



Nesting Structures



Interpretive Signs





US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Clendening Wetland Loop Trail and Wildlife Viewing Area Handshake Agreement (2022 – 2023)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and our partners recognize the importance of outdoor recreation and sound land management. As an owner of public lands, it is important to improve the natural resources on USACE property. Converting areas of mowed lawn, not being used for recreation or operations, into suitable wildlife habitat decreases mowing costs and burning fossil fuels. It increases biodiversity including pollinator populations we rely on for food production and sequesters carbon. Creating artificial habitat, such as nesting structures and brush piles, is important to supplement natural features in altered environments to improve survival, growth, reproduction, and abundance of wildlife. The USACE and partners installed a pollinator field, several nest boxes, an Osprey platform, interpretive signs, spotting scope, and created several areas of artificial habitat including decomposing log piles, and rock, sand, and brush piles. Additionally, providing opportunities for healthy outdoor exercise where the USACE manages public lands increases a positive relationship within those communities. The USACE developed a loop trail that crosses a wetland in two locations using floating boardwalks donated by the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District and refurbished by the Wills Creek maintenance staff. The Canton Audubon spent several days birding and reporting their observations (> 90 species) on eBird to promote the location as a birdwatching destination and USACE staff promoted the new trail at the Harrison County fair. Photos Left to Right: Silver-spotted skipper on wild bergamot, Eastern kingbird, South



boardwalk. Credit: S. Hatfield.