

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
Fiscal Year 2024  
Handshake Program Application**

**Please review instructions before completing application!**

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

District / Division:**MVS/MVD**

Handshake Proposal Title: **Rend Lake Enhancement of the Multi-Use Trails**

Corps POC Name:**Breanna Whitley**

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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 2023 or review a 2023 Handshake webinar on the Gateway?  Yes  No
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**B. Handshake Funding Request (maximum \$25,000): 25,000**

**C. Corps Foundation Bonus Request: (maximum \$5,000): 5,000**

Separate bonus funding provided by the Corps Foundation for a selected Handshake Project. Please do not include bonus funds on your overall financial spreadsheet below. Provide an explanation of how the funds will be used in the Corps Foundation Bonus section.

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

This lake/river project has never received Handshake funding. (100pts)

This lake/river project has not received Handshake funding in the past 5 years (FY 19-23 funding years). (50 pts)

This partnership project will either result in overall O&M cost savings or no net long-term O&M gain. It reduces program liabilities, consolidates or eliminates redundant/inefficient recreation assets or facilities (Up to 200 pts)

**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:**

The Rend Lake project is a destination for outdoor users of all interests with the attraction of the multi-use trail system. The 21 miles of accessible trails known as the Rend Lake Bike Trails (RLBT) are classified as a National Recreation Trail system and are heavily utilized as a multi-purpose recreation feature. The Rend Lake Mountain Bike Trails (RLMBT) include 6 miles of off-road trails that connect to the RLBT and are maintained through a partnership with the Rend Lake Bike Club. Both trail systems at Rend Lake are favored by runners, hikers, cyclists, and more. Recently, with the increased popularity of electric bikes, the trails have seen an increase in usage from new user groups.

Along with sustained popularity, the Rend Lake Project anticipates increased usage of the trails as regional trail connectivity plans develop. Specifically, the Cities of Benton and Mt. Vernon are developing master bicycle plans that would connect to the RLBT. Additionally, the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is funding a project along IL Hwy 154 on USACE property that connects existing sections of Rend Lake trails. This expansion is a \$6.5M project that the IDOT will be providing as a contribution to USACE. To improve visitor safety and anticipate increased usage from regional expansion, the Rend Lake team proposes the addition of (1) emergency bike stations along the existing RLBT, (2) wayfinding/interpretive signage, and (3) an outdoor water fountain.

**Handshake Funding Cost Break Down:**

The RLBT system is an attraction for many of the 1.6 million visitors of Rend Lake.

With sustained utilization, introduction of e-bikes, and regional trail expansion, we anticipate a large increase in trail usage, by both experienced and novice riders. To improve safety and continue providing opportunities for our users, funding would be used to purchase the following:

3 Deluxe Bike Repair Stations: \$7,000.00

3 Bike Pumps with Gauges: \$2,400

1 Outdoor Two-level Drinking Fountain: \$6,700

Wayfinding Display outside the Rend Lake Visitor Center: \$3,000

-Fabrication of 4'x6' Max-metal sign with laminate: \$2,100

-Materials (sign posts, hardware, concrete): \$900

Wayfinding Signage along COE roadways between existing Bike Trail: \$3,400

-Fabrication of (5) 2'x2' Max-metal signs with laminate: \$1,200

-Materials (sign posts, hardware, concrete): \$2,200

Update Trail brochures: \$2,500

-Printing (10,000 copies): \$2,500

Total: 25,000

**O&M Impacts:**

The 21 miles of multi-use trail is constructed of concrete (15 miles) and gravel (6 miles). The sections on leased property are maintained by those agencies (Rend Lake Conservancy District, IDNR, RLC) and USACE sections are maintained through the Volunteer Program. All new sections constructed by IDOT on USACE property will be concrete, with litter and debris removal provided by the Rend Lake Volunteers. IDOT will continue to maintain the foundation of the trail. The off-road (mountain bike trail) portion is maintained by the Rend Lake Bike Club through a Memorandum of Understanding. The wayfinding signage will be fabricated with MAXMETAL, an aluminum composite material bonded to a solid polyethylene core. It is more durable than

other materials, resists scratching, and provides long-term durability and minimal maintenance. The outdoor water fountain is rated for outdoor use, is vandal resistant, and corrosion resistant. The water fountain will be placed outside the Visitor Center where there are existing water lines. The bike repair stations are manufactured with welded steel and cast aluminium that are impact and UV resistant. Overall, the enhancements to the bike trail reduce program liability by enhancing visitor safety.

**Partnership Value:**

The proposed enhancements to the multi-use trails at Rend Lake are enthusiastically supported by the community. In fact, these improvements are in part a response to trail connectivity work happening in the Rend Lake area and throughout Southern Illinois. Statewide, the IDOT is facilitating an Active Transportation Plan with the aim to improve walking and biking infrastructure throughout the state. Locally, IDOT has committed to constructing a 10 ft. wide concrete multi-use path along IL 154, on USACE managed lands, across Rend Lake from Fitzgerald Park Drive to Larry Foster Parkway in 2026-2027. Construction costs are estimated at \$6.5M and engineering costs are estimated at \$1M. This contribution would connect the RLBT section from the North Marcum Recreation Area (USACE) to Wayne Fitzgerald State Park (IDNR) and improve trail connectivity at Rend Lake. The Greater Egypt Regional Planning & Development Commission (Greater Egypt) has funded (\$120,000) Transportation Planning Studies for the City of Benton and City of Mt. Vernon. The focus of these studies is to develop bicycle master plans for the communities. Both the Benton and Mt. Vernon plans identify that their proposed trails should connect to the existing bicycle infrastructure at Rend Lake. The contributions from the cities, would connect the 1.6 million visitors of Rend Lake to the local communities and residents of the local communities to Rend Lake. While IDOT and Greater Egypt are not contributing to the bike trail enhancements presently on USACE managed lands, their contributions would expand the RLBT system, improve user opportunities, and enhance visitation to Rend Lake. The Cities of Benton and Mt. Vernon, Greater Egypt, and IDOT will be strategic partners for long-term transportation/trail connectivity plans that include connection to the RLBT.

The Rend Lake Conservancy District (RLCD), Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and Rend Lake College (RLC) are key management partners of the Rend Lake Project. These partners manage portions of the existing RLBT, and will provide consultation during this phase of trail enhancements.

The Rend Lake Area Tourism Council (RLATC) is also a key management partner that since their inception, has provided professional and volunteer services to the USACE totaling near \$2M. This project will also benefit from their services as the RLATC has agreed to provide all the graphic design work for the wayfinding/interpretive panels for a contribution worth \$7,400. AshBeas Rend Lake E-Bike Rental is a new business in the Rend Lake Area that provides e-bike rentals and delivery to the Rend Lake Area. AshBeas is an enthusiastic supporter of the bike trail enhancements and has agreed to donate the use of e-bikes for an interpretative program on the RLBT. The Rend Lake Bike Club (RLBC) has been maintaining the RLMBT since their inception. In FY22, the RLBC contributed \$6,417 in partner value towards trail maintenance. The RLBC will continue to be an important trail partner moving forward. The River to River (R2R) Runners are another important trail partner, who contributed to the creation of the RLMBT. As part of the project, the R2R Runners will plan and execute a marathon that will draw hundreds of outdoor users to Rend Lake.

**Recreational Value:**

The Rend Lake Bike Trail supports a diverse array of user groups including hikers, runners, cyclists, and more. Additionally, with the increasing popularity of e-bikes, people of all ability levels are now able to access the outdoors in ways that were not before possible. For visitors of Rend Lake and people in the surrounding communities of Franklin/Jefferson counties, the closest paved bike trail is 50 miles away and the closest mountain bike trail is 30 miles away. Various community groups already utilize the trail system for special events such as marathons, 5Ks, and team building challenges. As a multi-purpose trail, the trail system supports three (hiking, running, biking) of the top five outdoor recreation “gateway activities,” which are defined as activities that serve as launchpads to other outdoor activities. Trends in the outdoor industry project positive growth in these activities; in 2022 growth in all biking categories increased by 22.9%. The RLBT are a major recreational feature at Rend Lake, with the addition of emergency bike stations and improved signage, both novice and experienced users will feel empowered to use the trails.

**Environmental Stewardship Value:**

The multi-use trail system at Rend Lake offers access to a diversity of habitat types (bottomland forest, wetlands, prairies) as well as access to various recreational activities such as running, hiking, watching wildlife, geocaching, hunting, and more. Established trail systems and continued improvement of trails are fundamental to conservation of public lands. Well defined trail systems prevent user-created trails and minimize environmental impact. Additionally, trails are a means to increase users' awareness of the environment and empower them to act as stewards of public lands. After the construction of the IDOT trail sections, prairie habitat will be planted and maintained by IDOT between the roadway and trail to promote pollinator diversity. The continued use and maintenance of the RLMBT involves removal of invasive plant species such as autumn olive, bush honeysuckle, Japanese stilt grass, and others.

#### **Communication & Education Value:**

Communication is an integral component of this project. Members of the local communities and current users have provided enthusiastic support for improving the existing trail system at Rend Lake. Specifically, during the 2018 Rend Lake Master Plan update, users noted the need for new recreational opportunities and thus the first phase of the RLMBT began. Today, the Rend Lake team continues to consider visitor input and many users have requested the enhancements proposed in this application.

Through interpretive/wayfinding signage we will be able to indirectly connect to new demographics and promote bike safety as well as outdoor recreation. The Rend Lake interpretive team also plans to integrate more guided hikes and interpretive programs on the trail system in partnership with AshBeas Rend Lake E-Bike Rentals.

#### **Supporting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access Goals:**

The 2022 and 2023 Outdoor Participation Trends Reports highlight improvements and disparities in outdoor recreation for various user groups. While the outdoor recreation participant base is less diverse than the overall population, the percentage of people of color (Hispanic and African American/Black) participating in outdoor recreation has increased over the past 3 years. Specifically, running, hiking, and biking are the top recreational activities of choice for these user groups. With the addition of wayfinding signage and emergency bike stations, more people of diverse backgrounds and of various experience levels may feel more comfortable using the existing trail system.

Another key finding in the recent reports is that a significantly higher percentage of seniors are participating in outdoor recreation. In 2022, the senior participation rate hit a record high of 35%. Both the paved and off-road multi-uses trails provide access for low impact activities such as walking and hiking, both popular activities for aging user groups. A unique component of this project is the regional connection aspect. The connection of the Rend Lake trail system to the local communities will enable people without transportation to access the outdoors and develop a new connection to nature and thus improve well-being in our local communities.

#### **Corps Foundation Bonus Cost Break Down:**

The Corps Foundation Bonus would be used to purchase bike and water safety stencils for use on the existing RLBT. The stencils would be placed and maintained by the volunteer program. The stencils would promote safety such as wearing your helmet and also point trail users to our rest stops which include our shower houses and water stations.

- 48" x 48" Custom Safety Stencils (20): \$4,500

- Miscellaneous Paint for Stencils: \$500

#### **Conclusion:**

The multi-use trail system at Rend Lake has been and will continue to be an important recreational feature for various outdoor user groups. As progress continues toward more regional trail connectivity, the RLBT will not only be an important recreational feature, but also an important active transportation feature for visitors and local community members. If awarded the handshake funds, the RLBT will be safer, more inclusive, and connect more people to the outdoors.

**NOTE:** To show foresight, commitment, and planning, it is REQUIRED to include maps/pictures/plans/specs as part of your overall package. Failure to include supporting attachments will result in points deductions.

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

**You MUST enter partner names into the spreadsheet:**

	<b>Local Corps Office</b>	<b>Handshake Funds</b>	<b>IDNR</b>	<b>RLC</b>	<b>RLCD</b>	<b>RLATC</b>
Salaries	\$12,000	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	N/A	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$0	\$25,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
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	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
In-Kind Services	N/A	N/A	\$3,520	\$3,840	\$6,160	\$7,400
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$12,000</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>	<b>\$3,520</b>	<b>\$3,840</b>	<b>\$6,160</b>	<b>\$7,400</b>
<b>Share of Total Cost</b>	17.3%	36.1%	5.1%	5.5%	8.9%	10.7%
	53.4%					

	<b>AshBeas Bike Rentals</b>	<b>Rend Lake Bike Club</b>	<b>River to River Runners</b>			
Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Equipment Use	\$1,350	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Funds Contributed	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	\$0	\$2,544	\$7,500	\$0	\$0	\$0
In-Kind Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,350</b>	<b>\$2,544</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
<b>Share of Total Cost</b>	1.9%	3.7%	10.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0

	<b>Partner 11</b>	<b>Partner 12</b>	<b>Partner 13</b>	<b>Partner 14</b>	<b>Partner 15</b>	<b>Total</b>
Salaries	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$12,000
Travel	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Materials and Supplies	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$25,000
Equipment Use	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350
Funds Contributed	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Personal Property	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Volunteer	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,044
In-Kind Services	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$20,920
Other (explain below)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$69,314</b>
<b>Share of Total Cost</b>	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100%

**Explanations:**

USACE Rend Lake Project funds will cover expenses related to installation of the outdoor water fountain, emergency bike repair stations, and wayfinding panels.

-Salaries for overseeing bike trail enhancement project: **\$5,000**

-Salaries for installation of water fountain, repair stations, and panels: **\$7,000**

**Total: \$12,000**

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Handshake Funds will cover the cost of following supplies and materials:

3 Deluxe Bike Repair Stations: \$7,000.00

3 Bike Pumps with Gauges: \$2,400

1 Outdoor Two-level Drinking Fountain: \$6,700

Wayfinding Display outside the Rend Lake Visitor Center: \$3,000

-Fabrication of 4'x6' Max-metal sign with laminate: \$2,100

-Materials (sign posts, hardware, concrete): \$900

Wayfinding Signage along COE roadways between existing Bike Trail: \$3,400

-Fabrication of (5) 2'x2' Max-metal signs with laminate: \$1,200

-Materials (sign posts, hardware, concrete): \$2,200

Update Trail brochures: \$2,500

-Printing (10,000 copies): \$2,500

**Total: 25,000**

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Partner funds will be used to (1) plan RLBT improvements (2) design wayfinding/interpretative panels, and (3) execute a special event on the RLBT.

-Rend Lake Conservancy District:

-Professional services for consultation and planning for existing RLBT improvements and regional connectivity: **\$6,160**

-Illinois Department of Natural Resources (Wayne Fitzgerrell State Park, Site Superintendent)

-Professional services for consultation and planning for existing RLBT improvements and regional connectivity: **\$3,520**

-Rend Lake College

-Professional services for consultation and planning for existing RLBT improvements and regional connectivity: **\$3,840**

-Rend Lake Area Tourism Council

-Graphic design work for wayfinding/interpretative signage that will lead riders on and between marked trail sections; and brochure updates: **\$7,400**

-AshBeas Rend Lake E-Bike Rentals

-Use of electric bikes for interpretative programming on RLBT: **\$1,350**

-Rend Lake Bike Club

-Continued maintenance of Rend Lake Mountain Bike Trails: **\$2,544**

-River to River Runners

-Planning and execution of Rend Lake Marathon on the Rend Lake Bike Trail: **\$7,500**

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**Total: \$32,314**

Figure 1. Construction of multi-use path across IL HWY 154 from Fitzgerald Park Drive to Larry Foster Parkway. Construction is estimated to occur in 2026-2027. Map provided by Illinois Department of Transportation. While this work is not directly related to the Handshake application, it is part of the overall RLBT enhancement and expansion plans. IDOT is expanding the causeway to add this section of bike trail on USACE managed lands, an estimated value of \$7.5M. IDOT will construct and provide future maintenance on the trail foundation. After construction, USACE will only have to provide minor repairs to this concrete trail section and provide trail clean up through the Volunteer Program. Although this does increase O&M costs, the value far outweighs the added maintenance.

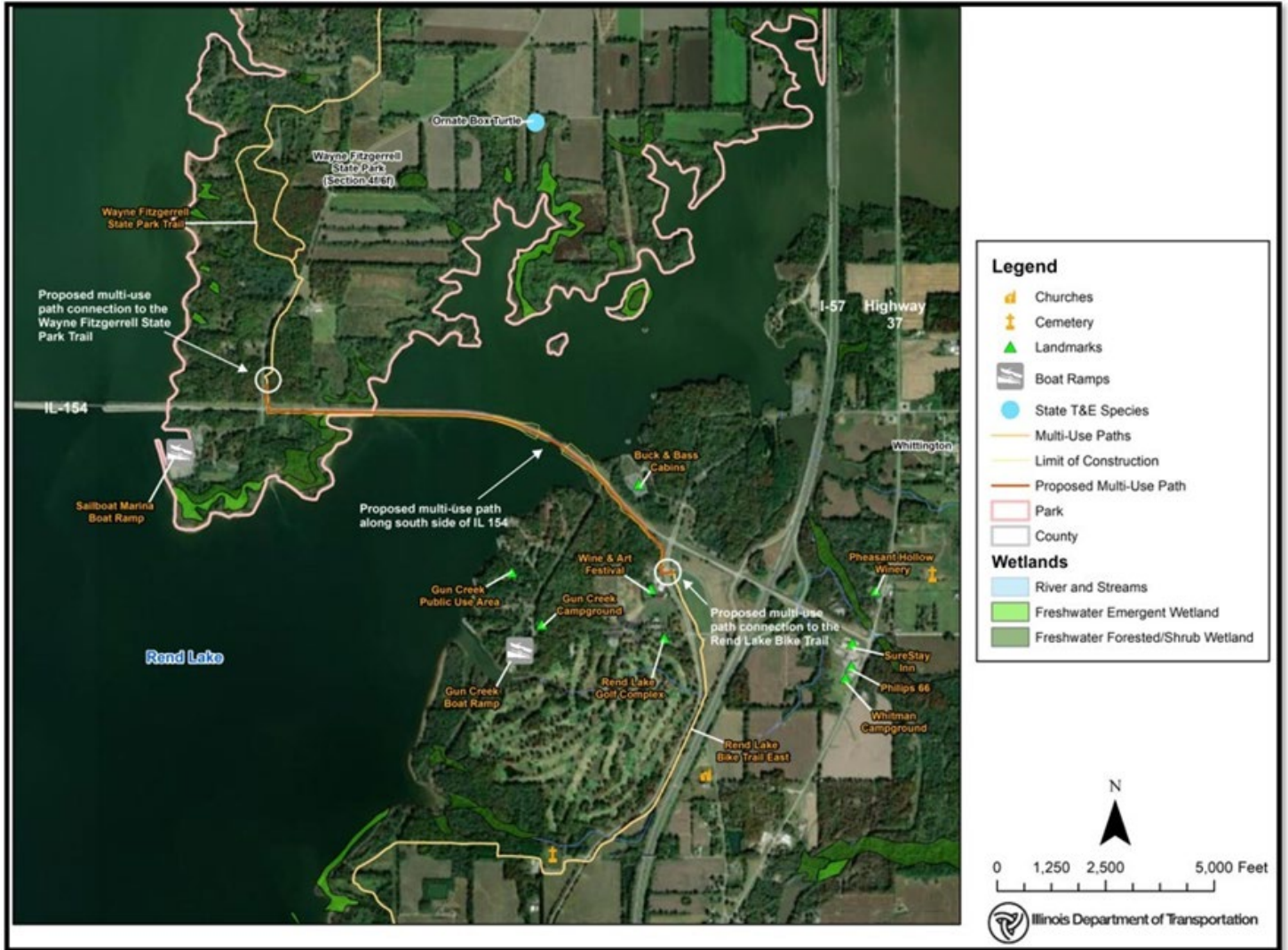




Figure 2. Overview of Benton Bike Master Plan Brochure, highlighting the inclusion of connecting to Rend Lake Bike Trails.



Figure 3. Map of the current Rend Lake Bike Trails. Note the yellow proposed section of the trail indicates expansion opportunities. The section between number 4 and 5 is the IDOT funded project mentioned in the proposal.





Figure 4. Two-level drinking fountain to accommodate humans and their pets.



**316 STAINLESS STEEL**  
Corrosion-resistant base material provides the ultimate protection from the elements.

**VANDAL-RESISTANT**  
Bubblers are a one-piece, chrome plated hood guard that prevents contamination from users, airborne deposits, and tampering.

**HEAVY-GAUGE CONSTRUCTION**  
Made with tamper-resistant screws that withstand stains and corrosion.

**ELKAY OUTDOOR EZH2O BOTTLE FILLING STATION BI-LEVEL PEDESTAL WITH PET STATION**  
ADA Compliant, Non-Filtered, Non-Refrigerated

Outdoor tubular drinking fountains and bottle filling stations are ideal for outdoor applications including educational campuses, recreational areas, office complex grounds, golf courses and parks.

**ELKAY**

Figure 5. Deluxe Bike Repair Station with Bike Pump



Figure 6. Example of wayfinding panels

