

Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2019 Recipients

1. **Name of Corps Project/Lake:** Francis E. Walter Dam
2. **District / Division of Corps Project/Lake:** Philadelphia/North Atlantic
3. **Handshake Project Name:** Borrow Area Habitat Completion
4. **Amount of Handshake Funds remaining:** \$0.00
5. **What has been accomplished?** Please provide photographs; before, during, and after!:
Please see attached

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$6500.00
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$2425.00
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Pheasants Forever Chapter 803	\$5670.00
2 Pheasants Afield	\$1185.00
3 RD Kieper Excavating	\$3750.00
4	\$
5	\$
6	\$
7	\$
8	\$
9	\$
10	\$

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.

See below

7. Handshake Summary:

WHITE HAVEN, PA – The Francis E. Walter Dam, owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was constructed approximately 60 years ago. During the construction process, millions of cubic yards of sediment and rock were excavated from two nearby borrow areas to build the earthen embankment of the dam. For the past 11 years, the Army Corps, Pheasants Forever Chapter 803, and other non-profit organizations have worked to reclaim and

restore these borrow areas by removing invasive species and planting native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat. These environmental stewardship activities have been made possible with funding from the USACE Handshake Program and numerous hours of manual labor by volunteers and the F.E. Walter Dam staff. “These borrow areas were stripped down to bedrock and were essentially a barren landscape,” said Dave Williams, the Northern Area Facilities Manager for the USACE Philadelphia District. “During the past 11 years, we’ve made significant progress in creating and maintaining habitat in these areas.” In 2018 and 2019, the Army Corps and partners continued ongoing efforts to restore sections of a 26-acre borrow area through funding from the 2019 Handshake Program. Pheasants Forever Chapter 803 of Northeastern Pennsylvania has been a key partner throughout the process.



Stock piling Topsoil



Topsoil Ready to be spread



Topsoil ready to be spread



Topsoil starting to be spread



Spreading Topsoil



Spreading Complete, food plot ready for planting



Starting to spout



Emergence

Army Corps conducts environmental restoration through Handshake Program

By **Steve Rochette**
USACE PHILADELPHIA DISTRICT
Published Oct. 1, 2019



Volunteers (left to right) Jake Turcan, John Stubeda, Steve Seyfert, John Fushus, Ross Piazza, Christopher Traver, Chris Traver, and USACE Philadelphia District Northern Area Facilities Manager Dave Williams worked to restore a section of a borrow area by removing invasive species and planting native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat.



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A satellite image from 2008 shows a barren landscape at a borrow area that was excavated for the construction of the embankment of the Francis E. Walter Dam. For the past 11 years, the Army Corps and partners have worked to restore these borrow areas.



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A satellite image from 2018 shows significant habitat improvement at a borrow area that was excavated for the construction of the embankment of the Francis E. Walter Dam. For the past 11 years, the Army Corps and partners have worked to restore these borrow areas.



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Volunteers clear white birch and other invasive plant species from the borrow areas at the Francis E. Walter Dam as part of restoration efforts. For the past 11 years, the Army Corps and partners have worked to restore these borrow areas by removing invasive species and planting native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat.



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A manure spreader was used to spread topsoil at the Francis E. Walter Dam as part of environmental restoration efforts. For the past 11 years, the Army Corps and partners have worked to restore areas that were excavated during the construction of the dam more than 60 years ago. Partners have removed invasive species and planted native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat.

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WHITE HAVEN, PA – The Francis E. Walter Dam, owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, was constructed approximately 60 years ago. During the construction process, millions of cubic yards of sediment and rock were excavated from two nearby borrow areas to build the earthen embankment of the dam.

For the past 11 years, the Army Corps, Pheasants Forever Chapter 803, and other non-profit organizations have worked to reclaim and restore these borrow areas by removing invasive species and planting native and pollinator plant species that enhance wildlife habitat.

These environmental stewardship activities have been made possible with funding from the USACE Handshake Program and numerous hours of manual labor by volunteers and the F.E. Walter Dam staff.

"These borrow areas were stripped down to bedrock and were essentially a barren landscape," said Dave Williams, the Northern Area Facilities Manager for the USACE Philadelphia District. "During the past 11 years, we've made significant progress in creating and maintaining habitat in these areas."

In 2018 and 2019, the Army Corps and partners continued ongoing efforts to restore sections of a 26-acre borrow area through funding from the 2019 Handshake Program.

Partners cleared invasive plant species; placed topsoil, lime and fertilizer; and planted a food plot with brassica, clover, oats, turnips and other tubers. Previous efforts include planting warm season grasses to provide adequate cover for wildlife and creating several check dams in suitable areas to retain a year round water supply.

Pheasants Forever Chapter 803 of Northeastern Pennsylvania has been a key partner throughout the process.

Ross Piazza, a Pheasants Forever partner, said the concept started with the realization that there was ample land that could serve as suitable habitat. Each year, the Army Corps and partners have tried to improve additional areas in the previously barren landscape.

The results have been remarkable.

"This place has been transformed as far as habitat," said Ross Piazza. "Many different species have benefitted, but the area has become a mecca for pheasant hunting."

The F.E. Walter Dam staff also works with Pheasants Afield, another non-profit organization. Each year, the group rears approximately 300 day-old pheasant hatchlings on the property to supplement the Pennsylvania Game Commission's stocking program.

Since 2008, Pheasants Forever in cooperation with the Army Corps, has held an annual Youth Hunt on F.E. Walter Dam property. The event focuses on educating adolescents on firearm safety, proper hunting techniques, and conservation. After the event, participants have a cookout at a nearby pavilion built by F.E. Walter Dam staff.

"We milled nearby trees and built this pavilion with lumber from the project," said Dam Operator Jared Quinn.

Quinn has worked at the dam for the past seven years, but grew up nearby and has been coming to the project area to fish and hunt for most of his life. He said the changes and transformation to the borrow areas have been impressive.

The initiative with Pheasants Forever is one of several environmental stewardship programs for the staff at F.E. Walter Dam. They have worked with the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Pennsylvania Game Commission, Wild Turkey Federation, American Chestnut Tree Foundation, and Quality Deer Management Association on a variety of efforts to improve habitat and manage the health of the forest.

"It's great to have partners – we keep each other on track with the various initiatives," said Dave Williams. "It's been a pleasure to work with all of them."

About Francis E. Walter Dam

The Francis E. Walter Dam, constructed in 1961, has prevented more than \$220 million in flood damages to the Lehigh River Valley. The dam was built for flood risk management, but recreation became a Congressionally-authorized purpose in 1988. Since 2005, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and partners have employed a collaborative approach to managing flows out of the Francis E. Walter Dam into the Lehigh River for whitewater rafting and fishing. The project includes approximately 1800 acres of managed federal property.

About the USACE Handshake Program

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Handshake Program, developed in 2004, offers a source of seed money to USACE installations or facilities for worthwhile partnership projects. The intent of this program is to initiate new, or enhance existing recreation and natural resources management opportunities. In addition, this funding is intended to encourage local organizations to partner with USACE to construct, operate, and/or maintain local partnering projects.

About Pheasants Forever

Pheasants Forever is dedicated to the conservation of pheasants, quail and other wildlife through habitat improvements, public awareness, education, and land management policies and programs.

<https://www.nap.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Stories/Article/1975989/army-corps-conducts-environmental-restoration-through-handshake-program/>