

## Handshake Partnership Program Final Project Close-Out Report

1. Fiscal Year Selected as Winning Project: FY21
2. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Barren River Lake
3. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: LRL/LRD
4. Handshake Project Name: Highlander Trail System
5. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: \$0
6. What has been accomplished?

The FY21 Handshake Partnership grant received by Barren River Lake funded the construction of the War Hammer Loop of Highlander Trail. This new Recreation Area came from a lease relinquishment from the KY Department of Parks in 2018. Once the land was back under Corps management, SouthWest KY Mountain Bike Association (SWKyMBA) reached out with interest in bringing a new trail to the 140 acres that comprised the old State Park Picnic Area on the east side of US Route 31-E. The MOU that already existed with SWKyMBA was amended to include this new Recreation area and then work began to detail flag the trail corridor. SWKyMBA worked with professional trail builder Ed Sutton and over the course of a few days laid out 9 miles of Mt. Bike optimized multi-use trail (Pic-1). The trail corridor was mapped with GPS and then sent to our Planning Division to obtain all the cultural and environmental clearances.



**Pic-1**

Once the trail was cleared to move forward with construction, SWKyMBA began to work on the development of the trail with volunteer labor. Approximately 1 mile of the trail had been completed when the project began working with SWKyMBA, Friends of Barren River Lake



and Park, Cave Country Trails, and Barren County Evening Lions Club to apply for a Handshake Grant during the FY21 application cycle. Once we received notification of being selected for the Handshake Grant, we began to write the specifications to solicit for a professional trail builder to construct the remaining 3 miles of trail to complete War Hammer Loop. The contract was awarded to Parsons Construction Services, Inc and work began on March 21, 2022. Parsons Construction worked on roughing in the 3 miles of trail with the finish work being completed by volunteer labor through SWKyMBA. Parsons completed their portion of the contract work on June 6, 2022. (Pics 2-6).



Pic-2





Pic-3





Pic-4





Pic-5





Pic-6



Once the trail construction contract was complete, the work turned to a 100% volunteer labor workforce that was very passionate about seeing this trail come to fruition. Over the course of the next 12 months, a multitude of trail workdays were planned and attended by numerous volunteers. They were able to complete all of the hand tool finish work that was needed to get War Hammer Loop ready for the Grand Opening celebration. The total volunteer hours that were contributed to the completion of this trail during the Handshake period was 1,339 hours (Pics 7-13). Without the efforts of our volunteers from SWKyMBA, this trail would not have been possible.



Pic-7





Pic-8





Pic-9





Pic-10

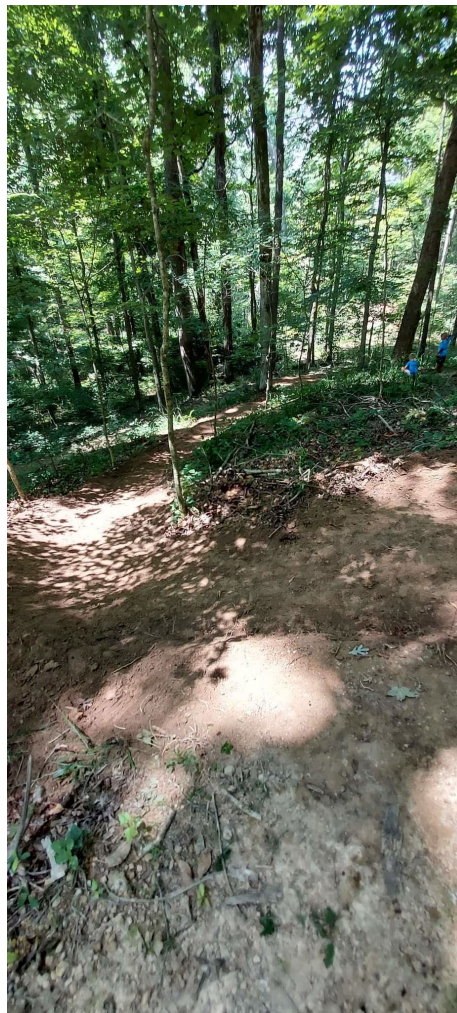


Pic-11





Pic-12



Pic-13



The pièce de resistance for this Handshake Grant was the Highlander Grand Opening and Trailfest that occurred on August 19, 2023. The Trailfest is the annual fundraiser for SWKyMBA and was held at Highlander this year to celebrate the Grand Opening of War Hammer Loop. There was a total of 183 Mt. Bike and Trail Running enthusiasts that participated in the Trailfest races (Pics 14-21). All total over 200 people attended the event. The trail has received much praise from the trail users that have been on it thus far. The trailhead signage was provided by our Friends of Barren River Lake and Park as their contribution to the Handshake Grant. We will now turn our sites on beginning the trail development of the second loop (Bagpipe Burner Loop) that will be an additional 4 miles of trail at Highlander.



Pic-14





Pic-15



Pic-16





Pic-17



Pic-18





Pic-19



Pic-20





Pic-21

	<b>Total</b>
<b>Handshake Program Funding Amount</b>	\$25,000
<b>Local Corps Office Funds</b> (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$11,500
<b>Partner's Contributions</b> (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
<b>Partners Name</b>	<b>Total Value of Contributions</b>
1 SouthWest KY Mountain Bike Association	\$59,867.68
2 Friends of Barren River Lake & Park	\$1,975.00
3 Cave Country Trails	\$0
4 Barren County Evening Lions Club	\$0
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.

- This program is a tremendous resource to help fund partnership projects that we lack the funding to accomplish through our typical business lines. It is a great way to develop new partnerships and further strengthen existing ones. We look forward to utilizing this program again in the near future for the development of Bagpipe Burner Loop.

## **7. Handshake Summary: See separate news release.**





# NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:  
September 4, 2023

Contact:  
Daniel R. Taylor  
daniel.r.taylor@usace.army.mil  
270-646-2055

## Barren River Lake, KY-

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### **FY21 Barren River Lake Handshake Partnership Completion**

In 2021 Barren River Lake (BRL) in partnership with SouthWest Kentucky Mountain Bike Association (SWKyMBA) and the Friends of Barren River Lake and Park, applied for a Corps of Engineers Handshake Grant. The grant request was for funding to construct a new multi-use Mt. Bike/Hike trail at BRL. The work on the trail had already begun through volunteer efforts by SWKyMBA, with almost a mile of the 4.5-mile War Hammer Loop completed. In January of 2021, the project was notified of being selected for a \$25,000 grant to fund the completion of War Hammer Loop thru contract and volunteer labor. Over the course of the last two years a combination of contract labor, volunteer labor, and project personnel have come together to see the project to fruition. The FY21 Handshake Partnership grant received by Barren River Lake has given us the opportunity to expand our trail system here at Barren River Lake and have a positive impact on the health of our recreating public. This is also the first Mt. Bike trail in Barren County which expands the user groups that are coming to the area for eco-tourism.

### **Highlander Trail – War Hammer Loop**

Once the funding was received, work began to solicit for a trail construction company to build the trail at Highlander. Not only did SWKyMBA have the volunteer labor force for this handshake partnership, but they also brought \$20,000 of the group's funding to the table. The Friends of Barren River Lake and Park provided \$1,900 to go towards the purchase of the Trailhead Signage, which helped to tie the project together. The work by the contractor (Parson's Construction Services, Inc.) was completed in June of 2022. The focus then turned to the finish work on the trail surface, which was completed by hand over the course of the following year. By the time the Highlander Grand Opening and Trailfest occurred, a total of 1,339 volunteer hours had been invested in this handshake partnership. That is a total volunteer labor value of \$39,867.68. This trail system will be maintained by SWKyMBA through an existing Memorandum of Understanding. If you would like to find out more about SWKyMBA, you can look them up thru <https://kymba.org/bowlinggreen/>.





Ribbon Cutting @ Grand Opening (Kelsie Hall, LRL PAO)



Mt. Bike Racing @ Grand Opening (Kelsie Hall, LRL PAO)



Trailhead Signage (Kelsie Hall, LRL PAO)



Mt. Biking @ Grand Opening (Bryan Lemmon Photography)



Recreation Area Sign Install by BRL Maintenance Staff

**U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS – LOUISVILLE DISTRICT**  
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[www.lrl.usace.army.mil](http://www.lrl.usace.army.mil)



## **Project Success**

Overall, the FY21 Handshake Partnership Grant has been a great benefit to the project, and we look forward to utilizing all aspects of the improvements that this grant afforded us in the years to come. This partnership program is the reason why this new Highlander Trail Recreation Area came to fruition. The project staff at Barren River Lake would like to thank all our volunteers for a job well done!

## **For More Information**

For more information, please call Dan Taylor at the Barren River Lake, Corps of Engineers Office at 270-646-2055.

Please remember, your safety is our concern! ALWAYS wear your life jacket!

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The Corps is the largest federal provider of outdoor and water-based recreation in the nation and hosts more than 350 million visits each year at its lakes, beaches and other areas. Corps lands and waters provide approximately 4,500 miles of trails, 3,400 boat launch ramps and 33 percent of all U.S. freshwater fishing. To discover the Corps recreation area near you, please visit <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/visitors.cfm>