

## Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2022 Recipients

1. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Beltzville Dam
2. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: Philadelphia District/North Atlantic Division
3. Handshake Project Name: Invasive Species Portable Wash Station: Stopping Aquatic Hitchhikers
4. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: **\$0.00**

	Total
<b>Handshake Program Funding Amount</b>	\$22,600
<b>Local Corps Office Funds</b> (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)	\$5,500
<b>Partner's Contributions</b> (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1. Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources	\$41,000
2. Friends of Beltzville State Park	\$3,000
3. Pennsylvania Lake Management Society	\$1,000
4. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission	\$2,000

### 5. Handshake Summary:

Beltzville Dam is a USACE owned multipurpose flood control project located in the Delaware River Basin and is operated by the Philadelphia District. Congressionally authorized for flood control, water supply, low flow augmentation, its secondary purposes also include recreation and water quality. Recently during water quality sampling efforts, it was determined that an invasive species called hydrilla was present in the lake. Water quality and recreational activities could be impacted long term if the condition worsens, but the immediate concern is that Beltzville Dam will become a source of spreading this invasive throughout the region. With the use of portable wash stations and help from partnering agencies, USACE is seeking a long-term sustainable solution to stop aquatic hitchhikers through environmental stewardship efforts, while providing public education and transparent communication on the topic. This will ultimately preserve the recreation and water quality missions of Beltzville Dam, help prevent the introduction of other invasive species at Beltzville, and preserve water quality at other bodies of water located within the region, including other USACE Philadelphia and Baltimore District owned dams in Pennsylvania.

### 6. Roles and Responsibilities:

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (PA DCNR) and USACE have partnered to establish two decontamination sites at each of the public boat launches at Beltzville Dam. This consists of collection boxes, roadside cleaning tools, and aquatic hitchhiker signage. The Handshake Funding was used to procure a mobile watercraft decontamination unit priced at \$22,600. It is transported and deployed at two different launch sites. PA DCNR and Friends of Beltzville State Park provide labor and in-kind services by providing staff to operate the wash station, transporting and deploying it for use, and filling the water tanks as needed. The

PA Fish and Boat Commission and PA Lake Management Society provide educational tools and material for handouts to the general public and recreational user groups.

#### **7. Longevity / O&M description:**

Through the use of partner's assistance, this project will be sustainable both financially and environmentally. Future costs will mainly consist of labor to man the wash station, properly dispose of collection box matter, and provide educational value to the public. This will be provided by PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resource permanent staff members and ranger interns. The wash station will also enhance PA DCNR's environmental stewardship efforts supporting their own PA Clean Boat Clean Water Initiative. Preventative maintenance costs on the portable unit will be provided by USACE. The Friends of Beltzville State Park, a Nationally recognized volunteer group will assist as needed in various roles. The PA Fish and Boat Commission and PA Lake Management Society will provide additional reference material as needed. The expected useful life of the wash station is 10 - 15 years.

#### **8. Recreational Benefit:**

Beltzville Dam is a highly visited recreation area boasting over 800,000 visitors in FY20. Of that total, approximately 40% participated in some sort of watercraft related activity including recreational boating, skiing, and fishing. The portable wash station is placed at the heaviest used launch sites at Beltzville Lake and will capture the majority of the recreational boaters and fisherman that comprise this total. The lake itself is a valuable resource and critical to the local economy in Lehighton and surrounding area. Preserving the recreation mission at the lake is a goal of all partnering agencies. By preventing aquatic hitchhikers, the partners are ensuring protection for long-term public access and use of the water resource.

#### **9. Environmental Stewardship Value:**

It is difficult to quantify the environmental stewardship value this project is providing. Not only is it having a positive impact at Beltzville Dam, but its benefits will continue to have a positive impact on all water resources throughout the region. It is important to note the US Army Engineering Research and Development Center (ERDC) was considering sampling Beltzville Dam for genetic analysis of hydrilla this past fiscal year. Although Beltzville Dam is known to inhabit hydrilla, there are numerous other invasive species found in the PA region that have not been introduced to the lake yet but are of dire concern. Included on that list is Water Fringe (*Nymphoides peltata*), which was recently discovered downstream of Beltzville near Weissport. It is viable to work proactively to keep other invasive species from entering Beltzville Dam and to prevent further spreading of the existing known invasives throughout the region. The environmental stewardship value will ultimately stem from the preservation of water quality, a congressionally authorized mission at Beltzville Dam.

#### **10. Communication & Education Value:**

Education and communication are key in promoting awareness of environmental values, especially to the youth. The importance of environmental stewardship, protection, compliance, and restoration practices are highlighted by the optics of the wash station, the partnership agencies, group interaction with the public, and the provided educational reference material and tools. Promoting public awareness is a very important step in stopping aquatic hitchhikers and this project is accomplishing that.

## 11. Innovativeness:

Beltzville Dam is the first USACE Philadelphia District owned dam to purchase and test a boat washing system at a public launch site. Working in partnership with PA DCNR, this is providing the first proactive effort at Beltzville to bring State and Federal agencies together to work on preventing the spread of invasive species in an effort to preserve water quality throughout the region. This project supports the PA Clean Boat Clean Water Initiative and provides job experience for conservation students which are recreation and water stewardship based. This initiative also provides a unique opportunity to educate youth groups about environmental stewardship efforts as they participate in outdoor recreation. Overall, this Handshake project contributes to the USACE Recreation Strategic Plan efforts highlighted by the value and roles of People and Water Meet, Safe and Accessible, Resource Protection, Healthy Communities, Attractive Partner, and Geographic Distribution.



Unit Delivery to USACE Beltzville Dam



Establishment of (2) Boat Cleaning Stations





Initial Deployment



Fishermen Utilizing the Wash Station and Helping Stop the Spread of Aquatic Invasive Species





Recreational Boaters Washing off their Watercraft