

Handshake Partnership Program Final Project Close-Out Report

1. Fiscal Year Selected as Winning Project: 2016
2. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Beech Fork Lake
3. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: Huntington / Lakes and Rivers/ Beech Fork Lake
4. Handshake Project Name: Rock Hollow Trail Rehabilitation and Interpretive
5. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: \$0.00
6. What has been accomplished? Please provide photographs; before, during, and after!:
Interpretive Trail Improvements (8 modern and diverse interpretive signs installed strategically)
on the Rock Hollow Hiking Trail along with access improvements to and on the trail.

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$17,000.00
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$4,000.00
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Friends of Beech Fork Lake	\$9,807.00
2	\$
3	\$
4	\$
5	\$
6	\$
7	\$
8	\$
9	\$
10	\$

6. Handshake Program Recipient Feedback

Beech Fork Lake and the surrounding community are extremely thankful for the opportunity to be selected for Handshake Funds to make improvements to the Rock Hollow Trail that would have not been possible with existing project recreation budget funds, that continue to be inadequate to adequately support existing recreational resources, let alone improvements. Additionally, the Handshake Partnership Program and Funding is an excellent way to foster, build, and expand relationships with outside organizations that would like to provide constructive efforts to improve recreational and fish and wildlife resources at Corps Projects.

7. Handshake Summary:

In FY 16, Beech Fork Lake was fortunate to be selected as recipient of the USACE Handshake Program. Beech Fork Lake is located just outside of Huntington, West Virginia near the community of Lavalette, WV. Beech Fork Lake was completed in 1978 with the congressionally authorized purposes of Flood Control, Recreation, and Fish and Wildlife Management. Beech Fork Lake received Handshake Partnership funds for improvements to the Rock Hollow Hiking Trail. The Rock Hollow Hiking Trail is centrally located near the Dam at Beech Fork Lake and is the most utilized trail at the lake and is just under a mile in length but features a lot of diverse landscape and excellent overlook of the dam and lake. The Rock Hollow Trail was initially developed solely as a hiking trail for visitors and was later altered to include interpretive features focused solely around native flora and trees on the trail. Numbered wooden posts were placed along the trail that corresponded to a paper pamphlet that could be obtained at the Visitor Center as a guide for visitors to use while walking along the trail to identify various flora and tree species. Over time the posts became deteriorated and visitors weren't as prone to come into the Visitor Center to obtain copies of the pamphlet, also sometimes limited by the operating hours of the Visitor Center.

The Friends of Beech Fork Lake Group came to the table seeking to improve and expand hiking opportunities at Beech Fork Lake. In coordination with USACE and Marshall University the Friends of Beech Fork Lake prioritized access improvements and robust interpretive features on the Rock Hollow Trail as the primary initial goal in trail improvements at the project. Dr. David Graefe with Marshall University worked seamlessly with USACE and the Friends of Beech Fork Lake to develop a plan to provide users with a diverse interpretive experience along the Rock Hollow Trail. A total of eight interpretive signs were designed, manufactured and placed strategically along the Rock Hollow Trail. The interpretive signage focuses on both natural and cultural history relevant to the area of Beech Fork Lake. The theme of the eight signs area as follows: Leave-No-Trace/Outdoor Ethics, Watersheds and Small Stream Ecology, Mammals, Dendrology, Birds, Geology, Forest Undergrowth (mosses, ferns, and lichens), and Cultural History. Additionally, a couple of resting benches were placed along the trail and a handicap accessible access bridge at the trailhead was constructed. The improvements to the Rock Hollow Hiking Trail will increase user volume on the already most popular trail at Beech Fork. Additionally, these improvements will be of great benefit for educational purposes for local students when they engage in interpretive hikes with teachers and Park Ranger staff at Beech Fork Lake.

Picture 1: New Rock Hollow Access Bridge



Picture 2: Leave No Trace Sign Interpretive Sign



Picture 3: Streams Interpretive Sign



Picture 4: Rock Hollow Bridge and Stone Steps



Picture 5: Mammals Interpretive Sign



Picture 6: Cultural History Interpretive Sign and Overlook

