

Handshake Partnership Program Report - FY 2017 Recipients

1. Name of Corps Project/Lake: Rend Lake OD-B
2. District / Division of Corps Project/Lake: MVS
3. Handshake Project Name: Rend Lake Visitor Center Accessible Trail & Pollinator Habitat
4. Amount of Handshake Funds remaining: \$20K
5. What has been accomplished? Please provide photographs; before, during, and after!:
The construction of a quarter mile accessible concrete trail with 4 accessible fishing piers,
construction of a half mile nature trail, planting and maintaining a 5 acre pollinator prairie and
native plant demonstrations around the piers, construction of an accessible covered bench, and
the purchase of interpretive exhibits.

	Total
Handshake Program Funding Amount	\$20K
Local Corps Office Funds (total expended on labor, materials, contracts, etc.)?	\$33K
Partner's Contributions (total value of funds, goods, services, volunteer hours, etc.)	
Partners Name	Total Value of Contributions
1 Laborers Local 773	\$4,569.60
2 Cement Finishers Local 143	\$2,813.84
3 Operators Local 318	\$6,638.40
4 Garden Gate Club of Benton	\$850.00
5 The Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois	\$570.00
6 Illinois Native Plant Society	\$620.00
7 Rend Lake College	\$556.00
8 Illinois Department of Natural Resources	\$347.50
9 Ryterski Trucking	\$500.00
10 Erb Equipment	\$1800.00
11 Lake Contracting INC	\$10,032.00
12 Carpenters Local 632 & 636	\$1,929.60
13 Rend Lake Conservancy District	\$2,200.00
14 Leedle-Houme Bees	\$120.00
Total	\$33,545.94

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.

An estimate of when handshake funds will be transferred to districts would be helpful. Also an attempt to have all districts set up the funds the same. MVS makes us use a cost share.

With this partnership, we formalized our partnership with a CPA quickly after being notified that we were handshake fund recipients. The partners wanted to move forward with work, but our district RM would not allow any work to be done or project funds to be spent until we received the HQ funds 6 months later. This almost made us lost partner commitments.

We would not complete these projects without the HQ funds. Our local unions do not have the best reputation in our area. These projects allow us to highlight the great work they are doing for the community and this has had them coming back to assist with each project. This then led to learning about the Union Sportsmen's Alliance which have been a huge help.

7. Handshake Summary:

Please also include a separate newspaper type article describing the project and the benefit to the Corps of Engineers and to the public as a result of this partnership project. Examples can be found on the gateway under Handshake Success Stories.

The Pollinator Trail Project was our response to an expressed need from visitors for a fishing area designed for youth and those with disabilities. This complemented the Corps' need to expand the outdoor activities offered around the Visitor Center for public use and to hold interpretive programming and events.

The completed project includes a 1200 foot long accessible concrete trail encircling a pond, 4 accessible fishing piers, a covered bench, and a .5 mile nature trail that extends through the woods. Five acres of native pollinator prairie surrounds the pond trail with interpretive exhibits soon to come.

This project was tabled for several years until some amazing partners stepped up and volunteered their time and equipment to bring this vision to life. There were 8 original partners who signed the Challenge Partnership Agreement, allowing this project to be chosen to receive \$20K from HQ through the handshake program. The original estimate with 8 partners totaled to over \$28K to be provided through in-kind service work. The project completed with a total of 14 partners providing over \$33K in services and equipment. Local unions prepped the grounds, built the trail, and constructed the covered bench. The IDNR ensured that the trail and piers were constructed as both accessible and user friendly. Local equipment dealers provided and hauled large equipment. Local contractor provided a large quantity of concrete for the trail and dead tree removal. The local college, garden club, master gardeners, University of IL extension, and Southern IL chapter of the Native Plant society assisted with the ground analysis and planting of the native pollinator prairie and landscape around the trail.

Use has already been observed at this area and interpretive rangers have hosted Small World programs and disabled veterans here.

On May 23, 2019, MVS Commander presented each partner with a certificate of recognition with the following verbiage: “In appreciation and recognition of your generous contribution for the completion of the Pollinator Trail Project at Rend Lake on May 23, 2019. Your efforts have enhanced U.S. Army Corps of Engineers public lands for wildlife and improved recreation opportunities for visitors for years to come.”

Laborers’ Local 773 – Labor and tools to form and finish concrete and coordinate volunteers

Plasterers and Cement Masons Local 143 – Labor and tools to finish concrete

Operating Engineers Local 318 – Labor to operate heavy equipment to clean up pond and do all dirt, rock, and culvert work in preparation for concrete. Also, removed invasive species from prairie and nature trail areas.

Carpenters Local 634 & 636 – Labor and tools to construct the covered bench.

Garden Gate Club of Benton – Labor to plant the demonstration plots and assist with prairie installation.

The University of Illinois Extension – Design and labor for demonstration plots. Donated tractor, drill, and labor to assist with the prairie planting.

Illinois Native Plant Society – Recommendation of native plants to use and designation of invasive species to remove. Also assisted with design of plots.

Rend Lake College – Assisted with soil test, fertilizer recommendations, and invasive species removal methods.

Illinois Department of Natural Resources – Ensured that trail and piers were accessible and user friendly.

Rend Lake Conservancy District – Donated the slip form paver and labor to assist with concrete trail.

Erb Equipment – Donated trackhoe for invasive species removal.

Ryterski Trucking – Donated transporting the trackhoe to and from site.

Lake Contracting Inc. – Donated a portion of the concrete as well as concrete forms and equipment time for dead ash tree removal caused by the Emerald Ash Borer.

Leedle-Houme Bees – Assists with the honey bee hive and presented interpretive programming at the new site.

