

Name of Award: Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence

Name of Nominee: Tammy Cleveland

Position, Title, Series, and Grade: Park Ranger, GS-0025-11

Organization, Location and Mailing Address:
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Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence
Executive Summary
Tammy Cleveland
Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes

The Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes Project Team is honored to nominate Park Ranger Tammy Cleveland, for the 2016 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. Ms. Cleveland has been able to infuse creativity, innovation, and teamwork into the project's interpretive and outreach program. In Ms. Cleveland's 25 years at the project, she has consistently strived to reach out to the community and make a positive impact on local Corps missions. In addition to performing a full range of visitor assistance and natural resource management activities, Ms. Cleveland's efforts throughout 2015 have produced a successful and vibrant interpretive program that has wide ranging impacts throughout the region.

In 2015, Ms. Cleveland accomplished an outstanding array of successes that included renovating the Project's Visitor Center interpretation exhibits, passionately promoting water safety, and expanding the interpretive program's scope and reach. While implementing an extraordinary range of programs, special events, and experiences for approximately 300,000 visitors year round, Ms. Cleveland took the time to mentor and involve other team members ranging from park rangers to the maintenance workers and volunteers, whose efforts and ideas contributed to the success of the interpretive program. Ms. Cleveland was the 2015 project volunteer coordinator overseeing 157 volunteers, who worked 4,882 hours equating to \$112,627 in government service. Ms. Cleveland led the Project's water safety program, resulting in 5,097 individual direct face to face contacts, incorporating emergency response training, boating safety compliance checks and glow swim events.



*Ms. Cleveland and Bobber
Promoting Water Safety*

Ms. Cleveland fosters a well-rounded and innovative interpretive program, involving recreation, environmental stewardship and flood risk management missions, and clearly deserves recognition as a candidate of the 2016 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

Creativity and Originality:

Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes (THC Lakes) Park Ranger Tammy Cleveland has consistently refined her interpretative skills and developed a strong community cadre of coworkers, volunteers and partners over the last 25 years, which set the stage for a very successful 2015 interpretive and outreach year. While in addition to performing a full range of visitor assistance and natural resource management activities, Tammy finds creative ways to weave environmental and water safety education into effective opportunities among grade school programs, special events and experiences for approximately 300,000 THC Lakes visitors annually.

Tammy led the THC Lakes Visitor Center Improvement Project Development Team in creating a plan to incorporate popular existing building components with a vision that converts under-utilized space, creating a provocative and entertaining experience that tells the stories of THC Lakes and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Tammy followed up the plan with action, considerably improving the functionality of the facility and educational experiences visitors now realize.

The transition of the Visitor Center began by incorporating a popular wall mural with existing wildlife exhibits that previously served as the sole attraction. In another area of the Visitor Center, a small wall was created by the Project's maintenance team to create more nooks for visitors to explore. The wall hosts a display of the current state record crappie and describes environmental stewardship activities that have enhanced the health and sustainability of the lakes. Tammy enlisted a volunteer to paint the wall around the record fish. She also mentored employees who assisted with planning and installing the wrap, which now adorns the heating room doors and shelves, along with a 3 dimensional boat display on the wall. A taxidermist's mount of a Tiger Musky provides a 3 dimensional tie in with the boat, on top of the wall.

Working to reduce electric consumption, lights with motion sensors were installed to illuminate specific sections of the display. A flat screen monitor was installed on another wall which is used for several multimedia presentations. Ms. Cleveland has worked with a volunteer to produce presentations that offer programming on a rotation basis. Visitors are entertained by shows including historic construction photos, local flora and fauna, aerial footage, and THC Lakes Overview Videos produced in concert with USACE Baltimore District resources. Currently, a life jacket and water safety display is being constructed, which will fit under the monitor. The purpose is to promote the THC Lakes Life Jacket Loaner Program, allowing visitors to learn about different applications, offering an opportunity to try on life jackets and borrow them as needed.



Progression of Creating the New Environmental Stewardship Display



Mobile Dry Erase Calendar Display Board

Additionally, a partition was purchased to add additional functionality to the existing conference room. The room can host two multimedia presentations simultaneously with an added overhead projector and flat screen TV. The room is used for large groups who wish to employ stations, or for small weekend movie/water safety program presentations. A mobile dry erase calendar and display board was installed in the lobby to highlight programs and events at the Project. WiFi has been added to draw visitors and provide them with a service that is hard to come by in this very rural and remote area.

Tammy believes in encouraging visitor imagination and provoking thought, not simply lecturing visitors. In 2015, Tammy worked with a local taxidermist in the

fabrication of a “touch and feel” rock exhibit that features crevasses in which bear fur, deer antlers, rattle snake skins and bird nests are hidden and felt by visitors. Objects are rotated to keep experiences fresh and visitors can complete identification sheets and be rewarded with water safety items. THC



Touch and Feel Rock Exhibit

Lakes staff use this feature to incorporate water safety discussion into the experience. The “touch and feel” rock has been used as a standalone exhibit, as well as in conjunction with approximately 10 school groups visiting the lakes. Feedback has been positive as visitors guess what the items are.



Updated Osprey Display

Continuing to make small spaces big, Tammy updated an inside Osprey display by creating new interpretive panels and lowering the outside nest, at a height to improve viewing. From the Osprey display, you can move outside to the back patio, where there is a telescopic viewer which allows visitors a close-up view of visible wildlife located behind the visitor center.

Tammy has enhanced the surrounding area with bat and bluebird boxes, and has coordinated wildlife plantings involving the PGC and Agricultural Lessee. Improving the visitor’s accessibility to wildlife with partner contributions, promotes management objectives in the

areas of fostering community support and enhancing educational opportunities.

Tammy has effectively created a culture within the project, centered in teamwork and purpose, for the betterment of public safety, environmental education and community support.

Made a Positive Experience for Visitors:

Tammy has wholeheartedly subscribed to Freeman Tilden's philosophy on interpretation. Tammy combines historical flooding and early cultural material, with present day issues such as invasive species and water safety, into a stimulating and palatable art form in many of her programs. Tammy routinely demonstrates her ability to successfully relate to grade school children and adults alike, by altering her style and content. Tammy has the flexibility to teach various educational subjects, while mixing in outdoor experiences. She has worked hard revitalizing and incorporating a Visitor Center Tree Arboretum Trail into the THC Lakes programs. Additionally, Tammy has led volunteers to take ownership of the area perennial landscaping display, which serves as great examples for promoting pollinator education in home applications. She believes in interactivity with her groups and always seeks understanding by relaxing the group with her sense of humor, followed up with provoking discussion and thought. Her goal is to inspire curiosity and awareness.



Tammy Hosting an Area School Group

Tammy was the 2015 project volunteer coordinator overseeing 157 volunteers that worked 4,882 hours, equating to \$112,627 in government service or about 11% of North Atlantic Division's total. Additionally, Tammy oversees partnership activities with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and Tioga County Bass Anglers, which contributed \$31,256 in value in FY15, improving fish habitat, assisting with environmental education and stocking fish fingerlings.



Bobber and Tammy

Understanding that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, Tammy took the time to mentor and involve other team members ranging from park rangers to maintenance workers and volunteers whose efforts and ideas contributed to the success of the interpretive program. Interpretive programs often address issues such as invasive species including Japanese Honey Suckle and Zebra Mussels; as well as detailing the importance of local species such as Eagles, Ospreys, and Timber Rattlesnakes.

Tammy helped to develop a devoted group of 10 volunteers who provide approximately 30 interpretive programs for local school districts and within the campgrounds. Williamson High School students returns every year to plant approximately 1,200 trees; volunteers assist with 30 Eagle and Osprey nesting surveys for PGC reporting; and USACE staff are a regular presence at Natural Resource Management Career Field Day at Mill Cove, Southern Tioga School District Career Day, Environmental Awareness Days at Ives Run, PGC Youth Field Days, Ives Run Trail Challenge Races, fish cover placement days, Earth Day at Mill Cove, and Reptile and Amphibian Day.

Volunteers and Park Rangers including Tammy, participated and led several community events to get the Water Safety Message out to the public, including Wear your Life Jacket to Work Day, Children's Health Fair in Wellsboro, Tioga Old Home Days Parade and Kids Day, Tioga County Fair, Kids Fishing Derby, Christmas tree decorating contest, and the Pennsylvania State Laurel Festival Parade in Wellsboro. Participating in these local community events continued the grass root movement imprinting the Corps' water safety message on all in attendance. The purpose is to stay relevant and keep the message fresh. This combats the attitude of indifference, along with the "out of sight, out of mind" perception by creating the atmosphere that this is really something important for everyone to care about. Ms. Cleveland also repurposed a remote control water safety jet ski from Jacksonville District. This new water safety mascot made a big impact when it was presented at the Tioga Old Home Days Parade.



Ives Run Trail Challenge Race

To further illustrate the safety culture Tammy has helped develop, THC Lakes have recently passed several significant close calls this past summer. In June 2015, a THC Lakes maintenance employee witnessed an unattended motor home gaining momentum traveling downhill towards Cowanesque Lake, multiple campsites and a playground. The employee took immediate and decisive action intercepting the motor home with his USACE vehicle, preventing any significant property damage or possible loss of life. In July 2015, a THC Lakes volunteer was off duty boating on Cowanesque Lake, when he discovered two campers attempting to swim across the lake, and appeared to be in danger. The volunteer quickly boated over to the individuals and provided life



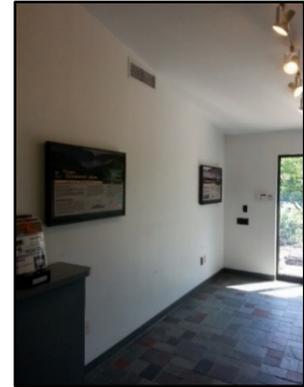
THC Lakes Staff Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day

jackets so they could swim back to shore. Once on shore, one of the campers humbly said, "I would not have made it without the life jacket." Tammy herself in July of 2015, discovered a heart attack victim at THC Lakes and quickly enabled life-saving care including the use of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine, performed cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and phoned for paramedics. Tammy received the 2015 Baltimore District Hero of the Quarter for that action.

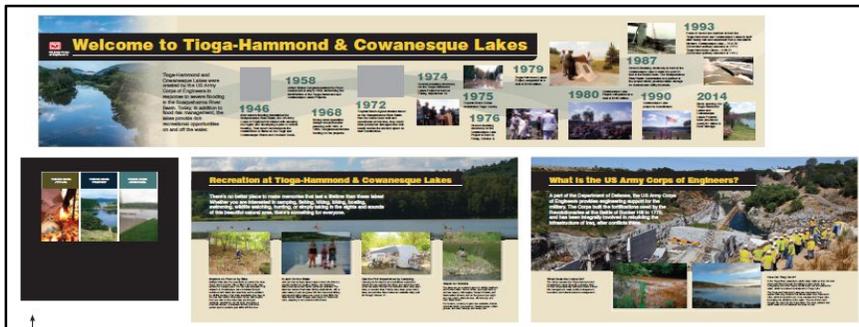
A big part of the interpretive program is amplifying awareness with the purpose of it leading to action. This growing circuit of community members, who give back, creates a positive experience for both visitors and volunteers alike. Programs and events are designed to foster positive attitudes and continue the cycle of voluntary stewardship. Tammy plays a vital role in bringing this cohort together for the benefit of the visitor.

Enhancement of the Public’s Understanding of the USACE and THC:

Management’s desire to focus on the Corps story and THC Lakes’ missions led Tammy to develop a timeline display that encompasses the roles played by the Baltimore District through our flood risk management, recreation, environmental stewardship, and water quality missions. This updateable timeline also features an interactive touch screen display that will offer visitors information about local recreational resources including trails and information on how flood risk management works. Local resources and public input was sought to provide a well-rounded picture of the benefits that the lakes provide. To facilitate the process of acquiring the display, Ms. Cleveland worked with the St. Louis District to utilize existing contractor subject matter experts, streamlining the acquisition process. Interpretive



Future Location of Timeline



Timeline in Development Phase

panels from inside the facility now have been installed outside, to open up space in the visitor center and to add to the experience visitors undergo as they walk from the parking lot, up the sidewalks, and into the visitor center. These informative and historical

interpretive panels along the visitor center walkway teach about the flood risk management mission in addition to its history.

Understanding the USACE is the country’s largest provider of water based recreation, THC Lakes management and Tammy have made water safety a top management priority. She has shown the ability to do more with less, and has had a significant impact on the community in this regard. Her achievements in 2015 demonstrated her resourcefulness and passion to educate and serve the public. She continued to employ a multi-tiered approach by utilizing park rangers, volunteers, Friends of THC Lakes, as well as the local community. Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes continued supporting HQUSACE’s Public Fatality Reduction Initiative and the Baltimore District’s “Think Five, Stay Alive” campaign. During the 2015 recreation season, the Ranger staff and volunteers made direct face to face water safety contacts with 5,097 individuals.



Bobber Helping with Fish Structures

Tammy had extraordinary success in cultivating THC Lakes resident volunteer, Ms. Barbara Smith, who was dedicated to interpretive outreach efforts. Ms. Smith has proved to be an essential asset in promoting water safety. Tammy led a partnership agreement with Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) and their Route 15 Welcome Center Rest Area asset. Tammy developed an interpretive display which was installed on their trail system overlooking



Ms. Barbara Smith and Bobber

Tioga and Hammond Lakes that illustrates and interprets the Connecting Channel feature and water quality mission. Additionally, Tammy worked with PennDOT to provide space for a USACE booth where Ms. Smith and other volunteers were able expand water safety visibility. Not only did this partnership reach travelers, but it reached the community as a whole because local residents regularly bring family and friends to the Route 15 Welcome Center Rest

Area to view the two lakes. In 2015, Ms. Smith made 2,861 contacts given this new opportunity which Tammy helped develop.

During National Safe Boating Week, Ms. Cleveland reached out to several local businesses that support the USACE, by placing water safety messages on their billboards. The North Shore Boat Club, Dandy Mart in Lawrenceville, PA, Acorn/Exxon in Wellsboro, PA, and Florida Fried Chicken in Tioga, PA all participated. Additionally, two water safety messages were installed at the entrance to the South Shore Recreation Area and at the Ives Run entrance. These signs provided another opportunity to remind visitors about the importance of life jackets.



Water Safety Message



THC Lakes Glow Swim

Ms. Cleveland also utilized the grass roots network provided by The Friends of THC Lakes who co-sponsored two Glow Swims, one at Tompkins Campground Beach and one at Ives Run Beach. These events gave approximately 40 visitors an opportunity to swim at night in a controlled designated swimming area. Kids and adults decorated their life jackets with glow rings, bracelets, and sticks. Participants were greeted by rangers and volunteers. Volunteers assisted swimmers with choosing a properly fitted life jacket so that all ages could participate. The Glow Swim was very powerful and successful. Following the swimming portion of the evening, the Friends of THC Lakes provided a campfire with s'mores, as a THC Lakes volunteer led a karaoke sing along.

Throughout the past few years, Tammy tackled management concerns of THC Lakes erosion and sedimentation due to unstable shorelines with real solutions. Tammy submitted and received \$15,000 in FY15 HQUSACE Handshake funding for an erosion stabilization project on 670 feet of shoreline on Hammond and Cowanesque Lakes. Tammy received the commitment of \$20,000 from Shell Corporation for 1,200 tons of stone and PFBC committed \$18,368 of in-kind labor for design and installation work, along with construction equipment use. Tammy is planning to fully implement this project in 2016, along with working with Baltimore District's Corporate Communications Office for video productions to be displayed on social media, USACE websites and THC Lakes Visitor Center.



Hammond Lake Stone Deflector Project Example

CITATION

Park Ranger Tammy Cleveland is officially recognized with the 2016 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. This past year has proven to be just one of many outstanding ones she has spent with the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers. As a park ranger at Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes, she enthusiastically promoted water safety, the Corps mission, and environmental stewardship through a variety of interpretive services. Ms. Cleveland creates a fun environment for people of all ages, which promotes the Corps' mission, and her accomplishments are a credit to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Ms. Cleveland has demonstrated exceptional commitment, values and leadership ability, making her highly deserving of this recognition.