

**Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence  
Award Submittal Nomination  
2005**

**Brian C. Westfall, Park Ranger**

**Nominee:** Brian C. Westfall

**Position, title, series, and Grade:** Senior Outreach Park Ranger, 0025, GS-09

**Organization and Location:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District, DeGray Lake Field Office, Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

**Years of Federal Service:** 22+

**Nominated By:** Jody J. Dvorak, Park Manager, 729 Channel Road, DeGray Lake Field Office, Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71923. Telephone: 870-246-5501 ext. 4006 E-mail: Jody.J.Dvorak@MVK02.USACE.ARMY.MIL



## Interpretive Innovations and Accomplishments For 2005

Mr. Brian Westfall coordinated the DeGray Lake Interpretive Outreach Program in 2005 through which 10 park rangers presented both direct and indirect interpretive contacts for approximately 3,000,000 visitors, area residents and organizations. Programming topics included water safety, Hispanic water safety public service announcements, recreation and resource management, forestry, environmental education, snakes, history, Lewis and Clark Expedition, Corps of Engineers mission/history, trail hikes, geology, birds, and fishing. Ranger Westfall prepared and personally presented the majority of the interpretive programs.

Ranger Westfall prepared and recorded water safety and environmental education public service announcements on three local and regional radio stations. These spots were broadcast during National Safe Boating Week, holiday weekends, and during the annual Earth Day



celebration. In addition, Ranger Westfall coordinated a **Hispanic water safety public service announcement program**. Ranger Westfall secured the services of a Spanish speaking volunteer to record Hispanic water safety messages.

Westfall and the interpretive staff presented water safety programs by trailering and utilizing a patrol vessel to reach a diverse audience. Ranger Westfall promoted National Safe Boating Week in the DeGray region by conducting water safety newspaper interviews, rescue bag demonstrations and school programs. Ranger Westfall has served as a workshop instructor for the National Water Safety Congress and currently serves as a Corps of Engineers Motorboat Operator Instructor. Mr. Westfall coordinated a multi-agency water safety partnership meeting to include local law enforcement, AR. Game & Fish Comm., and emergency response personnel prior to the 2005 recreation season. The purpose of the meeting was to establish water safety education and enforcement logistics with the goal of **zero water related accidents and fatalities**.

Ranger Westfall served as instructor for Blood borne Pathogen, 8-hr. Visitor Assistance update, "Utilizing Interpretive Techniques for Visitor Assistance Compliance" and instructed the 8-hr. Boating Refresher at the annual Safety Fair.

Ranger Westfall is responsible for the volunteer program for DeGray Lake. In 2005, Ranger Westfall coordinated the services of 440 **volunteers that donated 4451 volunteer hours**. This dedicated volunteer service saved the United States Government over **\$112,232.00**.

Ranger Westfall prepared and submitted an ALCOA grant proposal for the construction of a Pakistani Fly propagation facility. The grant proposal was selected by ALCOA and \$10,000.00 was awarded for the biological control of aquatic vegetation (Hydrilla) on lakes Ouachita and DeGray. The propagation facility was completed and became operational in 2005.

### Hurricane Katrina Disaster Recovery

Ranger Westfall, volunteered for Task Force Hope deployment duty along the Mississippi Gulf Coast. Ranger Westfall served as a Public Affairs Augmentee (**Public Affairs Specialist**) during his 45-day tenure down range. Throughout his service, Ranger Westfall fostered positive Corps of Engineers community relations with respect to debris removal mission and the Corps mission by interfacing



with the media and the hurricane-stricken communities. In an effort to meet and exceed customer expectations, Ranger Westfall interfaced with the media and the communities to make over **3,000 direct customer contacts and over 2.5 million indirect customer contacts.**

Specifically, Ranger Westfall interfaced with the Biloxi Sun Herald Newspaper and the Mississippi Public Broadcasting Network to help promote the public's faith and trust in the Corps of Engineers by describing the debris removal mission, Blue Roof program, Temporary Public Structures (Schools and City Offices) and car and vessel removal. Ranger Westfall promoted community relations by making presentations to coastal community civic organizations to include the Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs. Ranger Westfall prepared and presented interpretive programming to local schools graded K-6<sup>th</sup> grade. Topics of discussion included the debris removal mission, blue roof program, emergency preparedness, water safety, hurricane safety and environmental education.

Ranger Westfall conducted public meetings in less than ideal and sometimes hostile circumstances. On each occasion, Ranger Westfall calmly and professionally communicated the Corps of Engineers position with integrity and personal courage. When Pass Christian residents raised concerns that they could not reach a "Corps Spokesman" to voice their problems, Ranger Westfall gave them his telephone number and officially became the trouble shooter for customer complaints and inquiries. Initially, Ranger Westfall was scrutinized for providing his number, but the only thing that Ranger Westfall regretted was the fact that he didn't give his number out sooner. Ranger Westfall stated, "Good customer care is personal and I was determined to establish a contact number so that citizens could reach the Corps of Engineers". Ranger Westfall's bold step led to the creation of a customer concern hot line number established in Vicksburg, Mississippi and ultimately enhanced customer satisfaction.



### **2005 National Scout Jamboree**

Ranger Westfall represented the DeGray Lake Field Office and the Vicksburg District at the 2005 National Scout Jamboree at Ft. A.P. Hill, Virginia. Ranger Westfall was a part of a nationally diverse interpretive team that represented the Corps of Engineers at the premier Boy Scouts of America signature event. Approximately 8,000 scouts, parents and scout leaders attended the Corps of Engineers program exhibit. The Corps exhibit theme "Water for Life" centered on water conservation, environmental education and was constructed on site by the interpretive team. In addition, the team interpreted water management mission essential tasks to include flood damage reduction, hydropower, water supply, water storage, environmental stewardship, recreation, water safety, natural resources management, navigation and support to others. A working Corps of Engineers lake model highlighted the exhibit by giving the scouts a first hand opportunity to witness and take part in water management issues. Ranger Westfall was chosen by the Jamboree Interpretive Team to serve as the lead interpreter for VIP tours and presentations. Approximately 75,000 scouts, leaders and parents experienced a scouting opportunity of a lifetime that included a visit by President George Bush and a myriad of activities that exemplified scouting values.



## Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration

Ranger Westfall represented DeGray Lake and the Vicksburg District by serving on the National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration Team 2003-2006. Ranger Westfall performed interpretive programming in Long Beach, Washington for the 2005 Destination Pacific Signature Event for approximately 21,000 direct interpretive contacts. In addition, Ranger Westfall, a third time Lewis and Clark Commemoration team member, provided valuable interpretive and historical training for first time team members. Specifically, Ranger Westfall staffed the Keel Boat replica and presented Lewis and Clark and water safety interpretive programming to diverse audiences that ranged from preschool to senior citizens.



Ranger Westfall utilized interpretive props from the Lewis and Clark Discovery Box to illustrate various highlights of the expedition. Ranger Westfall teamed with Lewis and Clark re-enactors to present “first person” interpretive programming. Ranger Westfall interpreted the Michael Haynes painting collection to a diverse audience to include Colonel O’Donovan, Northwest District Commander.



## National Public Lands Day

In 2005, DeGray Lake was a National Public Lands Day participant for the sixth consecutive years. Ranger Westfall coordinated the 26th annual DeGray Lake Shoreline Cleanup. **In 2005, 300 volunteers contributed 2,100 volunteer hours, and collected 2.5 tons of litter from project lands.** This represents savings to the Government of approximately \$21,000.00. Local merchants donated approximately \$5,000.00 in merchandise for volunteer door prizes. The volunteers braved severe weather conditions from the edge of Hurricane Rita and gave a day back to DeGray Lake. Ranger Westfall has been the driving force in fostering dedicated partnerships with Keep Arkansas and Keep



America Beautiful. This longstanding environmental public awareness program exemplifies the National Public Lands Day ethic. Volunteers that cleaned up DeGray Lake as children are now bringing their children back to DeGray to lend a hand and take pride in project lands. Each year more volunteers are picking up less trash on DeGray Lake.

## Endangered Species

Ranger Westfall served on the Avian Vacuolar Myelinopathy (AVM) Team. This American Bald Eagle Task Force was formed as the result of a mysterious Bald Eagle die-off that occurred on project lands. Mr. Westfall’s primary duty during this investigation has been logistical support and public awareness programming. AVM is now present in other states.

Mr. Westfall is commended for his diverse interpretive talents. He exhibits superb ability and adaptability in coordinating special assignments, combining varied functions, and addressing a wide spectrum of audiences. Ranger Westfall’s professionalism and enthusiasm assures respect from fellow workers and instills competency to support the Corps Mission. Mr. Westfall exhibits an untiring desire to support all aspects of Corps of Engineers safety program and instills a sense of duty to excel in the most difficult of tasks. Mr. Westfall leads by example in selfless service to the Corps of Engineers and the Nation.

CENWO-OD-TN

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, Vicksburg District, 4155 Clay Street, Vicksburg,  
MS 39183-3435

SUBJECT: Letters of Appreciation for Participants in the National Lewis and Clark  
Signature Event

1. In 2000, the National Council for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial decided to highlight some of the more nationally significant festivals and events and call them "Signature Events." These events were to be those of nationwide historical significance, have the potential of high visitation, and be multicultural in nature. The "Destination the Pacific" was designated as the eleventh of these Signature Events. At this event, which took place in Long Beach, WA/Astoria OR, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had numerous participants working during the Signature Event.
2. I would like to express the National Lewis and Clark Team's appreciation for the significant support of those team members from your district, Brian Westfall and Renea Guin, who helped to make the November 2005 Destination the Pacific Signature Event a great success. The participating Corps team worked long hours in adverse conditions of wind, rain, and cold. In spite of this, they were still on top of their game at all times in dealing with the public and answering numerous questions. The work this group does is important and enjoyable but certainly not an easy task.
3. The Corps received many kudos during this event, which reflects great credit upon the Natural Resources Management Program, your district and the entire Corps. Thank you again for all of your support.

Enclosures

*Jeannine M. Nauss*  
Jeannine M. Nauss  
National Lewis and Clark  
Bicentennial Coordinator





DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
HEADQUARTERS U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20314-1000

Mr. Brian C. Westfall  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
DeGray Lake Field Office  
729 Channel Road  
Arkadelphia, Arkansas 71923

Dear Mr. Westfall:

In late July and early August, over 45,000 Scouts and adult leaders from all 50 States and many foreign countries attended the 2005 National Scout Jamboree. I understand the Corps' exhibit was a tremendous success with over 8,000 Scouts visiting the exhibit and receiving a positive message concerning water conservation.

The exhibit was truly one of the great success stories of the 2005 National Scout Jamboree. Your hard work and dedication was highly instrumental in ensuring an exceptional event. Please accept my personal thanks for your performance before, during and after this event. You can be justifiably proud of the contributions you made in this worthwhile effort.

Sincerely,

Carl A. Strock  
Lieutenant General, US Army  
Commanding



## Stressing Water Safety



# Corps: 'Wear a life jacket'

BY JEREMY LANGLEY  
 Siftings Herald

As the Fourth of July weekend approaches, many people will be heading to DeGray Lake to enjoy water sports and boating, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers encourages everyone to think about safety.

"We could have well over 100,000 people out on the lake this weekend," Brian Westfall, outreach ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at DeGray Lake, said. "Safety is our biggest concern."

The Corps has taken several steps to educate the public about safety on the water, Westfall said. Public service announcements are being run in English and Spanish on area radio stations, and Corps rangers are meeting one-on-one with people on the lake to emphasize safety.

The Corps started its water safety program in 1973, Westfall said. "We take a proactive approach. Our goal is to have zero accidents and zero fatalities," he said. "Being safe on the water is paramount, and the weekend can end in tragedy if your guard is let down."

He said the best protection while in a boat is to wear a life jacket. Arkansas boating laws require all children 12 and under to wear a life jacket at all times on a moving boat. The law requires those 13 and up to have a life jacket in the boat, but they are not required to wear them.

The Corps encourages everyone to wear a life jacket in a moving boat, even if they are not required to. "Wearing a life jacket is the best defense against drowning," Westfall said. "It doesn't matter



Brian Westfall, outreach ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, demonstrates the use of a throw bag at the DeGray Lake Highway 7 beach swimming area. The floatation devices can be tossed to swimmers in distress.

how good of a swimmer you are; if you get thrown from a vessel and knocked unconscious, you're going straight to the bottom."

Westfall also encourages installing a "kill switch" on boats. The switch is connected to the driver's person, and if the driver is thrown from the boat, the boat's motor stops automatically.

If the driver is thrown from a boat that does not have a kill switch, the boat will begin the "circle of death" and is likely to run over him before he can



DeGray Lake will likely be crowded with boats during the Fourth of July weekend. Officials urge all boaters to wear their life jackets.

See Water safety, Page 2



## US Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District Certificate of Appreciation



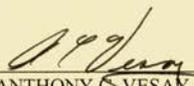
presented to

### *Brian Westfall*

Brian Westfall is recognized for safety excellence for the period of 1 January 2004 through 31 December 2004. Mr. Westfall's initiative and proactive safety attitude enabled him to complete the calendar year with the highest safety point total of all employees within the DeGray Lake Field Office. Mr. Westfall provided valuable support to the overall safety program by organizing and conducting several safety meetings for his fellow employees, and exhibiting outstanding safety consciousness in carrying out his job responsibilities. His concern for the safety of his fellow employees, as well as the visiting public, results in his being a valuable asset to the DeGray Lake Field Office, the Vicksburg District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

21 March 2005  
 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 Vicksburg District  
 Vicksburg, Mississippi



Thanks!  
  
 ANTHONY C. VESAY  
 Colonel, Corps of Engineers  
 Commanding