



EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIPS AND NATIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARDS

**PARTNERSHIP WEBINAR
OCTOBER 15, 2025**



*2024 EIP Winner
Mississippi River Water Trail Association (MRWTA)*



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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**



WEBINAR OVERVIEW

Excellence In Partnership Award & National Volunteer of the Year

- History and Purpose
- Application Process
- Success Stories





EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIPS AWARD PURPOSE AND HISTORY



To recognize an outstanding partner within your area that provides substantial support to the Corps Recreation and/or Environmental Stewardship programs

Began in 2001

Co-sponsored by the Corps Foundation:
www.corpsfoundation.org

Selected based on achievements in 3 categories addressed in your applications

Winner is presented with the award at a ceremony held in the award recipient's location

EIP Application Process

Packages are due to Michael L McCoy by December 5th
(routed through division MSCs)

One nomination package per division will be submitted electronically
by the MSC

Package Requirements:

- Corps Project Name
- Corps POC
- Partner's Name
- Partner's POC
- Corps project mailing address
- Corps project phone number
- Introduction: Briefly describe the project setting and your partner's mission
- A narrative describing the nominee's accomplishment that addresses the required criteria in the nomination package (maximum of 4 pages, with up to 4 additional pages of support material such as photographs, news articles, letters of recommendation)
- A citation that provides a summary of achievements to be read at the award ceremony (750-character max.)
- Spotlight slide with pictures and highlights of the partnership





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NOMINATION CRITERIA

Specifically address how the partner's accomplishments meet the following **three (3)** evaluation criteria

Accomplishment of Management Objectives

Improvement in Public Awareness/Education

Involving Other Partners





ACCOMPLISHMENT OF MANAGEMENT OBJECTIVES

Assisted the Corps in accomplishing work items that could not have been completed without the partner:

- How were goals accomplished only through the partnership?
- Did the project/partnership tie into greater regional or national goals or initiatives?
- What specific management goal did the partnership meet?
- How did the partnership improve cost-benefit/efficiencies?
- Did the partner provide any ongoing O&M?





IMPROVEMENT IN PUBLIC AWARENESS/ EDUCATION



Enhancing the public's awareness of Corps missions. Providing the public with opportunities to acquire knowledge, values and attitudes related to Corps projects and public lands.

- How does the partnership raise public awareness about Corps missions?
- Does the partnership have far-reaching impacts regionally/nationally?
- Is there ongoing outreach, or is this just a one-time event?
- Are there a variety of programs/unique ways of doing outreach?
- Was the partnership or model used and sought out by others?
- What are the quantifiable interpretive efforts, products, programs?
- Were other partners or schools/universities engaged to increase public education?

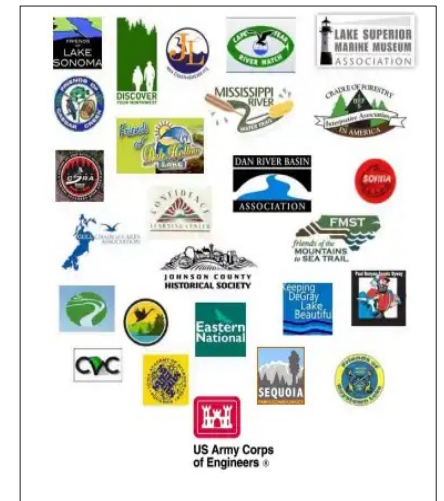


INVOLVING OTHER PARTNERS



Increased community involvement and understanding of the Corps:

- Did the partnership involve any other partners beyond the primary nominee?
- Did new partners join in the efforts beyond the initial project?
- Did the project involve a new or non-typical partner to the Corps?
- Did the partner bring in grants or other outside funding, materials, supplies, resources?
- Did the partnership lead to regional or broader impacts beyond the initial Corps location?
- Snowball effect: did the initial project lead to more partnership successes?



EXAMPLE SPOTLIGHT SLIDE

Spotlight slide

PENNSYLVANIA STRIPED BASS ASSOCIATION

The Pennsylvania Striped Bass Association's mission is to preserve the striped bass fisheries at Raystown Lake. Since their inception, this group has been a dynamic leader in projects like fish stocking, spawning research, aquatic habitat improvement, community involvement, education, and much more.

- Established by a group of anglers in 2005
- Augmented state's striped bass stocking efforts by purchasing and stocking over 800,000 fingerlings and 1.8 million fry in Raystown Lake
- Partnered with 3 organizations to create the Raystown Lake Striped Bass Hatchery to spawn and raise striped bass in-house
- Participates in annual aquatic habitat improvement events, including Lake Cleanup and Fish Structure Building Days
- Contributes over 3,000 volunteer hours annually

The views, opinions and findings contained in this report are those of the author(s) and should not be construed as an official Department of the Army position, policy or decision, unless so designated by other official documentation.



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2024 WINNER: MISSISSIPPI WATER TRAIL ASSOCIATION (MRWTA)



MISSISSIPPI RIVER WATER TRAIL ASSOCIATION – RIVERS PROJECT



The Mississippi River Water Trail Association (MRWTA) supports the Rivers Project by developing, supporting, and enhancing safe and inclusive paddling opportunities on the Mississippi River. Throughout their 20-year partnership, the MRWTA has donated over 20,000 volunteer hours, \$180,000 in professional services, and \$50,000 of materials and equipment donated, bringing their total partnership value to over a half million dollars. The USACE partnership with the MRWTA has resulted in:

- Conservation of the 121-mile Mississippi River Water Trail, working with communities, organizations, and agencies toward the shared goal of healthy rivers and people for recreation paddlers, including access points and island campsites.
- Volunteers working alongside USACE Park Rangers, bolstering annual special events and providing educational outreach.
- Developing relationships with numerous other partners to include the Missouri White Water Association, St. Louis Canoe and Kayak, and the Missouri Paddling Coalition.
- Serving diverse audiences through accessibility improvements to include an accessible kayak launch, training scholarships, transportation assistance, equipment loans and free programming to underserved groups.





2022 WINNER: SUMMERSVILLE LAKE AND THE NEW RIVER ALLIANCE OF CLIMBERS



Objectives:

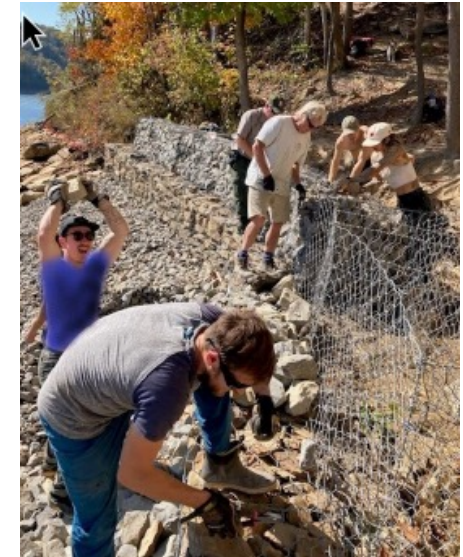
- Repair eroded shoreline located in remote road-less area.
- Improve trail access for emergency response.
- Protect hiking trail and climbing access from further degradation.
- Formalize long-standing partnership with NRAC.
- Leverage resources & allocate funding.

Activities:

- Conducted several workshops on leave no trace principles and effective communication of these principles to the public for the Summersville Lake staff, volunteers, and stakeholders.
- Held several community outreach events to include: paddleboarding demo by Active Southern West Virginia, Trivia Night hosted by Gad Dam Brewery, as well as Climber Coffee in conjunction with the Access Fund and New River Alliance of Climbers.
- Directed an area clean-up at Dike Two which resulted in numerous bags of litter being removed from the project.
- Leave No Trace led workshops with Summersville Lake staff, volunteers, and stakeholders on how to address the current litter impacts and create plans going forward on how to mitigate its impact.

Key Take-Aways:

- Community engagement and education that leads to a stronger relationship between the US Army Corps of Engineers, the local community, and stakeholders.
- Creating and utilizing educational programs to implement innovative solutions to protect our natural resources.





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NATIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD PURPOSE AND HISTORY

- A way to nationally recognize the extraordinary service provided by volunteers who have provided significant contributions to the enhancement of one or more of the Corps business lines
- Co-sponsored by Corps Foundation
- Began in 2014
- Winner is presented with the award at a ceremony held in the award recipient's location with district and division leadership.



Volunteer Award Application Process

Packages are due to Michael L McCoy by December 5th (routed through division MSC)

Three nomination packages per division may be submitted electronically by the MSC.

Package Requirements:

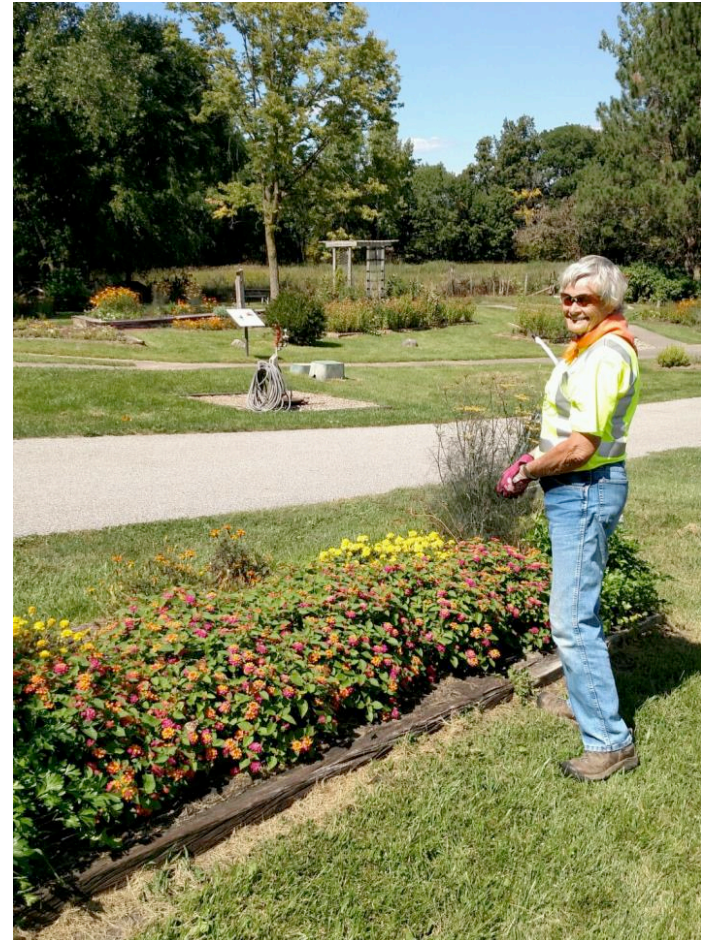
- Complete nomination form
- A narrative addressing the 3 award criteria (max of 3 pages on the fillable form)
- Up to four additional support documents, including photographs or articles
- A citation that provides a summary of achievements to be read at the award ceremony (750-character max.)





ELIGIBILITY

- An individual, couple or family unit who has provided substantial support to operations in Recreation/ Environmental Stewardship
- Must have performed some of their qualifying work within the previous fiscal year
- 3 categories of achievements will make up each nominee's score





SUPPORT AND DEDICATION TO THE CORPS MISSION

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Describe how the nominee's service supported one or more of the Corps missions. Describe how their service raised public awareness of the Corps missions in the local community.

- What missions were supported? (Recreation, Environmental Stewardship, FRM, Hydropower, Navigation)
- How did the volunteer service raise public awareness of Corps missions in the local community?

Examples include:

Flood Risk Management and Hydropower: "Mrs. Jones has a passion for the Corps and her community that is evident to each visitor she encounters. During a typical tour, Mrs. Jones discusses multiple missions and benefits to the region by informing the public about hydropower and flood risk management. She became an expert in forging an emotional connection between the visitors' interests and revealing a deeper meaning of the corps mission and purpose at our reservoirs (as indicated by the numerous comments and feedback surveys we received)."

Natural Resource Management: "Mr. Smith has assisted with special events at the project that support Natural Resource Management such as providing interpretive talks to visitors regarding salmon spawning and habitat as well as actively volunteering his time at the fish hatchery."



ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND IMPACT



Summarize what the volunteer did that made them great.

- How was the volunteer exceptional?
- Describe any challenges the volunteer faced and overcame.
- Can you **quantify** the service provided by the volunteer other than hours served?
- How did the volunteer address a real, identified need?
- What did the volunteer accomplish that would have otherwise been left uncompleted?

Examples include:

“The invasive species, the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB), threatened thousands of trees at the park. In 2017 the Reynolds planted over 700 trees and shrubs in campgrounds and picnic areas with a diverse species of foliage to reduce the chance of mass pest invasions while providing shade that had been lost to the EAB.”

“Due to a short staffing of Park Rangers, it was difficult to meet the interpretive and outreach goals of Wolf Creek Lake. Mrs. Watson stepped up to the challenge and provided interpretive programs in 40 classrooms as well as the visitor’s center increasing public awareness of water safety practices”



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COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

Briefly describe the partnership efforts associated with the nominee's project/activities

- Were there any funding sources and/or in-kind donations received as a result of this volunteer's project/activities?
- Did the volunteer collaborate with other partners? If so, what did they do?
- How did the volunteer's efforts build partnerships, boost public interest, or increase other community involvement?





PAST SUCCESS STORIES: 2024 STANLEY FRERICH LAKE GEORGETOWN FORT WORTH DISTRICT

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Mr. Stanley Frerich began volunteering at Lake Georgetown in 2021 and during his tenure has supported the Recreation and Environmental Stewardship business lines with many different activities. His expertise was especially beneficially following the February 2023 Central Texas Ice Storm and the impacts it had to our parks and recreation facilities. Mr. Frerich was able to gather equipment and start removing debris and clearing roads in the parks. Campers were over-joyed to see him and expressed their gratitude for his work as he cleared the roads in the park. Mr. Frerich's background in general maintenance and experience as an equipment operator has been invaluable when it comes to addressing various problems and challenges encountered in the parks. His hard-work and can-do attitude contributes to the success of the project across many levels.

 **PAST SUCCESS STORIES: 2023 WINNERS TIM AND PAM HARRISON**
U.S. ARMY KAW LAKE – TULSA DISTRICT



Tim and Pam started volunteering at Kaw Lake in 2018 after a major flood event forced them out of their normal campground. Their response to being asked to leave was “How can I help?” which accurately captures their volunteer spirit. They continued on through the years and helped the project recover from several other events including the flood of record in 2019. They have helped build community and positive relationships amongst the other volunteers and staff and have even recruited two new volunteer families to the project. Other accomplishments include helping manage the busiest campground at the project, facility improvements, removing invasive species, assisting in controlled burns, and assisting in outreach programs and special events.



EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIPS AWARD



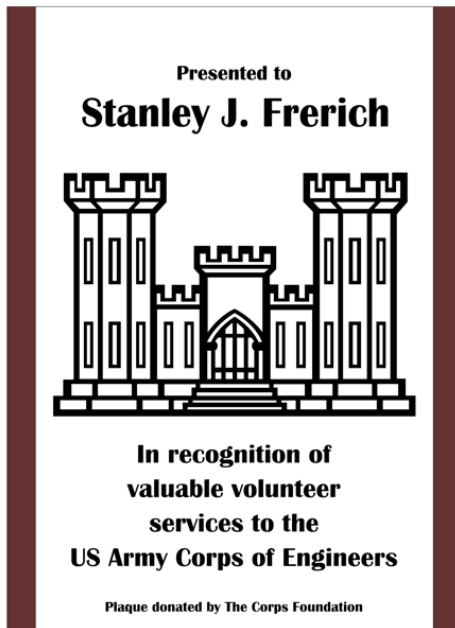
Plaque and ceremony for overall winner, provided by the Corps Foundation



Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence Coin and certificate for each regional winner (each division's nomination)



NATIONAL VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD



Plaque and ceremony for overall winner, provided by the Corps Foundation



Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence Coin and certificate for each regional nominee as well as the overall winner



Excellence in Partnerships Award

The Corps of Engineers and the Corps Foundation have partnered to present an annual award intended to recognize outstanding contributions by a partner to the Corps recreation and environmental stewardship programs. Divisions, districts and projects should be constantly on the lookout for outstanding examples to nominate each year. Headquarters will solicit nominations during the latter part of each calendar year, and present the award the following spring.

- [2024 Excellence in Partnership Award nomination memo](#)
- [2024 Excellence in Partnership application](#)
- [Excellence in Partnership spotlight example](#)

Excellence in Partnership National Award Recipients:

- 2023: [Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership](#)
 - [Award selection](#)
 - [Nomination package](#)
- 2022: [New River Alliance of Climbers](#)
 - [Award selection](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2021: [Berks Area Mountain Bike Association](#)
 - [Award selection](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2020: [Sesser-Valier Outdoorsmen Club](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2019: [Lake Shelbyville Fish Habitat Alliance](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2018: [Discover Your Northwest](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2017: [Mark Twain Lake FOREST Council](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
- 2016: [Okaw Valley Community Unit School District 302](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF
 - [Award Ceremony Video](#)
 - [Lake Shelbyville 2016 STEM Team Award with Okaw Valley School District](#)
- 2015: [Marklesburg Fire Department](#)
 - [Award selection announcement](#)
 - [Nomination package](#) PDF

Regional Award Recipients PDF

- 2023:
 - [LRD: Friends of Cordell Hull Lake](#)
 - [MVD: Mississippi River Water Trail Association](#)
 - [SAD: Union Sportsmen's Alliance](#)
 - [SWD: Phillips 66 Ponca City](#)
- 2022:
 - [MVD: Rend Lake Area Tourism Council](#)
 - [NAD: Pennsylvania Striped Bass Association](#)
 - [NWD: Missouri Feral Hog Elimination Partnership](#)
 - [SPD: Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado](#)
- 2021:
 - [LRD: Scioto Area Corps Cooperating Association](#)
 - [MVD: Rend Lake Area Tourism Council](#)
 - [SAD: Friends of Lake Lanier](#)
 - [SWD: Phillips 66 Ponca City](#)
- 2020:
 - [NAD: Pennsylvania Striped Bass Association](#)
 - [NWD: Rogue River Watershed Council](#)
 - [SWD: Austin Ridge Riders Bicycling Association](#)
- 2019:
 - [NAD: Cape Abilities](#)
 - [NWD: Kearney Saddle Club](#)
 - [SAD: Clean Jordan Lake](#)
 - [SWD: Southwestern Oklahoma State University](#)
- 2018:
 - [MVD: Lake Shelbyville Fish Habitat Alliance](#)
 - [SAD: Hunters for Christ](#)
- 2017:

- [Home](#)
- [Challenge Cost Sharing](#)
- [Cooperative Management Program](#)
- [Economy Act Agreements](#)
- [Challenge Partnerships Program](#)
- [Handshake Partnerships Program](#)
- [Contributions Program](#)
- [Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement \(MOU/MOA\)](#)
- [Cooperating Associations Program](#)
- [Cooperative Agreements](#)
- [Volunteer Program](#)
- [Corps Photo Album for Partnerships](#)
- [News / Current Issues](#)
- [Division & District POCs](#)
- [Partnership Advisory Committee](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [CWBI-OPS: Partnerships and Volunteers Module](#)
- [Good Enough to Share](#)
- [Policy & Procedures](#)
- [Grants/Alternative Funding Sources](#)
- [Training](#)
- [NRM Partnership Agreement Signature Approval Levels](#)
- [USACE NRM Partnership Agreements - Flow of Money/Contributions](#)
- [Qlik App - Partnerships/Volunteers Data Visualization Tool](#)
- [Corps Lakes Gateway Partnerships Webpage](#)
- [FY 23 Partnerships and Volunteer Fact Sheet](#)
- [Health/Medical Community Partnerships](#)
- [Partnership Outreach Sheet](#)
- [Military Partnerships](#)
- [Partnership Success Stories](#)
- [National Partners](#)
- [Partnership Volunteer Program](#)

Recap



Both award nomination packages are due December 5th to michael.l.mccoy@usace.army.mil must be routed through MSC

Nomination criteria and past winners are available on the NRM Gateway

One nomination per division will be accepted for the EIP award

Three nominations per division will be accepted for the Volunteer award

Winners will be selected and announced in January

Award ceremonies will be held in 2026 (determined by availability of district and division representatives/ recipient/ staff)



QUESTIONS?



For any questions contact Michael McCoy: EiP and NVoY Program Coordinator
Michael.I.mccoy@usace.army.mil
304-853-2371

Your division PAC team representative

HQ - Heather Burke- Heather.D.Burke@usace.army.mil

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NAD – Jared Gagnon- Jared.S.Gagnon@usace.army.mil

LRD – Mike McCoy- Michael.L.McCoy@usace.army.mil

MVD – Phil Manhart- Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil

SWD – VACANT

SPD – Taylor Baughn- Taylor.A.Baughn@usace.army.mil