



# THE recreation RETREAT

## Your Recreation HQ Update:

### National Water Safety Partnership That, With YOUR Help, Is Saving Lives

**POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager, 817-886-1727**

In 2014, the USACE National Water Safety Program partnered with the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (The Corps Foundation) to develop a National Water Safety Campaign that targets adults. The Corps Foundation applied for a Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund grant, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG). The Foundation was successful in receiving \$175,000 in 2014, and they have received four additional grants since then, for a total of \$895,000.

The grant funds in 2014 were used to conduct focus groups with adult men (20-60 years old) that didn't wear a life jacket, or only wore it occasionally, to try and find out what would encourage them to always wear a life jacket when on, in, or near the water. From the focus group information gathered, the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign was created. Ever since the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign was launched in 2016 the National Water Safety Program and The Corps Foundation have been working together to provide you with some outstanding products that you can use to promote water safety to adults. The reason the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign targets adult men is because from FY09 to FY18, 88% of the public recreation fatalities that occurred nationwide at USACE lake and river projects were men and 86% were not wearing a life jacket.

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US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

## YOUR Thoughts

We are looking for contributors and ideas!

\*If you have a topic, success story, lesson learned, or helpful suggestion—let us know.

**Send to: [Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil)**

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## This Issue:



EEC at W. Kerr Scott Lake  
LRDs Park Ranger CoP  
Cape Cod Canal VC


*Campaign Hat Photo Credit:  
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE*

# Earth Day 2020

Did you know that 22 April 2020 will be the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day? The Earth Day Network ([earthday.org](http://earthday.org)) has designated this year's environmental priority as "Climate Action".

The first Earth Day, 22 April 1970, is credited with launching the modern environmental movement. The annual event is now recognized as the planet's largest civic event!


We want to know what your project is doing for Earth Day. Send your event information to [CorpsLakes@usace.army.mil](mailto:CorpsLakes@usace.army.mil) to get it posted on the Corps Lakes Gateway.


 **Click here for the Earth Day Network!**

**Looking forward:  
2021 National NRM Workshop.  
Get it on your IDPs now!\***

## NRM Assessment Data Available

The data entered into the NRM Assessment Tool for 2019 is now available. To access the information, simply go the NRM Gateway website and select the NRM Assessment Tool link. Then, click once again on the NRM Assessment Tool link below the Corps castle. This will take you to the tool login page where the FY19 reports are posted.

 **Click here for the NRM Assessment Tool Link!**

 All links below are restricted to U.S.

- [NRM Assessment Tool](#)
- [Webinars & Training materi](#)

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The products that have been produced by The Corps Foundation utilizing USCG grant funds in cooperation with the National Water Safety Program include:

- Campaign Logo
- Video PSAs (60, 30, and 15 second versions)
- "Inflatable Life Jackets: All You Need to Know" 9-minute video
- Two mobile game apps ("Lake Guard" and "LJ vs the Lake") available for free on Apple and Google Play.
- "Please Wear It" social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter that include posts, videos, blogs, giveaways, and more that you can share on your social media pages.
- Blogs are posted at <https://medium.com/@pleasewearitarmycorps> and on [www.PleaseWearIt.com](http://www.PleaseWearIt.com) under news release/stories.
- Vinyl banners and tailgate wraps were purchased and have been distributed out to USACE lake and river projects nationwide.
- Woven campaign logo patches were purchased and available to USACE offices in the latest National Water Safety Program's product catalog.
- Campaign logo pavement stencils have been purchased and will be distributed out to USACE offices. There is a limited supply of stencils, so offices that receive them will be encouraged to share it with others.
- Campaign logo t-shirts that are used as social media promotional giveaways and can be obtained by any USACE employee that emails me at [pame-la.j.doty@usace.army.mil](mailto:pame-la.j.doty@usace.army.mil). Include your shirt size and how you or your office promotes the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns campaign.
- Publication ads in the 2020 state fishing regulation publications including: Oregon (partnered with Portland District), Louisiana, Nevada, Indiana, Tennessee, Florida, Oklahoma, North Carolina, Mississippi, and South Carolina. Mobile District purchased an ad in Georgia's Fishing Regulation publication.

A Life Jacket Video Contest will begin February 10, 2020 and ends September 1, 2020. The Corps Foundation utilizing USCG grant funds will be awarding prizes of \$5,500 for a 55-second video PSA and \$2,500 for a 25-second video PSA that helps promote life jacket wear to adults. Contest website is

[www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com](http://www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com) and it includes a "Tips for Creating Effective PSAs" document that will be helpful to anyone creating PSAs. USACE employees, The Corps Foundation, and their immediate households are not eligible to enter the contest and no government funds can be used to create a video. You can assist in giving guidance to someone creating a video, but you should not be entered as a team member on the entry. This contest will be promoted on "Please Wear It" Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages and items that you can use to help promote the contest are being created. Your help in promoting this contest to colleges, uni-



versities, and visitors using face-to-face contacts, news releases, flyers, social media, etc. will be greatly appreciated. The winning PSAs and other possible entries will be developed into PSAs that we all will be able to use to promote water safety.

In addition to these products, the National Water Safety Program has developed Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns audio PSAs, artwork for banners, billboards, tailgate wraps, publication ads, and posters, promotional products, and more that can also be used to promote water safety to adults. A campaign resource guide and media kit along with the video and audio PSAs and artwork are available at [www.PleaseWearIt.com](http://www.PleaseWearIt.com), which is the National Water Safety Program's website. The PSAs are also available on the National Water Safety Program's YouTube channel ([www.youtube.com/user/USACEwatersafety](http://www.youtube.com/user/USACEwatersafety)) and DVIDS unit ([www.dvidshub.net/unit/USACE-WS](http://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USACE-WS)).

Take advantage of using these resources to promote water safety to adults and THANK YOU for everything that you do to promote water safety!



# Eagle and Girl Scouts Are Soaring At West Hill Dam

POC: Viola Bramel, West Hill Dam, [viola.m.bramel@usace.army.mil](mailto:viola.m.bramel@usace.army.mil)

The recent USACE Ranger Legacy Timeline, which reflects the history of Park Rangers and their service to our nation, is a great parallel to the many Eagle Scouts (50) and Girl Scouts (Gold—2, Silver—3, and Bronze-9) that have been recognized for their service and contribution to West Hill Dam.

The beautiful West River Trail, a self-guided nature trail, was completed by West Hill Dam's first Eagle Scout, Walter Guertin, and recognized by a presidential letter from Richard Nixon. Forty-nine more Eagles Scouts have followed under the mentorship of Park Ranger Viola Bramel.

West Hill Dam's Natural Resource Management and Recreation missions to the public have excelled with the manpower and in-kind donations from the Scout's service. Their value in labor alone has surpassed \$100,000 through the Volunteer Program and approximately \$75,000 has been received as contributions. Donations have included materials such as lumber, cement, welded bench frames, and gravel, along with rough-cut lumber for blue bird, bat, kestrel, owl, and wood duck boxes.

*"It is so nice to see these young men remember West Hill Dam from their Cub Scout and campout days and choose to come here when they are ready to pursue their rank as an Eagle Scout." - Viola Bramel*

A long list of completed project's for the benefit of the public include: a five mile self-guided West River Canoe and Kayak Trail with water safety signs, park visitor benches, cement game tables with tiled checker/chess boards, planter-box benches, a Life Jacket Loaner Station, solar lighting, a time line tree (which preserved a 102 year old tree stump highlighting the history of our nation, scouts, inventions, and West Hill). Most recently, Eagle Scout project number 50, trail directional kiosks, has been completed and approved. Installation will occur after several feet of snow and ground frost have melted.



Over the years, Girl Scout awardees have chosen and completed a variety of beneficial projects as well, such as invasive species removal (sometimes more than an acre at a time), the design and construction of a pollinator garden complete with a trail bench, construction of butterfly houses, and the development of educational posters and youth play areas. One project stands out in particular, as two Girl Scout Silver recipients designed a cement step-up area for horseback riders at the trailer parking area, so riders did not lean ladders against horse trailers—a likely safety hazard. They were only 12 years old and were challenged to design a cement step that would function in four feet of winter frost and within a flood plain. They completed and earned their award in 2008 after hauling water and mixed cement in wheelbarrows over the off season. That step is still functional and heavily used today!

The best reward is that these fine scouts have excelled to become engineers, leaders in town governments, school teachers, coaches, mentors, biologists, missionaries, or serve in our military!





# W. Kerr Scott Holds Open House for Environmental Education Center

**POC: Jonny E. Jones, Park Ranger, W. Kerr Scott Dam & Reservoir**

On 16 Nov 2019, W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir in partnership with Friends of W. Kerr Scott Lake held an open house for its Environmental Education Center (EEC). The general public along with Wilmington District personnel Bill Bond and Eric Shreckengost toured the facility and its exhibits which educate visitors on aquatic resources, forestry resources, soil/water/air resources, wildlife resources, climate change, energy conservation, habitat conservation, and pollinators.

The EEC contains an extensive taxidermy collection of wildlife including a recent donation from family members of the Joseph Lester Warren estate. Mr. Warren's collection consists of a unique bear rug, coyote, bobcat, grey fox, grouse, an owl, and several different styles of turkey mounts that are displayed and used in the EEC to help youth and visitors see and learn about native western North Carolina wildlife.

The EEC is complemented by the Lakeside Nature Trail and Backyard Habitat. Visitors can take a short, leisurely hike on the Lakeside Nature Trail which includes a scenic overlook of W. Kerr Scott Lake and the intake tower as well as informative interpretive bulletin boards.

At the end of the hike, the visitors arrive in the Backyard Habitat where they can see and learn about native trees and plants, view aquatic wildlife in the pond, watch pollinators in the wildflower plot, or sit in the gazebo and take in a view of the lake.

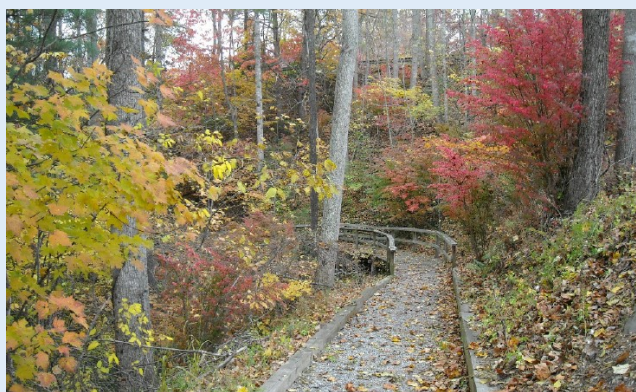


Photo Left: Children love to crawl through a beaver lodge made from actual sticks chewed by beavers and learn how beavers work and use their teeth to build their houses.

Photo Right: Visitors learn about recycling with the 3RBot, a robot built by Wilkes Community College to teach visitors of all ages how to reduce, reuse, and recycle in their everyday lives.

During the school year, the EEC is used to present a variety of topics to educate youth about the environment and natural resources. A typical visit will have students rotating through different stations led by Park Rangers and Volunteers. They are taught a topic in the EEC classroom, taken on a tour of the EEC exhibits, participate in an outdoor activity, and hike on the Lakeside Nature Trail and Backyard Habitat. Afterwards, they have lunch at the Fish Dam Creek Overlook picnic shelter.

The EEC is open to the public on the weekends during the recreation season, April 1 – Oct 31, and is operated by volunteers. Outside the recreation season, it is available for a tour or program upon request or by appointment.

The EEC is located on the lower level of the Visitor Assistance Center (VAC). For additional information, please call the VAC at phone number (336) 921-3390.



*Photo Top: Entrance to the Environmental Education Center.  
Photo Middle: Lakeside Nature Trail. Photo Middle: Volunteer Cathy Wall teaches in the EEC Classroom. Photo Bottom: Volunteer Mackenzie Berk operates the EEC Front Desk.*



# Interpretive Corner: Greater Than The Sum Of Its Parts

POC: Roseana Burick 202-761-4988 and Amber Tilton 541-506-8471

For the first time since the strict conference approval process went into place in 2012, USACE was able to have a “large” group attend the National Association for Interpretation (NAI) National Conference in November 2019. Not only did we have all four Chittenden Award nominees in attendance, we also had rangers and district staff from across the country.



**Chittenden Award Nominees from left to right: Blake Johnson, SAD; Aaron Boswell, SWD; Grace Trimble, LRD; And Amber Tilton, NWD**

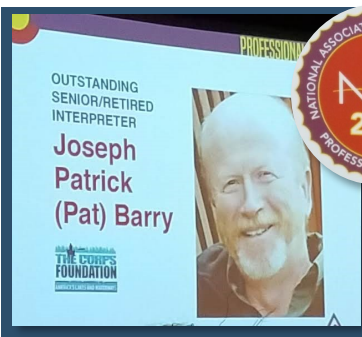
NAI is the professional association and certification body for interpretation. The term “interpretation” is synonymous with education. Interpreters not only teach facts, but strive to help the audience connect emotionally to the “resource” to help reveal meaning and context. “Similar to how treasure hunters discover resources, however, if they don’t understand the value of what they have - it’s worth nothing. Interpreters help the audience find meaning inherent to the resource,” commented

Amber Tilton, Park Ranger and this year’s national Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence award winner.

Aristotle coined the phrase “The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”, and the NAI conference definitely fits that description! It brings together interpreters from across the country who work in parks, museums, nature centers, zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, historical and cultural sites, commercial tour companies, theme parks, etc. Various breakout sessions on leadership, research, tourism, diversity, media and programming allow attendees to discuss interpretation with others in the field; both private and federal sectors, network with peers and experts, and develop relationships across the country with those whom are passionate about interpretation.

“We should have more opportunities like this for our staff to attend. Interpretation is vital to support our mission and a great way to achieve management objectives across all business lines, not just (NRM) Natural Resource Management,” stated Aaron Boswell, Southwestern Division’s regional Chittenden award winner.

During the week there was also a USACE breakout session where we were able to discuss agency current issues, share best practices, ideas and lessons learned. We met with Pat Barry, retired Corps park ranger who now volunteers with the Corps Foundation (the Corps’ equivalent of a Friends group) and heard what great things they’re doing for us.



Pat was recognized at the NAI professional awards ceremony for his continued dedication to our field through volunteerism.

“Individual contributions to the field of interpretation add up. You can participate in your community by volunteering, supporting professional memberships, presenting at workshops and conferences, writing a book, sharing individual stories in newsletters (like the Corps Foundation), and submitting articles to publications like NAI’s periodical “Legacy” magazine, to name a few,” said Pat.

If you want a more holistic perspective on how NAI and the NRM world connect, join us next year for the NAI Conference (Nov 10-14) in Saint Augustine, Florida. Mark your calendar and put it on your individual development plan now! You can also look for a regional workshop or training near you.

Check out these websites for more resources: [www.interpnet.com](http://www.interpnet.com) and [www.corpsfoundation.org](http://www.corpsfoundation.org)

## Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Park Ranger Communities of Practice

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) Park Ranger Communities of Practice (CoP) was formally established in 2008, to support the community of park rangers throughout LRD on a wide array of topics. Since the establishment of the CoP, members have worked to provide a unified and ongoing support platform to Park Rangers division-wide. Within the last year, the CoP has updated the boat patrol manual and drafted an appearance standard for LRD that is currently being reviewed at the division level.

Currently the CoP is planning a biannual conference to be held in November 2020. The intent for the conference is to showcase and increase understanding and awareness of various USACE programs utilized by rangers, and provide a platform for networking and idea sharing for newer rangers in the division. In the past these conferences have covered topics such as the sign program, CPAC, boundary, NRM Gateway, etc.

The Parker Ranger CoP is designed to represent all rangers within LRD and to increase effectiveness and efficiency in the field. For questions, concerns, or to suggest work plan items, please contact your district representative listed below.

**Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Oversight:** Jeff Defosse

**Nashville District:** Trey Church (Chair), Nashville District Office; John Malone, Center Hill Lake

**Buffalo District:** Thomas Wenzel, Mount Morris Dam

**Pittsburg District:** Brian Holtzinger, Pittsburg District Office; April Richards, Conemaugh River Lake

**Detroit District:** Michelle Briggs, Soo Locks

**Huntington District:** Michael McCoy, Huntington District Office; Jodie Hancock, Burnsville Lake





# Highlighting USACE's Visitor Centers: Cape Cod Canal

**POC: Samantha Gray, Cape Cod Canal, 978-318-8622**

Flowing through southeastern Massachusetts, the Cape Cod Canal is perceived by millions of visitors as the official gateway to Cape Cod and is a popular tourist destination in this region. About 3 million visitors stop each year to enjoy a variety of recreational opportunities including fishing, biking, hiking, sightseeing, picnicking and camping along the 1,150+ acres of Federal land that surrounds the Canal. This waterway exists, however, to serve as a safe, navigable shortcut for boats, ships and barge traffic.

As a Class B Visitor Center, the Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center aims to connect visitors with the fascinating blend of natural and engineered histories of this waterway, USACE missions and present day operations, and the recreational opportunities the Canal offers. Open daily from May through October, the Center features hands-on exhibits, a theater, and a full schedule of interpretive programs and events.

Some of the more popular permanent attractions at the Visitor Center highlight the Corps' navigation mission at the Canal. They include a retired 40-foot patrol boat that visitors can board, a Marine Traffic Control exhibit that features real-time monitoring of vessel traffic through the Canal, and a 16-minute film rich in archival imagery, that reveals how and why the Canal Cod Canal is the waterway we see today. Also popular are the rocking chairs on the Center's front deck. From here, visitors can soak in views of ship traffic, anglers reeling in fish, pollinators flitting from flower to flower in the pollinator garden, and other pop-up interpretive moments.

Exhibits and interpretative programs are designed with all ages in mind making the Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center very popular among families with small children. Families are encouraged to catch, open, design and play. Scavenger hunts through the exhibits encourage exploration and engagement. Open ended play on the patrol boat, with toy boats, building kits and puzzles promote creative and critical thinking. Extremely popular is a fishing activity where visitors use real fishing poles outfitted with magnets to catch laminated images of local fish. Supportive displays help them identify and measure the fish and then determine if it's a "keeper".

The Visitor Center is staffed by a mix of permanent and seasonal Park Rangers, as well as a team of volunteers. Multiple partnerships extend the offerings at the Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center. A Cooperative Agreement with Eastern National provides a small bookstore and offers support to interpretive offerings and events at the Visitor Center. Via and MOU, the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries has developed and installed a fishery exhibit in the Center, and offers family fishing clinics. This MOU is ongoing with more exhibit components in the works. Another ongoing MOU, is with Cape Abilities, a local non-profit that provides opportunities for differently-abled adults. This MOU made it possible to plant, maintain and enhance an

interpretive pollinator garden around the Visitor Center. Other partnerships help with interpretive programs from story time for families with children ages 2-5 to Exploring Oceanography, a hands-on science program for ages 12-15.

The Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center receives about 40,000 visitors a year. School buses transporting students on field trips dominate in the spring. Local, regional and foreign families are abundant in the summer, and tour buses transporting adult visitors from all over the eastern US abound in the fall.



**Photos Top to Bottom: 1. Visitors board a 40-foot patrol boat inside the Visitor Center. 2. Visitors view real-time radar and camera images to track vessels moving through the Canal. 3. The porch of the Visitor Centers offers visitors unique close-up views of ocean going vessels. 4. The Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center is housed in a former US Coast Guard boathouse.**



# The NRM Gateway— KM for our CoP

**POC: Jessica Grinnell Lee, Louisville District, 502-315-6328**

In 2019, the NRM Gateway website turned 18, now “old enough to vote” as some tease. This milestone marks a good time for a look at the multifaceted one-stop shop of official NRM policy/procedure and visitor information.

This website grew out of a grassroots need to capture and distribute the institutional knowledge of the NRM Community of Practice. The Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT) became the proponent for an NRM website. In August 2000, HQ gave the approval to proceed.

Launched in April 2001, the Gateway led the way in Knowledge Management for the Corps. Organized around the familiar 1130 ER/EP chapters, the result reflected the Gateway’s initial tagline at launch: Information the way managers manage.

A team of NRM Subject Matter Experts shaped content from the national perspective. This group also developed and reached consensus on the original Gateway page layouts.

In 2020, the Gateway continues to be content driven, efficiently powered by processes and a behind-the-scenes content management system the user never sees.

The need for the Gateway tool is as strong as ever. Demographically, the ratio of newer Park Rangers is growing. These young Rangers have the Gateway tool to find easily accessible NRM information when in-person guidance from a more senior staff member is often unavailable.

In recent years, the Park Ranger CoP Advisory Board has emerged as one of the strongest functional proponents for the NRM Gateway. The Advisory Board worked with the Gateway Team to develop and/or significantly improve communication tools such as the NRM Forum and the Glimpse feature.

In June 2019, LTG Todd T. Semonite announced implementation of the KM Portal. As launched, the KM Portal links to the NRM Gateway (the current KM repository for the NRM CoP). The Gateway Team will be making sure that the NRM Gateway is incorporated where it is needed within the KM Portal.

A comprehensive look at the Gateway’s development and the people behind it is available in this on-line article: The NRM Gateway Story-Past, Present, Future.



## Kids to Parks Day

The 10th Anniversary of Kids to Parks Day is Saturday, May 16, 2020. Kids to Parks Day is a national day of outdoor play, with the goal of connecting kids and families to

parks and creating future stewards of our public lands and waters. Now is the time to start planning and promoting your 2020 event.



**Click here for the NRM Gateway!**

Don’t worry if May 16th doesn’t work for your schedule— as a way to ensure everyone can participate in this nationwide initiative, National Park Trust is happy to include any event in May that invites kids and families to get outdoors. If you’re already planning an outdoor event for kids, just register your event to be included in a searchable Kids to Parks Day map. Events can be hikes, participation in a Jr. Ranger Program, nature / park scavenger hunts, clean-up events and anything in between. They can require as few or as many staff as you have available.

You can now register your event and download promotional tools at the National Park Trust website: <https://kidstoparks.parktrust.org/> or just click here!

When your event is done - let us know how it went. At the end of May, we’ll send out a request for your Kids to Parks Details (# of partners, # attendees, summary of what happened).



**Click here for the Park Ranger CoP!**



**Click here for registration!**

Remember - If any 4th graders attend, they have the added incentive of earning their Every Kid Outdoors Pass: <https://everykidoutdoors.gov/index.htm>

Matthew Palmer, CAP detailee in HQUSACE will be the program lead for this year’s Kids to Parks Day events. If you have any questions regarding this program or you need any assistance registering your activity or event, please contact him at 202-761-4558 or email [Matthew.H.Palmer@usace.army.mil](mailto:Matthew.H.Palmer@usace.army.mil)



**Click here for Gateway Story!**

## Natural Resources Management Gateway

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