



# THE recreation RETREAT

## Your Recreation HQ Update

**POC: Scott Strotman, Recreation Program & Business Line Manager, 202-761-0036**

Who could have guessed that 2020 would be the year Americans would be told to “Stay At Home” (and not “get outdoors”)? President Trump refers to the cause as the “invisible enemy,” and we all know it as COVID-19.

Beginning in March, Operational Order, i.e., OPORD 2020-10 (USACE Response to COVID-19) followed by numerous FRAGOs (Fragmentary Orders – spin-offs from the parent OPORD) have been issued directing how we are to respond to this new reality. To date, 29 FRAGOs have been issued along with numerous Annexes and Appendices. Keeping up with the continuous flow of Orders has been challenging; however, Annex O is the one we should all have pinned to the wall because on 18 March it directed an orderly shutdown of all campgrounds plus the closure of certain recreation sites and facilities, including the cancellation of special events. While some areas such as boat ramps remain open, by this date I suspect we have less than 20% of our areas open.

The next step in this new reality is to begin thinking about when and how we will open areas that have not yet opened for the 2020 season and reopening the areas we closed. On 27 April, a revised Annex O was released that provides direction on the evaluation of your areas for the potential to open/reopen. As we make this transition, all actions must be evaluated with your safety and that of our visitors as a top priority.

Which brings me to my most important message: THANK YOU!!! Every one of you deserves special recognition for being on the front lines and keeping yourselves and our visitors safe. We are blessed to have extraordinary people getting us thru these extraordinary times!!!



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)**

*The Recreation Retreat is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This online publication is produced quarterly with the purpose of providing its readers information about the USACE Recreation Program. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Mention of specific vendors does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or any element thereof. Managing Editor: Tara Whitsel. [Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil)*

Campaign Hat Photo Credit:  
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE

### This Issue:



#USACEeducates  
Uniform Program Updates  
Water Safety Award Winners



# 2020 National Water Safety Employee and Team of the Year Award Winners

**POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager**

It is my pleasure to introduce you to this year's National Water Safety Award Winners. The National Water Safety Awards are done in cooperation with the National Boating Federation to recognize a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee and team that have contributed to boating and water safety and through their efforts have made a difference in saving lives on our nation's waterways.

## National Water Safety Employee of the Year

This year's National Water Safety Employee of the Year is Ms. Juanita Souther. Juanita is a park ranger at John H. Kerr Lake in the Wilmington District. She is described by her peers as one of the most effective and impactful water safety interpreters in the country and I agree with that 100%. In 2019, she made more than 7,000 direct water safety interpretive contacts and indirectly influenced thousands of others at John H. Kerr Lake and the surrounding community. Juanita has a very unique ability to connect with people from all walks of life to really drive home water safety messages.

Through her efforts to build and strengthen partnerships in the community, her day to day park patrols, and presentation of programs in schools and libraries, Juanita is truly making a huge difference in the lives of many people. She helped organize a water safety event which featured boat and canoe rides for children with autism in conjunction with the Families Embracing Autism Together organization. This is the first event of this kind at John H. Kerr Lake. She is greatly admired in the local school system by both students and teachers for her ability to relate to the students while innovatively covering topics to satisfy the teachers' educational needs. Juanita made impacts on an individual level with the students during her "Lunch Buddies" Program. During this informal time at lunch and recess, she builds relationships with students and uses the time to incorporate water safety messages. For example, prior to Labor Day, she ate lunch with 19 students at a local elementary school and handed out Bobber the Water Safety Dog cards encouraging them to be safe during the Holiday weekend. For Juanita, a contact is more than just one simple message, it's about building relationships and helping the public understand how water safety personally relates to them.

At a Wounded Warrior Fishing Day event she presented a water safety interpretive program to all in attendance. She then remained at the event where she interacted in an informal one-on-one setting with all the participants discussing water safety and assisting with their fishing. Additionally, she attended a Fishing League Worldwide event where she setup a booth under the tournament registration tent. There she spoke with all fishermen about safe boating practices stressing the "Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns" campaign and handed out water safety items. Thomas Coleman, Chief Ranger at John H. Kerr Lake, noted, "Juanita was telling me that when she's doing an event she doesn't like to just set out our giveaways on the table for people to grab. She likes for them to earn them. Not sure what she meant by earn, I asked. She said she 'wanted to have a conversation with everyone that walked by the table, not just say Hi.' She wants to have a discussion about them and how water safety fits into their life. I think this is a great example of Juanita's passion and dedication to water safety." Her goal is to promote appreciation for the topic so visitors understand how water safety personally relates to them. Her passion and dedication to water safety is remarkable, often leading to new partnerships.

She's also a valuable member of the Wilmington District Water Safety Team and the National Water Safety Program's Bilingual Subcommittee. Juanita is well respected by her peers and serves as a great role model for less experienced park rangers. In addition to challenging the staff, she educates park attendants about how they can make a difference in the USACE water safety mission. Some of the messages that she asks the park attendant to cover are the life jacket loaner program, proper life jacket fit, or other messages such as safety during high water events. She always stresses that park attendants should go beyond the simple dissemination of products such as the coloring books and include a message about life jackets. Ms. Juanita Souther is an incredible employee that does an outstanding job promoting water safety and that is very much appreciated.



Photos Above: Juanita Souther, John H. Kerr Lake, providing water safety education.



## National Water Safety Team of the Year

This year's National Water Safety Team of the Year is the Huntington District Water Safety Team. The following USACE employees are on the team: Michael McCoy, Sylvia Chelf, Kara Wagner, Lisa Hess, Glenda Robinson, Erik Gore, Travis Daugherty, Brian Maka, and Josh Bennett.

After one of the worst years for water-related fatalities and a large turnover in park ranger staff within the district, the Huntington District decided to re-evaluate their water safety program and set new goals. In 2019, the district created a water safety team to identify new innovative ideas to reduce water-related fatalities at its forty-four projects. Once the team was established, it wasted no time analyzing water safety data and evaluating statistical patterns over the past ten years across the district, division, and USACE as a whole. The team conducted bi-weekly conference calls during the winter months to develop a district strategic water safety plan for the upcoming recreation season. They also developed a plan to concentrate water safety efforts at Alum Creek Lake, a project that accounted for eleven public recreation fatalities over the past ten years.

The USACE national water safety "Life Jacket Worn...Nobody Mourns" campaign, which was created to promote water safety to adults, was chosen to serve as a recognizable message to unite the efforts throughout the district. The team utilized a multi-faceted media approach to advertise and promote the "Life Jacket Worn... Nobody Mourns" campaign. The team members from the district Public Affairs Office promoted water safety on social media via weekly water safety posts on their district page and on all of their project pages. The team had video public service announcements played in local theaters, partnered with radio stations to get the message out, held water safety events, increased the availability of life jackets to the public by putting more life jacket loaner stations in place, increased vessel safety inspections, and emphasized new park ranger training regarding key water safety elements.



Photo Left: 2019 Commanders Award presented to Huntington District Water Safety Team (not all team members present). Photo Right: Huntington District Water Safety Kickoff Meeting at Alum Creek Lake.

The Huntington District's water safety team and their efforts contributed greatly to the reduction of water-related fatalities. Only one water-related fatality within the district occurred in 2019. This is well below the ten-year average and a decrease from 2018's total of six. With the success of these recent efforts, the team will continue their efforts to research and implement new innovative initiatives until zero water-related fatalities are the norm throughout the district.

*A huge thanks and congratulations goes to both Juanita and the Huntington District Water Safety Team for all that they have done and continue to do regarding promoting water safety and saving lives! Several exceptional nominations were received for these awards and all of those that were nominated are doing great things regarding promoting water safety. The announcement for nominations for next year's awards will be coming out later this year so please keep an eye out for it and I encourage each and every one of you to submit a nomination.*

## National Safe Boating Week

Kicking off National Safe Boating Week is Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day on May 15, 2020. While most of us are not working in our usual work environments and are practicing social distancing, that doesn't mean that we can't participate in Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day. Even if you are teleworking or it is your day off get creative, put on your life jacket, snap a picture, email it to National Water Safety Program Manager Pam Doty at [pamela.j.doty@usace.army.mil](mailto:pamela.j.doty@usace.army.mil) and place it on your social media page using #lifejacket2work. Stay Safe and Have Fun!



# #USACEeducates!

## 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.

During these times of "Safer at Home" Orders and closed parks, consider planning a virtual Kids to Parks Day! Virtual events can be hikes, participation in a Jr. Ranger Program, nature scavenger hunts, and anything in between.

Let us know what your project is planning and we'll help get the word out! Then, when your event is done - let us know how it went.

Matthew Palmer, NRM CAP detailed 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, please contact him at 202-761-4558 or email [Matthew.H.Palmer@usace.army.mil](mailto:Matthew.H.Palmer@usace.army.mil)

POC: *Roseana Burick,*

What's new in the interpretive world? It's #USACEeducates!

During these unprecedented times of park closures and "Stay at Home" orders, a group of rangers from across USACE have come together to up our online interpretive game.

Each week they are designing interpretive/educational content to share out on our project and district Facebook pages to keep our visitors engaged, and hopefully, enlighten them on who USACE is and what we have to offer.

Content will be loaded to the Interpretive Services and Outreach Program SharePoint site (<https://cops.usace.army.mil/sites/NRM/ISO/Online%20Resource%20Group/Forms/AllItems.aspx>). A notice will be sent out through the NRM Community Forum to announce when content for the next week is available.

Don't know what the NRM Community Forum is? Sign up on the NRM Gateway and you'll receive notices of posts on various topics, from job announcements to requests for sharing ideas on project initiatives.

- Shelbyville Fish Habitat Alliance (LSFHA)
  - Natural Resources Management Employee of the Year - Derick Walker
  - [Full List](#)



### Happenings in NRM Community

- NRM Assessment Tool
- Environment Stewardship Civil Works Integrated Funding Database (ES CWIFD)
- Recreation Civil Works Integrated Funding Database (Rec-CWIFD)
- VERS (Visitation Estimation & Reporting System)
- Survey Results: Park Ranger & Visitor Safety Survey and Visitor Assistance Program Manager Survey

### Recreation News

- February 2020
- November 2019
- August 2019
- May 2019
- [More News](#)

### Stewardship News

- March 2020
- December 2019
- September 2019
- June 2019
- March 2019
- [More News](#)

### Partnership News

- March 2020
- September 2019
- March 2019
- [More News](#)

### Discussion Forum and Contacts

- NRM Community Forum
- Historical Forums (prior 2014)
  - E-S Network
  - REC Network (NRM Network)
- NRM SmartBook
- Ranger SmartBook
- Field Office Directory

### NRM Gateway Glimpse

- 22 February 2019
- 26 November 2018
- 8 March 2018
- 27 February 2018
- 27 September 2017
- 15 June 2017
- [More Glimpse Issues](#)
- [Subscribe to Glimpse](#)



The topics for the next several weeks' postings are already being developed. If you have additional ideas or activities we can use please share with Tim Bischoff ([Tim.Bischoff@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tim.Bischoff@usace.army.mil)) and Amanda Kruse ([Amanda.L.Kruse@usace.army.mil](mailto:Amanda.L.Kruse@usace.army.mil)).

- 4 May: Pollinators
- 11 May: Invasive Species
- 18 May: Water Safety
- 25 May: USACE Careers



Photo: Park Ranger Alicia Palmer, Raystown Lake.

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



# Storm Drain Art Project: We All Live Downstream

**POC: Amber Tilton, The Dalles Lock and Dam,**

*"In an age when man has forgotten his origins and is blind even to his most essential needs for survival, water along with other resources has become the victim of his indifference."*

~ Rachel Carson

Rachel Carson is considered the inspiration that spurred our environmental consciousness and the movement that followed, which ultimately led to the creation of Earth Day. This year was Earth Day's Golden Anniversary and it was themed *Climate Action*. While celebrating Earth Day was not done in its typical fashion, I wanted to share a project we completed in February of this year.

Everything USACE does revolves around water, so a community project with a focus on clean water seemed a natural choice. It's all connected. Water pollution kills aquatic life. Aquatic life includes algae and other plant life that use photosynthesis. Photosynthesis takes carbon dioxide out of the air. Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas. Therefore, if we do our best to keep our waters clean we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

With this in mind, I wanted to combat indifference with action and set out to find community partners to help with a Storm Drain Art Project. I stumbled upon this idea while reviewing older EarthDay.org educational toolkits. Then as I skimmed the internet, I found so many wonderful examples of what other communities had done and I got very excited at all the possibilities!

Earth Day  
2020

April 22, 2020 was the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day! While celebrating this year did not occur in the same manner as previous years, we still remember the meaning!

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!



Photos above: A few samples from google images.

I chatted with our local middle school science teacher to see if her 6<sup>th</sup> grade class would be interested in doing an Earth Day project. It was great timing because their next unit of study was on the water cycle and water quality. Perfect!

What better way to illustrate the connection between the two? This project highlights how rain water flows into our storm drains, picking up whatever is in its path including pollutants, and it all ultimately washes down the drain. This in turn washes it down stream, down the river, and ultimately to the ocean. Many storm drains bypass the waste water treatment plant entirely and discharge untreated waters directly into local water bodies. By labeling drains you can raise public awareness of urban runoff, discouraging practices that generate nonpoint source pollutants.

The teacher stared at me...it wasn't a tough sell. We brainstormed and came up with a week of classroom material that went like this:

**Monday:** Field trip to waste water treatment plant

**Tuesday:** Park Ranger presents storm drain pollution program with age appropriate videos and leads an activity pulled from the Project Wet book.

**Wednesday/Thursday:** Kids get class time to create their own storm drain art design and make posters.

**Friday:** Paint storm drains on school campus and/or downtown.

## Natural Resources Management Uniform Program

**POC: Steve Austin, [Stephen.B.Austin@usace.army.mil](mailto:Stephen.B.Austin@usace.army.mil)**

I was pleased to announce on 25 March the opening of the FY20 NRM uniform program. The opening followed considerable work and coordination with the National Park Service who administers the interagency uniform contract.

VF Imagewear stated that this was the smoothest opening of any of their agency programs, and a big thanks goes out to everyone involved in getting us to the finish line, including our NRM Uniform Committee and everyone who wears the uniform.

A number of new items will be introduced this year. Items in bold below were made available on a limited basis, as sizes are available, starting 1 May.

- **New Dimension Duty Shirt** - Grey, 4.25 oz., 65% polyester/35% cotton, mechanical stretch, soil release and moisture management, long and short sleeve. Gusset fabric: 4.2 oz., 100% polyester flat back mesh with wicking finish. Authorized for Class B and C wear (not Class B formal wear).
- **Mobility Mimix Twill Trousers** - Green, 8 oz., 65% polyester/35% cotton. Authorized for Class B and C wear (not Class B formal wear).
- **New Duty Flex Cargo Pants** - Green, 6.6 oz., 70% polyester/28% cotton, 2 Spandex. Authorized for Class B and C wear (not Class B formal wear).
- **New Brush Pants** - Green, 12-oz., duck canvas, 100% cotton. Authorized for Class C Work wear only.
- **Knee High Winter Socks** - Black, Smartwool, cold weather, moisture wicking, 100% Merino wool. Authorized for daily and formal wear.
- **New Maternity Shirt** - Grey 4.25 oz., 65 polyester/35 cotton. Authorized for daily and formal wear.
- **New Maternity Trouser** - Green, panel black; 6.60 oz., 55% polyester/45% wool. Maternity panel 65% rayon/29% nylon/6% spandex. Plain front, front pockets, front and back maternity panel for added comfort. Authorized for daily and formal wear.
- **New Women's Fit Duty Trouser** - Green; 10 oz., 55% polyester/45% wool, lower rise; Palin front lowered waist Cool Flex waistband, shorter front and back rise double hook and eye. Authorized for daily and formal wear.
- **Volunteer Polo Shirt** - red, white, unisex, long and short sleeve.
- **Park Ranger Polo Shirt** - note: The polo shirt was discontinued last year due to county of origin issues. The uniform committee is reviewing replacement items in anticipation of a new polo being introduced later this year.

The availability of each item is dependent upon existing product inventory and production, and several items are impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic. We will let everyone know when each item becomes available.

## Storm Drain Continued...

Once we outlined our plan, I reached out to the local waste water treatment plant and they were excited to participate. I called city public works department to get permission to paint and they kindly gave us a tour of the potential drains we could paint. We discussed doing some downtown and in highly visited areas of the community like the marina. As it turned out, they already had a storm drain stencil and gave it to us to use!

Having a stencil was so helpful because I quickly realized that in order to do a fancy colorful design, it would require a lot more planning and partners to pull off. Originally we planned to have the students come up with the design and we would pick the best artwork to implement. But executing that would be difficult and require more time. So for now, a simple stencil is the best solution. The final product is pictured below.

We completed two stencils and planned to do more but unfortunately, our project was cut short this year. Although we did not get to do a big Earth Day hurrah and paint our hearts out all over town like I had dreamed...there is always next year.

I'm excited about the potential of this program to reach different audiences and involve the entire community (i.e. high school and college art classes, local art museums, beautification committees, etc).

Art is for all ages and people are inspired by creativity and beauty. The combination of nature, art and science, with a little bit of interpretation woven in, has the power to capture the imagination and turn indifference into action.





# Park Ranger Community of Practice 2020: In-person Meeting Recap

**POC: Chelsea Tyler, 641-828-7522, Chelsea.J.Tyler@usace.army.mil**

This January, the Park Ranger Community of Practice (Ranger CoP) met at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Headquarters (HQ) in Washington D.C. to address current issues facing the Park Ranger community. The team is comprised of two Park Ranger representatives from each division. During the three day meeting, the team conferred with Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, 54<sup>th</sup> Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mr. Thomas Smith, Chief of Operations and Regulatory Division, Mr. Jeff Krause, Chief of Natural Resource Management and Colonel Daniel Koprowski Executive Director for Civil Works. The team also analyzed the 2019 USACE Park Ranger Safety Survey results by division to track trends and identify needs in the Park Ranger community that can be addressed at the national level. Additional statistical analyses will be conducted this year on survey responses in addition to data calls across divisions to further identify, consolidate and communicate national issues found in the comments.

The Ranger CoP is divided into several Project Development Team (PDT)s within the team such as the NRM Gateway Update, Radio FAQ, Title 36 Revision, RLAT Newsletter and Communications, and Ranger Safety Survey, to name a few. The NRM Gateway team is responsible for updating and revolutionizing communication management. This team removed broken links, identified a plan forward for the NRM Gateway "On the Go" page, updated the Park Ranger SmartBook listings to better communicate with our Park Rangers in the field, and developed a timeline to track Ranger CoP activities for past, present and future.

Another PDT is working to standardize USACE's response to loss of human life experienced by the NRM community. PDT members met with Colonel Bradford Bauman, HQ USACE Command Chaplain to discuss the need for a standard operating procedure in response to the loss of a colleague within the USACE Park Ranger community. A memorandum will be sent to HQ asking for the development and or adoption of a document that establishes guidance for actions that can be taken by NRM personnel in response to these events.

A recurring comment found in the USACE Park Ranger Safety Survey is the need for a national ORI (Originating Agency Identifier) number for access to NLETS (National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System). While some projects have the ability to obtain limited information from local law enforcement agencies to safeguard themselves while conducting visitor assistance duties, many are losing these capabilities across the country due to issues with U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ). A national ORI number will enhance the safety of Park Rangers and allow them to receive vital information prior to making visitor contacts. A PDT has been established and submitted a memorandum to HQ to help address this issue with DOJ.

Please check the NRM Gateway to find out who your Division Representatives are and reach out to them if you have any questions or ideas you would like to discuss. To see more details on what we are working on and video highlights of our time in D.C., please check out these links: <https://gateway.erdc.dren.mil/nrm/rangers/minutes/20Jan-highlights.pdf> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y8kdxcmQeM&feature=youtu.be>

## Proposed Revision to 36 CFR part 327.13, "Explosives, Firearms, other Weapons and Fireworks"

**POC: Steve Austin, Stephen.B.Austin@usace.army.mil**

The proposed revision to 36 CFR part 327.13, covering the public possession of firearms at our lake and river projects, was published in the Federal Register on 13 April. This action has attracted much interest at all levels including us, the Assistance Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, and the Office of Management and Budget. We went back-and-forth with the language and were able to incorporate many of the comments received.

The 60-day public comment period ends on 12 June 2020.

As Corps employees, we should submit our comments, as directed by your supervisor, to your district office for consolidation and submittal to HQ by 1 June 2020. You can also send your comments directly to me at [stephen.b.austin@usace.army.mil](mailto:stephen.b.austin@usace.army.mil). USACE employees should not comment on the Federal Register portal site or the Firearms e-mail site. Individual employee comments will become part of the administrative record, and will be fully considered during the development of the final rule.

The proposed revision removes the requirement for individuals to apply in writing for permission from a District Commander to possess a firearm. Individuals will need to meet state and local firearm possession requirements

within the jurisdiction where the Corps project is located.

The prohibition on firearms and dangerous weapons in federal facilities will continue to apply to Corps buildings per 18 U.S.C. 930.

A complete description of this action, including the proposed language, is posted on the Federal eRulemaking Portal:

<http://www.regulations.gov>, docket number COE-2018-0008.



*Photo Above: As posted on the NRM Gateway, the Park Ranger CoP met with Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite, during their in person meeting held in Washington D.C.*