



# THE recreation RETREAT

## Your Recreation HQ Update

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

In Volume 2, Issue 2, dated May 2020, I wrote about the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, almost a year later I find myself writing about it again. Last March and April we were scrambling to shut almost everything down. Several

months later we were methodically and carefully re-opening areas and facilities. The CARES Act made additional funds available so we could better follow the CDC guidelines. Who knew what challenges lay ahead? Who knew that one year later there would be over 26 million cases in the United States, and that over 450,000 would lose their lives to COVID-19? I think we can safely say that 2020 provided the greatest challenges we have ever faced in the Recreation Program, and I APPRECIATE EACH OF YOU FOR A JOB WELL DONE!



Photo by David Gray, Baltimore District

And now, we have a new President and a new Executive Order (EO) 13991 (20 Jan 2021), Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing, and new guidance from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), OMB Guidance Memo M-21-15 (24 Jan 2021), COVID-19 Safe Federal Workplace: Agency Model Safety Principles.

### This Issue:

 LRD Park Ranger CoP  
Alton Audubon Eagle Ice Festival

Article continued on page 2.



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## 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

# HQ Update Continued

While we await DoD and HQUSACE to release more specific guidance, the key message from the EO is, "...to require compliance with CDC guidelines with respect to wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and other public health measures by: on-duty or on-site Federal employees; on-site Federal contractors; and all persons in Federal buildings or on Federal lands." What does the mean to us?

The CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/visitors.html>) are now requirements of all person in Federal buildings or on Federal lands. One of the significant take-aways is that masks are now required inside any Federal building or structure, and outdoors on Federal lands where social distancing is not possible. Please watch for detailed guidance on how this will apply to you, our Recreation program, visitors, volunteers, partners, contractors, and lessees (possibly released by the time you read this).

## Cold Water Kills!

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

This time of year, cold water immersion, which can cause cold water shock, cold incapacitation or swim failure, and hypothermia, can happen anywhere in the United States and it can be deadly.

On November 20, 2020 at Fort Peck Project in Montana (Omaha District) a 70-year-old man died after he broke through the ice on a pond while going after his dog that went out on the ice and fell through. At Lake O' the Pines in Texas (Fort Worth District) on January 2, 2021, Texas Park and Wildlife Game Wardens were called and discovered two men in the water. One of the men was deceased and the other man was in critical condition and transported to a local hospital to be treated for hypothermia. It was apparent that the bass boat they were on hit a stump and capsized. Both men were thrown into the water when the boat capsized and remained there for at least two hours before they were found.

When on or near cold water it is important to dress for the water temperature. That means dressing in multiple layers of clothes that can handle moisture and dry quickly. If you would happen to fall in your wet clothes will not pull you down. Instead if you remain calm your clothes will provide flotation from the air trapped inside them. The most important thing to do is to wear a properly fitted life jacket. A U.S. Coast Guard approved float coat is a great life jacket to wear when the water is cold.



# Life Jacket Video Contest

## THE PRIZE:

\$5,500 for 55-second Video PSA  
\$2,500 for 25-second Video PSA

\*ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY WILL BE SELECTED

**Contest Deadline: September 1, 2021**

**TO LEARN MORE:**

[www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com](http://www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com)



# Cold Water Kills—Continued!

The National Water Safety Program has several resources available that you can use to promote water safety this time of year. On the program's website ([www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-Water-Safety\\_Program](http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-Water-Safety_Program)) or

[www.PleaseWearIt.com](http://www.PleaseWearIt.com), which is a redirect to the program's website, there are cold water audio PSAs and banner art-

work under campaign materials and blog articles under news releases and stories. The blogs can also be found at <https://medium.com/@pleasewearitarmycorps>. The Please Wear It social media pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, which are

managed by the National Water Safety Program and the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education

Foundation (The Corps Foundation), are excellent resources for water safety social media posts that you can share and use on your office's social media pages. On the Bobber the Water Safety Dog website ([www.Bobber.info](http://www.Bobber.info)) under the Coloring tab there are bookmarks and a coloring sheet featuring Chilly Dog.

Water safety is something that we need to promote year-round, so you are encouraged to utilize the resources available from the National Water Safety Program whenever possible. If you have any questions about any of the National Water Safety Program resources please contact your division representative on the National Water Safety Committee or Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager.



**Click here for the program website!**



**Click here for the blog!**



**Click here for Bobber the Water Safety Dog!**



**Click here for the contest website!**

## 2021 Life Jacket Video Contest

The 2021 Life Jacket Video Contest that is being conducted by The Corps Foundation in cooperation with the National Water Safety Program is underway. Please help promote the Life Jacket Video Contest by distributing the news release, flyer, and social media image that are available on the contest website (<https://www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com>) under the Resources and Promotional Items tab. This contest is also being promoted on the Please Wear It Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages so please share those posts with your friends and followers. If you have not already done so, you are encouraged to follow and like the Please Wear It social media pages for more water safety information, blogs, videos, and giveaways.

## COLD WATER KILLS

**1 minute - Cold Shock**

**10 minutes - Incapacitation**

**1 hour - Hypothermia**



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# LRD Park Ranger Community of Practice

**POC:** *Trey Church, Nashville District, 615-736-5118*

The Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) Park Ranger Community of Practice (CoP) guiding principle is to serve as a direct link between the regional Park Ranger CoP with its constituent District communities and the larger national Park Ranger CoP; and to provide a unified and ongoing support platform for park rangers.

Due to COVID-19, the LRD CoP biannual conference had to be postponed. However, this allowed the team to work on projects requested by the LRD ranger staff. The intent of each of these projects is to increase the proficiency of our rangers. Over the last year, the CoP has worked diligently to create the following work items:

**1** The first agenda item was the LRD Vessel Inspection Booklets. These booklets will serve as a useful tool for our ranger staff while performing boat patrols, which continue to be a critical part of our water safety program as our visitation surges on the reservoirs.

**2** Next, the team developed LRD NRM Uniformed Employee Appearance Policy. This policy creates consistency throughout the LRD Natural Resources Management community.

USACE Rangers are the "Face of the Corps", and with this responsibility, they must project a professional image. Creating a consistent professional image increases the recognition and approachability of the Ranger to the visiting public. This policy was vetted through the LRD Park Ranger CoP Advisory Board, Division Ops Chiefs, and LRD Office of Counsel before approval.

**3** Recently, the CoP completed its final action item for 2020 the LRD Citation Manual and Field Guide. This initiative was developed to assist our ranger staff with consistency, efficiency, and training purposes, regarding the citation program. The LRD Citation Manual & Field Guide doesn't introduce any new policy. These products serve as a consolidation and quick reference and/or policy tool for rangers while performing their daily VA tasks.

The Park Ranger CoP mission is to represent all rangers within LRD and to increase professionalism and efficiency in the field. For questions, concerns, please contact any district representative!

## CITATION FIELD GUIDE



 **Nashville District**  
Trey Church (*Chair*)  
John Malone

 **Buffalo District**  
Thomas Wenzel

 **Pittsburg District**  
Brian Holtzinger  
April Richards

 **Detroit District**  
Michelle Briggs

 **Huntington District**  
Michael McCoy  
Tony Miller

 **Louisville District**  
Danielle Robertson  
Tyler Blankenship

 **Chicago District**  
Ryan Martin

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

**VESSEL INSPECTION**



# Alton Audubon Eagle Ice Festival

POC: Amanda Kruse, 314-331-8624

On Saturday, 2 January 2021, the Rivers Project Office and National Great Rivers Museum in partnership with the Audubon Center at Riverlands and Great Rivers & Routes hosted the Annual Alton Audubon Eagle Ice Festival.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was held virtually, but still provided ample opportunities to learn about eagles. Activities included meet and greets with Liberty, a live bald eagle from the World Bird Sanctuary, eagle crafts, an eagle watching panel which included guest speakers from a variety of organizations, live ice carving demonstrations and ranger reviews of eagle watching hot spots.

In all, the virtual event reached over 120,000 people and was a great kick off to another eagle watching season in Alton, Illinois.



## Eagle Watch Event at General Dean Recreation Area Carlyle Lake

On Saturday January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the staff at Carlyle Lake hosted the annual Eagle Watch event at the General Dean Recreation Area. The World Bird Sanctuary had a live Bald Eagle on display for public viewing in a heated tent. To ensure visitor safety during the event, face coverings were required when entering the tent. The General Dean Recreation Area is one of the best spots around Carlyle Lake to view Bald Eagles in their natural habitat.

If you have any questions about the event, contact the Carlyle Lake Project Office at (618) 594-2484 or email at [carlylelake@usace.army.mil](mailto:carlylelake@usace.army.mil).



*Photo Above: It was a cold, wet day for the Carlyle Eagle Watch, but participants braved the weather, followed safety guidelines and enjoyed learning about Bald Eagles.*

Photos (Top to Bottom): Liberty from the World Bird Sanctuary was available for viewer to get an up-close view of a live eagle and have any of their bald eagle questions answered. Members of USACE, Audubon Center at Riverlands, Pere Marquette State Park, and Two Rivers National Wildlife Refuge were part of an eagle watching panel that discussed eagle watching basics including the best times and locations. Ranger provided live updates throughout the day at known eagle watching hot spots. Bald eagle activity kits were available for pre-order and pick up the morning of the event. Ice carving demonstrations concluded with an incredible ice sculpture of an eagle.

# 50th Anniversary of the NRM Visitor Assistance Program

## Final Firearms Rule Update

The final firearms rule update is only several months from being published, pending further delays. At this point in the process the revised language has cleared the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)) and Army. Currently, the rule update is in the approval process with Department of Defense from which it will go to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

In addition to the final firearms rule, HQ NRM Staff are working on Visitor Assistance Training policy guidance that address current COVID training and travel restrictions.

Photo below: Original group of Citation Pilot program Park Rangers at Lake Cumberland, left to right: Bozeman, Halcomb, Thomas, Patterson



*POC: Steve Austin, Senior Policy Advisor for Park Rangers Activities , 202-590-6811.*

Did you know that 31 December 2020 marked the 50th Anniversary of the Flood Control Act of 1970, Public Law 91-611? Signed into law on 31 December 1970, this act is often considered the beginning of the Corps of Engineers modern and professional Natural Resources Management (NRM) Visitor Assistance Program.

It all started when Senator Cooper of Kentucky noticed a littering problem at Lake Cumberland and introduced legislation against dumping and unauthorized disposal of trash, stating in part, “Any violation of such rules and regulations shall be punished by a fine of not more than \$500 or imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.... all persons designated by the Chief of Engineers for that purpose shall have the authority to issue a citation for violation of the regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Army. These few words set in motion the development of a very successful program now beginning its 51st year.

Published a year later in 1971, “Title 36” (36 CFR Chapter III, Part 327) established the first set of regulations governing public use at USACE Water Resources Development Projects. Many of these regulations are still in effect today. Following a pilot program at Lake Cumberland, the USACE citation program went nationwide in 1972. Park Ranger Wallace Holcomb issued the first citation to a resident of Burnside, KY, for an unpermitted dock on Lake Cumberland.

These early actions from our first generation of park rangers and NRM managers, along with further studies and reports from Congress, led to the formal establishment of USACE’s first Visitor Assistance regulation in 1979, now addressed in ER/EP 1130-2-550, Chapter 6.

This legislative action 50 years ago serves as a reminder of how Congress recognized the importance of proper stewardship and visitor management by authorizing this important tool to help carry out our missions.

Since 1970, thousands of park rangers have served well in the public interest, providing visitor assistance and supporting Title 36’s key provision of managing “the natural, cultural and developed resources of each project in the public interest, providing the public with safe and healthful recreational opportunities while protecting and enhancing these resources”.

I thank every park ranger and NRM employee, past or present, for the excellent work and dedication in building and managing what I considered the best natural resources management program in the industry. More information on the history of the Visitor Assistance Program can be found on the Park Ranger site on the NRM Gateway.

# Virtual Watercraft Inspection and Decontamination Training

Hosted by the Aquatic Invasive Species Network, this two-day, intensive, training is provided free of charge on a first-come first-served basis. The course is designed for those individuals who are currently or will soon become active in setting-up or implementing watercraft inspection and decontamination programs for their respective agencies, organizations or businesses. The class size is restricted to 10–12 people, and the focus is on actual inspections of various types of watercraft and the use of several decontamination systems. It is certified by 100th Meridian member agencies and successful graduates will receive a Certificate of Completion.

The training includes:

- Introduction and Western State AIS Programs
- Biology (Zebra/Quagga mussel and other Aquatic Invasive Species)
- Watercraft 101
- Inspection Procedures and practice
- Triggers for decontamination and Step-by-step procedures.

For any questions, please contact: D Davis, (702) 236-3814 or [quaggadee@cox.net](mailto:quaggadee@cox.net)

## **Virtual Training March 23-25, 2021, 8AM-NOON (3 days):**

Zoom register here: [[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZwrcuyorj4qH9f-kRSeE9wzK0muibfWkDga?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZwrcuyorj4qH9f-kRSeE9wzK0muibfWkDga?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)].

## **Virtual Training April 6-8, 2021 8AM-NOON ( 3 days):**

Zoom register here: [[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZApcumvqDwjH9HQwD89a83y5eZHKZNWzJ3q?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZApcumvqDwjH9HQwD89a83y5eZHKZNWzJ3q?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)].

## **Virtual Training April 20-22, 2021 8AM-NOON (3 days):**

Zoom register here: [[https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAude6grj4vH9CvKmtNfq358pCW9L2FYnJw?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://us02web.zoom.us/join/register/tZAude6grj4vH9CvKmtNfq358pCW9L2FYnJw?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)]



## NISAW IS SOON!

### National Invasive Species Awareness Week

February 22-28, 2021: NISAW Part 1—  
Information and Advocacy

May 15-22, 2021: NISAW Part 2—  
Outreach and Education

<https://www.nisaw.org>

## DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE TRAVELING TRUNK?

The Invasive Species Leadership Team developed an Interpretive Trunk to serve as a tool to enhance the public's understanding of invasive species, the negative impacts they have, management approaches and steps we can all take to help stop their spread. The Travelling Trunk is FREE to borrow!

Learn how on the NRM Gateway.

<https://corpslakes.erdcdren.mil/employees/invasive/trunk.cfm>



# Learning More About USACE!

## National Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise

The National Ecosystem Restoration Planning Center of Expertise (ECO-PCX) is based in the Mississippi Valley Division with a virtual team from across the nation that provides ecosystem restoration planning services to civil works study teams throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The ECO-PCX leverages a 13-member virtual team with a large network of ad hoc technical experts that can provide specialized assistance with ecosystem restoration planning. The ECO-PCX team is comprised of the Director, Operating Director, Account Managers, PCX Independent External Peer Review Lead, and a Model Review Manager.

**POC: Greg Miller, 504-481-9683**

The USACE National Ecosystem Planning Center of Expertise (ECO-PCX) web page is now available at <https://www.mvd.usace.army.mil/About/National-Ecosystem-Planning-Center-of-Expertise/>. Learn more about the PCX and a variety of USACE ecosystem restoration projects. On the go? No worries! This page is compatible with your mobile device.



Click here for to access the site!

The ECO-PX was established in 2003 to support ecosystem restoration project planning. The center performs independent project reviews, technical training, expert planning support, and model development.