



THE recreation RETREAT

HQ Update: The FY25 Budget

POC: Ryan Hartwig, Recreation Program and Business Line Manager

If you are building the FY25 Recreation budget from a field perspective, the light at the end of the tunnel is shining bright. If you are working the budget build from a district or MSC perspective, there is still some work to do. However, no matter what your role in the budget development process is, the job is never fully complete, and there is always a way to improve understanding, data, and information sharing.

1 Understanding this year and preparing for next year. While it may seem crazy, it is never too early to prepare for the next budget cycle or continuously learn from this year. If you will be, or are new to, working with the Recreation budget be sure to check out ALL of the training available on the O&M 20/20 process. The O&M 20/20 training slides have been updated for BY25, and all modules are posted to the O&M 20/20 website. Videos will be posted when they are available, but the slides have the scripts in the “Notes” section. As a reminder, the website address is: <https://usace.dps.mil/sites/INTRA-HQ/SitePages/OM2020.aspx?web=1>

O&M 20/20 TRAINING MODULES

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4	Module 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• O&M 20/20 Basics• Audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those new to O&M 20/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work Package Construction• Audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those who develop or approve O&M Work Packages	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Data Quality Assurance• Audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those at Districts and MSCs responsible for budget data quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prioritization and Ranking• Audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those responsible for Prioritization and Ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overview of Current BY Changes• Business Line Changes Summary• Audience:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those familiar with O&M 20/20 who need to know what has changed for this BY

This Issue:

 Innovation Team
Recreation Around USACE

Article continued on page 8.



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

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

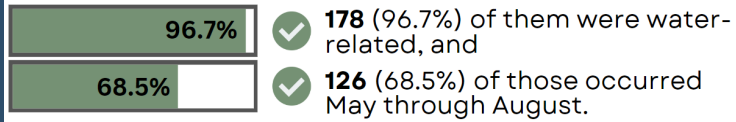
Campaign Hat Photo Credit:
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE

Promote Water Safety Early and Often

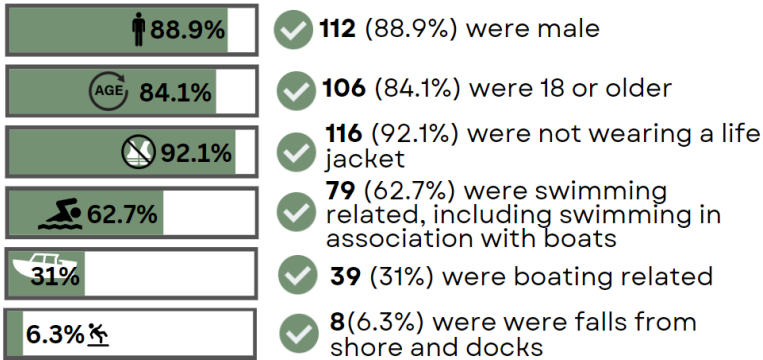
POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager

Be proactive instead of reactive when it comes to saving lives. Water safety is something that we promote year-round. While it is good to promote water safety in the summer, we highly encourage you to start promoting it in the spring-and don't let up on your efforts until after Labor Day!

In FY22, USACE recorded **184** public recreation fatalities.



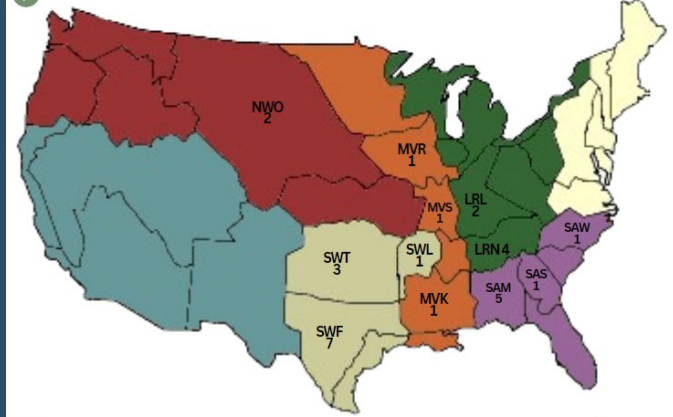
Regarding the **126** fatalities that occurred May through August 2022:



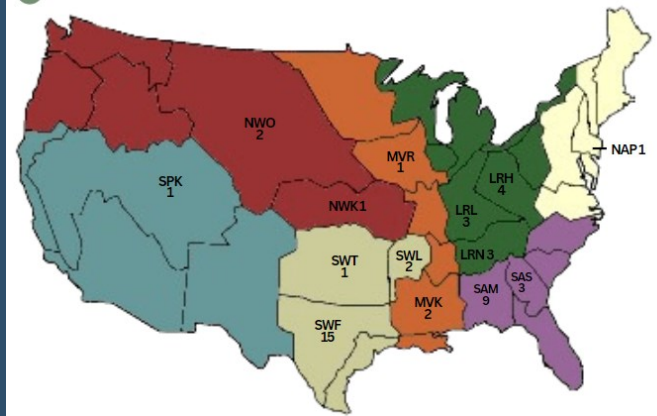
That makes our **target audience adult males not wearing life jackets**. It's often assumed that alcohol is a major contributing factor, but alcohol was suspected or associated with only 11 of the fatalities. If the victims would have been wearing a life jacket, their chances of survival would have drastically increased.

The "Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns" campaign is our water safety campaign that targets adults, primarily men. Campaign resources have been developed by the National Water Safety Program with help from The Corps Foundation and are available for use. They include a resource guide, video PSAs, audio PSAs in English and Spanish, logos, posters, publication ads, and artwork for banners, billboards, vehicle tailgate vinyl wraps, etc. Many resources can be downloaded from the National Water Safety Program's webpage, <https://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Civil-Works/Recreation/National-Water-Safety-Program/>, which PleaseWearIt.com redirects to. The National Water Safety Program's "Please Wear It" pages on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter are managed in cooperation with The Corps Foundation and act as a library of water safety social media posts that focus on the campaign. You can share as is or pull assets from these pages to create your own posts. If you cannot find the resources that you are looking for, please contact your division representative on the National Water Safety Committee and/or Pam Doty.

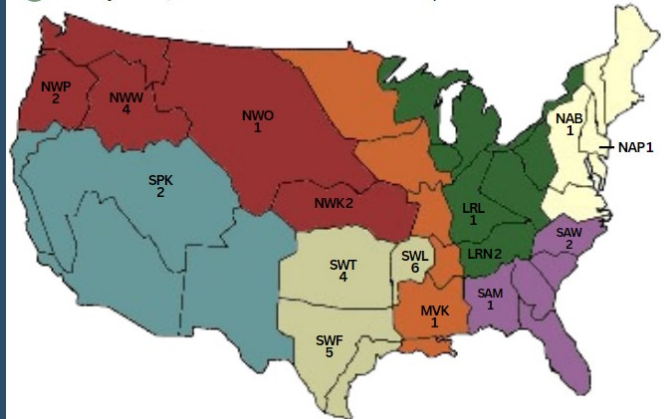
✓ In May 2022, there were **29** water-related public recreation fatalities.



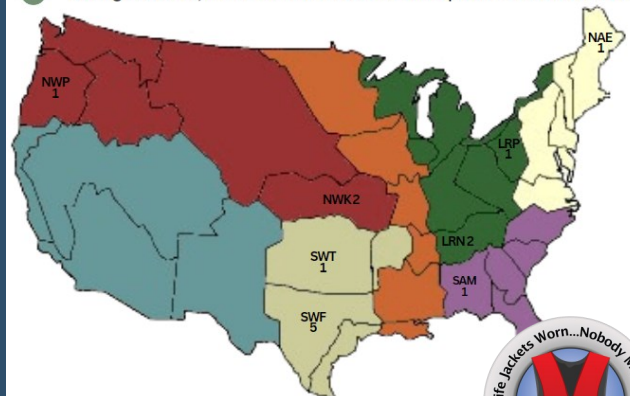
✓ In June 2022, there were **48** water-related public recreation fatalities.



✓ In July 2022, there were **35** water-related public recreation fatalities.



✓ In August 2022, there were **14** water-related public recreation fatalities.

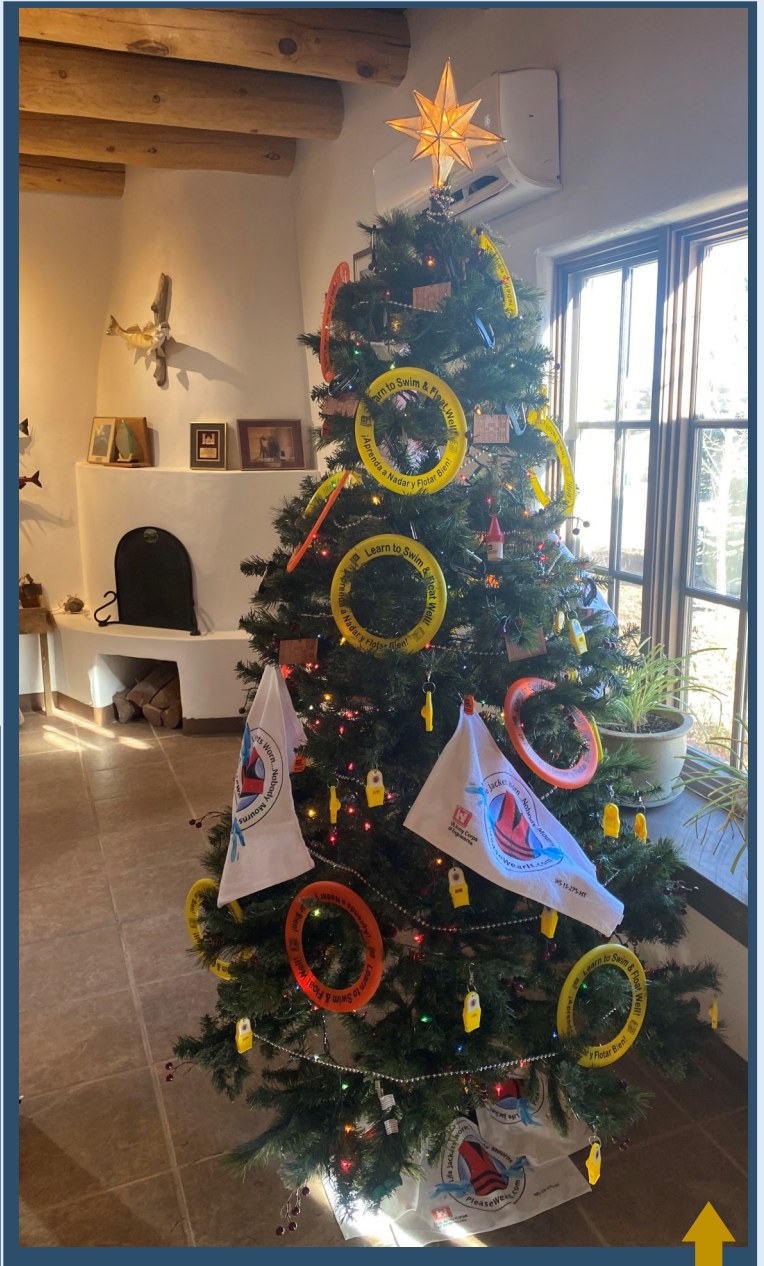


Promote Water Safety Continued

The USACE Strategic Campaign Plan for Reducing Public Fatalities is being updated by the National Water Safety Program and will be available later this year. The current version is still a good resource for ideas. It's available on the NRM Gateway in the water safety section under *Good Enough to Share*. Other great resources on the NRM Gateway in the same location include the boat patrol manual created by LRD and USACE Water Safety Resource Guide for Interpretive Services and Educational Outreach. The LRD boat patrol manual can be used as a model to develop your own division or district manual. The resource guide includes numerous interpretive program outlines that you can use to promote water safety on-site and off-site.

Work with your public affairs office and local media outlets. Send out news releases, contact them directly for interviews, and invite them to your project so they can help you promote water safety and save lives. Your efforts to promote water safety can be both big and small. You can make a difference and save lives, so start early and stay persistent with a focus on adults.

Spreading Water Safety Holiday Cheer!



Jennings Randolph Lake—Holiday Water Safety Float



Water Safety Christmas Tree at Abiquiu Lake. Staff use the tree as a tool to teach visitors about water safety and then allow visitors to take a water safety themed "ornament."

On Dec. 3, 2022, Rangers Howell and Russell and volunteers Adreal Durmon and Paul and Mary Bailey, participated in the Atlanta Christmas Parade. On December 5th, Rangers Smith and Russell and volunteer Paul Bailey made an appearance in the Texarkana Christmas Parade.

Recreation Around USACE



1 Paddle Your Park—St. Louis District. The Paddle Your Park program is a collaborative effort between the St. Louis district, National Park Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Missouri State Parks, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Audubon Center at Riverlands, and other organizations. The partnership aims to increase public awareness of watershed issues, increase public safety, and get kids outside to learn as part of the national Every Kid Outdoors initiative.

This successful event took place at the Audubon Center at Riverlands in West Alton, Missouri, on Oct. 6, 2022, with over 200 4th-grade students participating. The day consisted of a series of on-land activities to introduce students to issues affecting water quality, various aquatic species, concepts of pollution and bioaccumulation, and wetland science, as well as an opportunity to get on the water in canoes. Paddle Your Park's mission is to supplement classroom learning with a field experience that motivates the next generation to take action to restore and protect natural habitats.

Key takeaways of the program:

- The continuation of fostering partnerships with numerous state and federal agencies.
- The interpretation of the significance and importance of natural resources conservation.
- Promotion of water safety.
- Share and display the national value of USACE projects.



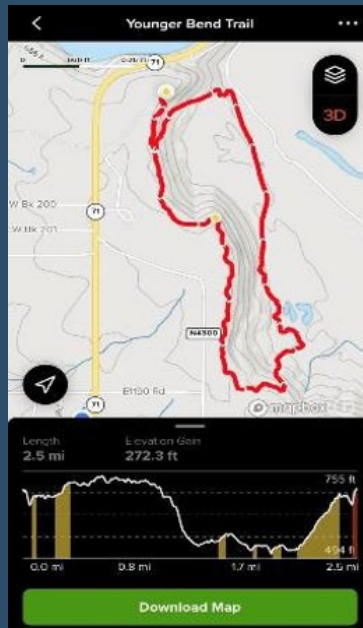
Photos Left to Right: 4th-grade students and teachers experience safe paddling by Big Muddy Adventures. A USACE St. Louis District Park Ranger assists a student while fishing. Students engaged in birding activities as part of a nature walk.

2 2022 Eco-Meet—Lake Shelbyville. The Lake Shelbyville Project Office hosted the 45th annual Eco-Meet on Oct. 6, 2022. The Eco-Meet is an environmental competition for junior high and high school students. Junior varsity teams are comprised of four students in 7th and 8th grades. Varsity teams are made up of four high school students from 9th through 12th grades. A total of 148 students from 37 schools competed in this year's event. Junior varsity event topics included Illinois trees, mammals, and wildflowers. Varsity teams were tested over invasive species, pond ecology, and songbirds. There were 19 junior varsity teams and 18 varsity teams in the competition. Lake Shelbyville staff and volunteers teamed up with the Lake Land College professors and environmental science students to make this event a success.



Recreation Across USACE

3 Younger Bend Trail—Eufaula Lake. Ranger staff at Eufaula Lake completed trail maintenance on the Younger Bend Trail, and they used Trimble GPS units to map the trail. Staff then uploaded all necessary data onto the highly used “All Trails App” to encourage use and share trail information for us-



Enjoy this 2.5-mile loop trail near Stigler, Oklahoma. Generally considered an easy route, it takes an average of 1 h 0 min to complete. This trail is great for birding, hiking, and walking, and it's unlikely you'll encounter many other people while exploring. The best times to visit this trail are September through May.

Length	Elevation Gain	Route Type
2.5 mi	272 ft	Loop

Kid friendly Bird watching Views Wildlife



4 Automated Fee Machines—Buffumville Lake. Buffumville Lake project staff recently installed the first automated fee machine in the New England District (and all of NAD) in their day use park. This machine has been getting a tremendous amount of use. The park frequently reaches capacity and has had to limit visitors. An average of 1,500 visitors per day is common on weekends.



Photo Above: Buffumville Lake visitors. Photos Right: Allegrippis Adventure Weekend participants.

5 Allegrippis Adventure Weekend—Raystown Lake. The Allegrippis Adventure Event is a weekend mountain biking event hosted by Pennsylvania Interscholastic Cycling League (PICL) on the Allegrippis Trail System (ATS) at Raystown Lake. PICL is a youth development organization that uses mountain biking to inspire healthy lifestyles, build communities, and engage youth in trail stewardship. The event features races, team rides, award ceremonies, competitive scavenger hunts, and other fun activities. 18 participants also took part in a volunteer trail work day on Sunday as a way to give back to the ATS!

This event was attended by over 550 student-athletes, 500 coaches, and other supporting family members. It is estimated that over 3,000 people rode the trails during this weekend event!

Seven Points Campground was 100% reserved and Susquehannock Campground was reopened to youths and their families participating in the event.



Citations & Warnings

In Case You Missed It

POC: Heath Kruger, Park Ranger Program Manager

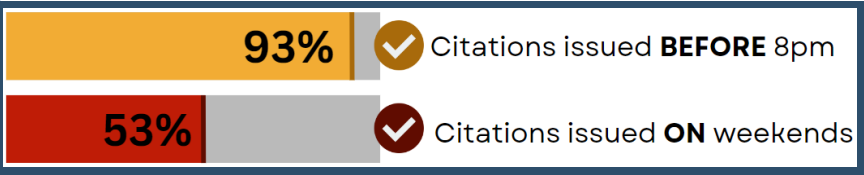
1 If you haven't already received an invitation to this new site, open MS-TEAMS, click the "Join a Team" link, enter code fmc90v1 or utilize type "/join" in the search bar followed by the code. A new channel was added in January: "Ranger Talk, Let's Chat." This is a place for the NRM Community to share ideas, share best practices, or ask our questions.

On Dec. 31, 1970, Public Law 96-611 (the 1970 Flood Control Act Section 234) established the citation authority program for USACE, ushering in the modern era of the USACE Park Ranger. Since this time, Park Rangers across the country have utilized written warnings and citations under Title 36 as a tool to provide the public with safe and healthful recreational experiences while protecting and enhancing natural, cultural, and developed resources.

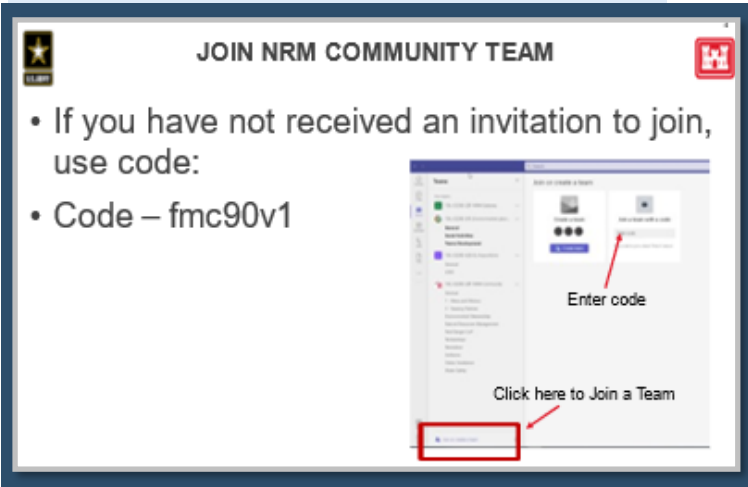
Each year, written warning and citation data is entered into a system of record, compiling citation data from each lake project. Currently, the system of record for collecting citation data is the CWBI-OPS Citation Module. Written warnings and citations entered in this system help demonstrate trends with public users, and resource utilization, and can be used to inform Visitor Assistance Program Managers at all levels across the enterprise. This last year saw USACE Park Rangers issue **18,088** written warnings and **2,130** citations. Each citation and warning have their own individual story behind their existence, but the compiled data can provide a snapshot of growing tendencies occurring at USACE lake and river projects.

Citation and warning reports can be used to understand and learn about common issues or trends which further promote both visitor and Park Ranger safety. As stated in EP 1130-2-550 Chapter 6, "MSC's, districts, and projects should perform a citation data analysis at least biennially." This analysis can show if a project is: 1) consistent as a project, and 2) consistent with the national average of citations to warnings. For 2022, the national average was **8.5** written warning per every citation. Citation data analysis can potentially identify any problem areas or reasons for variances compared to historical trends. Park Ranger personnel and local management can use this trend analysis to discuss if alternative management techniques might be appropriate for an area.

Alternative management techniques, in addition to written warnings and citations, have proven effective at reducing visitor problems. Such techniques include closing areas, physical control such as fencing or barriers, planning and design techniques, public involvement, and partnerships. Evaluating when citations are issued can provide insight to adjusting patrol schedules, increasing law enforcement presence, or creating a local project restriction. Across all MSC's and districts, 93% of citations were issued before 8pm and only 53% of citations issued occurred on the weekends.



By reviewing citation data routinely, Park Rangers and managers can help understand user conflicts, management obstacles, and safety concerns. Regardless of the amount of citation or written warnings that are issued, the protection of facilities and the enforcement of rules shall always be secondary to the safety of USACE personnel. For more information on citation data and to access the CWBI-OPS Citation Module, please visit the NRM Gateway page: <https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/visitassist/citations.cfm>



2 Remaining Day Use Fee-Free Dates in FY 23 for All Visitors to USACE Managed Recreation Areas.

- Jun. 16th, 2023: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Birthday
- Jun. 19th, 2023: Juneteenth National Independence Day
- Sep. 23, 2023: National Public Lands Day

All day use fees for all visitors to Corps managed recreation areas will be waived on the dates listed above. This waiver covers boat ramp launch fees and swim beach fees. This waiver does not apply to camping and camping-related services or fees for specialized facilities such as group picnic shelters.

Other agencies that manage recreation areas located on Corps lands are encouraged, but not required, to comply with this schedule to waive fees in the areas that they manage.

POSTED TO NRM GATEWAY: Instructions on how to program the automated Fee Machines for "Fee-Free Days." Huge thanks to Jonathan Wise for providing this information. Please feel free to reach out to him if you have any questions.

<https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/usefees/machine.cfm>

Ranger Recognition: Steve Stone and Joseph Ogden

Summary: At the Atchafalaya Basin, two Boy Scout camp leaders in kayaks became stranded in dense mats of water hyacinth and were rescued by Park Manager Steve Stone and Natural Resource Specialist Joseph Ogden.

Swamp Base Boy Scout Camp is conducted annually within the Atchafalaya Basin during June. Boy scouts travel in pairs in canoes, while the leaders follow in kayaks on the Indian Bayou canoe trail. The scouts were able to paddle through the hyacinth blockage, but the single kayakers became stranded. Temperatures approached 100 degrees and the leaders ran out of drinking water. USACE staff members were contacted by cell phone at the end of the day and responded with a surface drive vessel and bottled water.

Key Takeaways:

- Heat stroke was imminent and the quick response saved lives.
- Life jackets allowed the kayakers to jump overboard in alligator infested waters to prevent heat stroke.

Thank you for your public service Steve and Joseph.



Help Us Help You: Advertising Vacancy Announcements

When you are recruiting for a position, these communication avenues can help spread your vacancy announcement throughout the NRM CoP:

- 1 The NRM Gateway Community Forum**—Go to the Community Forum page and “Start New Discussion” to post your vacancy. <https://gateway.erd.c.dren.mil/nrm/rangers/nrmforum.cfm?Option=Start&Login=No>
- 2 The NRM Community TEAMS Site**—List your announcement in the Vacancy Notices channel. <https://dod.teams.microsoft.us/channel/19%3adod%3a3eaea68143994425a7776bab38e8abd%40thread.tacv2/2%2520-%2520Vacancy%2520Notices?groupId=4803eda2-5c76-4b9e-96e2-ecc2281153b8&tenantId=fc4d76ba-f17c-4c50-b9a7-8f3163d27582>

Please help keep the site clean by removing your post when the notice expires.

- 3 The NRM Gateway Homepage “Current Jobs and Notices for All”** - Email your vacancy information to Ginny Dickerson. (Virginia.L.Dickerson@usace.army.mil)

Incase You Missed It

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has today announced the release of the [2023 Request for Proposals](#) under the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Restoration Fund.

Eligible applicants include non-profit 501 (c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, Tribal Governments and Organizations, and educational institutions.

This request for proposals (RFP) expects to award approximately **\$1.4 million** in federal and private sector funding in support of projects that restore, enhance, and maintain bottomland hardwood forests and wetlands; implement conservation practices on working agricultural lands; and promote aquatic connectivity.

In pursuit of habitat and species restoration goals, applicants are encouraged to prioritize projects that also address co-benefits and engage local communities and historically underserved landowners:

- **Conservation Co-Benefits:** Projects that will implement habitat restoration or improvement practices that benefit wildlife, while also sequestering carbon and/or protecting and improving water quantity or quality, are encouraged.
- **Community Impact and Engagement:** Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged.

All proposals must specifically address how projects will directly and measurably contribute to the bottomland hardwood, aquatic, and associated species goals outlined in the [Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley Business Plan](#).

Full proposals are due Thursday, April 6, 2023, by 11:59 PM Eastern Time.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact Zack Bernstein (zachary.bernstein@nfwf.org) or Jon Scott (jonathan.scott@nfwf.org).

<https://www.nfwf.org/programs/forestland-stewards/lower-mississippi-alluvial-valley-restoration-fund/lower-mississippi-alluvial-valley-restoration-fund-2023-request-proposals>

Incase You Missed It

NEEF Grant for Pollinator Enhancing Projects

Please visit <https://www.neefusa.org/resource/2023-biodiversity-conservation-grant-enhancing-pollinator-habitats> to learn more about the latest grant offered by our partners at NEEF with support from Toyota. \$200,000 is available to support shovel-ready pollinator habitat enhancement projects that directly support the creation, restoration, remediation, improvement, or protection of habitats. **Projects should impact pollinators on at least 150 acres of public land.** Applicants can request a minimum of \$50,000 and a maximum of \$100,000 to be spent over a one year period.

Grants are open to nonprofit, state or federal government agencies, tribes, and educational institutions.

The grant competition is a 2-part process.

- Submit Letter of Intent. NEEF will select and invite LOI finalists to submit a full application.
- Submit a full application.

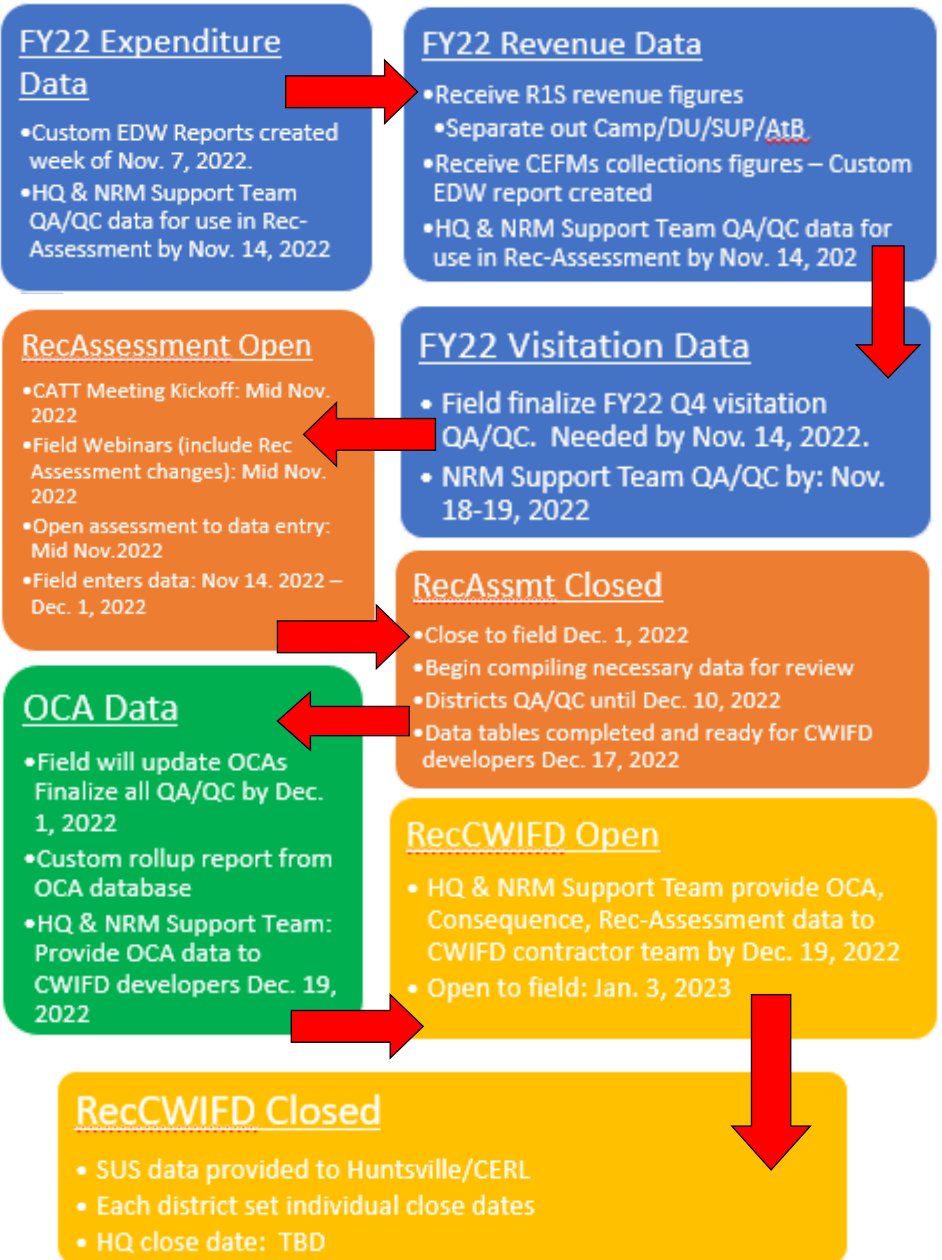
Timeline:

- LOI opened: Feb 1.
- LOI deadline: Mar 1.
- Finalists invited to submit application: Apr 10.
- Application due: May 10.
- Grants awarded: Jun. 9.
- Grant period: Jul. 1, 2023 – Jun. 30, 2024.

If you have any questions, please email grantsadmin@neefusa.org.

HQ Update Continued

2 Understanding and providing accurate data. Building the Recreation Program budget is more than just entering packages into RecCWIFD (*Recreation Civil Works Integrated Funding Database*). There is a significant compilation of datasets which are utilized to populate portions of Rec-Assessment. Data from Rec-Assessment, as many know, is incorporated into RecCWIFD. **Ensuring accurate data is of paramount importance.** This is what the process looked like over the past few months.



3 Understanding program philosophies and direction. Knowing and understanding national priorities, philosophies, and direction of the program helps us all build and defend the best possible recreation budget. Suggestions for FY25 and beyond: 1) Implement methods to reduce “the O&M tail” and increase project efficiencies (e.g. utilize volunteers, explore regionalized efficiencies and strategic use of outgrants, ensure appropriate charging practices), 2) Maximize non-appropriated funding (e.g. FLTP/ERFO, Partnerships, Donations, Special Use Fees, AtB Fees), 3) Know the investment needs of your project (OCAs are critical and investment strategies are a must), and 4) Examine project and program ties to Administration goals.

Innovations Team Spotlight: USACE Hunting Maps WebApp



USACE HUNTING



The USACE Hunting Maps App was designed and produced by the NRM National Innovations Team in FY20. As a growing collection of digital and interactive Hunting Maps from around USACE, our webapp now encompasses more

than 15 states each with multiple USACE Lake Office Hunting Maps. Just by scanning the QR Code with your smartphone, you can link to our webapp or you can even save the link to your smartphone desktop for easy access whenever you head out to federal lands and waterways. Features include but are not limited to: Digital Hunting Maps, Access Points, Location Mapping, Hunting Surveys, Rules and Regulations, and much more. This innovation, is open to all USACE Lakes and we hope you will be a part of it. If you would like your digital hunting maps listed on this webapp, let us know at USACEInnovations@usace.army.mil.



Water Safety in the News

From WYFF4, Anchor/Reporter Jennifer Ready

<https://www.wyff4.com/article/five-people-rescued-lake-hartwell-life-jackets/42712355>

“Life jackets do save lives”: Rescuers say 5 people rescued from Lake Hartwell had on life jackets

ANDERSON COUNTY, S.C. —Five people were rescued from Lake Hartwell on Friday night, according to Josh Hawkins, the director of emergency management for the Anderson County Sheriff's Office.

According to South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, five Furman students took a canoe and an inflatable paddleboard out on the water to camp on an island. Hawkins said the canoe started taking on water.

“Myself and four others got on our rescue vessel at Portman Marina, we took off from there and, in just pitch black, did everything we could to try to find these people,” said Hawkins. “The problem is if you’ve been on Lake Hartwell, especially in that area, it’s a wide-open area, in pitch black, you can’t really see anything much less heads bobbing out of the water, and that’s what we were looking for is just trying to find anybody that’s still there.”

Hawkins said it was dark outside, cold and windy.

“Dispatch stayed on the phone with them and used a system called ‘Rapid SOS’ and pinged the phone while they were on the phone with them and found the precise location and honestly ended up taking a picture of it on the screen and sending it to my cell-phone,” said Hawkins.

Hawkins said this technology helped them locate the 5 individuals.

“As we finally got that ping location locked in, we came upon them, and when we came upon them, all we could see was the glow of a cellphone where he was still on the phone with dispatch,” said Hawkins.

Hawkins said all five people were accounted for. He said one person was on the paddleboard, and the four others were holding onto the paddleboard. He said all five were wearing life jackets.

“The thing that saved their life is all five of them had life jackets on.”

Rescuers said the Rapid SOS system was key in helping bring all five individuals to safety.

“A lot of times on Lake Hartwell, especially during the dark, there is no landmark so having the dispatcher have the ability to actually pinpoint within feet of that phone is very vital for us,” said Ryan Herring from the Anderson technical rescue team.

Hawkins also commended dispatch and rescuers.

“Dispatchers saved their lives, the rescuers that responded that day saved their lives and the fact that they planned ahead and had life jackets on saved their lives,” said Hawkins.

Hawkins reminds people to have life jackets, appropriate clothing for the weather, and a signaling device out on the water.

Incase You Missed It

1 Updated FRAGORD Related to Contractors and Official Visitors

Please see updated FRAGORD 30 to OPOD 2021-38 (USACE COVID Steady State Operations) guidance—effective immediately.

This rescinds the requirement for contractors and official visitors (volunteers who work in USACE facilities or drive/ride in GOVs) to present DD Form 3150 to access Army Facilities and DOD sponsored meetings. It also removes COVID testing requirements for these volunteers.



Grant Opportunity

Sharing awareness: upcoming two-part webinar series on the Federal Transportation Alternatives grant funding program.

USACE has had success in getting funding from this program in the past. One example is at the Raystown Lake Project in Baltimore District where they received \$850k in funding for a non-motorized transportation pathway (trail) connecting their parks and visitor center.

- The first webinar will be Feb. 14, at 2:30 EST, focusing on eligible projects and how funds can be used. To register, visit: https://railstotrails-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZ0tdOipqTiiE9HfH-FimMCv_mdH_fYOdVc9
- The second will be Mar. 9, at 2:30 EST, and will share how applicants have used the funds in innovative ways. To register, visit: <https://railstotrails-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYucOGqqTkpHNcNSqyDI5XU63vYm7pqtQwb>

National Invasive Species Awareness Week

NISAW is an international event to raise awareness about invasive species, the threat that they pose, and what can be done to prevent their spread. NISAW is powered by The North American Invasive Species Management Association ([NAISMA](#)), which supports local, state, and regional organizations to make NISAW their own with these tools:

- **Outreach and Communications.** NAISMA encourages local, state, and regional organizations to use the [FREE NISAW toolkit](#) of outreach and communications resources to raise awareness of local invasive species concerns to elected officials, agency leadership, and the public. NAISMA's emails, social media posts, and digital advertising campaign aims to reach 500,000 viewers.
- **Educational Invasive Species Webinars.** NAISMA hosts [educational webinars](#) on priority invasive species issues the week of NISAW and the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Other organizations may host webinars also. Get more information and register on the [NISAW events](#) page.

Please visit—<https://www.nisaw.org/>

Photo: Phragmites on the MKARNS, photo by Cherrie-Lee Phillip