



THE recreation RETREAT

HQ Update: FICOR Work Plan for 2023-2024

POC: Ryan Hartwig, Recreation Program and Business Line Manager

In July 2022, USACE joined the Departments of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce in reestablishing the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation (FICOR) by signing a new Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

The vision for FICOR is to institutionalize and improve coordination and collaboration among federal agencies whose missions or programs include providing outdoor recreation and conserving or sustainably managing natural and cultural resources. FICOR provides a coordinating framework to address common challenges and opportunities in outdoor recreation and public lands and waters management.



The FICOR work activities will be accomplished through improved collaboration, coordination, and partnership building by:

1. *Facilitating coordination of recreation programs and policies among the Parties (agencies of the MOU);*
2. *Facilitating coordination of federal recreation-related programs and policies with State, Tribal, territorial, and local governments and communities near federal recreational lands and waters;*
3. *Building partnerships between the Parties and a range of private, public, Tribal, and non-profit entities to promote stewardship of and sustainable recreation on federal lands and waters.*

This Issue:



**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).

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*Campaign Hat Photo Credit:
Cynthia Mitchell, USACE*

Toot Your Horn About Water Safety

POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager

A lot of great things are being done across USACE to promote water safety, and the National Water Safety Program wants to share the various ways water safety is promoted in a quarterly journal that will be shared agency-wide. Your help is needed to make the journals a success. Throughout the year, please send your water safety initiatives, including photos and a short writeup about your initiatives, to your division representative on the National Water Safety Committee.

Here are a few water safety initiatives that were included in the first quarterly journal.



1) Philadelphia District's Survey Section, along with state and local first responders, participated in water safety training at a local YMCA in February.



2) Savannah District's J. Strom Thurmond Lake Park Rangers, Makayla Barlow, David Quebedeaux, Chief Ranger Henry Way, and Professional Angler Charlie Evans, promoted the *Every Kid Outdoors* program and water safety to every 4th grade student in Columbia County, Georgia (2,104 students). 5th grade students at North Columbia Elementary School also attended the program. Thurmond Lake also accepted a donation of 50 life jackets from life jacket manufacturer Onyx that will be used to help stock their life jacket



3) Lake Red Rock in the Rock Island District and the local U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Flotilla renewed their partnership to offer Vessel Safety Checks at the lake, and they are also working to schedule a Boating Safety Course for this spring.

4) The Huntington District utilized video PSAs that were developed by the National Water Safety Program in cooperation with The Corps Foundation in multiple movie theaters across the district. Water safety video PSAs were also aired on CBS & FOX television channels. The PSAs were viewed in their entirety 41,000 times.

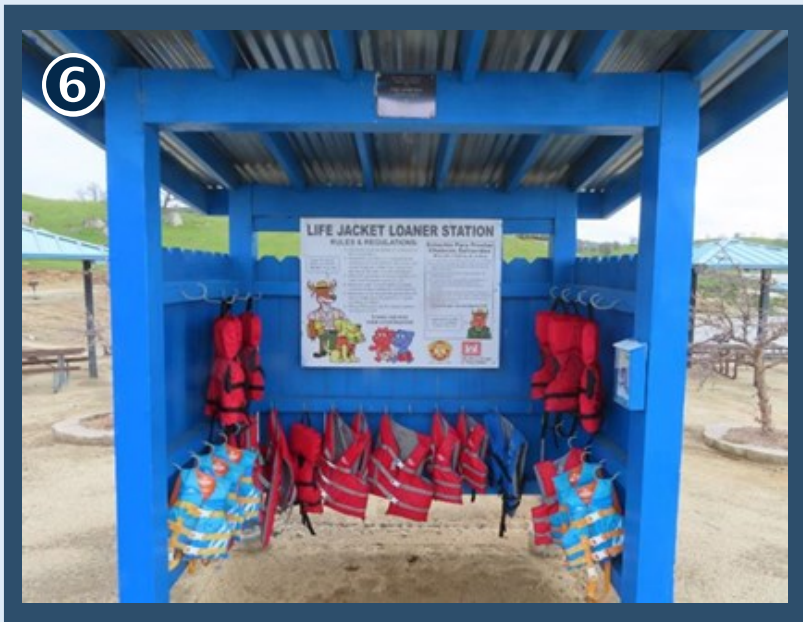


 [Click here for link!](#)



Toot Your Horn About Water Safety Continued

5) On Oct. 25, 2022, the Willamette Valley Project in the Portland District hosted their annual *All Hands Wellness Fair* for their employees. Park rangers set up an interactive area with a Ranger Jeopardy game that included recreation safety questions for employees to answer and win water safety prizes. Bobber the Water Safety Dog also made an appearance so employees could have their picture taken with him.



6) A bright blue life jacket loaner station was installed at Hensley Lake in the Sacramento District, which includes both child and adult vest-type life jackets. Visitors to the swim beach will be able to borrow a life jacket on a first-come, first-served basis and return it the same day.



7) On Feb. 15, 2023, Fort Worth District's Whitney Lake Park Rangers, Kathryn Devers and Matthew Jones, staffed a booth at the *Health and Safety Fair* conducted at West Texas High School. The park rangers promoted water safety to children of all ages and their families by showing them how to inspect and properly size life jackets. They also shared information on the importance of wearing life jackets when in, on, or near open water (e.g., lakes, rivers, etc.). To receive a water safety promotional prize, students had to answer a few water safety questions. Overall, it was a very successful event, delivering the water safety message to over 300 people ranging in ages from 3 to 33.

We look forward to seeing and sharing your water safety initiatives, regardless of how big or small they might be in the Quarterly Water Safety Journals. Keep up the great work, and thank you for all that you do to promote water safety. Together we are making a difference and saving lives on our nation's waterways.

Division Representatives on the National Water Safety Committee to send your water safety initiatives to are LRD: Michael L. McCoy, NAD: Samantha K. Hutchins, MVD: Erica L. Nabers, NWD/POD: Tana K. Wilson, SPD: Carla C. Robinson, SAD: Emily A. Jones, SWD: Abby L. Jones.



Important News on Workamper

POC: Heather Burke, National Partnership and Volunteer Program Manager, heather.d.burke@usace.army.mil

USACE is in the process of renewing next year's contract subscription to Workamper News, which will be the 3rd out of 4 total option years on the contract. In the process of renewing, statistics on USACE use of the contract were requested. The results demonstrated that Workamper is underutilized. In order to exercise the final option year of the contract, increased use is necessary.

If you're not familiar with Workamper, they provide a service where we can advertise our PAID or VOLUNTEER campground host positions. <https://www.workamper.com/>

So far in the September 2022 – August 2023 contract year:

- **163 projects** are using the Employer Gold subscription level (*70 were activated because the project submitted the annual survey during Jul.—Aug. and 93 were activated because the project contacted Workamper to request access or submitted a help-wanted ad*).
- **53 projects** are at the Employer Intro level.
- **5 projects** (out of the 163 active Golds that could do it) have taken the time to create an Employer Tour – with up to 5 photos of the living/working environment they offer at their project. A link to the Employer Tour is included with any Hotline ad the project runs, so Workampers can get more information/visuals.

Online Hotline Ad System: Each project can run 10 ads per year, which equates to their ad being published for up to 20 weeks. So far, **68 of 1200 potential ads** have been used.

- September 2022: 5 projects ran an ad
- October 2022: 5 projects ran an ad
- November 2022: 4 projects ran an ad
- December 2022: 8 projects ran an ad; 1 project ran 2 ads
- January 2023: 18 projects ran an ad; 1 project ran 2 ads; 1 project ran 3 ads
- February 2023: 16 projects ran an ad; 1 project ran 3 ads
- March 2023: 12 projects ran an ad; 2 projects ran 2 ads each

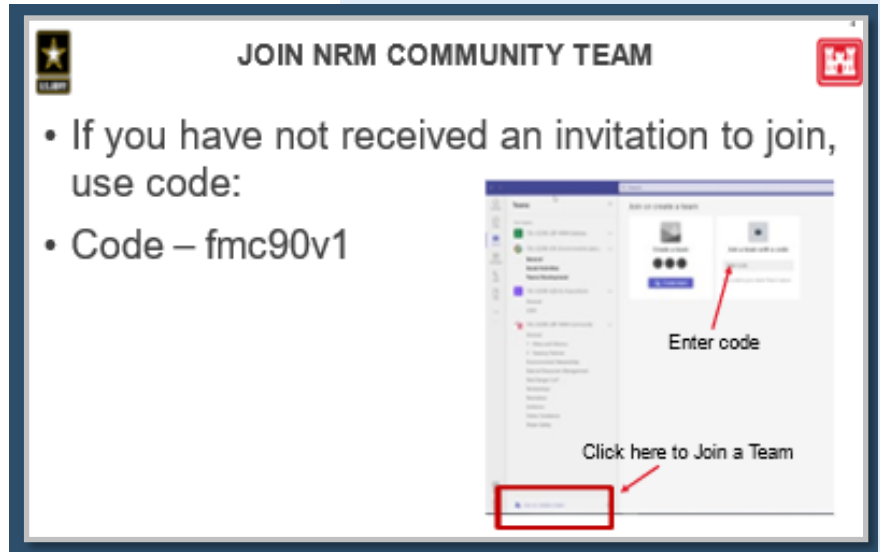
Podcast Episodes: Workamper emails all Employer Gold subscribers every other month, recommending that they participate in the podcast, and sends a weekly email announcing a new podcast episode. In 2022, only one project submitted a podcast, and in 2021, five projects submitted.

In case you haven't checked out Workamper or participated in a previous webinar, here's a "walk thru" video from 2020 that's still available: <https://youtu.be/-bNw0FPALQg>

You can also view the webinar conducted for USACE in Jan. 2021: <https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/learning/exchange.cfm?Option=Webinar&Type=Past&CoP=nrm&Id=590>

In Case You Missed It

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.



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

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

All day use fees for all visitors to USACE 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 USACE lands are encouraged, but not required to comply with this schedule to waive fees in the areas that they manage.

Recreation Around USACE

1 Lake Georgetown (SWF) - A February ice storm caused considerable damage to various recreation facilities on Lake Georgetown. Thanks to an outstanding group of volunteers and staff, campers were able to salvage spring break at campgrounds on Lake Georgetown. To date, 54 volunteers have saved the government \$26,000 in labor cost with this clean-up effort. Although there is still a lot of debris to remove, the volunteers and staff were able to not only get the campsites and park safe, but they also took the opportunity with the closure to paint more than half (75) of the 148 shelters at Jim Hogg. Great team work in action!



2 St. Louis District - St. Louis Park Rangers participated in the 2023 Natural Resources Management meeting Feb. 7 - Feb. 9 at the National Great Rivers Museum. The purpose of this training was to improve overall ranger safety and build a stronger ranger community with the St. Louis District through sharing ideas, knowledge, and improving communication between projects and district office elements. In summary, the meeting:

- › Completed annual refresher training to maintain Title 36 citation authority.
- › Provided a broader understanding of successes and challenges in the St. Louis District.
- › Built relationships between park rangers and district staff.
- › Provided an understanding of Division/District/USACE Policy initiatives.
- › Provided an introduction to a diverse range of topics impacting the Ranger Community.



3 St. Paul District - St. Paul District recreation and natural resource staff gathered at the St. Paul District Office in April for a Recreation and Natural Resources Conference. Staff provided updates on projects, met with leaders and employees of the district, and learned about available resources. The St. Paul District operates 49 recreation areas, ranging from public landings along the Mississippi River to lock and dam visitor centers to full-service campgrounds.



Recreation Across USACE

4 Illinois Waterway (MVR) - The Illinois Waterway Visitor Center (IWVC) hosted their *26th Annual Bald Eagle Watch Weekend* in February. Partners included the State of Illinois Department of Natural Resources, Starved Rock Lodge, Illinois Valley YMCA, the Audubon Society, and the Illinois Raptor Center. In summary:

- › Attendance at the IWVC was around 1,000 people.
- › Volunteers from the Audubon Society brought their personal telescopes to the IWVC to help visitors see the eagles.
- › All local 4th grade classes were invited to a Birds of Prey program at the YMCA where nearly 500 students and teachers learned about birds of prey.
- › Members of the community learned about eagles and other raptors, habitat requirements, and restoration efforts by multiple agencies and non-government organizations.
- › NRM Specialist Julie McDonald was recognized as MVR's Hero of the Month for her coordination and efforts related to the Bald Eagle Weekend. **Great Job Julie!!**



Julie McDonald



Recreation Leadership Advisory Team Meeting Summary

The Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT) and the Stewardship Advisory Team (SAT) met in Memphis, Tennessee on Apr. 11– 13, 2023, to discuss program topics with national relevance. The meeting schedule allowed for a RLAT day, a Joint RLAT/SAT day, and a SAT day. The minutes and presentations from this meeting may be found at the following links: <https://corpsslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/minutes.cfm?Id=23aprllat&Code=rlat> (RLAT & Joint Day) and <https://corpsslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/minutes.cfm?Id=23aprSAT&Code=sateam> (Joint Day & SAT). Current RLAT members are listed below.

NAD—Mike Vissichelli
 NAE—Tia Mercer
 SAD—Amy Cobb
 SAM—Allen Earhart
 (co-chair)

LRD—Jeff Defosse
 LRL—Lori Brewster
 (co-chair)
 MVD—Amanda Kruse
 MVR—Jacob Kresel

NWD—Jonathan Carlisle
 NWS—Taylor Johnson
 SWD—David White
 SWF—Jeff Boutwell

SPD—Tom Ehrke
 SPK—Taylor Saia
 POD—Gayle Rich
 POH—Jill Davis Belanger

