



HQ Update: New PSA Quality Assurance Tool

POC: Ryan Hartwig, Recreation Program and Business Line Manager

For the past 20+ years, the Recreation Business Line has been building a database of accurate and reliable inventory information to include a static number of Project Site Areas (PSAs) and facilities for budgeting and reporting purposes. Therefore, very few changes or corrections should be needed.

To assist with correction/addition requests and in place of the annual review, visit the PSA (Recreation Area) Quality Assurance Tool in NRM Assessment Tool – Recreation PSA module (<https://gateway.erdcdren.mil/nrm/rec-best/nrm.cfm>). The PSA Module will be utilized for quality control and assurance of our recreation areas and associated data. This new tool allows for the review of existing PSAs and associated data online, the ability to indicate corrections for each field, and the creation of a PDF, corrections highlighted, that must be routed for approval signatures. The tool also has the ability to create the PDF for new PSA requests.

Division	Name	Phone
Chair/Manager	Dena Williams	615-202-4095
LRD	Rachel Rush	304-399-5675
	Spencer Taylor	615-736-7988
MVD	Amanda Kruse	314-331-8624 x 8624
	Darren Schneider	319-338-3543 x 6305
NAD	Natalie McCormack	978-318-8373
NWD	Michelle Frobose	503-808-4359
	Bradley Trumbo	509-527-7131
SAD	Ranell Franklin	251-690-2253
	Kathryn Pavolillo	912-652-5053
SWD	Jennifer Linde	817-886-1578
	Terrie Broomhall	918-669-7693
SPD	Hilary Coleman	916-557-7146
	Mayumi Ezoe	559-689-5054
	George Harchack	530-432-6427
At large	Steve Perrin	972-442-3141 x 222
Advisor	Lynn Neher	314-331-8880
HQ Advisor – Rec	Ryan Hartwig	

For a correction/addition request to be considered for inclusion into CWBI-OPS, the deadline for fiscal year submittals will be June 30 of each year.

CWBI-OPS is an important database which feeds into multiple other systems (RecAssessment, CWIFD, VERS, CorpsLakes, OCA, etc.) and plays a vital role in the recreation budgeting process. All requests must come with approval at ALL levels (Project, District, Division). The HQ Recreation BLM will make the final decision following a review and recommendation from the NRM User's Group. For questions, please reach out to the NRM User's Group.

This Issue:



Recognizing Excellence
The 2024 Solar Eclipse



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

Videos, Videos, and More Videos

POC: Pam Doty, National Water Safety Program Manager

Here are some great video resources from the National Water Safety Program.

1 Water Safety Interpretive Program Training Videos

There are a total of 15 training videos (six interpretive programs and nine roving interpretation scenarios) available for you to download from the NRM Gateway Water Safety Section under Training and Conferences. <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/water.cfm> To download: open a video, right click on the video, from the popup menu select Save Video As, and then save it on your computer. **If that doesn't work here is another download option:** in the bottom right-hand corner of the video click on the three stacked dots (more options), select download, select Save As, and then save it on your computer.

These videos are to be used for internal training purposes only and should NOT be shown to the public. They are a great resource to use to train your employees and volunteers on how to present water safety interpretation. The videos were created by the National Water Safety Committee with our target audience in mind, which is adult males who are 18 and older. The six interpretive program training videos include Captain Alcohol, Cold Hand Luke, Flotation Fashion Show, Safety First and Always, Sink Fast, and Sink or Float. The nine roving interpretation training videos include boat show scenario, cleat hitch knot, inflatable life jackets and float coats, I Got Caught, life jacket loaner station, overestimating swimming ability, photo op frames, signs of drowning, and vest type life jacket not worn properly.



Image Above: Clip from a water safety training video.

2 Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns Video PSAs (public service announcements) and "Inflatable Life Jackets: Everything You Need to Know" Educational Video

A total of 53 Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns video PSAs (60, 30, and 15 seconds) and a nine minute "Inflatable Life Jackets: Everything You Need to Know" educational video have been created by the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (The Corps Foundation) in cooperation with the National Water Safety Program. These are outstanding videos that you can use to promote water safety to adults, especially men.

Through a partnership with the US Power Squadrons, the Corps Foundation, and National Water Safety Program the videos have been placed on America's Boating Channel that is available on Roku, Fire TV, Apple TV, and at www.americasboatingchannel.com. These videos are available to view and download on DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/unit/USACE-WS> (you must register and login to download) and are on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/user/USACEwatersafety>.

Please take full advantage of using these videos. The videos can and have been used in several ways including on social media pages, movie theater ads, gas pump video monitors, television station PSAs, visitor center/office lobby monitors, etc. Think outside the box and get them out there so that our target audience can learn from them and be encouraged to wear a life jacket when in, on, or near water.

3 Life Jacket Video Contest

The Corps Foundation has been conducting a Life Jacket Video Contest since 2020 in cooperation with the National Water Safety Program. Some of the 53 Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns video PSAs mentioned above were developed from winning entries and other entries from this contest. The Corps Foundation utilizing U.S. Coast Guard grant funds pays the 55-second video winner \$5,500 and the winner of the 25-second video \$2,500. Deadline for the 2024 video contest is August 18, 2024. *Article continued on page 3.*

Enjoy Watching the
Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns
videos on



bit.ly/TCFonTV

2024 Life Jacket Video Contest

CONTEST DEADLINE: AUGUST 18, 2024



THE PRIZE:

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

*ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY WILL BE SELECTED



TO LEARN MORE:

www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com

Water Safety Good News Story

Vicksburg District (MVK) - Water Safety mascot Bobber dropped the game opening puck at the Shreveport Mudbugs hockey game on Mar. 9, 2024.

Recreation Around USACE

Lake Washington Ship Canal (NWS) - Lake Washington Ship Canal Natural Resource Management staff partnered with University of Washington Men's Rowing Team and Seattle Parks and Recreation Volunteer Program to improve visitor safety and viewsheds along the waterside trail on the south side of Montlake Cut. This volunteer event allowed UW Rowing's "Beyond the Boat" program to develop leadership and connection to the community beyond the collegiate environment.



Photo Above: Bobber drops the puck at the Shreveport Mudbugs game.



Photos Above: Beyond the Boat members at Lake Washington Ship Canal.

The team reduced hedge heights and widths, removed tree saplings, hauled debris away, scraped moss off walkways, and removed invasive plants in just two short hours. Partnering with the Parks department allowed USACE to have enough tools for the team of 47 volunteers who donated a total of 94 hours for a labor value of \$2,989. That value of time from Parks employees and of borrowed tools gave the project an estimated minimum value of \$3,654.



Videos, Continued

USACE employees and members of their immediate household are not eligible to win, but you can help someone creating a video as long as you are not listed as a team member on the entry and no government funds are used to produce the video. Also, your help is needed to promote this video contest to your visitors, partners, local colleges and universities, etc. A promotional flyer, social media image, and sample news release are available on the video contest website, <https://www.lifejacketvideocontest.com> under Resources and Promotional Items.

Thank you for all that you do to help save lives on our nation's waterways! If you have any questions about the information mentioned in this article, please contact me at pamela.j.doty@usace.army.mil or your division representative on the National Water Safety Committee. List of division representatives can be found on the NRM Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/watersafety/members.cfm>.

RLAT

The Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT) provides oversight on the recreation program and serves as an ad hoc committee to the Chief of the Natural Resources Management Branch in HQUSACE. In 2023, this team supported the Recreation Fee Reconciliation Process by reviewing and supplying information for the team completing the process. Sub teams on RLAT are working on the ER Update for Commercial Activities, an update to the Closure Policy to include a Minimum Standards List, and the NRM Strategic Plan. Minutes from the two in person meetings held during 2023 may be found on the NRM Gateway. <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/rlat/rlat.cfm>

Your RLAT Team Members

Lori Brewster—LRD Louisville District
Jacob Kresel—MVD St. Paul District
Molly Wilson—NAD Baltimore District
Taylor Johnson—NWD Seattle District
Jill Davis Belanger—POD Hawaii District
Robert A. Earhart—SAD Mobile District
Taylor Saia—SPD Sacramento District
Jeff Boutwell—SWD Fort Worth District

In Case You Missed It: Handshake Partnership Program

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is committed to continuing and building a partnership culture within our organization and recognizes that partnerships are a key component to continued successful operations.

The Handshake Partnership Program began in 2004 and has provided “seed money” to USACE facilities. In total, 218 partnership projects have engaged over 747 partners on federal lands. These projects have improved recreational opportunities and benefited environmental stewardship activities while promoting the USACE missions. Partners have contributed over \$10.3 million in volunteer hours, professional services, materials and supplies, equipment, and funds to these efforts.

This program provides incentive to use our partnering authorities to their fullest potential and an opportunity to compete for additional funding to further partnerships. USACE project offices are invited to submit applications to obtain funding assistance to enter into partnerships with non-federal entities (i.e. Challenge Partnership Agreements) to accomplish activities which benefit recreation facilities and/or natural resources at USACE water resource development projects. Applications must be received **no later than Sep. 30, 2024**.

The Handshake Program application instructions and application form can be found on the NRM Gateway at <https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>.

In Case You Missed It: Volunteer Value Rate

The FY24 figure for the value of service per hour of volunteer time is \$33.49. When entering FY24 volunteer data in CWBI-OPS later this year, this value will be auto-calculated for you.

The value of volunteer time is based on the average hourly earnings of all production and non-supervisory workers on private nonfarm payrolls (as determined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics). <https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

For consistency, it is the rate used by all the federal land management agencies to calculate their volunteer value each year. This information will also be posted on the NRM Gateway at:

<https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/employees/faqs.cfm?id=volunteer&View=Yes>

Remember Tim Bischoff

On December 22, 2023, the Rend Lake team lost a cherished member – Ranger Tim Bischoff. Many visitors to Rend Lake likely interacted with Tim at the Visitor Center, where he greeted everyone with a smile and shared his love for interpretation and helping others. Tim began his career with USACE in 1994 at Wappapello Lake, St. Louis District. Later he moved to Rend Lake where he spent the rest of his career. During his time at Rend Lake, Tim worked closely with Eagle Scouts, mentoring them through their projects, oversaw the vision for the Rend Lake Visitor Center when it was constructed, and left an indelible impression on many, many, Rend Lake visitors and team members.



Tim's greatest passion was interpretation. He loved to weave elaborate stories from facts of science and history. Tim's passion and embodiment of interpretation did not go unnoticed. In fact, he is the only 2-time recipient of the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. The first award came in 2004, celebrating Tim's remarkable reenactments in the Army's coast-to-coast Lewis and Clark Expedition known as the “Corps of Discovery Bicentennial Expedition.” From 2003-2006 Tim internalized every aspect of George Drouillard, a half-French/half American Indian hunter, scout, and interpreter, for the Corps of Discovery. He changed his accent, learned French, and learned the art of Indian Sign Language.

Tim's second Chittenden Award came in 2021 in recognition of Tim spearheading #USACEeducates, an online interpretive campaign. This online resource launched in the peak of COVID-19 shutdowns to provide free educational materials to parents, teachers, and students stuck at home. Maybe even more notable is that during this time, Tim was also fighting his battle with cancer after being first diagnosed in November 2015. As an immunocompromised person, Tim had a lot to worry about during the COVID-19 pandemic, but despite that he still found a way to help others.

Those who knew or met Tim Bischoff know a man dedicated to teaching and touching lives. They know a man who cared endlessly about people. They know a man who put passion into everything he did. Even when dark clouds hung over Tim, he was sunshine; always positive; always enduring.

Photo: Roseana Burick, Ryan Braaten, and Amanda Kruse at Tim's celebration of life.



IIJA Work In Action

Mississippi River Project (MVR) —The Mississippi River Project, Facilities Support Unit completed electrical renovations at the Shady Creek Recreation Area utilizing Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding. Phase one of the project consisted of trenching over 9,000 feet of wire, installing 54 concrete pedestal bases and erecting three new service disconnects. Phase two consisted of installing new camp site electrical pedestals provided by an in-kind agreement. The new pedestals are a quick-detach design and can be removed quickly and safely to prevent inundation during high water. Completion of this project resulted in the modernization of a popular recreation area, and in doing so, facilitates efficient high water operations and quick flood recovery.



Photos Above: IIJA efforts at the Shady Creek Recreation Area.

Recreation Around USACE

Carlyle Lake (MVS) —The Carlyle Lake Project, in partnership with the Case-Halstead Public Library, hosted its annual Eagle Watch event. Over 290 participants assembled at Carlyle Lake to experience the presence of a live bald, golden, and harpy eagle up close. Participants were also able to join in two informative programs facilitated by the World Bird Sanctuary at the Case-Halstead Public Library. Attendees connected with NRM specialists at the General Dean Access Area and were able to use spotting scopes and observe wild bald eagles feeding along the Kaskaskia River.



Photos Above: Participants in Carlyle Lake's Eagle Watch.

Help Us—Help You: Gateway SmartBook

The SmartBook feature on the NRM Gateway is an excellent tool that can be used to network and enhance communication amongst the NRM community. The SmartBook provides information on individuals as well as their expertise, and allows you to filter by location, business line, programs, and sub-Community of Practice membership. It also creates an email list that boosts communication across USACE. Unlike a DLL mailing list or Outlook search, the SmartBook makes communication with points of contact much easier and makes it easier to find information that you may be looking for.

On the SmartBook, individuals have the freedom to manage and update their own profiles at any time, as well as their colleagues', both past and present. SME's and/or PDT leads have the ability to update their member information at any time and can delete employees that are no longer active in the NRM community. It is very important to keep the information on these profiles up to date, so it's a good idea to view yours and your team's profiles regularly to verify that all details are current and correct.

So, how do I use the SmartBook?

In order to access the SmartBook, visit the following link: [SmartBook \(dren.mil\)](https://dren.mil/SmartBook)

At the top of every screen, there are two drop-down menus to create lists by: "Select a Topic Area/Business Line" and "Select by Office" for a list by District/Division. At any time, you can use the search bar to search an individual by their name. You can also look at "Specific Lists" to view the roster of Deputies, OPMs, Lake Managers, Park Rangers, etc.

On the side menu of the SmartBook, under "Smart Options", you can "Add a new POC". From here, an individual can add their name, contact information, job title and location, and any areas of expertise they may have. Also, while under an individual's profile, there is an option on the left side menu to "delete listing" if a duplicate entry needs to be removed or if an employee has retired, etc.

Knowledge Management Portal for NRM

The Natural Resources Management Program has several pages on the Civil Work Knowledge management Portal.

Please visit: <https://usace.dps.mil/sites/KMP-CW/SitePages/Natural-Resource-Management.aspx> to access program priorities, metrics, newsletters, and more.

Recognizing Excellence

1 Joshua Springer—Eufaula Lake (SWT) - Tulsa District
Commander Colonel Hudson presented the Tulsa District Park Ranger of the Year award to Mr. Joshua Springer from the Eufaula Lake Office. Congratulations to a very deserving individual!



2 SWT Life Saving Award - Park Rangers Matt Nolen, Preston Jones, and Environmental Specialist Raef Perryman received the Life Saving Award for their actions in rescuing individuals that were stranded on a shallow flat in rough conditions at Oologah Lake. These employees were recognized for their outstanding level of service and quick actions to prevent injury and loss of life.



3 SWT Individual Water Safety Award - Park Ranger Randi Clifton was recognized as the recipient of the SWD Water Safety Employee of the Year award from the National Boating Federation. Ranger Clifton spearheaded various initiatives aimed at promoting water safety.



4 NWW Natural Resources Management Awards -
Each year, the NWW NRM Community recognizes two individuals at their annual NRM workshop. The awards are:

1) NRM Professional of the Year Peer Award.

This award is selected by voting of all NWW uniformed NRM staff. In 2023, Avery King was given this award by her peers for her can-do attitude, willingness to help, and ability to find solutions to challenging situations.



2) Didn't Drop the Ball Award.

This award is chosen by the NWW NRM Chief to recognize an individual who juggled many actions over the past year and "Didn't Drop the Ball". In 2023, Leigh Cranmer was given this award for her efforts to stand up the new conservation biologist position, continuing to build productive relationships with partners in NWW Planning, training the new NWW Master Planner, and still providing great customer service to the District.



5 NWS NRM Employee of the Year. Miranda Berg was recognized as the 2024 NWS NRM Employee of the Year for her efforts in going above and beyond to support the NRM program in a variety of ways.



Recognizing Excellence

Calvin Foster was presented with the 2024 South Pacific Division Natural Resource Management Award for setting the standard of excellence in the USACE NRM Program throughout his 51-year USACE career.

Calvin's impact on the USACE NRM Program is truly awe inspiring and his accomplishments are second to none. He has proudly served as the SPD Representative on RLAT, SAT, the OPM CoP Advisory Board, ES OMBIL, ES BEST, as the SPD NRM Champion for Boat Operations Training, and as a member of the HQ Special Events Taskforce. Calvin has also served as a lead on the SPK Boat Operator Instructor Team and as an original Pepper Spray Instructor. His HQ accomplishments include overseeing the West Coast's Mandatory Life Jacket Study efforts, re-writing policy related to boat operations and special events, and serving as a SME for the NRM Gateway.

Perhaps most importantly, Calvin has established a lasting legacy in the USACE NRM Community for his ability to lead and mentor others. Calvin's accomplishments reflect great credit upon himself, the South Pacific Division, and the United States Army Corps of Engineers.



Fee Free Days

The 2024 fee-free days for the USACE user fee program have been set. This initiative was first instituted on Veteran's Day 2006 with the intent to support and honor the men and women who have served the Nation in the armed services. Including the recurring Veterans Day and National Public Lands Day, USACE will recognize the following five days as the FY24 Day Use Fee Free dates.

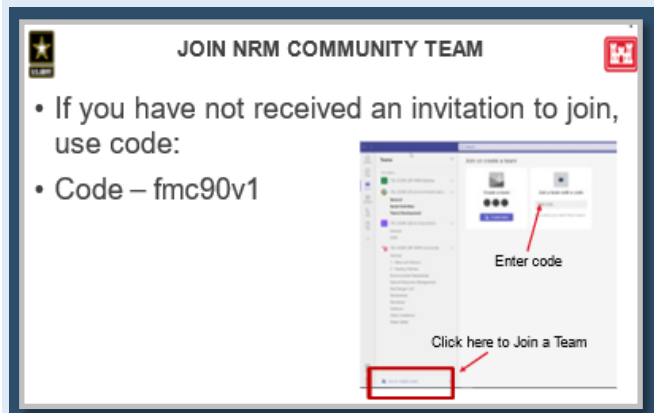
The remaining 2024 Fee Free Dates are:

- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Birthday: Jun. 16, 2024**
- **Juneteenth National Independence Day: Jun. 19, 2024**
- **National Public Lands Day: Sep. 28, 2024**
- **Veterans Day: Nov. 11, 2024**

For questions, please contact Ryan Hartwig at Ryan.D.Hartwig@usace.army.mil or Jason Owen at Jason.W.Owen@usace.army.mil.

In Case You Missed It

NRM Community Team. 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.



NRM Trainings & Workshops

1 SWT Natural Resources Workshop—From Feb. 20—22, 2024, the annual SWT Natural Resources Workshop was held in Broken Arrow, OK. This two day training consisted of over 70 NRM personnel training on personal protection, pepper spray, verbal defense and influences, ranger safety, Title 36, and updates from various offices from around the District. A special emphasis was placed on all aspects of safety. Special guests from out of District included David White – SWD, and personnel from NWK and SWG. At the annual SWT Natural Resources Workshop, six individuals graduated the SWT Ranger Training Program.

Rangers from left to right: Josh Glazebrook, Niki Baker, Ryan Parisotto, Bridger Montgomery, Alex Bilinski, Dillon Chaloupek. Congratulations to everyone on a job well done!



2 NWD Ranger Training CoP Meeting—The NWD Ranger Training and CoP Meeting was held in Boise, ID in early March. The first ever division-wide ranger training in NWD was a great success. Approximately 150 uniformed NRM staff and 25 support staff attended. The NRM community heard from several HQ and NWD representatives and partnering agencies, completed required training, and shared best practices and lessons learned. Key topics included ranger safety, drug awareness and identification, partnership opportunities, the future of NRM in USACE, verbal defense, and self defense training.

What's next? The plan is to meet every three years at alternating locations to maintain communication, promote idea sharing, and complete training.



NRM Trainings & Workshops

3 SPD Park Ranger Training—The South Pacific Division hosted the annual SPD Park Ranger Training at the Monterey Presidio from Feb. 26—Mar. 01, 2024. Approximately 75 park rangers from across all four districts of the SPD Operations Community of Practice gathered in Monterey to receive required annual training. Participants gained knowledge in a variety of topics, including: self-defense, water safety, interpretation, critical incident stress management, bloodborne pathogens, tactical communications training, and sustainability. The training was a resounding success and will directly prepare this critical group of field personnel to assist our visitors in the upcoming recreation season.



In Case You Missed It

Our partners at Leave No Trace have selected four USACE lakes for their 2024 Spotlight program! <https://lnt.org/our-work/protecting-parks/spotlights/>

These include:

- April 12-14: Beaver Lake, AR <https://lnt.org/event/leave-no-trace-spotlight-beaver-lake/>
- June 6-8: Rend Lake, IL <https://lnt.org/event/leave-no-trace-spotlight-rend-lake/>
- June 21-24: Hodges Village Dam, MA <https://lnt.org/event/leave-no-trace-spotlight-hodges-village-dam/>
- November 1-3: Skiatook & Keystone Lakes, OK <https://lnt.org/event/leave-no-trace-spotlight-skiatook-keystone-lakes/>

Sites that were selected will receive three days of activation put on by the Subaru/Leave No Trace Traveling Teams that can include service projects, staff and community training, community outreach, and youth programs. There is no cost for USACE to participate (other than the time required for preparation and hosting the event). Leave No Trace has partnered with Airbnb with a \$500k grant to help host these events around the country.

Last year, a similar event was held at Summersville Lake in WV. The program was previously called the Hot Spot program, and was rebranded this year to Spotlights. Read more about it on page 12 of their annual report. <https://lnt.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2022HotSpotReport.pdf>

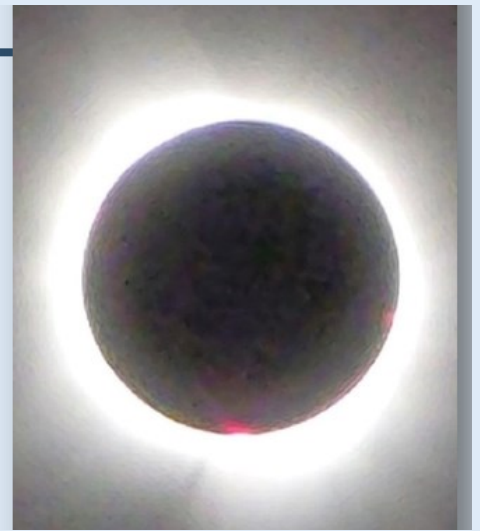
Request for nominations for the 2025 programs will be announced in late July/early August.

***Congrats to the selected projects!
We look forward to seeing some great
community involvement at these events.***

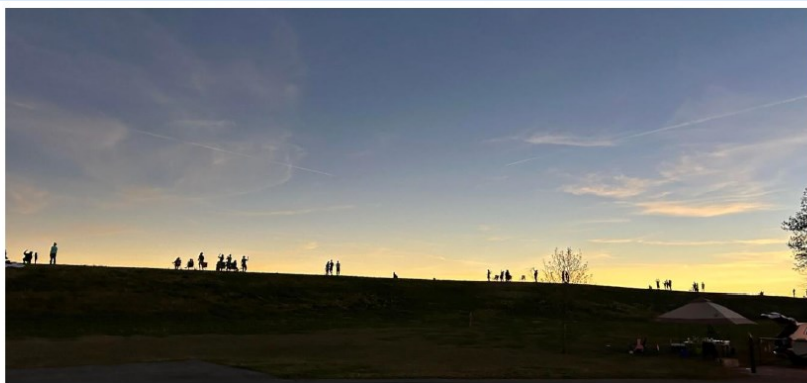
The 2024 Solar Eclipse

On April 8, 2024 a total solar eclipse crossed North America, passing over Mexico, the U.S. and Canada. Many USACE projects were either near or in the path of totality which resulted in higher than normal visitation for this time of year as people travelled from across the globe to witness the event. Many projects coordinated with local planning and emergency management agencies for crowd management in preparation of the event. Here are some highlights!

1 Lake Ouachita & Lake Greeson (MVK) - The staff at Lake Ouachita prepared for over a year for the eclipse event and had Rangers stationed at key areas where people were expected to arrive for the viewing. Lake Greeson recreation areas were near capacity with visitors using day use areas to view the 2024 solar eclipse. Staff noted the excitement was contagious and opened the door for impromptu water safety programs and education. No issues were reported during the event. Visitors arrived from all over the world including Argentina, England, Germany, and South Africa.



2 Kaskaskia River (MVS) - Visitors to Southern Illinois found the Kaskaskia River Project to be a great location to view the solar eclipse. With over four minutes of totality, the recreation areas at the project were highly utilized as the USACE team welcomed visitors with lock tours, water safety messages, and great viewing opportunities. The eclipse provided an opportunity to interpret the USACE mission to visitors who had previously never visited a project site.

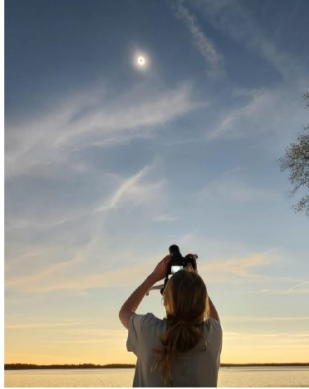


3 Carlyle Lake (MVS) - Visitors to Carlyle Lake discovered a great viewing location for the solar eclipse. Within the area of totality, the recreation areas at the project accommodated over 3,000 visitors who were seeking a location to view the event. Park Rangers greeted onlookers at the Visitor Center and interpreted the USACE mission.



Eclipse continued.

4 Carlyle Lake (MVS) - The Rend Lake Project hosted more than 12,000 visitors for the 2024 Solar Eclipse. With over four minutes of totality, visitors from around the globe sought out Rend Lake. Visitors from Canada, Germany, England and 32 states were accommodated by the recreation features the project offers. Diligent planning efforts by the Rend Lake team and their partners resulted in a highly successful event.



5 Wappapello (MVS) - An estimated 10,150 visitors from more than 10 different states viewed the historical solar eclipse at Wappapello Lake. With over four minutes of totality, the Southeast Missouri region experienced a large boost in tourism to include international travelers, greatly impacting the local and regional economies.



6 Lake Texoma and Fort Gibson Lake (SWT) - The Lower Red River field staff along with additional staffing from Lake Texoma and Fort Gibson Lakes worked diligently to ensure all visitors to the Lower Red River Area Projects had a safe and enjoyable experience during the solar eclipse event. Visitors from over 35 states and several countries visited the area to see the eclipse. The weather cooperated and mostly clear skies were enjoyed by those looking to experience the rare event.

7 Bardwell Lake, Whitney Lake, Waco Lake, Proctor Lake, Navarro Mills Lake, and Belton Lake (SWF) - Hundreds of visitors gathered at Whitney Lake to witness the total solar eclipse. Whitney Lake provided an ideal viewing location with some visitors travelling from Australia, Germany, and England. Staff and visitors of Navarro Mills Lake used the opportunity to spread awareness for water safety by installing water safety banners in all the parks and visiting with campers—some of whom were from other countries including Belgium and Germany.



The National Sign Advisory Working Group (SAWG)

The National Sign Advisory Working Group (SAWG) met 16-18 April for the annual sign standards meeting. Members of the SAWG work together to ensure consistency and guidance across divisions. The meeting was held at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia with a field trip to the Unicom sign shop housed at the Federal Correctional Institution in Cumberland, Maryland.



Pictured from left to right: (Back row): Allen Rudicil (NAE), Nancy Sumners (SAS), Oscar Gonzalez (SPK), Tim Grundhoffer (MVP/MCX), Doug Vogel (MVR), Melissa Bean (NWK), Jeff Mangum (NAE); (Second row): Terrie Broomhall (SWT), April Richards (LRP); (Front row): AJ Jensen (National Sign Manager)

Recreation Around USACE

Little Rock District (SWL) - Little Rock District Public Affairs Office conducted a lock and dam tour with local recreation oriented social media influencer known as “all About Arkansas”. With a presence on Facebook, Instagram and the Internet; All About Arkansas is a family-oriented site with more than 80,000 followers in the region. The team routinely works with state and local recreation outlets to promote the state and its many outdoor recreation opportunities. SWL PAO Chief Jay Townsend and Deputy Commander “CT” Warren took the AAA and their family on a tour of Arthur V. Ormond Lock and Dam near Oppelo, Arkansas. Townsend and LTF Warren discussed the mission of USACE and the global reach of the MKARNS as an inland waterway. Opportunities like this allow others to amplify the USACE message within their own sphere of influence. This in turn provides an opportunity for Arkansans used to seeing the recreation side of USACE an opportunity to experience the agency’s full spectrum of operations at home and abroad.



50th Anniversary of West River Nature Trail is Preserved and Upgraded By Another Eagle Scout 50 Years After the First Eagle Scout and Presidential Citation

POC: Viola Bramel, Park Ranger West Hill Dam

Along the pristine West River, with unusual habitats, wildlife, and plant populations to be protected for all generations to come, including a rare New England wetland “Quaking Bog”, visitors find a healthy population of pitcher plants, Sphagnum mosses, Bog turtles and much more. In 1973, Eagle Scout Walter Guertin volunteered at West Hill Dam to establish, clear, and construct the West River Nature Trail intended to protect the habitats and rare species found there. His work included developing signs and a brochure. His trail included references to the many habitats, upland and forested above the bog, and all the wildlife who find food, shelter, and reproduce there.

Walter began and finished his construction and dedication in 1973 with his Eagle Honor Court held after the Boy Scout Review Board. The citations and ceremony were official in March 1974. Walter brought his President Richard M. Nixon Presidential Citation Letter to the 50th anniversary celebration of West Hill Dam's dedication.

What a coincidence that Eagle Scout Brandon Spiller had his plan approved and completed the construction of brand new kiosks and laminated panels, almost 50 years to the month since Walter's project.



Walter viewing a copy of his Presidential letter on the “1950’s Timeline collage”-Walter has glasses on closest to the panel .



Eagle Scout Brandon Spiller as he works on his project and with his Presidential citation.

Brandon made use of off-site construction parties with his patrol and volunteers to work on his project. Brandon carries an advanced course load at Northbridge High School, while already taking accelerated college courses at Worcester Polytechnic University in engineering. He worked on his project during evenings and weekends to upgrade the entire trail in about a three-week period. West Hill Dam Park Ranger Viola Bramel, mentored and assisted with some of the installation, construction, and work details. Together, they had a working joke about water bottles on the trail, as when they didn't have a level to make the new signposts plumb, their clear water bottles was an old trick Ranger Viola taught the scouts. How appropriate a water bottle was placed on the podium for his Ranger Recognition presentation at the Eagle Scout Honor Court on January 12, 2024.

The West Hill Dam Eagle Scout Timeline currently has 73 Eagle Scout's complete and two pending. Additionally, two Girl Scout Gold, two Girl Scout Silver and nine Girl Scout Bronze Award recipients; all under the supervision and guidance of USACE Park Ranger Viola Bramel.

From the Innovations Team: Ranger Patrol Log App Prototype



The Ranger Patrol Log App is a map-based form accessed through the secured side of USACE managed phones and can replace the paper version Park Rangers use on patrol to document findings and take notes for an incident report. Several automated data entry fields in the ESRI Survey123-based app are enabled that makes data entry fast and efficient. Web-based dashboards display and aggregate live data as it is submitted for users in the office to visualize stats on visitor contacts, warnings, and citations for upward reporting. Field testing is occurring at Lake Lanier and Carter Lake. Three to five additional projects are planned to be added this summer. Contact Russell Lundstrum by email russell.a.lundstrum@usace.myl or phone at 770-904-3252 for any questions!



Image Left: Survey123 app: Name, Radio, and Location are auto-filled for fast data entry on a smartphone. Image Right: Stats dashboard: interactive to filter a combination of data points and category.

Innovations In Progress

Innovation

Status

Digital Ranger Log

Pilot/Field Testing at Lake Lanier and Carters Lake

Hazardous Tree App

Pilot/Field Testing at Millwood Lake

Hunt Fish USACE

Pilot/Field Testing to occur at Canton Lake, John Redmond Lake, Marion Lake, Big Hill Lake, Council Grove Lake, Fall River Lake, Perry Lake, and Tion-