

# THE recreation RETREAT

## HQ UPDATE: NRM DASHBOARDS

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I am pleased to share that NRM Financial Reporting has been released in CWBI-Ops!

Over the last several months, the CWBI team has worked to discover the data and logic of legacy reporting in the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW). The team recently announced that six of the seven legacy EDW reports identified for modernization are complete, with one additional report to be released soon. Anyone can access these reports from the CWBI-OPS NRM homepage or directly at the link below.

<https://app.mil.powerbigov.us/groups/90976429-d90d-4acd-ab76-fa945aba2c3d/dashboards/3403f90a-d5af-4f56-9365-d9fb7a49da60>

Additional NRM Dashboards, including NRM Hiring Actions, and Recreation Operational Status, have been compiled and are available on the NRM Knowledge Management Portal.  
<https://usace.dps.mil/sites/VKMP-CW/SitePages/NRM-DASHBOARDS.aspx>

Please remember: Projects are required to log in at <https://gateway.erdc.dren.mil/nrm/opstatus/> and ensure the Recreation Operational Status accurately reflects project status changes.  
New: Direct public-facing link for Recreation Operational Status is <https://geospatial.sec.usace.army.mil/arcgis/apps/dashboards/9f3fef08cfd44aa8648ca683a2621d0>



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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.  
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*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 readers with 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.*

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## OUTSTANDING IN THE NRM FIELD: Rachel Rush 2025 Natural Resources Management Employee of the Year

Rachel Rush, Huntington District Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Program Manager, is the 2025 recipient of the Chief of Engineers Natural Resources Management Employee of the Year Award. The NRM Employee of the Year Award annually recognizes exceptional work in the field of natural resources management. Ms. Rush's outstanding achievements and contributions demonstrated her bulldog like commitment to the NRM profession, community, and stakeholders. Many of Rachel's accomplishments have a regional or national impact so it was only fitting that she was nominated by a sister district with assistance from multiple MSCs and national program managers.

"Ms. Rush's superior work ethic and drive make her a role model for all Corps of Engineers employees" said Matthew Palmer, Detroit District Business Line Manager, who nominated Ms. Rush for the award. Rachel's numerous behind-the-scenes contributions to the MSC and national program motivated him to recognize Ms. Rush. Since working directly with Ms. Rush in 2022 on the REC and ENS Budget CATT teams, he quickly saw first-hand what an asset she was to the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division.

### Looking Forward to Next Year!

Do you work with high performing employees in the field of natural resources management or interpretation? If so, the Chief of Engineers Natural Resources Management Employee of the Year Award and Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence are annual USACE awards that recognize employees who do exceptional work.

Each Spring, the Headquarters Natural Resources Management Branch sends out a call for nominations to recognize deserving employees' accomplishments from the preceding year. If you're considering submitting a nomination for these prestigious awards in the Spring of 2026, start developing your nominations now!

If you have questions about the awards or criteria, please reach out to Ms. Tara Whitsel by email at [Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil)



Ms. Rush is an asset not only to the MSC, but also for the national NRM program. In 2024, Ms. Rush served as the senior LRD representative for the NRM User's Group, VERS CATT, VERS Governance Board, and the REC and ENS Budget CATT. Her active participation on these teams only partially illustrates her value to the Corps of Engineers. Rachel serves on national teams to share programmatic insights and improvements across the enterprise. Whether it's assisting a new Recreation Business Line Manager in a sister district, providing in-depth fee training to the Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT), or mentoring park rangers in the field, Ms. Rush exhibits she is a leader, team player, and dedicated professional in support of the Corps of Engineers missions.

Ms. Rush's commitment to the NRM community is particularly evident in her work in the fee program. Since 2017, she worked behind the scenes as the subject matter expert for the implementation of the automated fee machine program and towards resolution of the accounting discrepancies with the Finance Center. Rachel selflessly provides trainings across the nation in support of improving project and district fee programs. The trainings not only provide a basic understanding of the program, but also the tools to identify and resolve future discrepancies. She has worked tirelessly with Ventek to create the National Fee Machine Report, reducing administrative man hours which can then be allocated towards higher priority needs within the recreation program.

Ms. Rush's unwavering personal commitment and energy to improving the NRM program from the field level to Headquarters level is unsurpassed. Her persistent drive to improve Huntington District and the national program has made her standout as an expert in her field and an asset to the Corps of Engineers. Her contributions and leadership in the organization have been carried out with unrelenting persistence and enthusiasm. Most importantly her sharing of information will ensure our districts and field projects possess the knowledge to excel. She sets the standard for collaboration and making herself available to assist the natural resources community. Ms. Rush's outstanding achievements and contributions demonstrate her commitment to her profession and reflect positively upon herself, the Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.





## OUTSTANDING IN THE NRM FIELD: Grace Trimble 2025 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence

Grace Trimble, W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir, is the 2025 recipient of the Chief of Engineers Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. The Chittenden Award annually recognizes outstanding contributions in interpretation and environmental education. Ms. Trimble effectively leveraged partnerships to mentor the next generation of interpreters and expand the reach of the interpretive program. Her diverse interpretive programs engaged students from preschool to college level to lifelong learners, all while highlighting the important missions of the Corps of Engineers. A hallmark of Ms. Trimble's career has been her continued dedication to interpretation and outreach.

Throughout her career, Ms. Trimble has been committed to the principles of interpretation and conveying memorable messages to her audiences. As a Pathways Ranger in 2018, Grace began her career by developing creative interpretive programs to enhance Huntington District visitors' understanding of the various missions of the Corps. Her outreach activities in Huntington District included partnering with local trade schools and colleges which provided students job building experiences while contributing to beneficial projects at Corps reservoirs. After recently just starting with the Corps, Ms. Trimble was awarded the 2019 Great Lakes and Ohio River Division Interpretive Award. Since that time, her passion for interpretive programming has continued to grow as she has continued her career at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir in the Wilmington District. Building upon her past experiences and successes has culminated in her selection as the 2025 Chief of Engineers Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence recipient.

Investing time and effort on students preparing to enter the workforce has been something Grace has admirably done since the beginning of her career. Grace partners with Appalachian State University to foster relationships and to grow future generations of environmental and interpretive professionals. Appalachian students were led by Grace in obtaining real world work experience in designing eight separate interactive wayside displays along the Lakeside Nature Trail at W. Kerr Scott. The partnership provided the opportunity for students to implement learning objectives from their classroom while giving back to the local community through environmental education displays. Further strengthening the partnership with Appalachian State, Ms. Trimble mentored approximately four dozen students and provided job shadowing opportunities so that graduating students would have beneficial insights into the natural resources job fields and the Corps of Engineers.

Ms. Trimble's engaging approach to interpretation is an inspiration to her colleagues, the public, and those she mentored throughout 2024. Since starting as a Pathways Ranger only a handful of years ago, she has blossomed into a leader in interpretation for Wilmington District. Grace's contributions on the Wilmington District's Water Safety and Environmental Education team provided her the opportunity to mentor emerging interpretive rangers. Her dedication to education, community outreach, ranger colleagues, and partnership-building will have impacts that transcend 2024 for many years to come.

### Additional Nominees

Additional nominees for the NRM Employee of the Year included:

- Taylor Johnson (NWD)
- Glenn Werner (NAD)
- Nicole Govan (LRD)
- Bradley Mitchel (SWD)

Congratulations to ALL of our award winners and nominees. You set an example of excellence and your contributions to the Natural Resources Management Program, USACE, and the Nation are commendable.

### Additional Nominees

Additional nominees for the Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence included:

- Nick Racine (NWD)
- Emily Laperriere (SWD)

## EKO 2023-2024 Report

The 2023-2024 Every Kid Outdoors Report provides a complete summary of the interagency Every Kid Outdoors program. The report is available to view at

[https://everykidoutdoors.gov/about.htm#annual\\_report](https://everykidoutdoors.gov/about.htm#annual_report)

## EKO 2023-2024 Program Highlights



**167,970** Passes issued



**6,328** Programs offered



**277,233** Participants engaged

## Good News!

West Point Lake's Susan Cromer submitted this year's winning photo. It's USACE's very first representation on any Interagency Pass! Congratulations to Susan and her family!



## REMINDER

Passes should not be issued to students before 1 September.

Projects **MUST** generate and redeem vouchers online to track all the passes. This is a critical step to show our participation that gets reported to Congress.

For instructions on how to redeem vouchers, visit:  
<https://corpslakes.erc.dren.mil/employees/usefees/discount.cfm>



## Every Kid Outdoors Interagency Pass

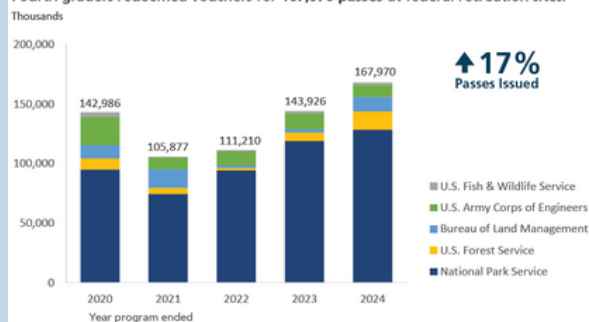
POC: Jason Owen

The 2025-2026 4th Grade Pass is now available to order from USGS. Only **District Interagency Pass Coordinators** are approved to order passes. If those roles have changed for your district, please contact Jason Owen. Since, September 2024, the EKO website notes that USACE has issued 14,667 passes!

The number of free 4th grade passes issued through the Every Kid Outdoors program increased 17% from 2022-2023. Over 275,000 participants engaged with in-person Every Kid Outdoors programs that connect 4<sup>th</sup> graders and their families with federal lands and waters.

### 4th Grade Passes Issued by Agency

Fourth graders redeemed vouchers for 167,970 passes at federal recreation sites.



The Every Kid in a Park program began in 2015 as part of the National Park Service centennial. Congress renewed the Every Kid Outdoors program through the EXPLORE Act in 2024, authorizing the program for another seven years.

## Programs and Participants

277,233 4th graders participated in 6,328 Every Kid Outdoors Programs in 2023-2024

Agency	Programs	Participants
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration	-	5,375
U.S. Forest Service	144	47,394
Bureau of Land Management	586	17,774
National Park Service	5,598	184,487
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	-	22,203
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,328</b>	<b>277,233</b>





Side-by-side photos of Libby Dam Natural Resource Manager Tana Wilson and her paternal grandfather Donald "Whitey" Wilson.

## From Construction to Conservation: One Family's Legacy of Service at Libby Dam

Tana Wilson, Natural Resources Manager, Libby Dam

The construction of Libby Dam set my life's story in motion. My grandpa, Donald "Whitey" Wilson, recently out of the Navy, married, and raising a growing family, moved to Hungry Horse, Montana, to work at the Columbia Falls Aluminum Plant. Not long after, he joined the Operating Engineers Union and was hired by Morrison-Knudsen as a batch plant operator during the dam's construction. The Wilson family eventually relocated to Libby. Though his work on the dam wrapped up in 1972, Grandpa Whitey remained in Libby working other construction projects. All the while, my dad grew up and attended Libby High School where he met my mom. Her father, Don Whitmarsh, also helped build Libby Dam.

I started working at Libby Dam right out of high school as a seasonal student worker. For three summers, I scanned and archived over 10,000 construction-era photos, many of which are now featured in our 50th Commemoration celebrations. It was monotonous work, but it ultimately introduced me to the USACE recreation and environmental stewardship programs. In all, I spent five summers working at Libby Dam while attending the University of Montana, where I studied Parks, Tourism, and Recreation Management, as well as Journalism. I later earned a Master of Science in Conservation Areas Management from Clemson University.

After graduate school, I landed my first permanent USACE position with the Mill Creek Project. I was there for a couple years before taking a promotion at John Day Dam. I never thought I'd get the chance to move home and make a living in Libby. Permanent job openings at Libby Dam, particularly in natural resources, are rare. But one became available and when I asked my Grandpa Whitey what he thought about it, he said, "You're a Montana mountain girl." Grandpa Whitey passed away in August 2024. He was a proud man who kept a piece of Libby Dam concrete core with a Seattle District coin embedded in it displayed proudly. As Libby Dam commemorates its 50th year of operations, it's been a fun excuse to talk to my Papa Whitmarsh about the early Dam days. It's pretty neat to look back at the dam's construction and my family's part in it and be in the natural resource manager seat, looking toward the future as we commemorate the past. ■

**"If it weren't  
for Libby  
Dam...I might  
not even exist."**



Photos highlighting Libby Dam's construction era and ID buttons collected by Papa Whitmarsh.



Dedication coin given to the Libby Dam builders during the operating project's official dedication.

Read Tana's full story at:  
<https://www.nws.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Stories/Article/4217706/from-construction-to-conservation-one-familys-legacy-of-service-at-libby-dam/>





Fee-Free Days

### Day Use Fee-Free Dates in 2025 for All Visitors to USACE Managed Recreation Areas

USACE fee-free days was first instituted on Veteran's Day in 2006 with the intent to support and honor the men and women who have served the Nation in the armed serves.

Remaining Fee-Free Days for 2025

- **National Public Lands Day:** Sept. 27, 2025
- **Veteran's Day:** Nov. 11, 2025

All day-use fees for all visitors to USACE managed recreation areas will be waived on the dates listed above. It covers boat launch ramp 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 and waive fees in the areas that they manage.



Abiquiu

## I Got Caught Campaign in Full Swing

The "I Got Caught" Wearing a Life Jacket initiative that the USACE National Water Safety Program partnered with Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (The Corps Foundation) to enhance has been going strong for five years. This year, The Corps Foundation graciously donated dry bags that were distributed to USACE lakes and river projects that requested them. The products are handed out to adults caught wearing life jackets.

In the past, The Corps Foundation has donated beach towels, neck gaiters, lunch bags, vehicle windshield sunshades, and t-shirts. All these products have the "Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns" campaign logo on them. The Corps Foundation purchased them using grant funds from the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund, which is administered by the USCG. USACE is not authorized to purchase products such as the ones donated by The Corps Foundation for public distribution, so the donations are greatly appreciated.



Eau Galle



Allatoona

"I Got Caught" campaigns are a great way to reach adults and show appreciation to those who wear their life jackets and encourage others to wear them. If you haven't started an "I Got Caught" initiative at your lake or river project, you are encouraged to start one using products you receive from the National Water Safety Program and local partners. ■



Ouachita



Burnsville



# Water Safety Around USACE

## 1 Water Jam



Ranger Josh Friend exemplifies the importance of life jackets using oranges in a creative demonstration.

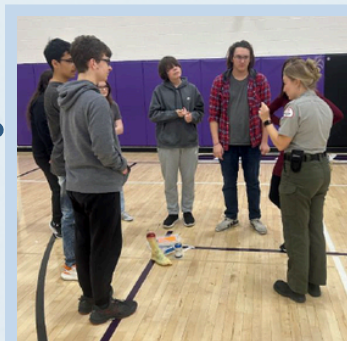
Bonneville Lock and Dam Rangers participated in the annual Water Jam event at Spring Creek National Fish Hatchery. Bonneville Staff presented water safety messages to local 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. Rangers led an activity simulating a sinking boat and emphasized the importance of wearing a proper fitting life jacket any time they are around the water.

## 2 NWD Water Safety for Lunch

Northwestern Division (NWD) held it's 3rd annual water safety training, providing all NWD NRM employees and volunteers with an in-depth background of the water safety program, tips to engage with stakeholders, and outreach strategies from subject matter experts throughout NWD and Southwestern Division (SWD).



Park Manager Tami Schroeder from the Willamette Valley Project covered strategies to engage and build relationships with stakeholders.



Park Ranger Paige Laughunn guides students through the Water Safety CSI program.

## 3 Water Safety CSI

Carlyle Lake Park Rangers visited four local high schools to promote water safety through "Water Safety Crime Scene Investigation (CSI)." This engaging, hands-on activity is tailored to teens and adults.



Participating students received water safety t-shirts provided by local partner, Excel Bottling Company.

These programs are part of an annual effort to remind students to recreate responsibly and safely. Through this program, rangers reached 1,214 students with direct water safety messaging.



Park Ranger Jennifer Lawson helps students with their life jackets during a program.



The Kansas Area water safety trailer received a new wrap.



Water safety training at the Lake Washington Ship Canal.



Park Ranger Bob Petrune highlights water safety during a Kids Fishing Rodeo



# USACE Celebrates World Ranger Day


World Ranger Day is celebrated each year on July 31st to commemorate rangers killed or injured in the line of duty and to celebrate the work rangers do to protect the planet's natural treasures and cultural heritage. World Ranger Day offers the opportunity to express gratitude to Park Rangers.

Your dedication to preserving our nation's natural resources is a vital public service impacting millions. You embody dedication, integrity, and selfless service through conservation, enforcement, emergency response, visitor safety, and public outreach—serving as key ambassadors for USACE and ensuring the health and accessibility of critical national resources. Your hard work is deeply appreciated. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to excellence and public service.



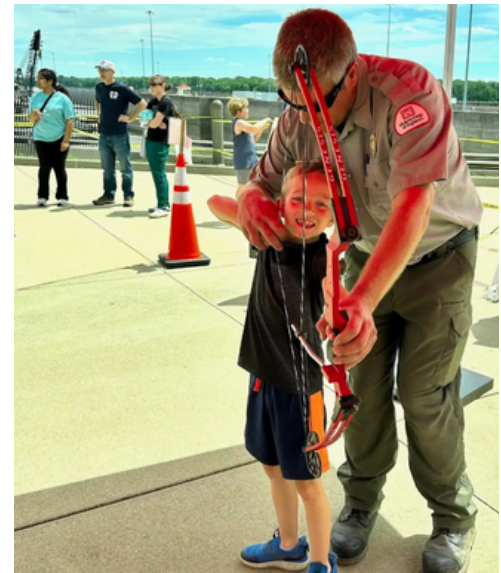
**We Need YOUR Help!**

We need recent (within the past year or two) photos that represent our efforts in natural resources management, our visiting public, and our workforce. We use A LOT of photos in various publications and shared media. Please send any images to [tara.j.whitsel@usace.army.mil](mailto:tara.j.whitsel@usace.army.mil). Thank you!



**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.



USACE social media pages highlighted the many duties Rangers have on World Ranger Day





## Recognizing Excellence

The Fort Worth District – Operations Division recognized Waco Lake Park Ranger Cara Niemietz as the Hero of the Month. Over the past three years as a Waco Lake Park Ranger, Ms. Niemietz's bright personality, care for others, and calm demeanor in stressful situations has made her an invaluable member of the team.

On Jun. 21, 2025, there was a medical emergency at the popular Twin Bridges Day Use area involving a young child who was unresponsive due to a pre-existing medical condition. When Ranger Niemietz arrived on scene she immediately stepped in to support the family of the unresponsive child. Ms. Niemietz engaged with the child's two younger siblings by asking them if they wanted to see the Park Ranger truck and some of the neat stuff inside. As a well-prepared park ranger, Ms. Niemietz had a variety of water safety promotional items that she used to ease the anxiety and distract the siblings from a potentially scary moment. The children were busy playing with frisbees and junior ranger badge stickers while their parents tended to their oldest child while he received medical care.

Ms. Niemietz's quick thinking in a high-pressure situation allowed the medical professionals and the child's parents to navigate the medical emergency with lowered stress levels and less distractions. Ms. Niemietz has worked in the Fort Worth District, Three Rivers Region since 2021, beginning her career as a Summer Park Ranger at Whitney Lake before going on to serve as a Park Ranger at Waco Lake where she was selected as the SWF Employee of the Year in 2024. Ranger Niemietz continues to excel in her role as a park ranger and reflects great credit upon Waco Lake and the Fort Worth District.

Well done, Cara!

## Recreation Around USACE

**Robert S. Kerr Lake (SWT)** - Several repairs and improvements were recently completed at Robert S. Kerr Lake as a result of Congressional Ads. Tenkiller Lake maintenance staff completed: (1) the final phase of repairs on four volunteer campsites, (2) the final portion of new CXT installation by pouring sidewalks and approaches at Short Mountain Cove and Cowlington Point Campgrounds, and (3) the repairs to sections of campground roads at Cowlington Point.

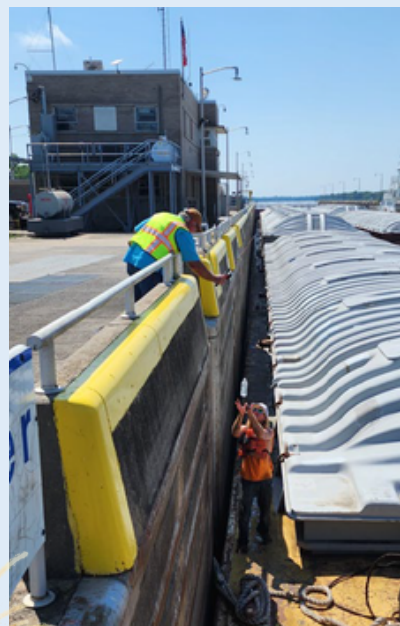


Left to right: repair of volunteer campsites, CXT restroom completion, and campground road repair.

**NWD Visitor Assistance Training** - The Portland District hosted a Visitor Assistance (VA) training course that qualified USACE staff for citation authority. Seven rangers attended the full week of training to qualify for citation authority. Eleven additional rangers attended two days of the training to complete their annual VA refresher requirements. Training included lessons in Visitor Assistance History and Policies, Corps Rules and Regulations, Verbal Defense and Influence (VDI), VA Enforcement and Reporting, Court and Legal Considerations, Unarmed Self-Defense, and Pepper Spray. Partner law enforcement officers provided a Law Enforcement Panel and assisted with Visitor Contact Scenarios.



Rangers who completed Visitor Assistance Training.



In a heartwarming display of community spirit and dedication, the team at Colonel Charles D. Maynard Lock and Dam 5 has been quietly making a big difference for boaters passing through the facility.

Recognizing the intense heat that can build inside the lock chamber—sometimes trapping vessels for up to 15 minutes with little airflow—the staff has taken it upon themselves to provide relief. Using their own money, they purchase bottled water, ice it down, and hand it out to barge deckhands and other boaters, offering a refreshing way to beat the scorching temperatures.

This voluntary act of kindness demonstrates the team's commitment to safety and community wellbeing. Their thoughtful gesture not only helps prevent heat-related issues for those working and traveling on the water but also highlights the caring spirit of the Lock and Dam staff.

Their efforts serve as a reminder that sometimes, a small act of kindness can make a big difference, especially during the hottest days of summer.

## Recognizing Excellence



# Recreation Around USACE Continued



**Cross Lake (MVD)** - Cross Lake Dam and Recreation Area hosted several activities as part of the 77th annual Minnesota Governor's Fishing Opener. The event started with a launch ceremony held at the Cross Lake boat ramp, during which Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, LTC Josh Rud, and others spoke. Afterwards, students were able to fish, attend a water safety program, witness Aquatic Invasive Species sniffing dogs in action, and learn about local fish species with a portable freshwater fish tank.



Cross Lake staff alongside Tamara Cameron, Randall Ulrich, Renwick Martin, and Dean Zwiefel at the Fishing Opener shore lunch.

This event was the culmination of months of planning and coordinating between USACE, the state of Minnesota, Explore MN, the Crosslake Community, and local law enforcement. The event provided an opportunity to raise community awareness of USACE opportunities and strengthen relationships with our partners and volunteers.



Ranger Ellen Tabako presents a water safety message to students.



**Rivers Project (MVS)** - The National Great Rivers Museum, in partnership with over 30 local organizations, hosted the fourth annual REC Fest. This free, family-friendly event welcomed nearly 1,900 visitors for a day dedicated to outdoor recreation, environmental education, and safety awareness. Throughout the day, guests enjoyed tours of the Melvin Price Locks and Dam, and learned about its critical role in the nation's navigational infrastructure.



Left to Right: The National Park Service and St. Charles County facilitate archery and safety practices, Backcountry Horsemen connect with visitors on backcountry trail use, and Upper Limits introduced local youth to the excitement and challenge of rock climbing.

Numerous safety and recreation booths were on-site, featuring organizations such as the Alton Police and Fire Departments and the SwimOn Foundation. Visitors explored hands-on exhibits promoting fishing, biking, and camping, encouraging families to embrace the outdoors safely and responsibly. Children who completed the Adventure Passport received water safety goodie bags and other prizes. Additionally, 4th grade students had the opportunity to earn a free Every Kid Outdoors - America the Beautiful Pass.

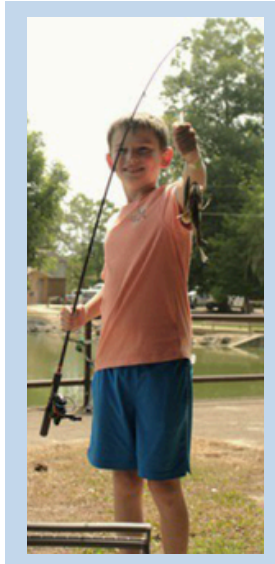
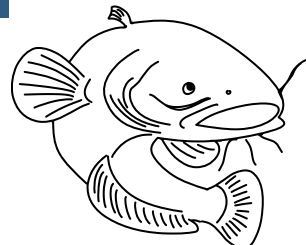


Young anglers show off their big catches. Participants that caught tagged fish received a trophy.



**Town Bluff (SWF)** - The Town Bluff Project hosted its annual kids fish day at Magnolia Ridge Park. Before the event started, kids were already lined up ready to try and catch their limit of catfish (bag limit of three catfish).

The pond was stocked with 400 lb. of catfish prior to the event, with 15 of the fish tagged. Those lucky enough to hook a tagged fish received a trophy (only three tagged fish were caught this year). Over 50 kids participated and every participant received a water safety bag.







## Recreation Around USACE Continued

» **Fort Peck (NWO)** - A grand total of 452 guests—the greatest single-day turnout of the past decade—visited the Fort Peck Interpretive Center and Museum on June 21, 2025, during its 20th anniversary celebration.

Located near Fort Peck Dam, the center is a joint effort between the USACE and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and is one of 14 museums along the Montana Dinosaur Trail, which also celebrated its 20th anniversary this year.



Participants enjoyed a variety of dinosaur themed activities.



Natural Resources Specialist Susan Dalbey introduces visitors to Fort Peck's "Pex Rex."



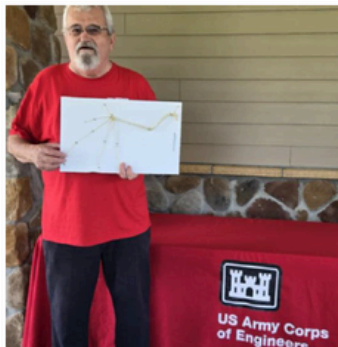
Visitors pose with some special guests.



Upon completion each Jr. Ranger receives a certificate, a badge, and a thematic button.

The first session drew participants from the Rend Lake campgrounds and surrounding local communities, reflecting broad community interest in outdoor education and conservation. The success of the program has been made possible by a dedicated group of volunteers. Their efforts are instrumental in delivering high-quality programming and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.

» **Rend Lake (MVS)** - Rend Lake kicked off its Jr. Ranger Program—Explore, Learn, Earn, welcoming 68 enthusiastic participants. This weekly series offers hands-on outdoor interpretive programs designed to help children explore nature, learn about environmental stewardship, and earn a Jr. Ranger badge along with other thematic buttons.



A volunteer educates participants about bats.



## Recognizing Excellence

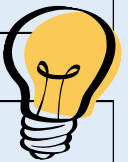
Park Ranger Brandon Lemieux was stationed at the entrance of Toad Suck Park when he was approached by a visibly distressed woman who reported that her diabetic friend was experiencing a medical emergency.

Ranger Lemieux responded immediately. Upon arrival at the scene, he located an older male estimated to be in his 60s, seated in a slouched position on the bench. The individual appeared extremely lethargic and minimally responsive, with his head down and physical signs indicative of a hypoglycemic episode, including pale, clammy skin and limited responsiveness to verbal prompts.

Ranger Lemieux promptly contacted 911 and provided dispatch with a detailed description of the individual's symptoms, the park location, and the suspected diabetic emergency. While awaiting the arrival of emergency medical personnel, Ranger Lemieux provided basic first aid within the scope of his training. After a few moments, there was a slight improvement in the individual's responsiveness. He was able to briefly communicate and provide his first name, signaling improved cognitive function. Shortly thereafter, EMS units arrived on the scene. Ranger Lemieux provided them with a detailed briefing on the incident, including the patient's condition upon his arrival and the aid that had been administered.

Thank you Brandon!

## Did You Know?



Fort Peck Lake is 134 miles long, with over 1,500 miles of shoreline. USACE has been operating Fort Peck Dam since 1940.

Hydropower production at Fort Peck was approved by the Fort Peck Power Act in 1938. Started in 1941, construction on the first power house was not completed until 1951 due to shortages of supplies and materials during World War II. USACE completed the second powerhouse in 1961, and the dam produces an average 1.1 billion kilowatt hours a year, or enough power to supply a town of 100,000 people.



# Recreation Around USACE Continued

➤ **Bonneville Lock and Dam (NWP)** - In May, over 1,200 8th grade students from Portland Public Schools participated in educational field trips to the Bradford Island Visitor Center at Bonneville Lock and Dam. These excursions are designed to enhance classroom learning by aligning with Oregon's Common Core standards and the SB 13 Tribal History/Shared History curriculum. During their visits, students explored the mechanics of hydropower generation through energy transfer, examined methods for collecting data and supporting salmon migration at the dam, and discussed the ongoing effects of regional history on salmon populations and the broader ecosystem. This district-level program serves as a practical case study in efforts to increase engagement with communities that may have limited access to such experiences. By immersing students in real-world applications of their studies, the program aims to inspire future careers in fields like environmental science, engineering, and public service.



*Bonneville Lock and Dam Park Rangers Tyler Ardent, Meg Sleeper, and Alexa Harmon lead Portland Public School students through their educational programs.*

This was the inaugural year working with Portland Public Schools at the District-level, which enabled us to host a broader array of schools than in years past. NRM staff is working with Portland Public Schools staff to finalize plans for next spring with the goal of extending this opportunity to all 3,200 8th grade students in the district.



➤ **Lake Washington Ship Canal (NWS)** - The Lake Washington Ship Canal (LWSC) NRM Section hosted a highly successful salmon education event at the Fish Ladder Plaza.

This event marked the first in a series of five tabling events developed by the LWSC ranger team for the 2025 Salmon SEason, an internal effort to uphold the Ballard Locks as a premier King County-promoted venue for salmon education. Throughout the day, visitors engaged with interactive displays and informative materials highlighting the importance of salmon to the region's ecosystems. A standout feature was Park Ranger Samuel Wensley's giant Jenga game, which creatively demonstrated the role of Pacific Salmon as a keystone species. Corps staff also emphasized water safety messaging and provided interpretation on the Corps' Fish Passage mission, underscoring efforts to support salmon migration and habitat connectivity. ■



## 1 Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership: Small Grant Program

The Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (RFHP) and the Friends of Reservoirs foundation (FOR) provide an annual small grants program available exclusively to Friends of Reservoirs member organizations. Mossback Fish Habitat and Reef Innovations, are providing four \$1,500-value product donations, which can be paired with a \$2,000 grant from Friends of Reservoirs. That means each small grant is worth \$3,500.

USACE cannot apply directly for these grants, but our partners organizations can. Our partners have successfully received \$30,000 in these small grants at 15 USACE projects in 10 districts since 2015.

For information about Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership (RFHP) small grant program visit <https://www.friendsofreservoirs.org/grants/small-grants-are-bigger-and-better-than-ever-and-open/>. Applications are due Aug. 31, 2025. ■

## 2 Leave No Trace Partnership

Our ongoing partnership with Leave No Trace provides continuous access to valuable training and educational resources. These are great tools to use anytime of year when engaging with the public and developing interpretive and outreach programs.

Year-round resources include

- [Workshop presentation slides](#)
- [Leave No Trace free online courses](#)
- [Agency Resource page](#) for federal agency partners - password: 2025Agency
- [Leave No Trace Assessment for Gold Standard designation](#)
- [Leave No Trace YouTube](#) - for video resources for websites, social media, etc.
- [AllTrails Public Lands program](#) ■

## 3 Handshake Partnership Program

The FY26 Handshake Partnership Program offers an additional funding source (i.e., seed money up to \$25,000 per project) to USACE facilities for worthwhile partnership projects. The program provides an excellent opportunity to leverage local partnerships with USACE dollars outside of the usual O&M budget to help complete recreation and environmental stewardship projects that benefits lands, waters, and visitors.

Electronic applications with district and MSC coordination must be sent from the MSCs to Mr. Phil Manhart, [Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil](mailto:Phil.J.Manhart@usace.army.mil), representative on the Partnership Advisory Committee, no later than Aug. 31, 2025.

The application instructions, and a copy of the application are posted on the NRM Gateway Handshake Program page at <https://corpslakes.erd.dren.mil/employees/handshake/handshake.cfm>. ■



# Stay Connected through the NRM Gateway



## Update Your SmartBook Information

If you haven't updated your SmartBook information on the NRM Gateway lately, please go in and ensure your information is accurate.

<https://gateway.erdc.dren.mil/nrm/smartbook/index.cfm>

### Don't know what the SmartBook is?

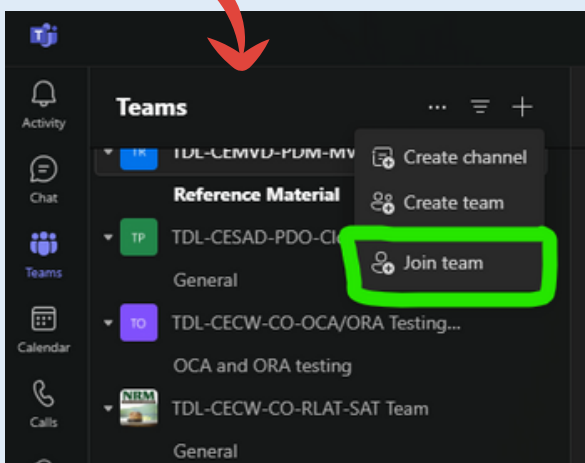
The SmartBook provides an electronic directory making it easy to connect with others in your respective CoPs. Revamped in April 2021, the SmartBook includes members of the NRM, Park Ranger, and OPM CoPs. The SmartBook enhances communication with program points of contacts, subject matter experts, and other individuals. It offers connections and workforce context information far beyond what a DLL mailing list or an Outlook search can produce. The SmartBook works best when everyone periodically reviews and updates their personal (and team) information regarding areas of expertise, PDT membership, location, and other organizational information. The SmartBook is only accessible from the army.mil network and requires CAC card for access.

## Join the NRM Community on TEAMS!

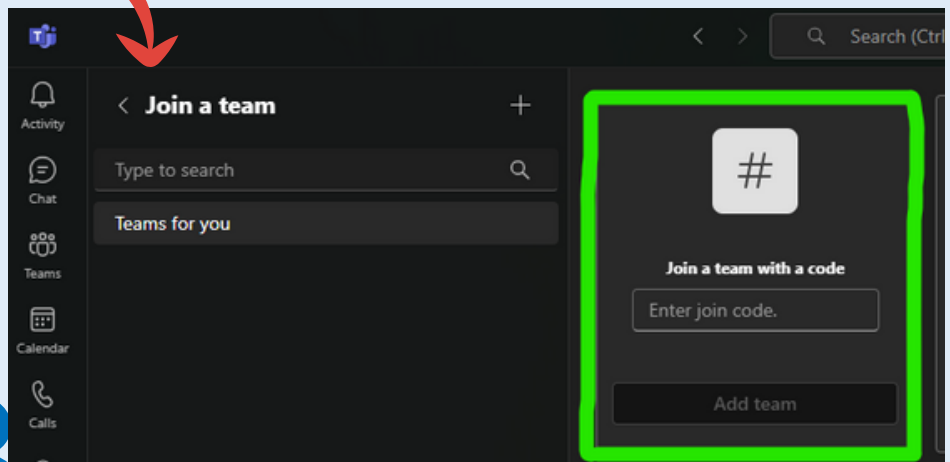
The NRM Community Teams site compliments the NRM Gateway, our knowledge management repository for the NRM Community. Various channels have been created to promote news, topics, and provide a communication tool for all! These channels mirror major topics on the NRM Gateway.

Use the steps outlined below to join the team. Users can "follow" a channel to be notified when new items appear. For example, the "News and Memos" channel includes any notices from the Gateway's "New Posting and Important News." To "follow" a channel, right click on the 3 dots and select "Follow this Channel."

**Step 1:** Click the "+" at the top of your TEAMS app while in your Teams category and select "Join team."



**Step 2:** Click on "Join a team with a code" and enter "fmc90v1." This will allow you to join the NRM Community Team!



## Gateway Glimpse

Subscribe to the Gateway Glimpse to get all the latest NRM Gateway news and updates straight to your inbox!

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/glimpse-subscribe.cfm?Step=Subscribe&Email=None>

The latest issue includes information about:

- NRM 2024 Annual Report
- Natural Resources Management Notes and Broken Links
- Water Safety Updates
- Farewells and Fresh Starts
- NRM Newsletters



<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/nrm.cfm>