

THE recreation RETREAT

HQ UPDATE: SUSTAINING ACCESS TO RECREATION FACILITIES

POC: Ryan.D.Hartwig@usace.army.mil

USACE has pledged to implement proactive steps to minimize or prevent impacts to recreation programs in FY26. The Chief of Engineers has provided guidance and supports our efforts to ensure access to our recreation resources. These commitments are our commitments, and our success depends on the actions we take together.

Our HQUSACE NRM team is working closely with recreation program managers to expand options and deliver HQ support that reduces workforce fatigue while sustaining public access.

All staffing and operational decisions should align with these three principles:

- **Safe Public Access** – ensuring that visitors can continue to enjoy our recreation areas.
- **Public Health & Sanitation** – maintaining essential services such as janitorial, sanitary systems and basic refuse removal.
- **Support for Local Communities & Economies** – recognizing that our sites provide significant economic and social value to the regions we serve.

HQUSACE leadership has established the following enterprise goals consistent with referenced guidance:

- Increase Conservation Corps student participation by 25% for FY26
- Identify at least 50 Project Service Areas (PSAs) for potential outgrant management opportunities
- Implement Cooperative Joint Management at 25 PSAs during FY26
- Expand use of the USACE Enterprise Talent Management (TMP) Portal for internal hiring to avoid ETP requirements

Additional materials, including current policy, guidance, and examples, are available on our Knowledge Management Portal:

👉 [Increasing NRM Capacity – USACE KMP](#)

Rec Assessment

It's that time of year!
Rec Assessment
season is upon us.

**Rec Assessment
opened Nov. 10,
2025 and will close
on Nov. 26, 2025.**

The Rec Assessment module is designed to collect performance data and other current conditions to help leadership prioritize the work requested in Rec-CWIFD budget packages. The data you and your teammates enter into this system is compiled and sent to the CWIFD contractors for use in the budget build. It is combined and compiled with other datasets such as CEFMs revenue & expenditure, RIS revenue, OCA, and Visitation data. Its importance cannot be understated!! Be knowledgeable on the Rec Assessment data quality!



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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.
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 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.

Managing Editor:
Tara Whitsel
Tara.J.Whitsel@usace.army.mil

Important Dates: Rec OCAs

Important reminder: All data associated with Recreation Operational Condition Assessments (OCAs) must be completed and have quality assurance (QA) finalized by Dec. 1, 2025. After Dec 1, the OCA data will be compiled with Rec Assessment data for upload into Rec-CWIFD.

More NPLD Events

Great Lakes and Ohio River Division (LRD) - Mount Morris Dam Spotlight. On Oct. 3, 2025, Buffalo District Park Ranger Alexandria Emke hosted a NPLD event with volunteers from The Arc GLOW, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit group that works toward the inclusion of adults with cognitive and emotional challenges as productive members of the community and society at-large.

The Arc volunteers supported USACE's Environmental Stewardship mission and NPLD by building and installing bluebird boxes to enhance bluebird habitat on Mount Morris Dam project lands.

Ranger Emke worked with 16 volunteers from The Arc to construct 20 bluebird boxes, which were then installed throughout the recreation area by a crew of Arc volunteers. Volunteers worked a total of 222 hours at a value of \$7,435.



NPLD participants at Mount Morris Dam (LRD)



Volunteers plant trees at Success Lake during the 2025 National Public Lands Day event.

National Public Lands Day (NPLD)

South Pacific Division (SPD) - Thirteen events were held at projects across SPD and included volunteers and staff from all four districts. These annual events are an opportunity for SPD staff to share their love of the outdoors with the public. These events also strengthen partnerships with local communities and provide an opportunity to showcase USACE missions. Events included activities such as picking up litter, painting restrooms, planting trees, removing invasive species, removing graffiti, and maintaining trails. The SPD team is already planning for next year's events!



NPLD participants at the San Francisco Bay Model (SPN)



NPLD participants at Whittier Narrows Dam (SPL)



NPLD participants at Cochiti Lake (SPA)

South Atlantic Division (SAD) - Various NPLD events were held across SAD. Hartwell Project celebrated National Public Lands Day with a "Fall Splash Away the Trash" lake clean up held on Sep. 27, 2025. Over 230 volunteers came out to pick up trash and other nonnatural debris to help keep Hartwell Lake clean. USACE was excited to once again partner with the Lake Hartwell Partners for Clean Water (LHPCW) and the Lake Hartwell Association (LHA). LHPCW is an organization of government agencies and local interest groups who promote source water protection for Hartwell Lake. LHPCW and LHA provided planning and site captains, and distributed supplies and goodie bags to participants that included USACE Water Safety promotional items. A total of 693 volunteer service hours were documented at a value of \$24,109. Over 11,165 pounds of trash were removed from 109 miles of shoreline and islands.



NPLD participants at Hartwell Lake (SAD)



Park Ranger Bobby Bartlett Celebrates 50 Years of Service at Dale Hollow Lake

POC: Desmaray Brown, Park Ranger, desmaray.a.brown@usace.army.mil

For 50 years, Dale Hollow Lake has been fortunate to be served by a true local legend—Park Ranger Bobby Bartlett. In 2024, Ranger Bartlett celebrated his 50th and final season at the lake. Since joining USACE in 1974, Ranger Bartlett served in numerous positions, including park host, maintenance, park technician, and park ranger. Beginning the summer of 1985, he worked as a summer ranger while teaching school and driving a school bus during the winter months. Upon retirement from the Clay County School System, he transitioned into the seasonal Park Ranger position.

Ranger Bartlett, locally known as Mr. B, was an essential part of a team of rangers that manages more than 28,000 acres of public lands along 620 miles of shoreline, several day-use recreation areas, and four campgrounds. Ranger Bartlett possesses countless skills and a likable personality that allowed him to succeed in this profession. He's educated countless visitors on the importance of water safety, safeguarded public land, and assisted visitors across the lake, recreation areas, and campgrounds. Over the years, Ranger Bartlett has taken on and succeeded in many roles as ranger. Ranger Bartlett has been responsible for overseeing primitive camping, boat patrols, gypsy moth monitoring, swim buoy management, Trooper Island interpretive programs, school programs, water safety programs, honor box fees, and so much more. In all these areas and beyond, he has shown dedication, stewardship, and a strong love for Dale Hollow Lake and its people.

As a member of the staff at Dale Hollow (where he is affectionately known as "Bobby B"), he has provided support and encouragement to many younger rangers who have passed through the ranks at the lake. Park Ranger Sondra Carmen, who worked alongside Ranger Bartlett for over three decades, described how he has been instrumental in setting an example for younger colleagues and in training new resource managers at the lake. "His experience and passion for the job has contributed to the success of new Rangers that have gotten their start here at Dale Hollow," Carmen said.

She also emphasized that Ranger Bartlett set a standard for what it means to be a park ranger. "Each year, one thing we can count on guests asking is, 'Where's Bobby? Is Bobby working today? Is Bobby still around here?'" He is leaving an irreplaceable legacy, and we were so lucky to have him at Dale Hollow Lake." When asked about his career and advice for younger rangers, Ranger Bartlett explained that the best advice he could share with younger rangers starting their careers is to "Just be yourself. Be true to yourself and do your job the best you can."

His involvement in the community has reached far beyond the boundaries of Dale Hollow Lake. He was the first black coach in the Upper Cumberland Region of Tennessee. Ranger Bartlett served Clay County and the local community as a bus driver, teacher, and coach at Celina K-8. Later, he coached high school, a career that spanned 31 years. The Celina K-8 school gymnasium was named Bobby Bartlett Gymnasium because of the great impact he has had on sports in the community.

Updated National MOU

The national MOU between USACE and Girl Scouts of the USA (Girl Scouts), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1912, has been renewed.

This renewed MOU builds upon a strong 40-year partnership to provide valuable educational, recreational, and environmental stewardship opportunities for youth at USACE Civil Works projects.

Key objectives of this MOU include:

- Prioritizing public safety in land and water recreation.
- Promoting collaboration to enhance public safety, education, and recreational engagement.
- Expanding recreational offerings and resource sharing to support public engagement and safety.
- Strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility programs.
- Connecting youth with the outdoors through exploration, learning, and service activities.
- Inspiring youth in STEM through engaging activities.

Past collaborations have resulted in impactful projects such as trail maintenance, recreation facility improvements, habitat restoration, shoreline cleanups, and water safety outreach. It also encourages Girl Scouts to explore leadership roles, service learning, and potential career paths with USACE.

You can access the signed MOU on the NRM Gateway : <https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/cecwon/mou.cfm>

To learn more about Girl Scouts of the USA, please visit: <https://www.girlscouts.org>

EKO 2025 Current Status



167,970

Passes issued



6,328

Programs offered



277,233

Participants engaged



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. Thank you!

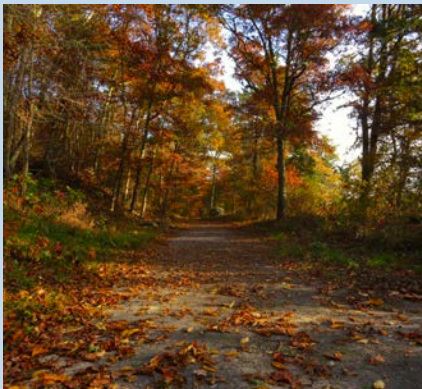


Knowledge Management Portal for NRM

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.

NRM in Photos



The Bournedale trail at the Cape Cod Canal (NAE) is a wonderful spot for a fall hike and some leaf-peeping.

50 Years of Service Continued

He is a well-deserved member of the Clay County Sports Hall of Fame. Ranger Bartlett stated he is proud of his time with the Corps because, "This is something that very few people, back when I started, around here, could experience. My wife was the first to get a college education in my community, I was the second. I'm proud that the public and my coworkers put trust in me to do my job."

Ranger Bartlett has received many awards and recognition for his efforts as a ranger, especially in water safety outreach. In 2009, he received the National Water Safety Congress Region 3 Award of Merit. In 2013, he received two awards from the Clay County Mayor and the Kentucky Safety Police for his volunteer service with youth in USACE's Water Safety program at the Kentucky State Police Trooper Island Camp.



Ranger Bartlett receiving a water safety award from the National Water Safety Congress in 2009. Included in the picture are former LRN Chief of Operations Diane Parks and Nashville District Commander LTC Bernard Lindstrom.



Ranger Bartlett conducting a program at the 2023 Fishing Rodeo.

On May 15, 2025, his half-century of service was honored by former employees, family, and friends. A retirement luncheon was held for Bartlett, during which he was given multiple awards and gifts in honor of his long and storied career. Ranger Bartlett shared insight about what motivated him to serve as a park ranger with Nashville District for 50 years. When asked what fueled him to work at Dale Hollow the past 50 summers he confidently replied, "People, and the people I work with. You meet so many nice people from everywhere. I love to help people."

National Public Lands Day Continued



Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) - MVD projects hosted five NPLD events ranging from shoreline cleanups to tree plantings and water sweeps. All total, over 500 volunteers and 35 USACE team members helped improve environmental quality and foster a sense of community stewardship among participants.



Top: Carlyle Lake volunteers proudly show their collected trash. Left: Lake Ouachita Rangers and volunteers removed 100 square feet of Styrofoam. Above: Park Ranger Austin LeRay provides a safety brief to volunteers prior to cleanup.



Recognizing Excellence

On July 7, 2025, a potentially tragic incident was averted thanks to the quick thinking and courageous actions of a USACE employee. Doug Stilts, a Ranger assigned to the Clearwater Lake Project, responded to a situation where a recreational visitor was in distress and engaging in self-harm. Upon arrival, Stilts quickly assessed the situation, recognizing its high volatility.

Remaining calm, Ranger Stilts engaged the visitor in conversation, successfully de-escalating the situation and preventing further acts of self-harm. Although the visitor was hesitant to accept first aid for their injuries, Stilts continued to offer reassurance and keep the visitor safe until emergency responders arrived.

This incident underscores the vital role that dedicated personnel like USACE rangers play in safeguarding our communities. Their readiness to respond swiftly to emergencies, especially in remote or challenging environments, can mean the difference between tragedy and hope.

The bravery and professionalism demonstrated by Ranger Stilts exemplifies the unwavering commitment of USACE staff to serve and protect the public.

NRM Uniform Committee Update

The NRM Uniform Committee would like to recognize two truly remarkable individuals who have been part of the Uniform Committee for many years. We bid farewell to our courageous leader and Chair, Sara Jernigan, who retired at the end of July. Sara has been part of the committee for over 30 years and served as the Chair of the Committee for the past 20 years.

Also leaving to enjoy retirement is Michele Fromdahl. Michele was the NWD representative on the team who served in her role for over 20 years. Both Sara and Michele were valuable members and we thank them for their many years of dedicated service. We extend our best wishes to them as they embark on this new chapter. To express that they will be missed is an understatement!

We are excited to announce that we have some new folks ready to step up into these vacated positions. Amanda Palmer from SWD has assumed the role of Chair. Amanda has served on the committee for over 10 years and, together with Heath Kruger, will fill the role Sara has vacated. For NWD, James Blakely will assume Michele's role as the NWD member. James is new to the committee and is eager to assume his roles and dive into the program. Tabitha Nixon will assume Amanda's role as the SWD committee member. Tabitha has been engaged the last year or so as she has been taking over the USACE maternity loaner program. ■

Ordering Status:

The NRM Uniform ordering site is operational, and the contractor is actively processing orders at this time. Changes in status will be shared by the NRM Uniform Committee.

NRM Uniform Committee Representatives:

Amanda Palmer, Committee Chair
Consuela (Connie) Gunter, SAD
Scott Graham, NAD
Holly L. Myers, LRD
Coty Thompson, MVD
James Blakely, NWD
Jill Davis, POD
Carrie Richardson, SPD
Tabitha Nixon, SWD



Recreation Around USACE



Saylorville Lake Park Ranger Sierra Phipps and Iowa STEM Teacher extern Lindsay Kasuga.

➤ **Saylorville Lake (MVR)** - This summer, Iowa STEM Teacher extern Lindsay Kasuga (Science Teacher at West Des Moines Valley High School) and workplace host partner, Saylorville Lake, partnered with one another to bring the classroom curriculum to life through the Iowa STEM Teacher Externships Program!

The Iowa STEM Teacher Externships Program aims to help teachers answer that age-old question, "When will I ever use this?" During the summer, STEM educators work side-by-side with knowledgeable and skilled industry employees who help bring the classroom curriculum to life. STEM Teacher Externships provide educators with the exposure to answer questions about real-world application, prepare students for careers they may have in the future, and improve educational experiences.

One of Lindsay's main projects during her externship was to collect data on all the signs at the project. She also learned about the project and what park rangers do on a daily basis. The externship program helps teachers build relationships with hosts partners that they can take back to their classrooms and give students an opportunity to see what natural resource opportunities are available.

➤ **Wappapello Lake (MVS)** - Wappapello Lake, in partnership with the Wayne County Historical Society, hosted the 34th annual Old Greenville Days at the Greenville Recreation Area. This beloved two-day community tradition featured arts, crafts, history, and music, drawing visitors from across the region to celebrate local heritage. A highlight of the weekend included the annual 35-point walking tour of Old Greenville, led by the Wayne County Historical Society President. Throughout the event, USACE staff, volunteers, and partners engaged with visitors through interpretive displays, hands-on activities, and water safety education, strengthening public understanding of USACE missions while supporting community involvement.



Left: Local vendors showcase their unique crafts and handmade goods. Right: The event is an ideal setting for collaborating with visitors and partners.



Left: Lasting partnerships bring cultural and historical value to the event. Right: Thousands of visitors safely enjoy the annual Old Greenville Days.



Recognizing Excellence

Lake Ouachita Natural Resources Specialist Amy Shultz demonstrated exceptional vigilance, bravery, and dedication to public safety while responding to a water-related emergency.

Shultz observed an intoxicated individual who had fallen from his kayak and was clinging to its side, unable to re-enter or swim to shore. Recognizing the immediate danger, Shultz swiftly coordinated with a nearby Sea-Doo operator to reach the distressed man.

Exhibiting calm under pressure, she successfully grasped the individual's arm and, with assistance, brought him and the kayak safely to shore—averting what could have been a life-threatening incident.

Shultz's compassion, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to public safety exemplify the highest standards of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Ranger Shultz's heroic conduct underscores the vital role Park Rangers play in safeguarding both our natural resources and the people who enjoy them.



US Army Corps of Engineers® Little Rock District

Recognizing Excellence

A coordinated effort by USACE Little Rock District personnel and emergency responders led to a swift rescue of a fisherman experiencing a suspected heart attack near Nimrod Dam.

EMS responders arrived first to assess a patient located below the spillway over rugged terrain, prompting them to request Fire/Rescue assistance. Volunteer firefighters quickly responded and determined that crossing the dam with a 4x4 pickup was essential for efficient evacuation.

Nimrod Blue Mountain Project Operations Manager Mark Green was notified that emergency responders needed access through a secured gate on the dam to reach the patient below the spillway.

Green quickly activated the project's protocol for emergencies. Contacting Jesse Palmer, Natural Resources Specialist, who responded swiftly and opened the secured gate, allowing emergency vehicles to cross the dam with minimal delay. He remained on-site until the patient was safely transferred to an ambulance.

Thanks to Green's quick decision-making and Palmer's immediate action, responders gained rapid access to the patient and facilitated his transfer to a nearby ambulance. The patient was then transported to a local hospital for treatment.

This incident highlights the critical importance of rapid response, effective teamwork, and clear communication in emergency situations. Officials credited Green's leadership and Palmer's prompt action with preventing a potentially tragic outcome.

Recreation Around USACE Continued

➤ **Stillhouse Hollow Lake (SWF)** - In August, Stillhouse Hollow Lake staff conducted over 50 brush pile burns at Dana Peak Park. After two floods throughout the summer, the day-use area was unusable due to flood debris scattered throughout the park. With help from members of the Capital Region Prescribed Fire Team, Stillhouse Hollow Lake staff were able to remove all the flood debris and reopen the park.



Above: Visitors photograph high water conditions. Right: Rangers conduct beach inspections.

Approximately a month later, the lake level was back at conservation pool. Park Rangers at Lake Georgetown conducted a swim beach inspections after the flood events to identify repairs. The Lake Georgetown staff are excited to have the swim beach open and available for public use!

➤ **Lake Georgetown (SWF)** - Over the 4th of July weekend heavy rain fell over the Edwards Plateau watershed. Park Rangers across the Capital Region responded swiftly to the rapid lake level rise.



➤ **Lavon Lake (SWF)** - Lavon Lake and North Texas Municipal Water District staff executed combined tours at Lavon and Bois D'Arc Lakes. Both teams had the opportunity to conduct site visits at each structure and discuss similar and differing lake operations and maintenance. This is part of an ongoing partnership to build relationships, share lessons learned, and look for opportunities for increased partnership.



➤ **Canyon Lake (SWF)** - Canyon Lake Professional Firefighter's Association coordinated a 9/11 memorial/freedom walk in memory of those who lost their lives during the tragic events of 9/11. Firefighters from Comal and surrounding counties and local citizens came to Overlook Observation Area at Canyon Dam to engage in the event. An estimated 100 people completed a 3-mile hike that started at the bottom of Dam Access road and continued to the top and across the dam. The community greatly appreciates the involvement and support from USACE every year for this event, which has been attended by the local community for 23 years.

Recreation Around USACE Continued



➤ **Sandy Lake (MVP)** - The Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) hosted the 25th annual Mikwendaagoziwag Ceremony at the Big Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area. The event honors the 400 Ojibwe members who died in the 1850 Sandy Lake Tragedy. Mikwendaagoziwag translates to "They are remembered." The memorial stands as a remembrance of the Anishinaabe people. The ceremony draws representation from 12 different Indigenous nations from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. The day consists of an opening ceremony followed by a canoe paddle across the lake and a feast and ceremony where Tribal leaders speak about the tragedy. Over 400 Tribal and community members attended the ceremony to honor and celebrate those who passed in the tragedy.

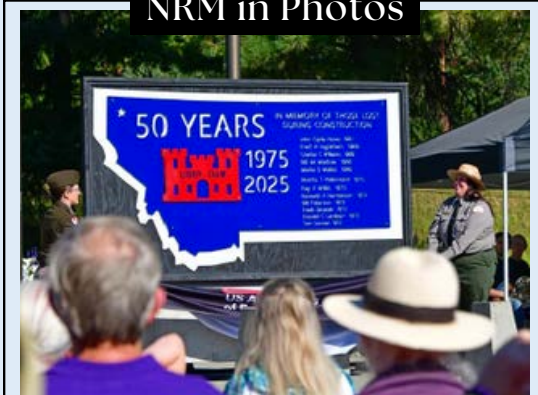
During this year's ceremony, Jeff Steere, retired Mississippi River Headwaters site supervisor, was honored for his essential role in coordinating with GLIFWC to place the memorial at Sandy Lake in 2000.

➤ **Libby Dam (NWS)** - Libby Dam supports year-round recreation, with peak visitation occurring during June, July, and August. To maintain seven-day operations at the Visitor Center and meet increased summer demands, the Natural Resources Management team brought on seven Student Conservation Association (SCA) interns and six onsite volunteers. With this additional staffing, the team was able to offer more Sunday tours to accommodate both public powerhouse tours and ongoing contract work. Staff also maintained a strong presence at the Souse Gulch boat ramp with frequent water safety pop-ups.

Over the summer, the Visitor Center recorded 6,034 visitors, not including approximately 2,000 additional attendees during the 50th Commemoration event. In total, 161 public tours were conducted with 1,206 participants, and six water safety pop-ups resulted in over 200 contacts.



NRM in Photos



Construction of Libby Dam was authorized under the 1964 Columbia River Treaty between Canada and the U.S. in response to system-wide flooding in the Columbia River watershed in 1948, including in the Kootenai River Valley. The Treaty authorized construction of four dams, three in Canada along with Libby Dam in the U.S. The dam's congressionally authorized purposes include providing local and system flood risk reduction and producing hydroelectric power. USACE began building Libby Dam in 1966 and completed the structure in 1972, with the first commercial power coming online on August 29, 1975. The 50th Commemoration included a memorial unveiling (honoring the 12 lives lost during the dam's construction), a tour of the Treaty Tower, an Open House in the Visitor Center, and public access across the top of the dam, an experience not regularly accessible to the public since 9/11 due to security reasons.

Recreation Around USACE Continued



➤ **Albeni Falls (NWS)** - Following an asphalt paving process a year earlier, the Priest River Recreational Area required maintenance to nearly every campsite within the park. Maintenance supervisor Joe Fitzgerald and maintenance worker Dale Stoley enlisted the help of Park Rangers Shane McKinley, Sam Zook, and John Copriviza along with summer Rangers Kassie Ehl and Emma Conaty to ensure 100% availability of the campsites to the public once the 2025 season opened. The crew measured, cut, and placed hundreds of feet of 6x6 timbers and secured them with roughly 400 feet of rebar, which they sectioned off and sledgehammered into the timbers. Over 150 tons of gravel was then raked and spread across the newly delineated areas. The altered campsites featured larger available space and new layouts that were enjoyed by visitors this season.

Left: Park Ranger John Copriviza and summer Ranger Emma Conaty shovel piles of gravel into the newly extended areas of a Priest River campsite.



➤ **Lake Washington Ship Canal (NWS)** - On Aug. 16, 2005, LWSC hosted its 3rd annual Salmon Day event. Chinook (King) salmon are at the height of their migration during this time, making the Locks a prime destination for salmon viewing and education. Hundreds of visitors stopped by tables to learn more about what local water quality, hatchery, and habitat experts do to support healthy runs. A sockeye salmon was dissected and on display, and common tabling themes centered around what each person can do in their own lives to support clean water. The NRM team managed a water safety table in addition to a microscope station where kids and adults alike could get an up-close look at plankton varieties. In all, the event was an enormous success.



Above: Friends of the Issaquah Salmon Hatchery (FISH) with their sockeye dissection display.

Left: USACE and other partners had tables with various information including water safety.



NRM in Photos



Lake Washington Ship Canal arborist Julia Clithero and Park Ranger Tish Cameron spent a day collecting specimens for transport to the Hyde Herbarium alongside Herbarium staff. The specimens were processed and a return trip to collect the preserved specimens is planned for early October. Some specimens will be placed in a time capsule. Herbarium specimens provide information about plants in our past and present environments. They offer a view over decades and centuries that allow scientists to study the extinction of plants, track invasive species, and even shed light on climate change through phenology. The Hyde Herbarium is a storehouse of botanical DNA from the Seattle region, the Pacific Northwest, and beyond

➤ **Portland District (NWP)** - NWP celebrated World Ranger Day to highlight the various programs Natural Resource Management staff accomplish across the Portland District. COL Caswell and Chief of Operations Anderson were honorary park rangers for the day at Bonneville Lock and Dam. Shadowing staff throughout their normal duties, they experienced a variety of environmental stewardship and recreation activities. Some of the activities included conducting veliger sampling on the Columbia River (monitoring for harmful invasive quagga and zebra mussels), engaging with Northwest Youth Corps AmeriCorps interns, shadowing Volunteers staffing the information desks at the Visitor Center, and assisting on a ranger-led public tour of the historic original Powerhouse. It was a great opportunity to engage with uniformed park ranger staff and learn more about the opportunities and challenges facing the NRM team.



World Ranger Day 2025 - NWP COL Caswell, Chief Ops Anderson practicing the standard 'rangers pointing' pose.

Recreation Around USACE Continued

➤ **Hords Creek Lake (SWF)** - Hords Creek CET Mack Watson, Park Ranger Ron Morris, and lake volunteers completed an erosion stabilization and boulder removal at the Lakeside West Swim Beach. The boulders were originally placed there years ago for aesthetic purposes and for delineation; however, the decision was made to remove the potential safety risks. A total of 52 boulders were removed from the perimeter, to include the interior of the swim beach. These boulders were relocated to other areas in the park to provide symmetry within the park itself.



Right: Relocated boulders were repurposed alongside park roads.



➤ **Proctor Lake (SWF)** - A local 4-H Plant ID team visited Proctor Lake to get some hands-on experience identifying grasses, forbs, legumes, and woody plants. The group is used to seeing plants in the classroom on mounts, so Park Ranger Ben Murphy took the group on a nature walk to see the live plants they have been studying.



After the nature walk, the 4-H group got to learn about water safety basics, Proctor Lake, and the impact its dam has on the environment and flood control.

Left: Proctor Lake Park Ranger Ben Murphey leads a tour for a local 4-H group studying various plants.



More NPLD

➤ **Waco Lake (SWF)** - Waco Lake new permanent Park Rangers Seth Williams at Waco Lake and Megan Dunagan at Navarro Mills Lake met with the Three Rivers Region representatives from the Ranger Training Plan PDT.

Kathryn Champagne, Jennifer Sleezer, and Steven Ridlehuber went over requirements in the new Ranger Training Plan and what the new rangers can expect in their first year.

Communicating these expectations early and often will help keep the rangers on track with their required readings, trainings, and tasks outlined in the plan.



➤ **Pacific Ocean Division (POD)** - Honolulu District's NPLD at the Ho'omaluhia Botanical Garden hosted 108 volunteers to clear 2 acres of invasive plants and lay traps and netting across another 6 acres in an effort to eradicate two invasive insects that could decimate the garden as well as the island. This event was a significant milestone for the district and their partners because it underscores USACE's ongoing commitment to service within the Oahu community.



Recognizing Excellence



Colonel Kroeger and Major Cox visited Sam Rayburn Project Office and Powerhouse.

The team at Sam Rayburn showcased a few unique projects, including re-armoring of the upstream dam embankment, discussed many of the unique features of the hydropower facility, and ongoing work associated with repair and rehabilitation of said hydropower facility.

Several team members were recognized during the visit for their outstanding work.



America the Beautiful Passes are Going Digital!

Look for digital Interagency Annual Passes presented via visitor mobile devices starting **October 1, 2025**. Additional digital passes will be coming **January 1, 2026**.

Stay tuned for more information!

Physical America the Beautiful passes will still be available for purchase



Digital Annual America the Beautiful Pass FAQs

- **What is the Digital Annual Pass?** This pass is one pass type in the Digital America the Beautiful Pass series that covers entrance fees and standard amenity (day-use) fees at thousands of recreation locations managed by six federal agencies. Proceeds from pass sales are used to improve and enhance visitor recreation services. The Annual Pass is valid for 12 months from purchase date through the end of the same month in the following year.
- **What's the difference between the Interagency Annual Pass and the Digital Annual Pass?** Nothing! They are the same pass; the Digital Annual Pass is offered in a digital format rather than physical and does not require shipping unless a physical pass is requested during checkout.
- **How much does the Digital Annual Pass cost?** The Digital Annual Pass is \$80 per pass, the same price as the physical pass, plus an additional \$7.50 shipping fee if requesting an accompanying physical pass at checkout.
- **Who qualifies for the Digital Annual Pass?** Anyone 16 years or older may purchase this pass.



Digital Passes

In response to the EXPLORE Act, the phased rollout for digital pass implementation on Recreation.gov began with the Interagency Annual Pass launch on Oct. 1, 2025. Digital passes are available for purchase through the Recreation.gov field sales, website, mobile application, or contact center. A Recreation.gov account is required for all digital pass purchases. Visitors will be eligible to purchase digital Interagency Annual Passes for use across National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, and USACE locations.

The suite of America the Beautiful passes-Senior, Military, 4th Grade, and Access passes-will be available as digital versions through Recreation.gov beginning on January 1, 2026.

After purchase, the valid digital pass will be displayed within the visitor's account details and can be added to a digital wallet. Visitors will immediately have access to their pass on their mobile device and they'll be instructed to simply present their digital pass for scanning.

Certain pass types (Access, Senior, and Military) will require additional information for eligibility verification, similar to the current process for physical passes. Physical passes will still be available, and visitors may opt to link valid, corresponding digital and physical passes for convenient cross-use.

Improved Pass Data and Management

With the launch of digital America the Beautiful passes, agencies and facilities will have access to more robust data and reporting on pass usage and trends. All digital passes will have an associated digital record, and physical America the Beautiful passes, where the necessary data is shared with Recreation.gov, will also result in an associated digital record. Pass records will be available through the Recreation.gov internal management portal, The Hub, alongside other utilization data, to support more robust Interagency Pass data collection. Field users with Hub access can leverage existing Recreation.gov scanning functionality or the Ranger App, for validation, similar to the current processes used for digital activity passes, tickets, etc. ■



The recording and slides for the digital ATB pass demonstration webinar have been posted to the gateway:

<https://corpslakes.erdc.dren.mil/employees/uses/digitalpass.cfm>

NRM Gateway Gateway 101 - Communication Tools for Corps Park Rangers

Natural Resources Management Gateway

to the future . . .

Home Visitors Lake Discovery Recreation Env Compliance Env Stewardship Partners
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The Natural Resources Management (NRM) Gateway is a knowledge management-based website with information about Corps recreation, environmental stewardship, environmental compliance programs, and partnerships. This tool enhances

Business Processes

- Headquarters
- Acquisition
- Administration
- Budget
- Communication & Marketing
- Environment
- Facility & Land Use Management
- Financial Management
- Human Resources
- Policy & Procedures
- Programs & Partnerships
- Project Master Plans and OMPs
- Related Sites
- Research & Development
- Safety, Security & Risk Management
- Teams/PDTs
- Tools/AIS

communication within the NRM community and preserves the organization's institutional knowledge. The Visitors Page (Corps Lakes Gateway) offers public information about Corps lakes and recreation areas.

The NRM Gateway-built by employees for employees-integrates people, policies, programs, and practices. Explore Gateway information from the homepage via the Business Processes links on the left menu, and the Tabs at the top (click [here](#) for a description of each tab). The [Index/Search](#) tab can be especially helpful to locate content within the Gateway.

NRM Gateway Link:

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



USACE Recreation in Photos. Park Ranger Sarah Seaborg makes contact while on bike patrol with a local fisherman at Martis Creek Dam and Lake.



Recognizing Excellence

Julie McDonald is a Natural Resources Management Specialist at the Illinois Waterway Visitor Center.

The Visitor Center received an email from a member of the public stating "Julie at the IL Waterway Visitor Center was immensely helpful issuing us interagency access passes. She took the time to review the benefits, show us how and where to use the passes, and demonstrated how to plan visits using the resources of the different agencies. She is a fantastic ambassador for the Visitor Center and for USACE!"

Julie and her Visitor Center co-workers continue to do a great job interacting with the public.

Gateway Glimpse

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

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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

