



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

USACE Vicksburg District, Corps Foundation recognize Lake Ouachita volunteers for distinguished service

VICKSBURG, Miss. – The USACE Vicksburg District recently recognized Lake Ouachita volunteers, Sidney and Grace Welch, with the Volunteer Excellence Coin for their years of exemplary service at the lake’s Denby Point Recreation Area.

Created in partnership with the Corps Foundation, the award recognizes volunteers’ extraordinary skills and contributions and encourages an attitude of stewardship and responsibility in caring for USACE lands, facilities, and resources.

Although 20 hours of service is all that is required per week for USACE volunteers, the Welches always exceed these requirements. In total, they have donated 670 hours of service since October 2020, and 9,296 hours since October 2010. Their efforts have allowed the lake’s operations and maintenance personnel to focus on larger projects, such as campsite amenity upgrades and renovations.

“It’s rare to drive through Denby Point and not see the Welches working,” said Lake Ouachita Park Manager Stacy Sigman. “The pride they take in keeping Denby Point clean is apparent, and the USACE Vicksburg District and Lake Ouachita staff greatly appreciate their continuous hard work and dedication.”

The Welches serve as contract-fee hosts during peak recreation seasons and volunteer at Denby Point during the off season. Their usual duties include clearing debris around the recreation area and roadway, cleaning fire rings and pedestal grills, reporting maintenance issues, maintaining bulletin boards, picking up litter, and providing information to visitors. The Welches also help campers find and set up a campsite, and routinely lend extension cords or other supplies. They help campers navigate the Recreation.gov website to book reservations. In addition to serving as campground hosts, the Welches partner in large lake cleanup events and donate their time to keeping Lake Ouachita beautiful. Over the years, many visitors have complimented their helpfulness and knowledge of the area.

The Welches’ water safety efforts include distributing themed coloring books, asking visitors to wear their life jackets, and maintaining the life jacket loaner board at the beach. They also partnered with park rangers to host a water safety information table at the Hot Springs Boat, Tackle, and RV Show to share the Vicksburg District’s message.

The USACE Vicksburg District is engineering solutions to the nation's toughest challenges. The Vicksburg District encompasses a 68,000-square-mile area across portions of Mississippi, Arkansas and Louisiana that holds seven major river basins and incorporates approximately 460 miles of mainline Mississippi River levees. The Vicksburg District is engaged in hundreds of projects and employs approximately 1,100 personnel.

