

Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence Award

The Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Lakes would like to nominate Matthew West for The Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence Award. Since 2008, Matt has performed over 500 volunteer hours at an estimated value of \$11,780.00.

Matt's full time job as a tourism counselor at the Route 15 Welcome Center, which overlooks the Project, provides him daily opportunities to interact with the public and relate environmental stewardship principles and recreational opportunities both locally and throughout the county. While not at work, Matt is an active volunteer throughout the community engaging in public outreach programs which teach others about the environment as well as opportunities at the Corps Lakes.

Matt's full time job has fostered relationships which have led directly to the installation of Project interpretive panels concerning the Project and wildlife. Matt also provided space for Corps volunteers to promote water safety. Through his job and the programs, he regularly provides to the local community including the Audubon Society and Rotary Association, Matt is a great ambassador for the environment and the Corps. Matt goes out of his way to help the Project and works extremely well with the staff.

Matt's goal as a volunteer is to engage the public promote awareness through intriguing presentations that he has continuously refined for people of varied interests and of all age groups, making them easy to understand. He innovates and engages by utilizing PowerPoints, brochures, poster boards, and life size taxidermy specimens for his audience. He also uses his unique "DJ" talents to interact and teach kids about water safety. Matt is especially passionate about eagles and his enthusiasm shines through his presentations.

Matt collaborates and with multiple partners, including the Project's Friends group, the PA Game Commission, the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Step Outdoors Winter Outings, and the Mill Cove Association (USACE Lessee). Matt is able to flex his work schedule to coordinate times best suited for programs and presentations for the Corps and the aforementioned partners.

Matt has demonstrated superb results as participation has increased at our programs. For example, during the 2017 Winter Outings Program, Matt conducted an eagle program in which 31 visitors attended, including both new and frequent attendees who come regularly to his presentations. Last year alone Matt engaged over 600 kids in stewardship through his outreach efforts. For the past two years he has been involved in our Glow Swim water safety initiative. In addition to helping with the event, which he concludes the program with a deejay style of fun-filled activities.

Matt is a marvelous volunteer because of his outstanding devotion and enthusiasm. When you watch Matt interact with the public, you can see the joy and understanding in their faces as they learn and grow from his presentations. Matt is a pillar within the community and is an

outstanding representative of the Corps. We believe that through his efforts, time, dedication, and accomplishments, he should be recognized.

