

Paul Jones – Volunteer
Jennings Randolph Lake
Baltimore District

Throughout the nation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operates and manages millions of acres of water and land. One of the most important missions on the land portion is managing the natural resources, which cover an array of activities from forestry to fisheries to wildlife management. Managing wildlife on project lands is one component of that can be a most rewarding, yet labor intensive endeavor. Wildlife populations can quickly increase when lands are designated no-hunting area and the region has few natural predators causing wildlife populations to exceed the capacity of the land. The result is often disease and starvation among those species affected. One effective method of thinning overpopulated wildlife is controlled hunting. A number of Corps projects use this method to control their wildlife populations and ensure their health and survival.

The Robert W. Craig Campground at Jennings Randolph Lake had such an event occur; the natural area's resident deer herd grew until the herd exceeded the land's ability to provide enough food for them. Browse lines could be readily seen throughout the area showing the result of overpopulation. After considering several options the staff decided a controlled hunt offered to physically challenged individuals would be the best answer. A Project Delivery Team was put together to make this happen.

Jennings Randolph Lake located in Garrett County, Maryland and Mineral County, West Virginia has a large population of whitetail deer in the area. The lake staff needed to reduce the size of the deer herd. After considering several options, the staff decided a controlled hunt would provide the desired solution. This led to the lake hosting a hunt for physically challenged persons. The lake staff established a Project Delivery Team to recruit sponsors and outside expertise in setting up the hunt. Combining their efforts for the joint venture was the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Elk District Volunteer Fire Company (EDVFC), WV Department of Natural Resources Police, and WV Hunter Education Association. Through the cooperation of Paul Jones the PDT was able to establish the Elk District Volunteer Fire Department as the primary sponsor of the event.

As the Challenged Hunt coordinator, Paul Jones is a key member of this team representing the EDVFC. Paul has surpassed the 1,000 hour mark of volunteer service dating back to 2006. The group started with an idea but no funding, equipment, volunteers, nor hunters. Paul spent his volunteer time going around to local businesses and organizations requesting donations for the Challenged Hunt. Through his efforts the EDVFC has raised over \$15,000 in contributions from corporate sponsors such as Wal-Mart, TS US Cellular and Southern States to the local mom and pop general stores in the area. These include various monetary donations including \$2,000 every year from Wal-Mart, other monetary donations from other companies ranging from \$200 to \$500, and donations of propane, feeders, food and gifts for the disabled hunters. Paul has also successfully completed and received a grant from US Windforce for the past two years.

Through his tireless efforts the Challenged hunt has been able to expand from its early beginnings of using small pop up blinds and hand heaters to now having nine portable insulated wood structures complete with sliding windows and handicap accessible ramps.



Paul Jones (Far Right) is shown after helping construct and install one of the hunting blinds used for Physically Challenged Deer Hunt at JRL.

This year we will be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the hunt. As we were planning for this year's hunt it was announced by the State of West Virginia Division of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resource Section there would be no doe hunting in Mineral County. This news jeopardized the hunt and in the view of the members of the project delivery team this would be the end of the hunt. Paul wrote a letter to the Wildlife Commissioners asking for an exemption to this ruling and explained the importance this hunt to the individuals involved. The wildlife commissioners wrote an exemption to their ruling and voted to allow a special management hunt at Jennings Randolph Lake.



Picture of Paul Jones receiving a Presidential Volunteer Bronze Award from the late Park Ranger Norm Dennis during a dinner after the Challenged Hunt

The product of Paul's work has enabled the Jennings Randolph Lake Project to successfully accomplish its goals of wildlife and natural resources management and provide 9 safe and successful Physically Disabled Hunts and 2 Disabled Turkey Hunts. The hunt has grown from roughly 10 volunteers to having 58 volunteers in 2014. We have expanded the outreach from local hunters to now include the Wounded Warrior program.



Photo of Paul Jones (2nd row, yellow hat) at the end of the 2nd Annual Disabled Turkey Hunt in April 2015.

A volunteer is a person who is a light to others; their heart is not measured in size, but by the depth of the commitment to make a difference in the lives of others. Paul Jones reflects this true definition of a volunteer by showing tremendous dedication to changing and improving the lives of many by making sure they are given an opportunity to continue the tradition of hunting despite physical limitations.



Volunteer Paul Jones proving his dedication by showing up to a work day and building hunting blinds for the hunt.

It is due to his dedication and heartfelt support of Jennings Randolph Lake program we are recommending Paul Jones to receive The Corps Foundation's Volunteer Coin.



Paul Jones receiving volunteer coin and recognition at 2015 disabled hunt at Jennings Randolph Lake, Baltimore District.



Chief Park Ranger Bill Donnellan, volunteer Paul Jones, and others receiving recognition at 2015 disabled hunt at Jennings Randolph Lake, Baltimore District.