

Designing the Indian Creek Multi-Use Trail with Western Illinois University

Lake: [Mark Twain Lake](#), MVS

Partners: [Western Illinois University Recreation](#), Park and Tourism Administration Department; Friends of Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Council

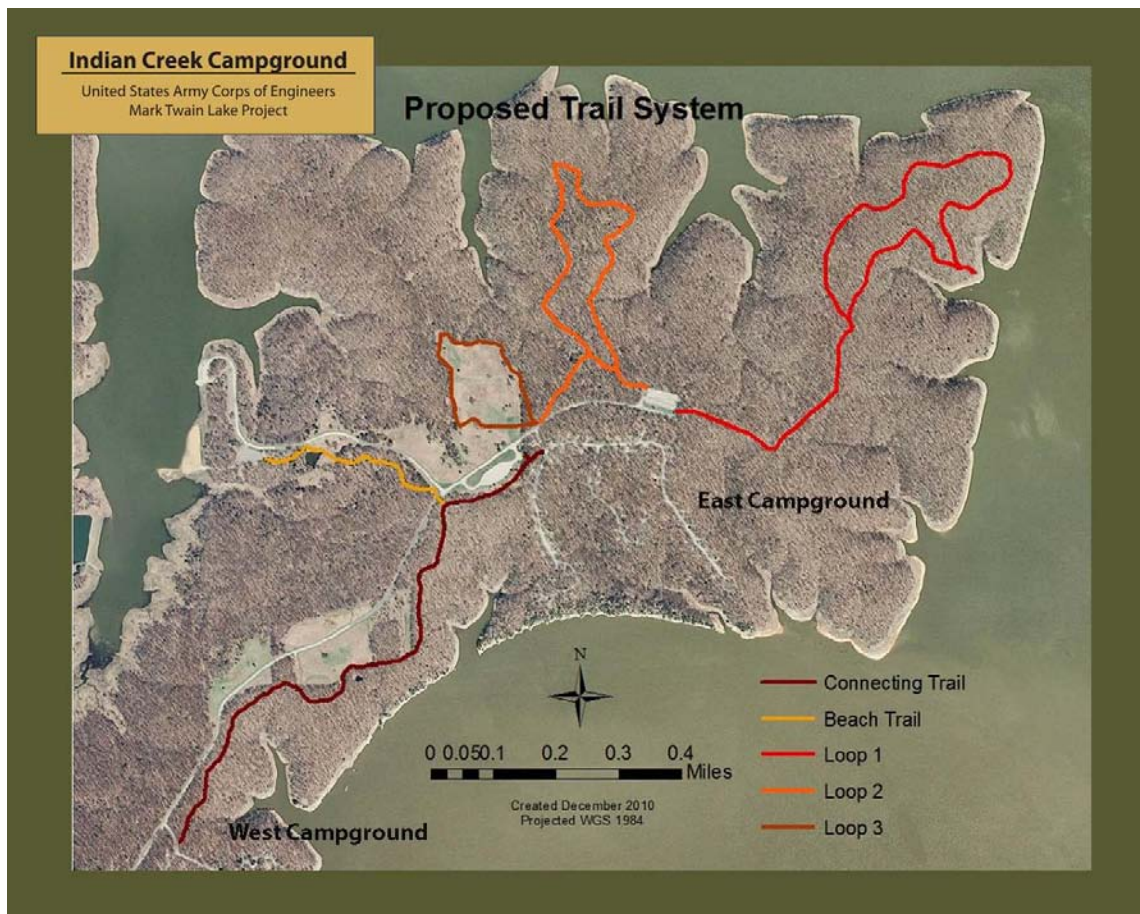
Partnership Type: MOU

Corps POC: Zach Noordhoff

Western Illinois University and Mark Twain Lake partnered together in 2010 to create a formal relationship based on common values. Dr. Rob Porter dedicated his Open Space Park Planning and Landscape Construction class projects for his students to work on a needs assessment study and a multi-use trail design within the Indian Creek Recreation Area, one of the USACE's largest in the nation. Students focused on customer feedback, trail sustainability, cost analysis, user difficulty, environmental education programming and incorporation of various types of habitat. The trail layout was vetted through Mark Twain Lake staff and the Friends of Recreation and Environmental Stewardship (FOREST) Council.

Once approved, students inputted the information into GIS for further analysis and created a 5-mile multi-use trail for running, walking and biking. The project design features a one-mile connector trail and beach trail, linking a 2009 Reserve America Top 100 Campground featuring 190 campsites, boat launching access to an 18,600 acre lake, mature oak and hickory forests, an educational amphitheatre, 2-acre fishing pond and a swimming beach. Loops 1-3 feature native prairie, food plots, prescribed burn areas and scenic views of Mark Twain Lake.

WIU and Mark Twain Lake are currently working with the FOREST Council in applying for grants to complete the first phase of construction for the 220,000 visitors that recreate in the area. Presently bicyclists and pedestrians are relegated to share the same 10-mile road access as vehicles hauling campers and loaded boat trailers, causing safety concerns to the visiting public. This trail will enhance public safety, alleviate parking congestion and encourage overall health and well being.



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