



# News Release

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Corps of Engineers Natural Resources  
Education Foundation

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## Corps Foundation Enduring Service Awards

We are pleased to announce the 2017 **Corps Foundation "Enduring Service" Awardees**, selected from an impressive group of individuals nominated for their continued service and accomplishments at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps of Engineers) lakes, lands and waterways.

The Enduring Service Volunteer Award was established by the nonprofit, Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation, doing business as the Corps Foundation to honor long term service and outstanding accomplishments by individuals and families as volunteers at Corps of Engineers operated lakes and waterways.

This year's two award winners are:

- **Chester and Phyllis Briggs, 19 years of dedicated service at Lake Red Rock at Knoxville, Iowa**
- **Mrs. Edie Wright, 12 years of distinguished service at Carr Creek Lake at Sassafras, Kentucky**

We are glad to have the generous support of the Bass Pro Shops for this very special and meaningful award program. The award recipients receive a plaque and recognition package consisting of a gift certificate and cash award sponsored by Bass Pro Shops.

The Enduring Service Volunteer Award was created in January 2016 by the Corps Foundation in recognition of the importance of volunteers in helping the Corps of Engineers meet its recreation and environmental stewardship goals. This year the work of more than 48,000 volunteers equated to approximately 27% of the Corps' workforce.

The Enduring Service Volunteer Award recognizes the extraordinary service provided by volunteers; it draws attention to their contributions and encourages an attitude of public responsibility in caring for Corps operated lakes and their resources. Each year the Corps Foundation presents the award to two individuals or families who display exceptional voluntary leadership, and have made or are making a positive difference in Corps lakes, waterways and

the communities they serve. While their years and hours of service are notable, it is the exceptional quality and impact of each of these outstanding volunteers that is central to their selection as the 2017 recipients of this award.

**Chester and Phyllis Briggs** have been volunteering for more than 19 years at Lake Red Rock, building nesting boxes and monitoring the native bird population at the lake. They've logged over 9,300 hours of volunteer service saving the Corps of Engineers over \$200,000. Chester and Phyllis manage a bird habitat restoration program which was initiated in 1979 to address a dramatic decline in bird populations by constructing and maintaining nest boxes. In conjunction with their field work, the Briggs have also made significant contributions to the interpretation and outreach programs at Lake Red Rock by sharing their knowledge of birds with visitors. Perry Thostenson, the assistant operations manager at Lake Red Rock says the Briggs' dedication has always stood out. Once a week during the summer the Briggs' make the trip to Lake Red Rock from their home in Newton, where they'll inspect each of the boxes that line the 10 mile trail, and meticulously record their findings. Under the Briggs guidance the Lake Red Rock nest box program has grown to include a trail of 113 bluebird boxes and 4 purple martin colonies which contributed to the fledging of 3,412 bluebirds, 2,172 tree swallows, 825 purple martins and 304 chickadees.



*September 28, 2017 - Bass Pro Shop, Altoona, IA – Chester and Phyllis Briggs were presented with the Enduring Service Volunteer Award for their volunteer service at Lake Red Rock. The award was presented by Greg Miller, Chairperson Board of Directors for the Corps Foundation with Gail McMahon (left), Event Planner representing Bass Pro Shops and Perry Thostenson (right), Assistant Project Manager representing Lake Red Rock, Corps of Engineers.*



**Mrs. Edie Wright** contributed over 3,900 hours of effort saving the Corps of Engineers approximately \$96,000. Her diverse contributions include water safety presentations, planting flower gardens, tree planting to restore the American chestnut, habitat ponds for amphibians, and many special events such as the Knott County "Old Fashioned Christmas" parade. Perhaps her most notable accomplishments were new displays for the Carr Creek Lake Visitor Center, and a 5 year aquatic re-vegetation project to increase populations of crappie in the lake. Mrs. Wright received her award on October 4, 2017, with family, friends, other volunteers and Corps employees attending a very festive celebration.



*October 4, 2017 at Tailwater Recreation Area, Carr Creek Lake, Kentucky, Mrs. Wright receives her award in front of family, friends, other volunteers and her Corps family. The award was presented by Marilyn Jones, Secretary of the Corps Foundation, with Willie Whitaker, Natural Resources Operations Manager, Upper Kentucky River Project, Louisville District and nominator for Mrs. Wright's award.*

Nominations for the 2018 awards will be accepted between January 15 and April 30, 2018. Go to [www.CorpsFoundation.org](http://www.CorpsFoundation.org) in January for more information on how to nominate your most exceptional volunteers.

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*Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation, is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, tax ID #20-5545091*