

May 23, 2024

## USA, Union Volunteers Improve Fishing Access for All at Hood Park in Burbank, Washington

**SPRING HILL, Tenn.** —The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance (USA) and 19 union volunteers representing six trades came together at Hood Park in Burbank, Washington, on May 18 to install two ADA-compliant AccuDock piers, improving fishing access for all.

Managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Hood Park encompasses a wildlife management area that includes two ponds that are stocked with trout several times a year. According to Brett Forge, a wildlife biologist with the USACE Tri-Rivers NRM Walla Walla District, the ponds are heavily fished from the shoreline, but the banks are uneven and only accessible to some.

“We’ve always wanted some kind of ADA-compliant fishing platform, but they are expensive. New projects can take many years to get accomplished,” Forge said.

When the USACE reached out to the USA for help, union members in Washington answered the call with their time, skills, and funds.

“We scouted several USACE projects and thought this one would benefit the community the most because of the park’s location and frequent use,” said Electrical Workers Local 112 Business Manager/Financial Secretary Travis Swayze, who led the project.

“Projects like this show the community that union members are here to help,” Swayze added, “and they are a great opportunity for members of different trades to connect outside the jobsite and get to know each other by name rather than just by trade.”

Prior to the dock installation, a volunteer from Operating Engineers Local 302 completed excavation, and volunteers from Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ (OPCMIA) Local 72 installed pads for the docks. On May 18, volunteers representing Electrical Workers Local 112, Plumbers and Steamfitters Local 598, Sheet Metal Workers Local 55, Ironworkers Local 14, Laborers Local 348, and OPCMIA Local 72 installed the two docks.

In total, union volunteers donated 208 hours of labor, a value of more than \$11,000. Fowler General Construction donated materials, Koncrete Industries donated concrete, and world-renowned floating dock manufacturer AccuDock was chosen to build the two new floating docks for the USA as part of a new partnership.

“Working together with the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance, we’re creating a more inclusive waterfront experience for everyone,” said AccuDock owner Jason Harrison. “Our docks are

safe, durable and accessible, ensuring everyone can enjoy the water. The fishing piers at the park are sure to be a favorite spot for people of all ages and abilities.”

Approximately \$23,000 for the project was funded by the USA’s annual Tri-Cities Conservation Dinner. Through auctions and raffles held during the dinner, union affiliates and union members donate money that is reinvested in the community through local conservation projects and events.

“This was the quickest turnaround for a donation and installation that we’ve seen in a long time,” Forge said. “I was talking to a park visitor the morning of the project. He said he wanted to bring his dad fishing, but he is in a wheelchair. When I told him we were putting in the docks, he was over the moon. It was a perfect sign that we are doing the right thing.”

“Within 15 minutes of the dock installation, people were fishing from it,” said USA Conservation Programs Manager Sam Phipps. “AccuDock makes a really quality product, and our union volunteers are highly skilled at what they do, so these docks are going to serve the community for a long time with minimal maintenance required.”

On June 1, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance will host more than 200 youths and their families for a ‘Take Kids Fishing Day’ event at the new fishing docks. Registered youths will receive free fishing rods and reels as well as instruction and assistance from local union volunteers.

“I think Take Kids Fishing Day will be a great event. Many people don’t realize that outdoorsmen are the frontrunners of conservation because a large portion of fishing and hunting licenses pay for conservation,” said OPCMIA Local 72 Business Agent Jacob Bradley. “The more people we get into hunting and fishing, the better opportunity we have to protect our natural resources.”

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***Union Sportsmen’s Alliance (USA):*** *The USA is a union-dedicated, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose members hunt, fish, shoot and volunteer their skills for conservation. The USA is uniting the union community through conservation to preserve North America’s outdoor heritage. For more information, visit [www.unionsportsmen.org](http://www.unionsportsmen.org) or connect on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).*

***Work Boots on the Ground (WBG):*** *WBG is the USA’s flagship conservation program that brings together union members willing to volunteer their time and expertise to conservation projects that improve and enhance public access to the outdoors, conserve wildlife habitat, restore America’s parks and mentor youth in the outdoors. The USA’s Work Boots on the Ground program works closely with federal, state and local agencies and other conservation groups to provide manpower needed to complete critical projects that may otherwise go undone.*

Volunteers from OPCMIA Local 72 poured pads prior to the fishing dock installation.



Nineteen union volunteers came together on May 18 to install two fishing docks at Hood Park.



Union volunteers representing six trades donated 208 hours of labor to install the two AccuDock fishing piers at Hood Park.





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