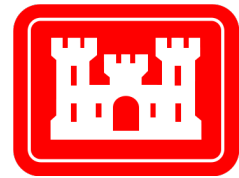




DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, LOUISVILLE
CORPS OF ENGINEERS
CAESAR CREEK LAKE VISITOR CENTER
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On June 8th, 2013 Caesar Creek Lake became the first project in the Louisville district to host a Take A Warrior Fishing event (TWF). The TWF project is a subset of the larger CAST (Catch A Special Thrill) Foundation that host events for physically and mentally handicapped children and veterans throughout the country to engage them in the outdoors and local community through the sport of fishing. The CAST foundation provides the necessary equipment for the veterans including rod, reel, tackle box, and event t-shirt. The park rangers at Caesar Creek Lake then went out to local community sponsors to help assist in hosting this large event. Letters, phone calls, emails, and word of mouth were all used to connect with potential sponsors. The local community responded with great enthusiasm to the event and 28 different agencies, organizations, and businesses donated time, money, and giveaways to the event.



On the Saturday of the event, boat captains from the local bass and muskie clubs arrived at Caesar Creek between 6:00-7:00am to ready their boats and assist rangers the setup for morning check-in. Forty boat captains volunteered their time and boats to allow veterans and their families to get out on the lake. Veterans and their family members were told to arrive at the Caesar Creek Lake Visitor Center between 7:00-8:00am where they parked their vehicles and were shuttled to the boat ramp. When they arrived they received their equipment, t-shirt, bottled water and

breakfast to take out on the lake. Though CAST provided equipment for veterans that they could take home with them, family members were given loaner poles and equipment provided by the Ohio State Parks, Ohio Division of Wildlife, and Ohio Department of Watercraft. Prior to the event, boat captains were given instructions to call their veteran whom park rangers had paired them with. This made introductions of veterans and boat captains go much more quickly and efficiently. Once everyone in a group had their equipment and had met with their captain, they were free to head out and get fishing! Boat Captains were given a time to return to the boat ramps between 11:30am-12:30pm. The return was spread out over an hour to help prevent congestion at the ramp, this was necessary not only because of the large number of boats the event had on the water but also because of the large number of recreational boaters attempting to put in during the event.

After vets were brought back to the ramp, they were shuttled along with the boat captains, back to the visitor center. At the center, members of the Southwest Ohio Muskie Club were hard at work cooking a wonderful picnic lunch donated by the Golden Lamb Restaurant. Volunteers from major sponsors, Lebanon Ford and Project Healing Waters, were hard at work assisting participants with food and beverages. The menu consisted of burgers, brats, and hotdogs with all the trimmings, potato salad, coleslaw, watermelon, cookies, brownies, water and pink lemonade. While participants were eating, they got to enjoy some wonderful, authentic bluegrass music by local bands Retread and Kentucky31, who both donated their time for this event. At 1:30, Ranger Samantha gave out appreciation plaques donated by the Friends of Caesar Creek organization to major sponsors: Lebanon Ford, Ohio Bass Federation Nation, SW Ohio Muskie Club, Kentucky Muskie Club, Project Healing Waters Dayton Ohio, and Bassmaster Larry Draughn. After the awards began the door prize raffle. Door prizes were donated by local sponsors: Lebanon Ford, Bass Pro Shop, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Krogers. Participants then had time to interact with sponsors such as the Muskie Clubs, Fly fishermen, and the Cincinnati VA hospital. The event ended with a ceremonial volley and playing of taps presented by the Mason VFW color guard.



Participants and staff all agreed that the first Take A Warrior Fishing event went above and beyond expectations thanks to all of the hard work and dedication of the events volunteers and sponsors. This event would be nothing without them. Many of our veteran participants shared their stories with staff and volunteers, bringing smiles and tears of joy to everyone's faces. Corps staff, along with many of the event sponsors are already beginning planning for next year's event.

