

**Partnership Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
September 23-24, 2008**

**Meeting Location: Raystown Lake Project, Huntingdon, PA**

Attending

Debra Stokes, HQ  
Jeff Boutwell, SWF  
Greg Miller, NWK  
Richard Otto, MVP  
Phil Benge, NWW

Cori Brown, NAB  
Mark Wilmes, LRL  
Chris Gallagher, SPN  
Mike Hosey, SAW

**1. Team Member Information**

- a) Debra Stokes has accepted a new position in HQ in the Legislative Liaison Office. Her position in Operations will be filled on a temporary basis until a permanent recruitment can be made.
- b) Greg Miller has accepted a new job as the NRM Division representative in SAD. His replacement on the Partnership Advisory Team (PAC) is Phil Benge from Walla Walla District.
- c) In Greg's new position he will be joining the Recreation Leadership Advisory Team (RLAT). There was discussion recommending that Greg become the liaison between the PAC and the RLAT. Kevin Pfaff is the current liaison.
- d) The Partner's Outdoors Conference will be held February 2009 in Columbia, MD. Greg has been nominated to attend.

**2. Review of Team Work Items**

- a) Clarifying Ethics Associated with fundraising, use of the Corps logo and Giving Recognition to Partners. This work item is considered to be complete and is covered in the new Contributions, Fundraising, and Recognition Reference Guide (CFRG) that will be released from Headquarters in Oct 2009.
- b) Draft Legislation for new Partnering Authority. Greg and Dick have worked this item jointly however since Greg is leaving the team Dick will now be the lead. Prior to the drafting of actual legislative language we are required to perform a legal analysis of our current authorities. Beth Pitrolo, from MVS Office of Counsel has been assigned this task. The review will determine what desired actions could be implemented through policy changes and which ones would actually require a new legislative authority. Dick will set up a conference call with Beth, Debra, Greg and Mary to discuss the procedure for carrying this out. This will be followed up with coordination through Janice Howell in HQ. From our research it is generally understood that new legislation will be required for accepting a real estate donation, transferring funds to a partner (cooperative agreements), expending funds on COE leased property, expending funds when a partner has an approved grant (eliminate up front money requirement), allowing the Corps to be a grant applicant, and expenditure of funds off Corps fee title lands. Guidance and/or changes in current policy are such things as clarification on the use cooperative management leases,

clarification concerning the ethics of partnering (reference 2a above), guidance concerning challenge partnerships especially concerning real estate requirements and necessary agreements, definition of funds augmentation (Economy Act), creation of MOU and MOA simplified templates, and policy guidance concerning the liability of volunteers when using government owned equipment. Beth Pitrolo's work should define all of the above as either policy or legislative issues. Kathy Sills from HQ RM has released an SOP concerning the processing of donated funds. Debra will re-circulate this guidance.

- c) ER/EP Updates. Debra has asked Carolyn Bauer and Dorie Murphy to review the Volunteer regulation and provide suggested changes to her. Other ER/EP's that need updating include Contributions, Cooperating Associations, and Challenge Cost Sharing. Debra has notes she has gathered over the years and will provide them to Cori who will take the lead on this task. Rhonda Jones is working on a volunteer handbook which should be ready for review by the PAC and others sometime this fall.
- d) RLAT Advocacy Document. The RLAT is drafting a collaboration/advocacy document on which Greg has provided considerable input to incorporate partnering as the advocacy method. Greg will send copies to all team members who will review and provide comments and communication points back to Greg. Greg will forward to the RLAT through Kevin Pfaff. We also discussed reviewing the USACE Recreation & Stewardship Programs Communications Strategy document located on the Gateway at: <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/cecwon/memos-drill.cfm?Id=569>
- e) Handshake Program. Mike reported that the 2007 reports are in and the 2008 reports have been requested. These will be shared with the team once Mike has a complete set. The 2009 application period was extended to October 15<sup>th</sup> after which all team members need to review and rank projects. Mike will consolidate scores and the team will discuss results at the next conference call scheduled for Oct 20, 2009. There is a new suggestion to award \$10K to a project that recruits a new cooperating association in their handshake project. The team needs to discuss how this would be administered, how projects become eligible, and how determination of the winner is made.
- f) Ranger CoP – The new Ranger CoP was discussed briefly. Chris is the partnership representative on this CoP.
- g) OMBIL. Many changes are being considered for OMBIL. Those changes will be implemented on a prioritized basis, not by the order in which they were received. Cori reported that it may be some time before we see the suggested changes in the Partnership data.
- h) CENREF. The foundation had a call out for information on Corps projects with a deadline of Sep 30, 2008, although their website states that they will accept applications any time during the year. CENRF's involvement may not necessarily be providing funds but could be assistance with executing a partnership or matching Corps projects with a corporate sponsor. Greg has been the main contact for the foundation and now Chris will take over those duties. Greg, Debra, and Chris will arrange a conference call to discuss the process that will be used to select Corps projects sponsored by CENREF.

- i) APPL 2009. The next APPL conference is in Baltimore March 1-5, 2009. Cori, Jeff, and Chris will jointly plan the Corps training and involvement at APPL. It seemed to work well to have the Partnership 101 class as part of the conference rather than doing it during the 1 ½ day Corps session. It was suggested to do this again, upgrading the curriculum from basic partnership authorities to show some more complex partnering examples. Claudia Schechter will be our contact again this year and needs to be involved through the planning process. Dori Murphy will remain as the Corps contact to APPL for overall conference issues. We should consider including information on the new CFRG, having a session with Doug Cox to explain his new position in Fort Worth, and possibly a session with a member of the RLAT. The Corps Cooperating Associations award which is given bi-annually at the APPL conference will not be given in 2009. However, the team discussed expanding this award to a more general “partnership award”. Ideas on how this might be administered should be discussed at a future meeting. Jeff and Mark will take the lead on this.
- j) NRM Gateway. All members agreed that we should add a “Partnership Tools” link to the Partnership page on the NRM Gateway. Things to be included are the new CFRG, competencies, partnership checklist, transition memo, the partnership 101 power point, the Corps partnership philosophy, and talking points. It was also suggested to have a search capability for the Partnership tab only, rather than searching the entire Gateway for needed information.

### **3. Meeting with Raystown Staff**

The second day of the meeting (9-24-08) was spent with the Raystown staff discussing partnership issues and examples from their Project. Some of the key issues that were brought forward were:

- a) OC and RM types need to be re-educated on partnership issues
- b) COE does not recognize that partners can manage money and projects
- c) The private sector does not like bureaucracy
- d) In many rural areas organizations are competing for the same money and talents of volunteers
- e) The Corps wants no risks and expects partners to take all the risk
- f) Corps needs authority to spend money on leased areas so that we may partner with lessees.
- g) Partners don't want to do O&M, they generally desire a new program or project
- h) A question was asked about why we need a challenge partnership for the Handshake Program. Why couldn't it be expanded to cover all partnerships?
- i) We should consider “long term” payouts under the Handshake Program. I.e. \$3-5K per year for 3 years.
- j) Most partnerships, in order to meet all the requirements, are a tremendous commitment in time. Getting a good plan in place is critical.
- k) Everyone agreed the partnership regulations need to be updated.
- l) There was a question about how to accept rental equipment as a contribution because there is an issue about the Corps accepting liability for damage that might be done to the equipment.

- m) There was a question about Corps leased agricultural lands. Can or should the Corps allow these lands to be placed in a government program such as CRP.

Respectively Submitted,

Richard J. Otto