

COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS

PROSPECT Session #1
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May 1 - 4, 2023



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**





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Authorities

Authorities:

33 USC 2328, WRDA 1992, Sec 225

ER & EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 9-Cooperating Associations





Cooperating Associations vs. Friends Groups



They are NOT the same thing!

- **Cooperating Association:** refers to a legal entity, organized under state law, which enjoys a non-profit and tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Service code AND which operates under the terms of a cooperating association agreement with the Corps.
- **Friends Group:** generally refers to local volunteer groups of citizens organized for a specific purpose or interest in a particular geographical area. Friends groups may or may not have 501(c) status. A friends group does not become a cooperating association unless an agreement is signed with the Corps.

Keep in mind that many of our Cooperating Associations are called “Friends of XYZ Lake” so it can be a bit confusing.

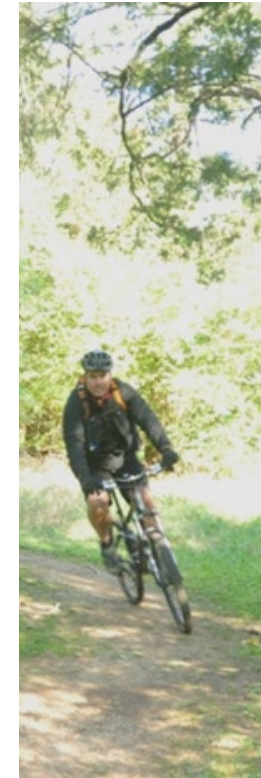
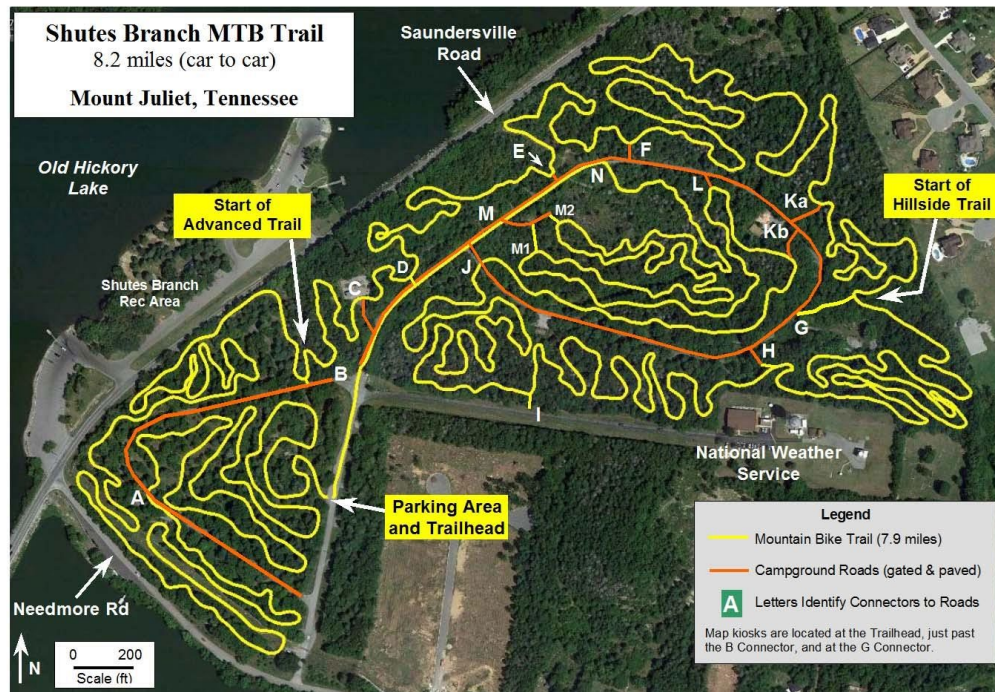


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Benefits of Friends Groups

- Even without a formal agreement, a friends group can get a lot accomplished for your project and be an advocate for the Corps
- Example: Friends of Shutes Branch at Old Hickory Lake – Completed over 1300 hours of volunteer work to build a bike trail. Saved the Corps \$40k
- Could not raise enough money needed to start a non-profit and become a cooperating association





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Benefits of Cooperating Associations

- Associations can purchase materials, equipment, programs, exhibits, services, and publications to be used at the project.
- Fundraising, sponsoring, collaborating
- Associations can develop an organized constituency not typically accessible to the Corps.
- Associations can be advocates for the Corps. Some can lobby if they are established with that mission.
- Can hire support staff to help Corps missions.



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Benefits of Cooperating Associations

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Your Cooperating Association Partners can operate bookstores in USACE Visitor Centers!

- May sell interpretive and educational items, such as publications, maps, visual aids, audio tapes, pamphlets, handicrafts, and other objects directly related to the recreation, scientific, interpretive, and educational goals and mission of a project.
- Your partner should act as the primary distribution method for the sale of approved items.
- Corps personnel and/or volunteers may assist associations with nominal duties including the sale of bookstore items.
- The association shall not be charged for the use of facilities, utilities, or janitorial services when the use is incidental to the usual operation of the facility. If these activities go above and beyond normal operations, the Corps shall be reimbursed at an agreed upon (but nominal) cost.
- Any necessary real estate instruments shall be a separate document and action from the cooperating association agreement.



Bookstore items in Lower Granite VC - NWW



Volunteer selling items at Bonneville L&D – NWP
Both bookstores operated by the cooperating association, Discover Your Northwest



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Getting Started

- Consult with Office of Counsel early in the process of trying to develop a new cooperating association.
- Determine if there is an existing association or non-profit group in your area.
- USACE employees can facilitate activities that lead to creation of a cooperating association.
- Nonprofit groups must have a developed structure and operating procedures.
- Provide them resources to assist with forming an association
 - Web resources (IRS.gov, etc.)
 - Supporting associations (Public Lands Alliance)
 - Training



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Cooperating Association Toolkit



TOOL KIT FOR DEVELOPING A COOPERATING ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



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Partnering with an Existing or New CA



Existing associations:

– Pros

- Availability of funds for start-up operations
- Track record for references
- Familiarity with Corps policies

– Cons

- Less influence and flexibility
- Potentially larger overhead expenses
- Less focus on individual projects

New associations:

– Pros

- More influence
- Lake/project focused
- Clearer reporting

– Cons

- No history/predictability
- Greater opportunity for failure





Cooperating Associations



Cooperating Associations must have:

- Board of Directors
- Complete Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws
- Non-profit 501(c) status
- Mission that aligns with the Corps mission



Cooperating Associations

USACE Efforts

- Provide the Association with Corps' goals, programs and activities.
- Provide members with a sample agreement to review
- Sign the agreement
- Establish annual goals
- Now the hard work begins...





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Cooperating Associations

<https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/employees/coopassoc/coopassoc.cfm>

USACE Efforts: Currently 60 Cooperating Associations and Friends groups in Partnership with the Corps

- LRP: Friends of Youghiogheny River Lake
- MVS: Friends of Lake Shelbyville
- SAW: Friends of Mountains to Sea Trail
- MVS: MS River Water Trail Association/Meeting of the Rivers
- MVK: Friends of Lake Ouachita
- MVK: Keeping DeGray Lake Beautiful (friends group)





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Can I be a member (or officer) of a cooperating association in an official capacity?

Yes, a USACE Employee may serve as:

- Official Liaisons
- Technical Advisors
- Committee Chairpersons (except for a fundraising committee)
- General (Simple) Membership



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Serving in an Official Capacity Means...

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- Assigned by a supervisor
- Working on official time
- Reimbursed for travel
- Could be using a government vehicle
- In official uniform
- May be either on federal premises or invited to participate elsewhere as a result of your official position.





As a Corps Employee May I:



- Participate in a fiduciary role as officer, director or trustee unless authorized by statute or waiver?
- Participate in partner operations, e.g. budget, fundraising, membership drives, by-laws, lobbying, or “for profit” activities?
- Endorse products or services?
- Accept compensation for official duties performed with partner?
- Utilize appropriated funds to conduct activities through a partner that violates USACE authorization?

NO, to all the above



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Can I be a member (or officer) of a partner organization in a personal capacity?

YES!... Participation in a nonfederal organization in an unofficial, personal capacity must occur on personal time, not on official work time.

Informing supervisors is encouraged to ensure that federal policies are being followed.



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A Word of Caution !!!

Participating in a personal capacity must not compromise an employee's first responsibility to represent the interest of the Federal government.

When in doubt, consult your Office of Counsel





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How do I work in an official capacity with partners who are fundraising for project support?

- Attending fundraising events in an official capacity is permitted – BUT restricted to approved and official remarks.
- Participation may not appear to endorse the fundraising effort or the organization; this includes asking for money.





Things Employees “Need To Know” When Attending Partner Fundraising Events:

- Can be named on invitation as speaker, but not shown as sponsor
- May wear uniform, but limit remarks to programs, projects or subjects related to the agency’s mission
- Cannot ask for money, support or receive donations on behalf of partner
- You may NOT be co-chair of a fundraising committee or actively participate in the fundraising activities.



Fundraising Displays and Materials

The Corps may allow the non-intrusive display or distribution of materials on its projects to educate visitors about an authorized fundraising partnership or activity.





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Fundraising Website Connections



The Corps may authorize links from Corps websites to partner websites that provide opportunities to make electronic contributions provided that such linkages conform to Corps information technology management and security policies, including those pertaining to websites, and are authorized by the written agreement between the Corps and partner.



...recreating on the water, and when they do—it's most likely on a lake or waterway managed by the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the largest provider of water-based recreation in the country! The Corps Foundation is the only nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated exclusively to supporting our nation's lakes, rivers and the lands surrounding them. The Corps Foundation works to connect contributors, businesses, communities and "Friends" organizations to benefit visitors and help ensure healthy lakes and waterways for current and future generations.

Home About Friends Partnerships Join/Donate News Contact

HOW WE ARE HELPING

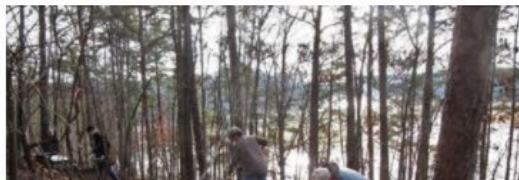
Supporting Recreation



Did you know that USACE operates and manages over 430 recreation sites and 12 million acres of land and waters in 42 states? Over 270 million visitors annually enjoy the recreation activities at these sites, and their tourism dollars support local, mostly rural, gateway communities. Federal funding for boating and fishing facilities and management has declined in spite of increased public demand. [LEARN MORE...](#)

Donations and memberships to the Corps Foundation provide financial support to improve programs and facilities that directly benefit the public.

Stewarding Public Lands



We partner with agencies, organizations and local community efforts to sustain operations, improve recreational facilities, preserve natural and cultural resources and enhance the visitor experience. The Corps Foundation pursues a variety of fundraising and grant opportu-

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The Corps Foundation uses 100% of your membership and donation funds to directly support education programs, stewardship projects and contribute toward partnership opportunities. Americans are enjoying their public lands more than ever before. In fact, outdoor recreation now comprises over 2% of the American economy. Despite this demand, public lands agencies, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, continue to face reduced Federal funding that could impact your access to lands and waters of the US.

Your financial support helps Corps projects and their friends groups connect, grow, and increase their capacity to fulfill the Corps' natural resource education mission on lakes and waterways across America.

JOIN US

DONATION



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Award Winning Fundraising

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_thRvSpmlg





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Success Story: Caesar Creek Wetland Partnership

<https://youtu.be/oBF2R-9dUZA>



Partnership between Friends of Caesar Creek and ODOT



Russell Curtis, Caesar Creek Lake park ranger



Continued Success Story...



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Caesar Creek Wetland - RGB orthomosaic

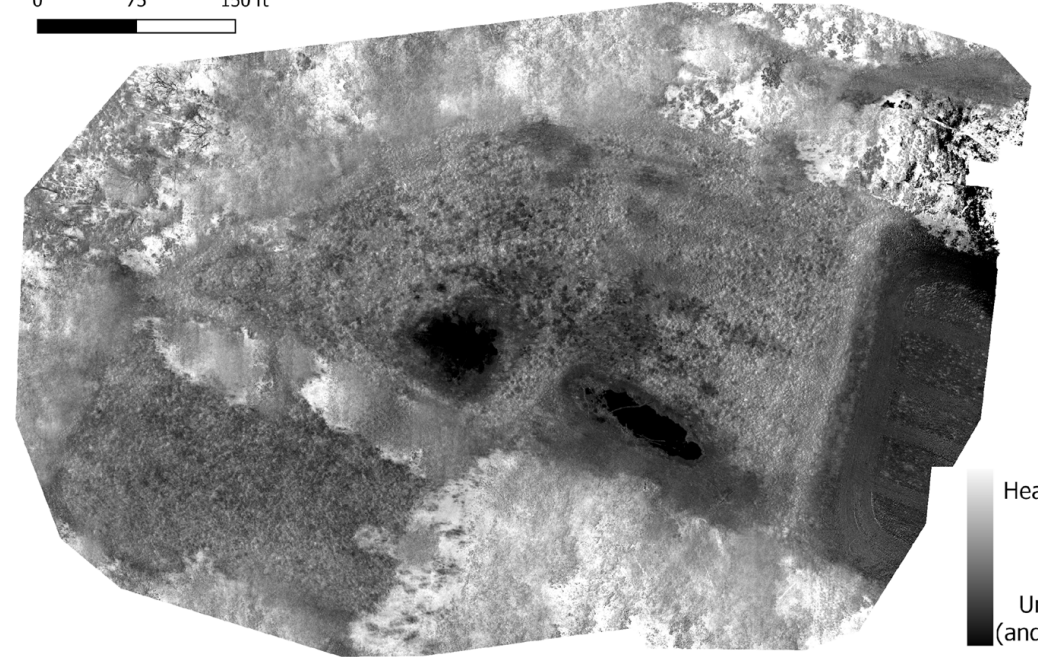
0 75 150 ft



Caesar Creek Wetland - Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI)

(NIR-Red)/(NIR+Red) --> demonstrates health of green vegetation

0 75 150 ft



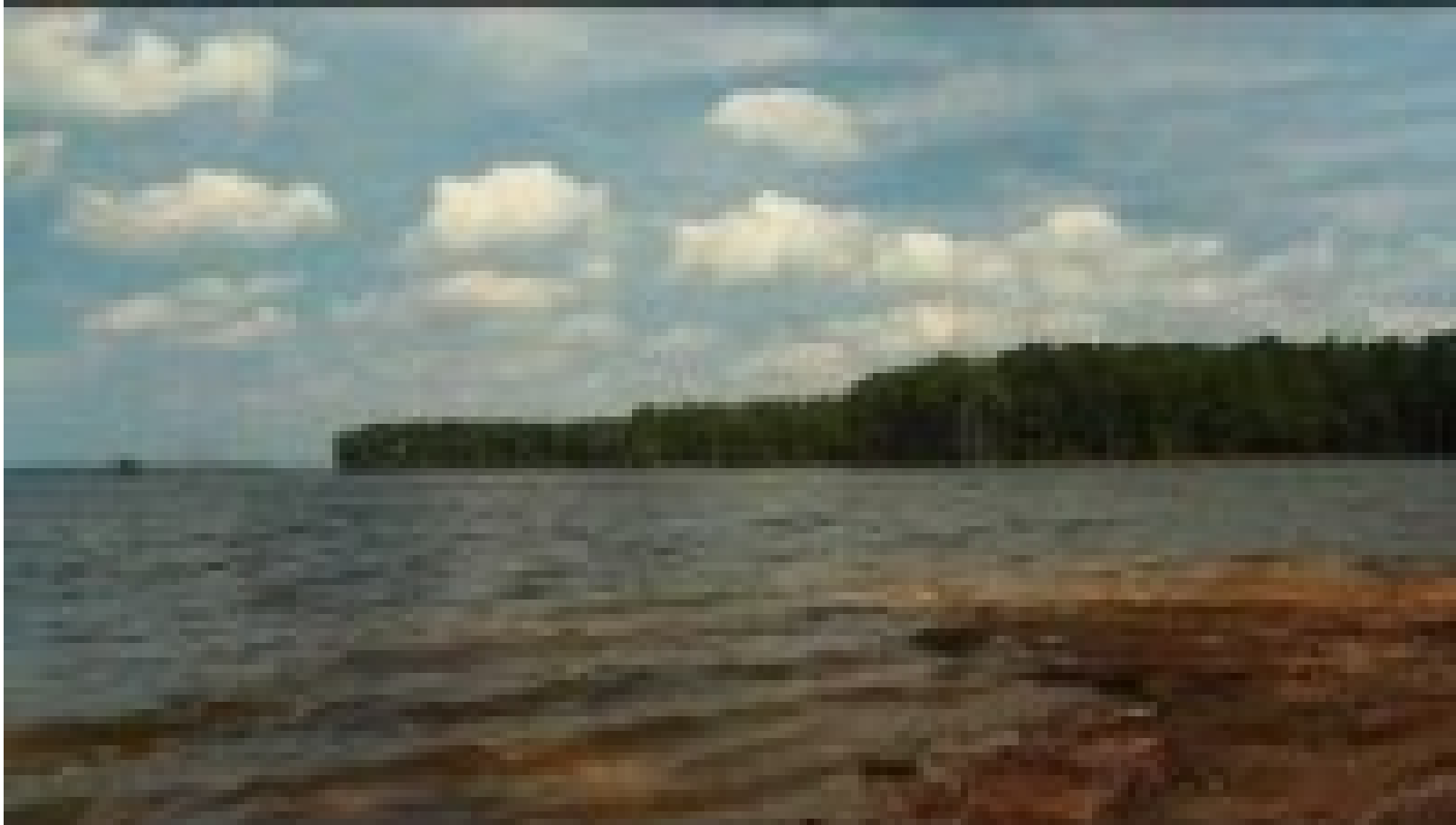
- Partnership with Ohio Department of Transportation still paying unanticipated dividends.
- ODOT has flown over the wetlands to provide aerial videos/pictures and assessments of vegetative growth around the site.
- ODOT has also offered to provide flights/assessments over other wetlands.



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Success Story: Clean Jordan Lake

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV3IAXbEXC4>





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DO NOT LITTER



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Wilmington District



How Does Litter Harm Jordan Lake?

Small animals mistake trash, including cigarette butts, for food and can die from ingesting toxic chemicals that also impair water quality

Birds and other small animals are killed or injured when they get trapped in fishing line, 6-pack rings, plastic bags & other trash

Human illness can be caused by rodents & mosquitoes that are attracted to open containers

How Long Does Litter Stay in the Environment?



*Polystyrene foam materials can stay in the environment for over 1 million years.

Tell your family and friends NOT to litter. If you see litter, PICK IT UP. Volunteer with www.CleanJordanLake.org and the U.S Army Corps of Engineers.

REMEMBER: LITTERING IS ILLEGAL.