

# Cooperating Associations

## Partnerships in NRM PROSPECT Course



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# Authorities

Authorities:

33 USC 2328, WRDA 1992, Sec 225

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



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# 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 codes 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.



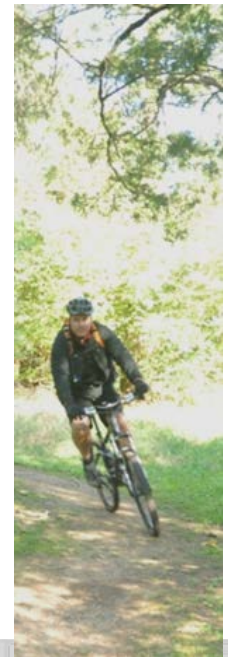
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# Benefits of Friends Groups

- 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



# 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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# 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

# Cooperating Association Toolkit



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



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction .....	3
2. Differences Between Friends Groups and Cooperating Associations .....	4
3. Benefits of a Cooperating Association Partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.....	5
4. Considerations for an Existing or New Cooperating Association.....	8
5. Getting Started.....	11
6. Structure of the Cooperating Association.....	13
7. Board of Directors and Staff.....	19
8. Lessons Learned.....	22
9. 21 Partnership Success Factors.....	25
10. Ethical Considerations for USACE Employees.....	27
11. Terminating the Cooperating Association Partnership.....	28
Appendix A – Sample Cooperating Association Articles of Incorporation.....	29
Appendix B – Sample Cooperating Association Bylaws .....	31
Appendix C – Sample Cooperating Association Agreement.....	37
Appendix D – ER 1130-2-500, Ch 9: Cooperating Associations Program.....	44
Appendix E – EP 1130-2-500, Ch 9: Cooperating Associations Program.....	46
Appendix F – Glossary of Terms.....	50
Appendix G – Online Resources.....	51



# 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



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# 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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# Let's take a closer look at a Cooperating Association Agreement:

<https://corpslakes.erdcdren.mil/employees/coopassoc/coopassoc.cfm>

COOPERATING ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS AND THE  
\_\_\_\_\_ ASSOCIATION

This Cooperative Agreement is for the mutual benefit of both parties and is between the United States Army Corps of Engineers, \_\_\_\_\_ District (hereinafter referred to as the "Corps") and the \_\_\_\_\_ Association (hereinafter referred to as the "Association"), acting through the Chairman of the Board of Directors or the Board's designee.

WITNESSETH: (Select the most appropriate ~~Whereas~~ clause)

WHEREAS, The Corps operates the \_\_\_\_\_ Visitor Center (or other facility) at the (project name), (state), for public recreation and the understanding of the Corps mission at ( ); and,

WHEREAS, The Corps achieves its operational goals for natural resources management through a wide range of activities, programs and events; and,

WHEREAS, the Corps operates its program for the benefit of the public. The public requires information and facilities for the safe and appropriate use of Corps projects. This information is conveyed through a variety of interpretive media such as; programs, exhibits, and displays which rely heavily upon the use of audio visual materials, photographs, models, interactive displays, lectures, artifacts and other materials which illustrate the Corps, its mission and activities in and around (project name) as well as the archaeological, natural and cultural history of the area; and,



# Cooperating Associations

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

- LRP: Friends of Berlin Lake, Conemaugh Valley Conservancy, Friends for the Youghiogheny River Lake
- NAE: Eastern National and Hartford Area Chamber of Commerce
- NWS: Discover Your Northwest
- SAM: Friends of Lake Lanier, Friends of Foscue Creek
- SAW: Dan River Basin Association
- SPN: Friends of Lake Sonoma



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



# Success Story

- Unique association set up with one main purpose: lake clean-ups
- Video produced with large grant from Walmart Foundation



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



Clean Jordan Lake: Stewards of Change









# DO NOT LITTER



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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](http://www.CleanJordanLake.org) and the U.S Army Corps of Engineers.**

**REMEMBER: LITTERING IS ILLEGAL.**

# 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 (with the exception of a fundraising committee)
- General (Simple) Membership



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# Serving in an Official Capacity Means...

- 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.



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# 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 of the above**

# 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.



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# 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.



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# 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.



## JOIN

By joining the Corps Foundation, you become a partner with the largest Federal provider of outdoor recreation facilities, helping with the stewardship of millions of acres of land and water managed by the Army Corps of Engineers. Be involved with your local community and a wider national community while funding important cultural, recreational and environmental projects for the enjoyment of all Americans.

All **membership fees** and **donations** are processed securely via PayPal (major credit and debit cards accepted) and are tax-deductible. **All memberships with the exception of the Lifetime membership are annual.** Thank you for helping

## DONATE

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.

