

BUILDING PARTNERSHIP CAPACITY



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps
of Engineers®



How Do I Start a New Partnership?



- There are no easy solutions or simple Standard Operating Procedures for starting partnerships.
- Finding partners and managing partners takes WORK!
- You will face challenges, roadblocks, and hang-ups; you may start 10 conversations with potential partners before you find a good fit.
- Don't get overwhelmed, just choose one idea at a time to focus on.
- Be persistent and don't give up because the reward is worth the struggle.





Why I Love Working on Partnerships



- I like the challenge; I feel a bigger sense of accomplishment out of completing something difficult than if it was an easy lift.
- Meeting new people and developing new relationships, often times the people that you meet that are involved in building partnerships can be very interesting characters.
- The legacy it leaves and the connectedness it creates in our communities; people can develop a personal connection with our projects and resources and become advocates for public lands.
- Personal example- **Working with Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail. Long time partners that were established before I came to Falls Lake. Exciting and rewarding to develop new relationships and grow the partnership. Recently added a new “backpacking” campsite, they helped overcome some of the challenges in finding the best site.**



Internal Capacity Building



- The Corps' Culture
 1. By nature, we try to control everything... we need to loosen up!
 2. Embrace private/public partnerships
 3. Does your supervisor/OPM embrace partnerships?

- Integrate into NRM Business Lines
 1. Build relationships internally with Office of Counsel, Real Estate, Resource Management, Planning, and Operations early in the process
 2. Strengthen interagency relationships
 3. Share and replicate ideas from other projects, districts, and divisions.

- Training
 1. NRM Gateway as an up-to-date resource
 2. Partnership webinars, Public Lands Alliance, Partners Outdoors, PROSPECT 328
 3. Best practice sharing

General Questions to Ask





1. What do you need from your partner/what do they need from you?
2. What is your potential partner's sustainability?
3. What is their reputation or standing in the community?
4. What are your respective expectations about time commitment?
5. Where can you be flexible with your needs to meet a potential partner in the middle?
6. What happens if you can't work it out?
7. What questions does your potential partner have for you?





Community Engagement



- Local chamber of commerce or visitor bureau
- Local trade unions (carpenters, plumbers, steel workers, electricians, concrete, welders, etc.)
- Volunteers and people who use the parks
- Community civic organizations 
- Current national partners – list on NRM Gateway
- Tradeshows, conventions...where people with similar interests gather
- Cooperative extension agencies
- Non-profits or for-profits in the area 
- Businesses within 50-100 miles of your project
- Who I know or someone I know who might know someone (network). Invite 10 people to invite 10 friends/partners each





Community Engagement: Philpott Lake & SAW



- **Philpott Lake Jan 18 partnership open house**

- Brainstormed potential partners and sent invitation to community organizations
- Format/Style: Presentation of partnership authorities with open discussion afterwards
- Representatives from state and local governments, Virginia Tech and Ferrum College, local businesses and nonprofits attended
- Many entities interested in working with us... just want to know what projects we have on the horizon
- Lessons learned: Might be good to have a project brainstorming activity, and/or facilitated Q&A session with pre-planned questions or prompts. Follow up with participants with a list of upcoming projects.

- **SAW Rangers to the Corps podcast series:**

Oct 16, 2023: Formal Partnerships and Their Benefits
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/rangers-to-the-corps-formal-partnerships-and/id1692785190?i=1000631523866>

Dec 18, 2023: All About Volunteering
<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/rangers-to-the-corps-all-about-volunteering/id1692785190?i=1000638992479>

Podcasts Preview



PLAY ▶

Rangers to the Corps- Formal Partnerships and Their Benefits
[Rangers to the Corps](#)

News

[Listen on Apple Podcasts](#) ↗

This month we are discussing formal partnerships, their benefits for all parties involved, and how we make them happen. Thanks for listening!



Community Engagement Success Story

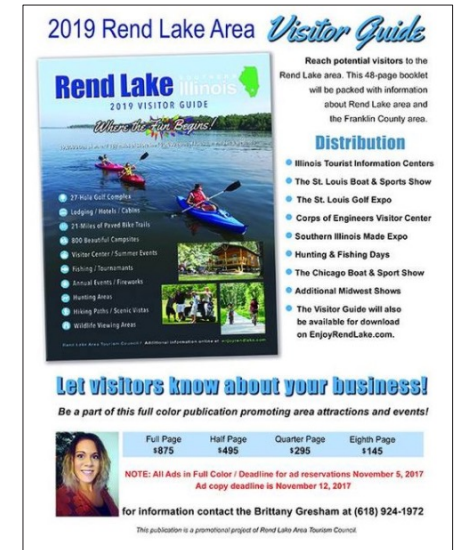
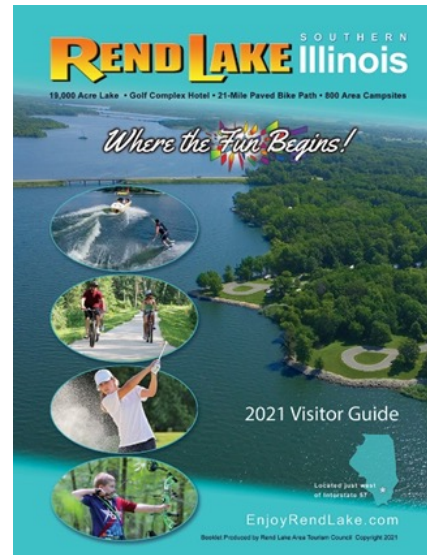


Rend Lake Area Tourism Council

- Formed in 2013 to promote the Rend Lake area
- Provides a benefit of over \$90K annually
- Create and manage the following advertising avenues
 - EnjoyRendLake.com & RendLake.com
 - Annual Rend Lake Visitor Guide & RLAs
 - Television commercials & billboards
 - Set up booths at local sport shows

Partnering With RLATC

- Contract for the National Scholastic 3-D Archery (S3DA) Tournament 2022-2025
- Brought 1200-1500 Participants to Rend Lake
- Participants came from over 30 states/countries
- Benefiting the local economy \$3-4m annually





U.S. ARMY

Community Engagement Success Story

<https://www.facebook.com/SloanImplement/videos/10155230644959613/>



Okaw Valley School District (2016 EIP Award winners)

- Partners/Sponsors:
 - FFA
 - Sloan/John Deere
 - Shelby County State Bank
 - Rural King, Inc
 - Farmweeknow.com
 - National Wild Turkey Fed.
 - Monsanto
 - Pheasants Forever
 - Van Horn, Inc.
 - Agri-Fab, Inc.
 - Barker Implement
 - Illinois DNR
 - Dupont Pioneer
 - International Paper
 - Lakeland College Engineering
 - Millikin University



Donations

- Chrome books (computers)
- Trail cameras
- Farm equipment, tractors, sprayers
- Seed and herbicide
- Chain saws, trimmers
- Food
- Weather station



Developing and Sustaining



- ❖ Formal agreements
- ❖ Make it work attitude to get over hurdles
- ❖ Honor commitments – long term trust always wins in building partnerships
- ❖ Invite other partners if possible – it can help both parties
- ❖ Find wins – even if small and celebrate them
- ❖ Don't just talk when you need something
- ❖ Have fun!



When Partnerships Don't Work Out

- ❖ Watch out for red flags
 - ❖ Relationships become strained
 - ❖ Partners lose or shift interest
- ❖ Some roadblocks cannot be overcome
- ❖ The Office of NO- leadership may decide the partnership isn't in the project's best interest, or OC may determine its not legal

Strategies

- ❖ Change of personnel if relationships are breaking down
- ❖ Change the scope- scale back
- ❖ Is there another way to go about accomplishing your goals?
- ❖ Reach out to your PAC to troubleshoot
- ❖ Stay positive and stick with it or move onto another partnership avenue.





Capacity Building Exercise



- Break into **12 teams** of 2 students per team
- 6 teams will be USACE projects and 6 teams will be partner organizations
- Read over your scenario card and become familiar with your organization
- To begin, each USACE project will match up with a partner organization, spread out in a large circle around the room.
- Teams will have **5 minutes** to develop a partnership that meets their respective needs. Avoid reading your scenario card out loud, instead use your card and your imagination to inform your conversation.
- The USACE project should begin the conversation and practice “providing information” without directly soliciting a contribution.
- Make some notes during each round on what type of partnership ideas you discussed, bonus points if you identify which partnership agreement type would work best.
- After 5 minutes, USACE projects will stay put and the partner organizations will rotate to begin the next round.
- The 5-minute rotation will come quickly, so be prepared to think on your feet and keep things moving
- After every USACE project has matched with every partner org we will recap with the whole class. Please share any unique or outstanding partnership ideas you came up with.



Questions?

