

# INTRODUCTION TO THE NRM PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

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# The Partnership Philosophy

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plays a key role in shaping the future of our Nation's water resources. Our **partners are essential** in making this happen. We recognize that partnerships must **flow in both directions**. **Cooperation** and **collaboration** are the keys to innovative solutions to meet a diversity of need. When we put our heads together, we can find answers far better than anything we can think of ourselves.



**Partnerships are a smart way of doing business.**



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**“Too often we think of a partnership as a handout instead of a handshake.”**

**-General Strock**







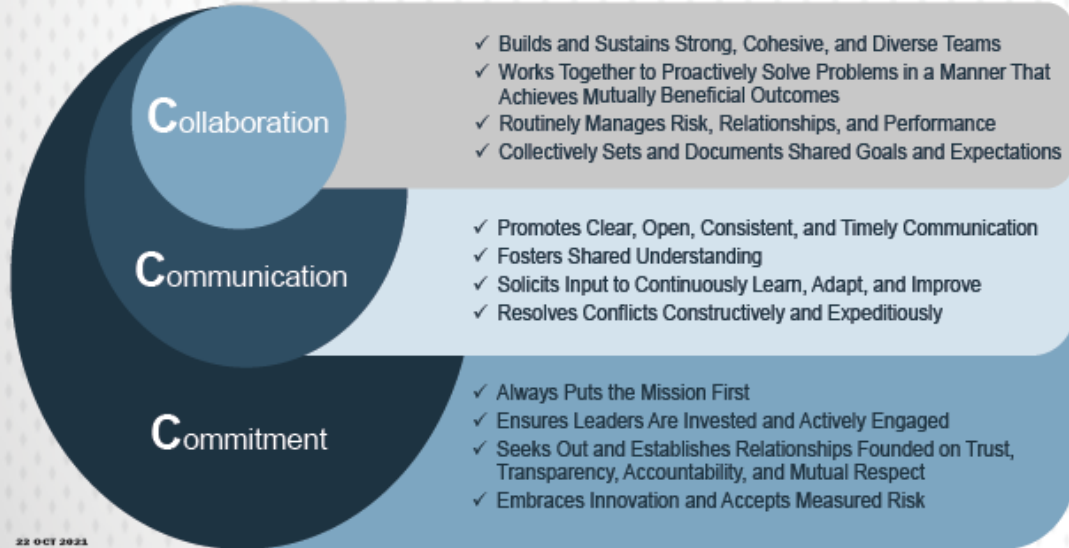
# U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Partnering Philosophy

*“Committed to working together with partners to accomplish the mission and build enduring relationships through trust, transparency, and shared values.”*

- Lt. Gen Scott Spellmon

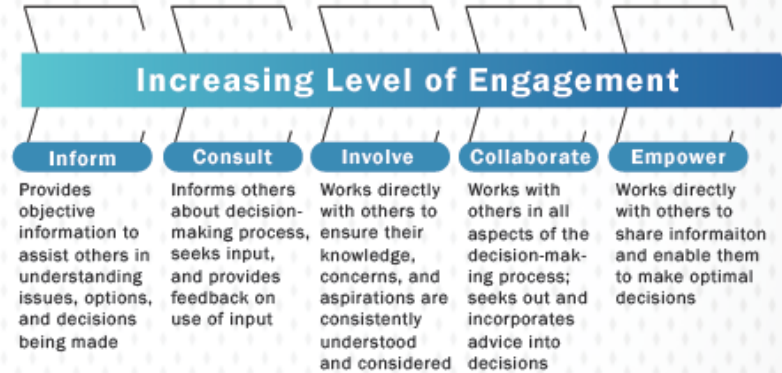
Sound partnerships require proactive engagement at all echelons of the organization and the embracement of a partnering mindset which embodies a set of behaviors rooted in three interdependent and mutually supportive elements: Commitment, Communication, and Collaboration.

## 3C's of Successful Partnering



## Relationship Spectrum

Each partnering relationship is unique and exists along a spectrum with transactional relationships at one end and strategic relationships on the other. Where these relationships fall along that spectrum and the extent of collaboration are influenced by the type of partnership, maturity of the relationship, and commitment towards partnering.



*“We must always strive to maximize partnering outcomes to enable the safe delivery of quality projects that are on time and within budget.”*

- Lt. Gen Scott Spellmon





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# Partnership Connection to the NRM Strategic Plan

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NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

## STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 - 2031

- Partnerships show up in three of the four Goals, with heavy focus in Goal 4 (Program Delivery)
- Communication: Engage stakeholders, elected officials, partners, and local communities at all levels to build awareness of the NRM program and achieve win-win opportunities.
- Resourcing: Explore opportunities to broaden partnering authorities and prioritize budget packages that utilize partnership contributions for gained efficiencies.
- Program Delivery: Foster Partnerships and Interdisciplinary Collaboration





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# What is a Partnership?

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- A mutually beneficial relationship where people work together to achieve goals
- Voluntary collaboration working toward a common objective related to the agency/partner's mission
- Builds consensus and broad-based community support
- Leverages funds and resources to meet challenges and improve opportunities



- They may be formal or informal 
- Can be as simple as a contribution of materials, services, or funds
- Appropriate legal authority, consistent with agency policies





# PARTNERSHIP

"You give me half the fish, and I tell my Mom to let you live."



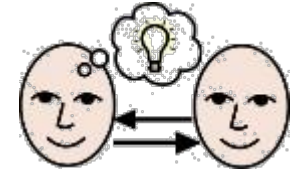


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# What's the Big Deal About Partnerships?

- Avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and promote coordinated efforts to resolve common challenges
- Partnerships are not only important, but they are also a necessity!
- Agency culture needs to promote partnering as a part of the management model and encourage training for staff.
- FY 24 Recreation/Environmental Stewardship budget = ~\$416M. Without sustainable cost-effective partnerships => Decrease in services and amenities and degradation of natural resources
  - FY 23 partnerships reported in CWBI-OPS: 3,622 with a total value of \$138 million (\$101 million in partner investment = 73%)
  - 42,839 Corps volunteers contributed 1.7 million hours of work (equivalent to 825 FTE) with a value of \$54.5 million





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# Annual Partnership and Volunteer Program Summary sheet

<https://corpslakes.erd.dren.mil/partners/ombil-annual.cfm>



## FY 23 Partnerships & Volunteer Program Summary

As we reflect on the past year, we are proud to share the incredible achievements and milestones of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) partnerships and volunteer programs. This summary highlights the impactful contributions of our dedicated volunteers and the successful collaborations with our valued partners.

(USACE Investment: \$37 million (27%))

**\$138,001,584**  
TOTAL VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

(Partner Investment: \$101.1 million (73%))



**3,622**  
TOTAL PARTNERS



**304 of 422**  
USACE PROJECTS WITH PARTNERSHIPS  
(72% of USACE Projects)

Alongside USACE staff, our volunteers and partners organized community outreach events, fostering connections and raising awareness about USACE missions. These events served as platforms to engage with new volunteers and potential partners.

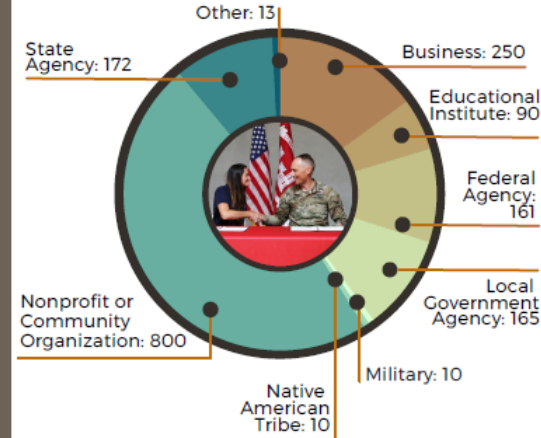
At the national level, USACE continued to team up with other Federal land management agencies to support the Federal Interagency Council on Outdoor Recreation, and the America the Beautiful 30x30 initiative, the Recreate Responsibly and Together Outdoors coalitions in providing outdoor recreation and conserving or sustainably managing natural and cultural resources. As we look ahead, we are excited about the potential for even greater achievements and are grateful for the ongoing support of our remarkable communities.

[corpslakes.erd.dren.mil/partners/partners.cfm](https://corpslakes.erd.dren.mil/partners/partners.cfm)

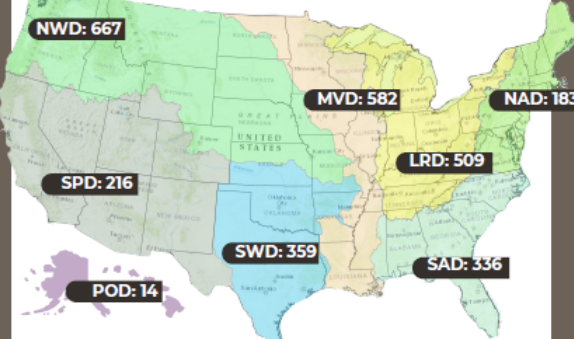
FY 23 Partnerships & Volunteer Program Summary

## Our USACE Partners

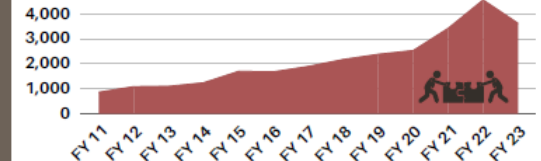
A total of **225** USACE projects partnered with **34** organizations that have a national MOU in place, providing educational programs, health and safety, environmental and recreation improvements. **58** USACE projects benefited from the assistance of **67** nonprofit cooperating associations which supported special events, interpretive activities, exhibits and programs, operated bookstores, and bolstered volunteer programs.



## PARTNERS ENGAGED BY REGION



## PARTNERSHIP GROWTH



## Our USACE Volunteers



Over the past year, volunteers played a valuable role in helping care for the environment and providing high quality recreation opportunities.

Total Volunteers **42,839**

**316** Projects Using Volunteers

Total Volunteer Hours Served **1,715,001**  
Equivalent to 825 FTEs

**\$54.5 Mil** Total Value of Volunteer Hours

Over the past 10 years, the USACE volunteer workforce has averaged approximately 35,000 providing 1.5 million hours of service annually.

**616** To Volunteers for 250 Hours of Service  
America the Beautiful Passes Issued

**USACE Annual Passes Issued**  
To Volunteers for 100 Hours of Service **4,647**

**23** Volunteer Excellence Coins Issued

National Public Lands Day **Sept. 23, 2023**

**127** Work Projects at 51 USACE Lakes

Partner Organizations and 5,231 Volunteers **218**

Produced by the USACE Partnership Advisory Committee





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# Building the Partnership Paradigm

- Be proactive. Don't wait until you need something from someone.
- Attend local community events and make personal invitations to potential partners.
- Partnerships are not “free.” They take time and effort to cultivate, and require a foundation built on trust to be successful.
- Where there is a will, there is a way.
- Partnerships are about getting to yes and finding ways to get things done.
- Partnerships should be treated like a marriage.





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# Principles for Success

- Establish clear expectations of roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the relationships to avoid future trials and tribulations.
- Get to know your partners as people 1st. Build that into the process.
- Use processes such as master plan development as an opportunity to collaborate.
- Engage partners in budget decisions such as park closures, reduced services, etc. Run the scenarios and see how they can help before the final decisions are made.



- Never pass up a good catalyst.

- Don't reinvent the wheel. Use the Gateway, the Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC) team, and your fellow classmates to find out if someone has done what you'd like to do.
- Share the resources and rewards.
- For a successful partnership, think of volunteers and partners as investors who expect a return on the value they provide.





# Partnering Authorities/Guidance



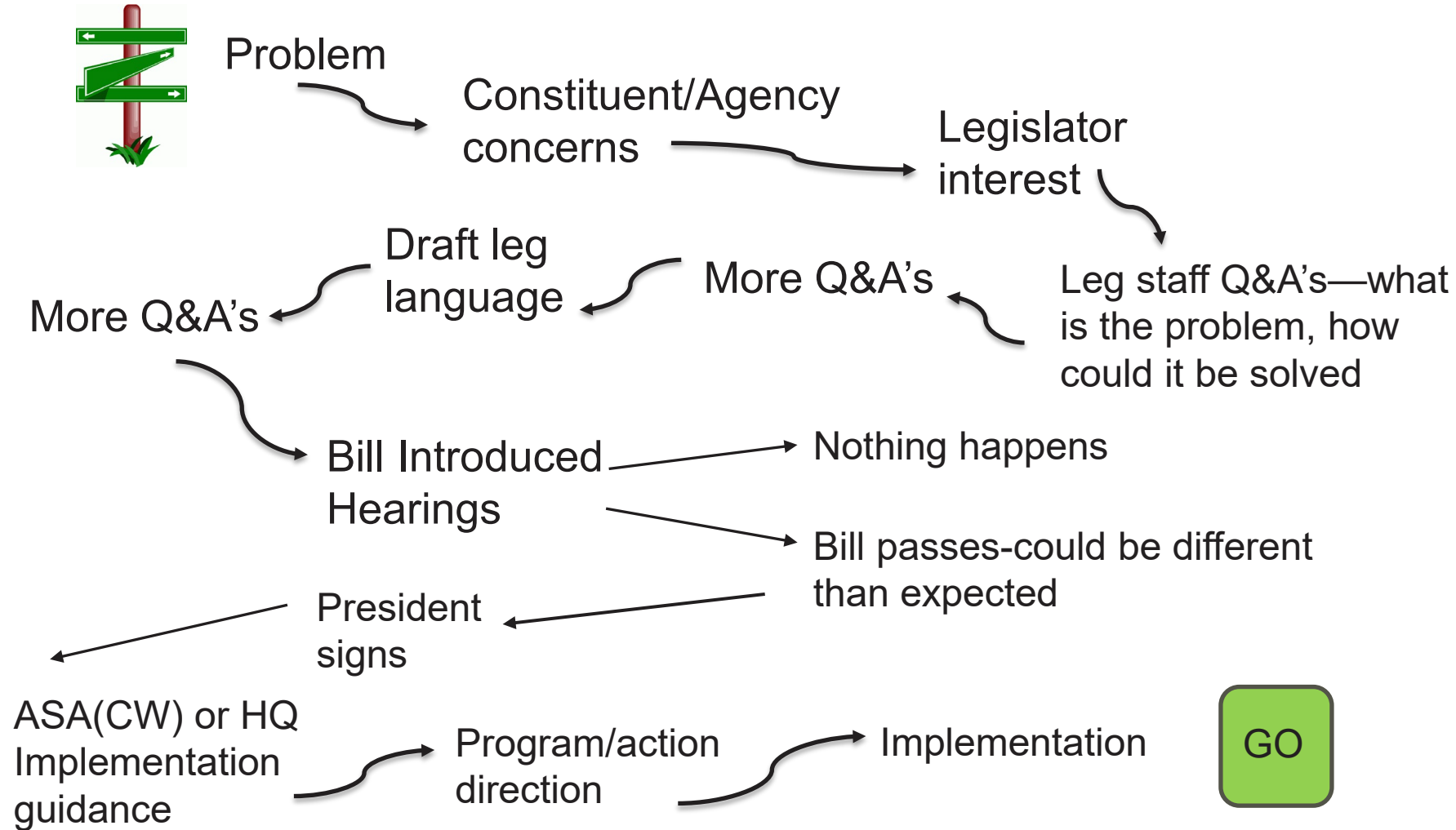
- **Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) 2016: Sec 1155, WRRDA 2014: Sec 1047d, WRDA 1992: Sec 203 (33 USC 2325) and Sec 225 (33 USC 2328), PL 98-63 (33 USC 569c), WRDA 2022: Sec 8124:** Authority to accept contributions, volunteers, set up Challenge Partnership, Challenge Cost-Share Cooperative Management Agreements, and accept Reserve troop training services
- **31 USC 1535, 41 USC 501, 31 USC 6301, 7 USC 2814, WRDA 2000: Sec 213 (33 USC 2339), WRRDA 2014: Sec 1031(b), 10 USC 2358:** Authorities to enter into agreements for services with other federal agencies (Economy Act), cooperative agreements for noxious weed management, education/training, research & development with universities, and agreements with Indian tribes
- **ER/EP 1130-2-500**, Partners and Support, Chapter 9 (Cooperating Associations), Chapter 10 (Volunteers) –replaced by WRRDA 2014 Implementation Guidance 12 Aug 2016, Chapter 11 (Contributions), Chapter 12 (Challenge Partnerships, formerly called Challenge Cost Share)

*(These chapters are currently undergoing update with the rest of ER 1130-2-500)*



# How Do We Get New Laws and Authorities for Programs?

It's a tortuous path—sometimes with unintended consequences







# Authorized NRM Partnership Types: Choosing the Right Tool for the Job

NOTE: Sometimes, more than one type of agreement will work for your partnership.

- **Economy Act Agreements:** Agreements for services and/or supplies with other federal agencies
- **Cooperative Agreements:** Agreements where the Corps transfers money or a thing of value to a partner for services and/or supplies. Authority for cooperative agreements is limited to specific types.
- **Cooperating Associations:** Tax-exempt non-profit, free-standing corporate entities with boards of directors, set up through a cooperating association agreement
- **Challenge Partnerships:** Agreement with non-Federal public and private entities on facilities and natural resources maintained at full Federal expense



# NRM Partnership Types



- **Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Agreement:** Agreement with non-Federal public entities to cooperatively manage and collect/retain fees on facilities and natural resources maintained at full Federal expense
- **Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/MOA):** “Agreement to agree” but does not obligate funds. MOA establishes legal terms that will be included in a support agreement/reimbursable order to follow
- **Volunteer Agreements:** Allow the Corps to accept services of volunteers for a variety of natural resources work with the exception of law enforcement and policy-making
- **Contributions Program:** Simplest form of partnership. Acceptance of money, materials, or services from groups and individuals for environmental stewardship, restoration, and recreation





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# Regulations and Policies

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A partnership does not allow the Corps to circumvent applicable legal requirements in areas such as:

- Procurement
- Personnel or labor laws
- Printing, publishing or audiovisual production
- Issuance of special use permits
- Real estate licenses and leases
- Fiscal responsibility
- Environmental regulations

Bottom Line: Regulations and Policies  
MUST BE FOLLOWED !



NOTE: It is just as important to build good relationships and trust with your internal partners/ support staff such as Office of Counsel, Resource Management, Contracting, Real Estate, etc. These staff members are essential to have on board when developing partnership agreements. Engage them early and often!



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# Natural Resources Management Gateway

*to the future . . .*

[Home](#)[Visitors](#)[Lake Discovery](#)[Recreation](#)[Env Compliance](#)[Env Stewardship](#)[Partners](#)[News/Events](#)[People](#)[Forums](#)[Learning](#)[GETS](#)[Tools](#)[New Postings](#)[Submit](#)[Index/Search](#)

## How To Develop a Partnership

[Step 1](#)  
[Assess Situational Needs](#)



[Step 2](#)  
[What Kind of Partnership  
is Right for You?](#)



[Step 3](#)  
[Budget Development and  
Financing](#)



## Step 2 - What Kind of Partnership is Right for You?

District Commanders are responsible for approval/execution of most partnering agreements. However, this authority can be delegated to the Chief of Operations or the Operations Project Manager through a delegation of [authority memo](#). The Corps of Engineers has a number of authorities and programs that allow it to provide work or funds or accept work or funds from Federal, State, Tribal, or non-Federal entities. The following list includes the partnership types within our authorities. [Click here for a Partnership Agreement Flow Chart](#)

**Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Agreements** - The Corps may enter into agreements with non-Federal public entities for the purpose of cooperatively managing public recreation areas, where fees may be collected and retained by the partner for reinvestment at the site at which the fees are collected. ([WRDA 2016, Sec 1155, Implementation Guidance for Section 1155 of WRDA 2016, Management of Recreation Facilities](#))

**Challenge Partnerships** – The Corps can enter into agreements to accept funds, materials, and services from non-Federal public and private entities to provide for operation and/or management and development of recreation facilities and natural resources at water resource development projects, where such facilities are being maintained at full federal expense. This program allows the Corps to accept services or funds in the above circumstances; it does not permit the Corps to reimburse for services. The contributed resources are combined with regular project resources to accomplish work within current authorities and contained in the annual or five-year plan in the approved operational management plan. ([33 USC §2328, WRDA 1992, Sec 225; EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 12; ER 1130-2-500, Chapter 12](#)).

**Cooperating Associations** – The Corps may enter into agreements with tax-exempt, non-profit organizations that volunteer services to the Corps. Cooperating associations are used to accomplish such broad goals as natural resource management, interpretation and visitor service activities at Corps civil works projects, fee-owned lands, and other areas for which the Corps has administrative and management responsibilities. ([33 USC §2328, WRDA 1992, Sec 225; EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 9; ER 1130-2-500, Chapter 9](#)).

**Volunteers** – The Corps is authorized to accept the services of volunteers to carry out any Corps activity except policy-making or law enforcement. Volunteer agreements allow the Corps to accept the services of volunteers and to provide for their incidental expenses. ([33 U.S.C. §569c; Implementation Guidance for Section 1047\(d\) of WRRDA 2014](#)).

**Contributions Program** – The Corps is authorized to accept contributions of cash, funds, materials, and services from persons, including governmental entities but excluding the project sponsor, in connection with carrying out a water resources project for environmental protection, restoration or recreation. Contributions must be used for work items within current authorities and contained in an approved annual five-year operational management plan. A contributions plan serves as the agreement for this program. Note: Real estate cannot be accepted under this program. ([33 U.S.C. §2325, WRDA 1992, Sec 203; EP 1130-2-500, Chapter 11; ER 1130-2-500, Chapter 11](#)).

**Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)/Memoranda of Agreement (MOA)** – These are “agreements to agree” which coordinate the Corps’ authorized activities with another entity. MOUs often state common goals and nothing more. Thus, MOUs do not contemplate funds transfers and should usually include language that states something similar to: “This is not a funds obligating document; by signing this agreement the parties are not bound to take any action or fund any initiative.” They may be used to run a program a certain way so that it functions better with the program of a sister agency, for example.

MOAs, on the other hand, often establish common legal terms that will be read into every Support for Others reimbursable order that follows. MOAs do not obligate any funds of themselves but they establish the terms for future service and cite one of the appropriate authorities to do so.

**Economy Act Agreements** – The Economy Act of 1932, ([31 U.S.C. 1535](#)), authorizes an agency to place orders for goods and services with another Federal agency (or a major organizational unit of an agency). It can be used when: 1) funds are available, 2) the head of the ordering agency determines that it is in the best interest of the government, and, 3) the head of the ordering agency decides that ordered goods or services cannot be provided as conveniently or cheaply by contract with commercial enterprise. These must be shown by a Determination and Findings (D&F), prepared by the ordering agency. The performing agency must be able to provide the goods or services in-house or by contract, and parties should verify under Part 8 of the FAR that the responsibility for this good or service is not assigned to another agency of the Federal government.

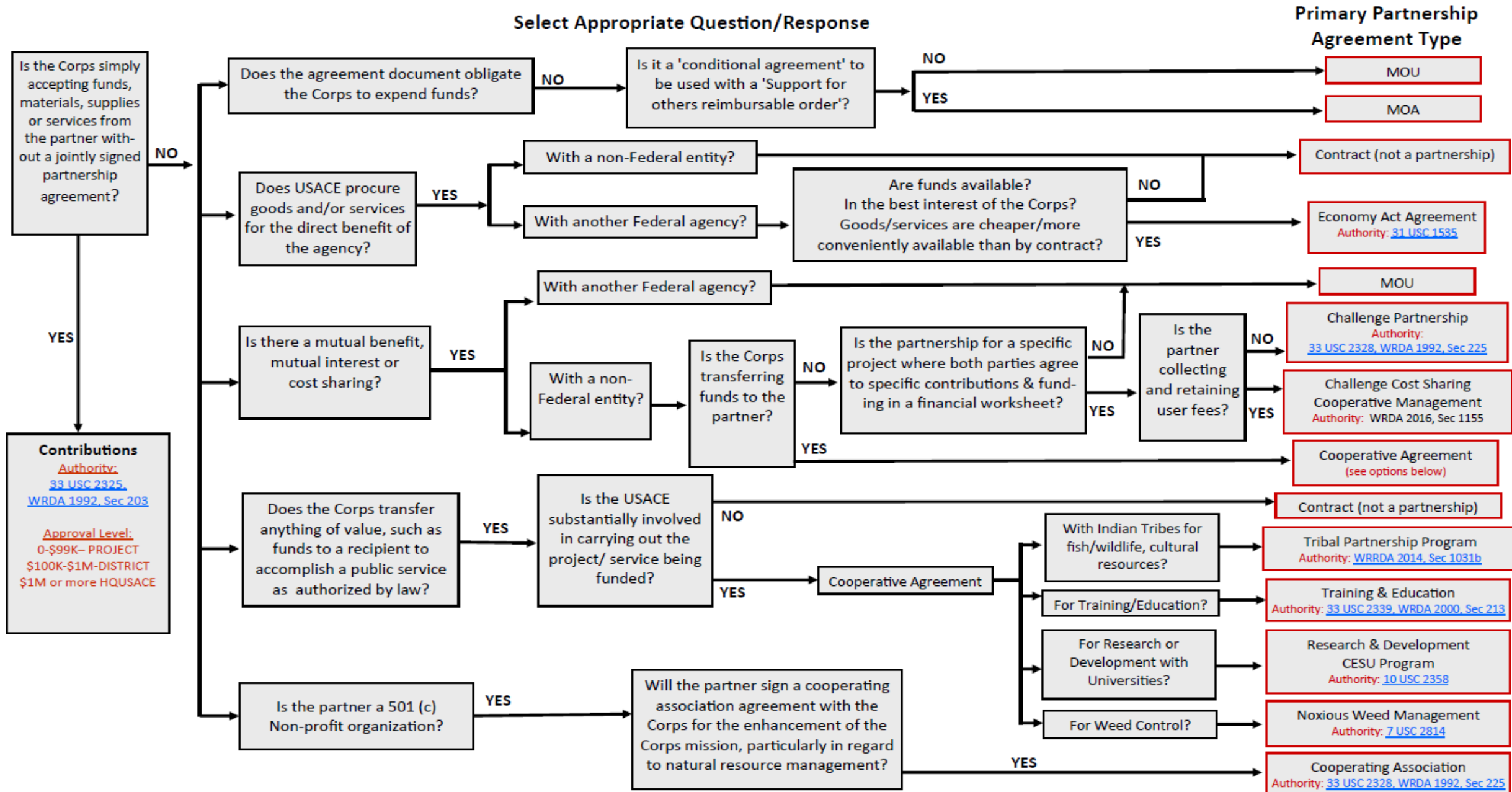
The Economy Act cannot be used for partnerships with non-federal entities, and is only used with federal agencies when another more specific transfer authority is not available. When entering into an Economy Act agreement with a non-DoD entity, the Corps must enter into an agreement by which the ordering agency agrees to pay all costs.

**Cooperative Agreements for Educational and Training Activities** – The Corps may enter into cooperative agreements with non-Federal public and nonprofit entities for natural resources conservation or recreation management work that furthers training and educational opportunities. ([33 U.S.C. §2339, WRDA 2000, Sec 213](#)).

**Cooperative Agreements for Management of Undesirable Plants on Federal Lands** - The Corps may enter into cooperative agreements with State agencies to coordinate the management of undesirable plant species on Federal lands. This integrated management system can include education, preventative measures, physical or mechanical methods, biological agents, herbicide methods, cultural methods, and general land management practices such as manipulation of livestock or wildlife grazing strategies or improving wildlife or livestock habitat. ([7 USC 2814](#))

# USACE NRM Partnership Agreement Decision Tree

(for Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Partnerships)







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# USACE NRM Partnership Agreements - Flow of Money/Contributions

(for Recreation and Environmental Stewardship Partnerships)



USACE ← \$\$\$

**Contributions**  
 (anyone except the project sponsor)

Authority:  
[33 USC 2325](#)  
[WRDA 1992, Sec 203](#)

USACE ← \$\$\$

**Challenge Cost Sharing  
 Cooperative Management**  
 (non-federal public entity)

Authority:  
[33 USC 2328 WRDA 1992, Sec 225](#)  
 amended by WRDA 2016, Sec 1155

\$\$\$ → partner

**Cooperative Agreement  
 for Training/Education**  
 (non-federal or non-profit)

Authority:  
[33 USC 2339](#)  
[WRDA 2000, Sec 213](#)  
 amended by [WRRDA 2014, Sec 1047\(e\)](#)

\$\$\$ → partner

**Challenge Partnerships**  
 (non-federal entity)

Authority:  
[33 USC 2328](#)  
[WRDA 1992, Sec 225](#)

**Cooperative Agreement for Research  
 & Development CESU Program**  
 (Universities)

Authority:  
[10 USC 2358](#)  
[WRDA 1996](#)

**Cooperative Agreement  
 for Weed Management**  
 (any State Agency)

Authority:  
[7 USC 2418](#)

**Cooperating Association**  
 (non-profit entity)

Authority:  
[33 USC 2328](#)  
[WRDA 1992, Sec 225](#)

**Cooperative Agreement  
 with Indian Tribes for fish,  
 wildlife, water quality,  
 cultural resources**  
 (Indian Tribes)

Authority:  
[WRRDA 2014, Sec 1031b](#)

USACE \$\$\$ ↔ \$\$\$ Partner

**Economy Act**  
 (federal agency)

Authority:  
[31 USC 1535](#)



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## NRM Partnership Agreement Approval Levels

This document is intended to provide a brief overview of available partnership authorities and approval requirements. Corps personnel should coordinate all proposed agreements with their Office of Counsel.



Agreement Type	Authority	Special Considerations	\$ Value	Signature*
Contribution	<a href="#">33 USC 2325, Sec 203 of WRDA 1992</a>	Acceptance level based on \$ value	< \$2,500: Any staff member \$2,500 to < \$100K: Manager \$100K to < \$1M: District NRM and OC \$1M or >: HQUSACE OC, NRM, DCW *Reference 2008 Contributions, Fundraising and Recognition Reference Guide, Sections 5.2 and 5.3	No agreement to sign. District Contributions Plan provides authorization.
Challenge Partnership	<a href="#">33 USC 2328, Sec 225 of WRDA 1992</a>	Signature based on \$ value	\$25K or <: delegable to OPM > \$25K to \$200K: delegable to Ops Chief > \$200K: District Commander *Reference ER 1130-2-500, Ch 12-2.k.	District Commander unless delegated to Operations Project Manager and/or Chief of Operations per ER 1130-2-500. Agreements involving projects in more than one district must be approved by MSC Commander or their delegate.
Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management	WRDA 2016, Sec 1155		N/A	District Commander *Reference 30 Mar 2018 CDCW-CD Memo: Implementation Guidance for Section 1155, Management of Recreation Facilities, of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2016, PL 114-322
Cooperating Association	<a href="#">33 USC 2328, Sec 225 of WRDA 1992</a>	A moratorium is currently in place for cooperative agreements and associated leases that allow CAs to collect and retain fees for use of Corps facilities. *Reference CDCW Memo dated 12 September 2018.	N/A	Agreements that do not involve fee collection/retention may be approved by District Commanders. Until further guidance is issued, all agreements involving fee collection/retention for use of Corps facilities must be approved at HQUSACE.
Economy Act	<a href="#">31 USC 1535</a>	Agreements w/ DoD entities	N/A	District Commander *Reference ER 1160-3-1, para. 6.
		Agreement w/ non-DoD agencies where the Corps is the servicing agency	N/A	MSC Commander unless delegated to District Commander. *Reference ER 1160-3-211, para. 8.
		Agreements w/ non-DoD agencies where the Corps is the ordering agency	N/A	SES or General Officer. *Reference DoD FMR Vol. 11A, ch. 3, para. 030304.
Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)	No explicit authority required. MOUs are non-binding agreements that do not commit either party to do anything. However, the Corps must have authority to perform the activities or carry out the intentions referenced in an MOU.	Level of signature depends on complexity of agreement and level of partner signature	N/A	OPM, Operations Chief, District Commander or higher official - depends on which authority is cited (if any) and/or level of signature at partner organization. Agreements with regional or national implications should be coordinated with affected MSCs and HQUSACE.



# Resources: NRM Gateway

<https://corpslakes.erdcdren.mil/partners/partners.cfm>

Partnerships

## Partnerships

[Headquarters POC](#)

[Partnerships Pages Quick-finder Index](#)

In today's financial environment PARTNERING is an essential tool that allows the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to effectively manage recreation and environmental resources. In order to successfully meet our recreation and stewardship missions, and to foster shared values, vision, and a sense of ownership it is imperative that we work together with state governments, Native American tribes, private/public organizations, local communities, and other partners to maintain or advance programs from wildlife protection and habitat improvement to recreational facility enhancements.

Partnering helps to pool scarce resources, to promote coordinated, focused, and consistent mutual efforts to resolve common problems and missions, and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. The NRM Program has embraced this reality and is committed to fully exploring the potential development of new public-private partnerships to leverage limited appropriated funds and human resources.

This page will help you determine the [right tools for your partnerships](#), [find the right training to expand your knowledge](#), and [learn from the successful efforts of your peers](#). You will find answers to longstanding questions and discover how to effectively utilize important partners such as the [Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation](#). The bottom line: **partnering is smart business**.

### Partnership Types: [Which is right for you?](#)

- [Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Program](#)
- [Challenge Partnerships Program](#)
- [Contributions Program](#)
- [Cooperating Associations Program](#)
- [Cooperative Agreements](#)
- [Economy Act Agreements](#)
- [Handshake Partnerships Program](#)
- [Memoranda of Understanding/Agreement \(MOU/MOA\)](#)
- [Partnership Agreement Decision Tree](#)
- [Volunteer Program](#)

### How To:

- [Corps Photo Album for Partnerships](#)
- [Division & District POCs](#) 
- [FAQs](#)
- [Good Enough to Share](#)
- [Grants/Alternative Funding Sources](#)
- [News / Current Issues](#)
- [Partnership Advisory Committee](#)
- [Partnerships in NRM Assessment/OMBIL](#)
- [Policy & Procedures](#)
- [Training](#)





U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Mohave Dam, CA



Los Angeles District, CA

# U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Partnership Opportunities

## Connecting with the Corps

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) manages some of the most cherished lakes, rivers and lands near your cities and towns. Communities are proud of their special places in our parks. Great family memories are made while boating, fishing, camping, or after a quiet day of hiking or biking on one of our many trail systems. These experiences are important in strengthening families and organizations. Our parks also have significant economic impact, with 260 million visits per year supporting 210,000 jobs in communities near USACE lakes.

With you by our side, we can provide more services to the public.



W. Kerr Scott Lake, NC

## Benefits of Partnering with the Corps

We believe in the power of partnerships to transform the experiences of our visiting public and enhance the sustainability of our public lands and waters.



### National Exposure

Partnering with a federal agency such as USACE offers the opportunity for national exposure. USACE manages more than 400 lake and river projects on more than 12 million acres of land and water in 43 states.



### Variety of Opportunities

The diverse missions of the Corps provide a variety of partnering opportunities. USACE provides over 4,700 recreation sites with more than 94,000 campsites, 3,700 boat ramps, and 7,400 miles of trails.



### Economic Impact

Our parks have significant economic impact, with visitors spending upwards of \$16.8 billion annually on trip expenses and strengthening the environmental, social, and economic health of local communities.



more than **90%** of our lakes are within 50 miles of a metropolitan area



To find out more about partnering with USACE please visit: <https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/visitors/partners.cfm>



Alum Creek Lake, OH



Shelbyville Lake, IL



Allatoona Lake, GA



Westville Lake, MA

## Who are our Partners?

USACE is proud to partner with a broad spectrum of businesses, agencies, and organizations across the nation. Through partnership authorities, we are authorized to partner with federal, state, and local agencies, non-profits, corporations, small businesses, universities, individual volunteers and more!

Through these formal and informal relationships, we are able to accomplish incredible projects together both big, and small. Whether it is building birdhouses for native birds, donating life jackets for our boat ramps, to more enduring endeavors such as visitor center improvements and invasive species mitigation, our partners are who help make our public lands shine.

On average, more than **3,600** federal, state, and local agencies along with Tribes, businesses, educational institutes, and non-profit organizations partner with USACE annually.

## Partner Spotlight

The Corps Foundation assists by partnering with a wide range of organizations including local Friends groups, private individuals and businesses to support educational activities which enhance our visitor's experiences. The Corps Foundation also advocates for policy changes to increase opportunities for partnering and leverage public-private resources. To learn how you can work with the Corps Foundation, visit the website: <http://corpsfoundation.org>

## Connecting with Communities

New River Alliance of Climbers (NRAC) Summersville Lake

USACE has benefited in many ways since formally partnering with NRAC. NRAC has contributed \$60K in funding, provided \$50K in volunteer services and generated over \$100,000 in environmental stewardship value to Summersville Lake. The mission of the partnership between Summersville Lake and NRAC is to work together to create a sustainable use and continued access to the climbing opportunities along the stunning sandstone cliffs. NRAC became an unstoppable force to get things done. They constructed a 20-foot metal staircase for improved emergency evacuation and saw hundreds of volunteers packing natural stone to protect the shoreline that will ensure climbing opportunities for future generations. The partnership efforts of NRAC have triggered the launch of a multi-lateral partnership between local and national non-profits, federal and state entities, as well as the local community on getting involved with other initiatives. This outstanding partner won the National Excellence in Partnerships Award.



Summersville Lake, WV



## Final Note

In a time of decreasing federal funding, America's lakes and waterways are at risk of reduced access, eliminated programs, and park closures. By partnering and working together, we can help maintain and improve programs and facilities and keep these treasured resources healthy and vibrant.



Partnering with the Corps information sheet





Partnership with Southern Piedmont Virginia Master Naturalist Chapter



Partnership with Roanoke River Basin Association



Partnership with FLW (Fishing League Worldwide)

## WHY PARTNER WITH JOHN H. KERR RESERVOIR?

### Benefits of Partnering

- Potential for national exposure by partnering with a federal agency
- Variety of partnering opportunities because of the Corps' diverse missions
- Potential market branding to reach out to new customers
- One of nation's leading federal providers of recreation
- At Kerr Reservoir millions of visitors each year enjoy Corps managed campgrounds (x4), boat ramps (x16), day use areas (x15), wildlife management areas (x26), trails (x2), environmental education center, and cultural resource sites
- Kerr Reservoir is located within 90 minutes of major metropolitan areas

### Connecting with Kerr Reservoir

In the 1950's, Kerr Reservoir, also called Buggs Island Lake, was constructed for flood control, hydropower generation, recreation, fish and wildlife conservation, and local water supply. The 800 miles of wooded shoreline stretch across three counties in Virginia and three in North Carolina. Along this shoreline great memories are made while camping, boating, fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, and hunting.

These experiences are important in strengthening families and organizations. Our parks also have significant economic impact, with approximately 4 million visitors per year spending on trip expenses, strengthening the environmental, social, and economic health of communities.



John H. Kerr Dam, Buggs Island Lake

Old postcard image taken from downstream side of Kerr Dam.

With the help of our partners, we provide more service to the public than without them by our side.

To find out more about partnering with John H. Kerr:  
Call: (434) 738-6143  
Email: JHKerr@usace.army.mil



### PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT:

The Corps Foundation assists by partnering with a wide range of organizations including local Friends groups, private individuals and businesses to support educational activities which enhance our visitor's experiences. To learn how you can work with our national foundation, visit the Corps Foundation website: <http://corpsfoundation.org>



### DISC GOLF COURSE IN NORTH BEND PARK

In 2019, a disc golf course was established in North Bend Park. The course is designed for all ages and levels of experience. You can visit our North Bend Day Use Area Gatehouse to sign-out discs and enjoy the course! Thank you to our partners including the Southside Virginia Disc Golf Association, Roanoke River Basin Association, and Dominion Power for their work on this project.



### ISLAND CREEK ACCESSIBLE FISHING PIER

Through a handshake agreement with Veterans of Foreign Affairs and American Legion this partnership built Veterans Park at Island Creek Recreation Area by installing an accessible fishing dock, picnic shelter, and portable toilet. Construction of the facilities was provided by military personal, SEABEES, and other military affiliated groups. Other partners on this project include: NASCAR's Jeff Burton and Paralyzed Veterans of America. This partnership helped increase access to recreational opportunities by supporting the right for all citizens to recreate on public land.

### NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY CONTRIBUTIONS

In 2021, park rangers and volunteers gathered at five locations around Kerr Reservoir to participate. Cleanup efforts across the Lake improved safety for our visitors, aesthetics at each site, and the health of the ecosystem by removing plastic, broken glass, and other trash from public lands. This event was possible through our partnership with Skanska and Cleveland Construction. They provided t-shirts, first aid kits, gloves, trash bags, water, and snacks for volunteers.







# Partnership Newsletter:



## BRIDGING THE GAP

Volume 8

Issue 2

September 2024



### About Bridging the Gap

"Bridging the Gap" is an electronic publication produced biannually by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Partnership Advisory Committee (PAC). The purpose of this newsletter is to provide information about the partnerships and volunteer programs around the country. For more information, or to submit stories for future editions, contact your PAC representative.

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### National MOU: Kids in Parks

In May 2024, USACE and the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation (BRPF) signed a new national Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Kids in Parks program. The mission of the Kids in Parks program is to work together with partners throughout the country to promote children's health and the health of America's parks and public lands by increasing physical activity and engaging families in outdoor adventures that foster a meaningful connection to the natural and cultural world. Kids in Parks accomplishes its mission through the installation of interactive TRACK Trails - a series of networked hiking trails that provide brochure-led, self-guided adventures designed to turn an ordinary hike into a fun-filled adventure.

Under this MOU, USACE and BRPF strive to:

- Construct, install, and maintain interactive trails at USACE projects.
- Promote USACE interactive trails through various media outlets.
- Seek ways to integrate interactive trail systems with community projects and activities.

A few examples of interactive trail programs that have been established at USACE projects can be found on the [NRM Gateway](#). These have included disc golf trails, pump tracks, bikes skills areas, and nature TRACK Trails at W. Kerr Scott, Blue Marsh, McNary, and Raystown projects.



Photo above: TRACK Trail kiosk at McNary.

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### Having a Ball at Ball Mountain Lake

Valerie Franklin, Natural Resources Specialist, Ball Mountain and Townshend Lakes, NAE

Ball Mountain Lake has partnered with Jamaica Area Mountain Bike Alliance (JAMBA) to develop two, one-half mile single track trails for hiking and biking. A Challenge Partnership Agreement was executed in June 2022 with JAMBA, who broke ground in September 2022 for the "Having a Ball" trail, completing it one month later. Having a Ball officially opened June 2, 2023, and was JAMBA's first official trail for their chapter. It is a hand-built intermediate level trail that incorporates sustainable design concepts to mitigate erosion and integrate it into the landscape. It is rideable in both directions and has good sightlines to allow all users to navigate it safely.

In May 2023 work began on the second trail, "Hard Corps". The trail was completed in June, two weeks before Ball Mountain Lake recorded its second highest pool elevation. JAMBA cleared silt and debris but otherwise found the new trails relatively unharmed, much to everyone's relief! JAMBA was instrumental in trail cleanup, spending over 40 hours between August and October removing silt and flood debris, ensuring our trails were safe for other visitors. Without their help we would still be trying to clear Ball Mountain's trail system for use.

Due to the flooding, the official opening of "Hard Corps" was pushed back and the ribbon cutting ceremony was held June 15, 2024. Hard Corps is also an intermediate level trail, constructed by hand, and with its completion, bikers and hikers can now access the boat launch parking area without traveling on pavement. These new trails have enhanced the recreational opportunities offered to our visiting public.



### NRM Gateway Spotlight: CWBI-OPS

Visit the CWBI-OPS: Partnerships and Volunteers Module page to find training resources, reports, and FAQs on entering annual data. The data entry period for Partnerships and Volunteers will be from October 1 - November 15 for field projects. Districts/MSCs will have until December 13 to review and correct data.



### New Corps Lakes Gateway - Partnerships Webpage & Partnering with the Corps Handout

Have you checked out the updated public [Corps Lakes webpages](#)? The partnership page is a great resource to share with potential partner organizations to provide examples of successful partnerships, links to all issues of Bridging the Gap newsletters, and an interactive map to drive users to your lakes to set up new partnerships. In addition to the webpage, a [new flyer](#) has been developed by the PAC team to help initiate discussions about partnership opportunities with USACE.

**Partnership Opportunities**  
Connecting with the Corps

**Benefits of Partnering with the Corps**  
- Access to USACE resources  
- 90% of Corps projects are funded by partners  
- Access to Corps expertise and equipment

Photos left: Hard Corps Trail ribbon cutting, Hard Corps Trail JAMBA volunteers and USACE rangers.

**Natural Resources Management Gateway**

Home | Visitors | Lake Discovery | Recreation | Env Compliance | Env Stewardship | Partners | News/Events | People | Forums | Learning | GETS | Tools | New Postings | Submit | Index/Search

### CWBI-OPS: Partnerships and Volunteers Module

The Civil Works Business Intelligence-Operations (CWBI-OPS) modules were developed to provide a location for data required to operate and manage the Operations functions of the Corps. CWBI-OPS contains 4 modules: Common, Hydroponic, NRM, and Water Supply where data are entered each year. Within NRM, there are submodules for Citizens, Environmental Stewardship, NRM, PSA, Partnerships and Volunteers, and Annual Update Status.

(A great way to find out more about our outstanding partners and volunteers!)

We need your stories!

<https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/partners/newsletter.cfm>






U.S. ARMY

# Resources: Corps Lakes Photo Album


<https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/visitors/album.cfm?Option=View&Id=0&Activity=Volunteers>



 **Corps Lakes Photo Album**  
 US Army Corps of Engineers  
 Take a virtual trip of our lakes:  
[Corps Lakes Gateway](#) > [Corps Photo Album - How to get photos added?](#)


**Volunteers**

Select a Corps of Engineers Lake  Select an Activity




*Photo by: Mary Margaret Lewis*

USACE Volunteers in Action- 1st Place




*Photo by: Eric Haskell*

USACE Volunteers in Action- 2nd place




*Photo by: Robert Carr*

USACE Volunteers in Action- Honorable Mention




*Photo by: Mindy Cory*

Volunteers in Action - 2nd place



Bardwell Lake



Bardwell Lake





US Army Corps  
of Engineers

**Corps Lakes Gateway**  
*Your gateway to fun at Corps Lakes!*

Select a State ▾

Select a Corps of Engineers Lake ▾



## Natural Resources Management Partnerships

The US Army Corps of Engineers is a federal agency responsible for a wide range of activities, including civil works, recreation, natural resource management, and environmental stewardship missions. The USACE has a long history of working with partners to manage natural resources and lakes. These partnerships help USACE to achieve its mission of providing safe, secure, and environmentally sustainable water resources for the American people.








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## Latest Opportunities



National Park Service



Forest Service



Forest Service

Resources:  
[www.Volunteer.Gov](http://www.Volunteer.Gov)





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Resources:  
www.workamper.com/



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# Philpott Lake Partnership Success



Twin Ridge Park Fishing Tournament Facility



- \$50,000 from local tourism council
- Led to selection by FLW for college fishing tournament
- Estimated value to local economy = \$500,000 return on investment





# Philpott Lake Partnership Success

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGAQaREwD\\_o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGAQaREwD_o)





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# Review

- Partnerships are all about relationships, trust, and communication.
- They take an investment of time and commitment and require flexibility to adapt to change.
- Types of partnerships used by the Corps NRM program:  
Contributions, MOU/MOAs, Challenge Partnerships,  
Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Agreements,  
Economy Act, Cooperative Agreements, Cooperating Associations, Volunteers
- Although leases, licenses, and contracts may be used as instruments in addition to a partnership agreement type covered in this class, they are NOT partnerships themselves.
- You probably have more partnerships than you realize.

