

# COOPERATING ASSOCIATIONS



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US Army Corps  
of Engineers®



# Authorities

Authorities:

33 USC 2328, Water Resources Development Act (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 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.*



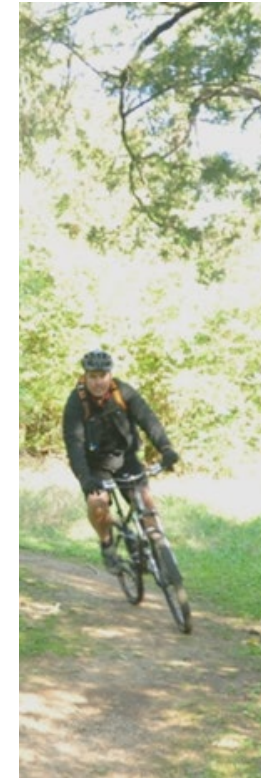
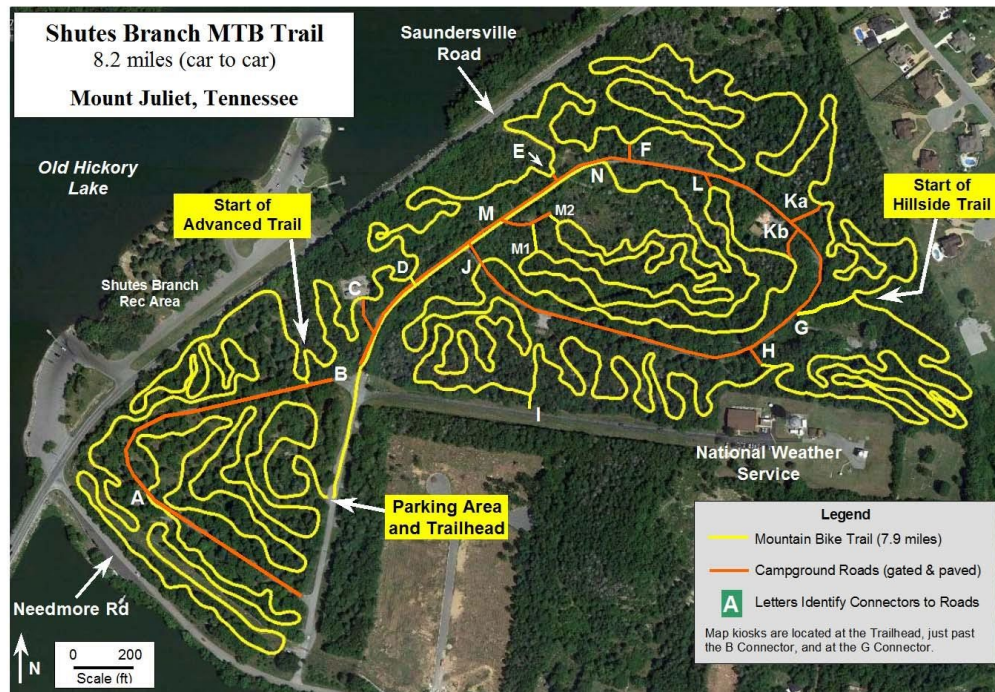


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# Benefits of Friends Groups

- 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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# Successful Friends Group: Lake Lanier Association

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- Solar Lights
- Location Markers
- Aids to Navigation
- Water Quality
- Erosion Control
- Clean Lake Pledge
- Abandoned Boats
- Life Jacket Loaner Stations (leased areas)





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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

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## 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

- LRH: Active Southern West Virginia Inc
- MVK: Friends of Lake Ouachita
- MVS: FOREST Council
- MVS: Friends of Lake Shelbyville
- SAW: Friends of Mountains to Sea trail
- SWF: Friends of Lake O' the Pines




**Iowa Academy of Science**  
Promoting science research, science education, the public understanding of science, and recognizing excellence in these endeavors.



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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?

**NO, to all the above**





# Fundraising Displays and Materials

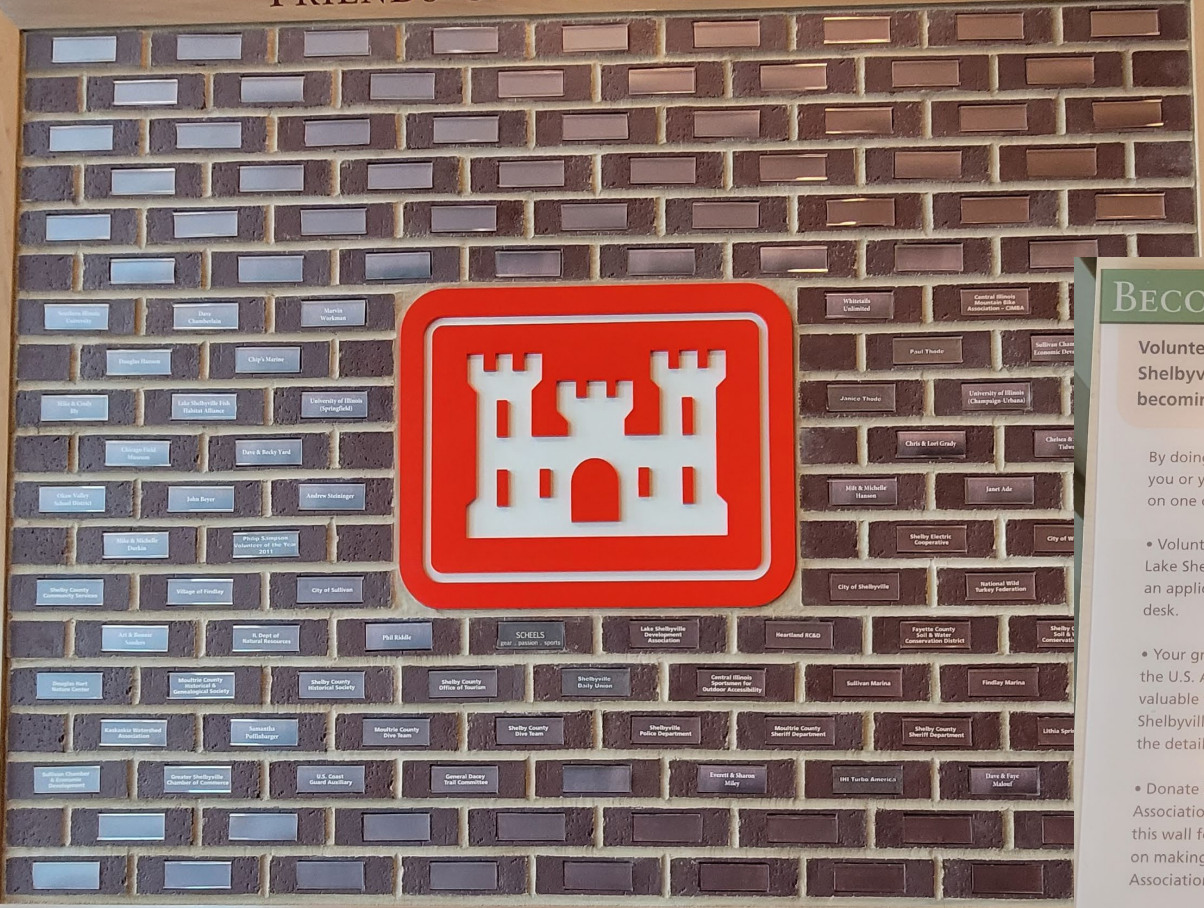
The Corps may allow the non-intrusive display or distribution of materials on its projects to educate visitors about an authorized fundraising partnership or activity.







# FRIENDS OF LAKE SHELBYVILLE



## BECOME A FRIEND OF LAKE SHELBYVILLE

Volunteers and partners are valuable to Lake Shelbyville and you can make a difference by becoming a friend of Lake Shelbyville.

By doing at least one of the things listed below you or your organization's name will be placed on one of the bricks above.

• Volunteer at least 100 hours of your time at Lake Shelbyville. To become a volunteer, fill out an application and turn it in at the information desk.

• Your group or organization can partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on a project valuable to everyone that visits Lake Shelbyville. Ask to speak with someone about the details of becoming a partner.

• Donate \$35 to the Lake Volunteers Association and your name will be placed on this wall for six months or longer. Information on making a donation is in the Lake Volunteers Association brochure.



Facility Maintenance



Special Events Such As Kids Fishing Tournament



Trail Maintenance



Fisheries Management

**BECOME A FRIEND OF LAKE SHELBYVILLE**

Volunteers and partners are valuable to Lake Shelbyville and you can make a difference by becoming a friend of Lake Shelbyville.

**THANKS FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!**

Your public land and water at Lake Shelbyville are owned and managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This is a huge task and it cannot be done without you. The services and facilities provided by partners and volunteers are very much appreciated. Thank You!

**LAKE VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION**

The Lake Volunteers Association is a non-profit organization that helps enhance Lake Shelbyville. The mission of the association is to work in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to enhance visitor safety, enjoyment, and overall experiences. Through this mission they work to provide education, historical interpretation, recreational and environmental improvements.

Please take a brochure if you are interested in helping the Lake Volunteers Association.

Application form for becoming a friend of Lake Shelbyville.







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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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# Success Story: Award Winning Fundraising

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3\\_thRvSpmlg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3_thRvSpmlg)





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# Success Story: Clean Jordan Lake

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



- Became a USACE cooperating association in 2012
- Unique and focused mission to improve the environment and water quality at Jordan Lake through:
  - Removal of trash from public lands
  - Litter prevention
  - Prevention of illegal dumping
  - Promotion of recycling
  - Public engagement and education
- Since 2008, hosted 900 clean up events with 11,000 volunteers removing 221 tons of trash

## DO NOT LITTER




### 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?

600 Years 	200 Years 
450 Years 	450 Years 

\*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.**





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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

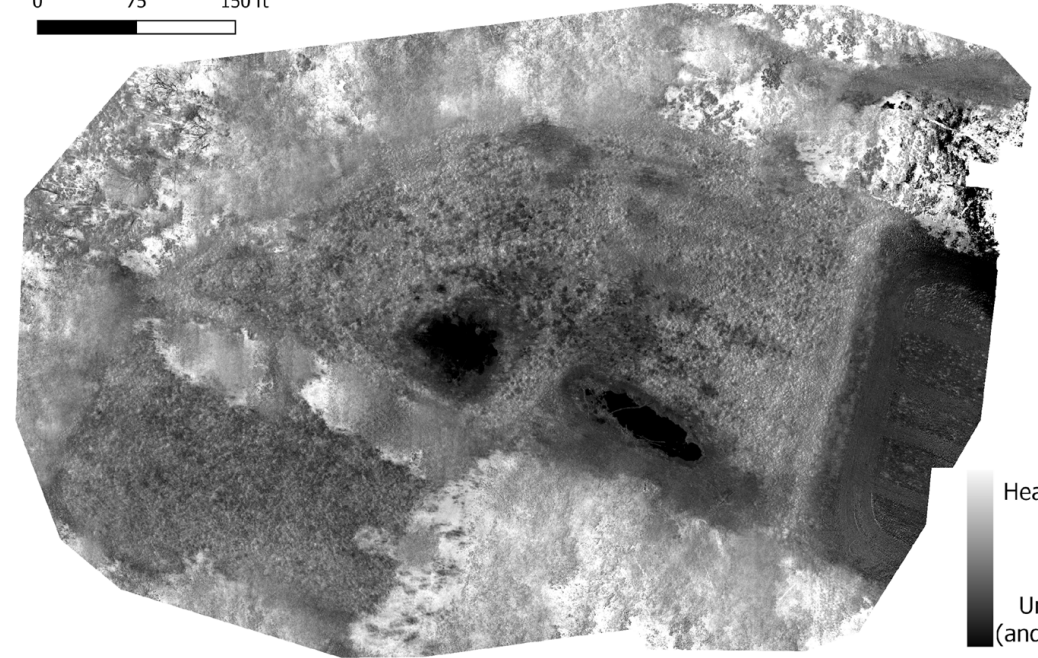
0 75 150 ft



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.



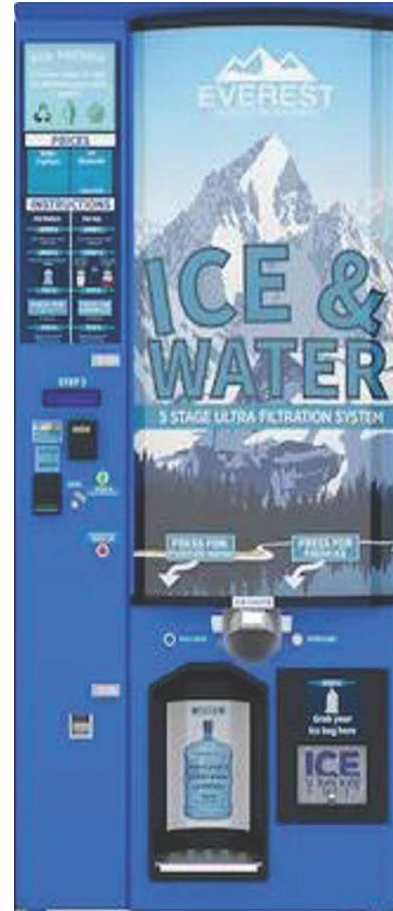


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# Success Story: Friends of Lake Lanier



- Life Jacket Loaner Stations – Corps operated areas
- Plans and Specs (Complete Instructions)
- Bulletin Boards
- Appreciation Luncheons
- A variety of maintenance needs
  
- Day Use
  - Ice / Water Machine
  - Drink Machines
  
- Campgrounds
  - Laundry
  - Ice
  - Firewood
  - Fire Starter
  - Charcoal





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# On the Gateway

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



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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

### Cooperating Associations Program

#### [Headquarters Partnership POC](#)

Cooperating associations are non-profit, tax-exempt organizations that financially support and volunteer services to the Corps through a cooperating association agreement. They are free-standing corporate entities with boards of directors, purposes, and abilities consistent with their boards and objectives. Some associations work in single areas; others are involved in various areas achieving multiple tasks.

Cooperating associations are used to accomplish such broad goals as natural resource and recreation management, interpretation, and visitor service activities at civil works water resource projects, fee-owned lands, and other areas for which the Corps has administrative and management responsibilities. In addition, forming an association develops partnerships with communities and improves communication among local constituencies.

Associations can:

- Support special events, interpretive, educational or scientific activities, exhibits, and programs
- Support natural resources management and/or public programs at or near Corps projects through conservation and educational activities and special events
- Acquire materials, equipment, supplies, or other items, or services appropriate for management, operation, interpretive, educational and visitor service functions.
- Provide services to visitors through the sale, production, publication, and/or distribution of appropriate interpretive and educational items related to the goals and mission of the Corps
- Distribute medium for those educational and scientific publications which relate to the Corps projects missions
- Collect dues; operate bookstores on-site, purchase equipment and materials for use at Corps projects, conduct and/or fund programs, and fund Volunteer Recognition Events.

There is often confusion between the definitions of a cooperating association and friends groups. To clarify:

- **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 of Engineers.
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Cooperating Assoc.

● [Policy & Procedures](#)

● [Toolkit for Developing a Cooperating Association](#)

● [Existing Corps Cooperating Associations](#)

● [Related Sites](#)

● [Sample Templates](#)

● [News / Current Issues](#)

● [Lessons Learned](#)

● [FAQs](#)

● [Success Stories](#)

● [Division & District POCs](#)