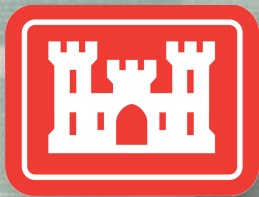


# Cooperating Associations

Partnerships in NRM  
PROSPECT Course



US Army Corps of Engineers  
**BUILDING STRONG**



# Authorities

## Authorities:

- P.L. 102-580, Water Resources Development Act of 1992, Section 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 codes and which operates under the terms of a Cooperative 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 a cooperative agreement is signed with the Corps.



# 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.



# 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 (APPL)
  - Training



# 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 control and flexibility
    - Potentially larger overhead expenses
    - Less focus on individual projects
  
- New associations:
  - ▶ Pros
    - More control
    - 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
  - ▶ Incorporation
  - ▶ 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 Cooperative Agreement to review
  - ▶ Sign the agreement
  - ▶ Establish annual goals
  - ▶ Now the hard work begins...





# Cooperating Associations

- USACE Efforts
  - ▶ Currently 60 Cooperating Associations and Friends groups in Partnership with the Corps
  - ▶ <http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/coopassoc/coopassoc.cfm>



# Success Story



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# Cooperating Associations

- Remember: Successful Partners...
  - ▶ Want the partnership to succeed
  - ▶ Seek win-win solutions; being flexible but focused
  - ▶ Are open and clear about their own goals
  - ▶ Listen well and respond to other views
  - ▶ Are prepared to trust
  - ▶ Have integrity and act consistently
  - ▶ Effectively and efficiently carry out tasks and responsibilities
  - ▶ Will not just sweep difficulties under the carpet



# Recap Questions

When you are developing a cooperative agreement to set up a cooperating association, who within your organization should you involve early in the process?

Office of Counsel



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# Recap Questions

TRUE of FALSE

Your cooperating association is having a fund raising event and has asked for your assistance in being a co-chair of the planning committee.

It is okay for you to do this.

FALSE



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# Recap Questions

## Cooperating Associations CANNOT:

- a. Operate bookstores in Corps facilities.
- b. Charge special event fees.
- c. Enforce Title 36.
- d. Manage Corps recreation areas.



# Recap Questions

TRUE of FALSE

A cooperating association and a friends group  
are the same thing.

FALSE



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# Review

- Cooperating Associations and Friends Groups are two different things (even though many of our CAs are called 'Friends of...')
- Cooperating Associations can operate bookstores, promote and charge for special events, develop interpretive materials, and more!
- Cooperating Associations cannot enforce Title 36.
- As a Corps employee, you are not allowed to participate on fund-raising planning committees or solicit for donations to the CA.
- When working with a non-profit group to develop a cooperative agreement to become a CA, involve Office of Counsel early in the process.





# Questions?

