



## Corps Foundation Goes to Washington!

- by Pep Persio and Nancy Rogers, Board Members, The Corps Foundation

In conjunction with the annual Public Lands Alliance convention in Washington DC March 1-5, 2020, *A Day on the Hill* was set aside for March 5 as part of the week's agenda. Board members Pep Persio and Nancy Rogers attended the convention, and then participated with hundreds of other public lands partners to visit their Congressional representatives from around the country.

The Foundation prepared specifically to meet with members of Congress from states with large USACE recreation footprints and visitation. We were provided information and data from HQ NRM Chief, Jeff Krause, HQ Recreation Program Manager, Scott Strotman and Heather Burke, National Partnership Program Manager in order to develop key areas to address:

- Include the US Army Corps of Engineers in the reauthorization of FLREA, the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, commonly referred to as "fee retention".
- Amending WRDA 2016 to include private sector and non-profit organizations to participate in challenge cost sharing cooperative management agreements to jointly manage Corps parks.
- Additional \$30 million in appropriated funds to the O&M account for Recreation Operations and Maintenance.
- Include the Corps in the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act- comprehensive infrastructure and deferred maintenance funding bill.

Pep and Nancy met with key staff for Senator Rob Woodall (R-GA) and Senator Marsha Blackburn (R-TN). In addition, they visited the offices of Congressman Jared Huffman (D-CA), Senator Kamala Harris (D-CA), and Senator Lamar Alexander (R-TN) to leave information for their review. A follow up meeting with Congressman Huffman is scheduled for March 17 in California.

The meetings provided an opportunity for the Foundation to explain the value of Corps recreation facilities to the House and Senator's constituents and economic value to their local communities. Everyone we spoke to was surprised to hear about the Corps' impact on outdoor recreation, and that is was the largest provider of water-based recreation in the country. They welcomed the information we provided.

An additional meeting with Callie Hoyt of the National Marine Manufacturers Association (NMMA) completed our day. The NMMA is currently working with the US Coast Guard for improved boat safety, and with small harbors and marinas regarding access and

maintenance. The NMMA is a key member of the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable - an industry group supporting access and infrastructure improvements for all areas that provide outdoor recreation. They are a supporter for the Restore Our Parks and Public Lands Act to increase appropriations to address deferred maintenance on Federal public lands. It makes sense for the Corps Foundation and the NMMA to work together on behalf of the Corps' recreation program! Pep and Nancy were able to provide critical information on the Corps' recreation program and it was a great start to what will become an ongoing discussion.

This was the first time the Corps Foundation met with Congress in Washington DC, but it won't be the last. The increased advocacy and outreach of the Foundation is ramping up and will build on this initial great start!

We welcome all comments and questions regarding the Foundation's programs so let us hear from you! Better yet - join the Foundation and receive quarterly newsletters on our growing influence. Learn more at



[www.corpsfoundation.org](http://www.corpsfoundation.org).