



## *Welcome to the Summer 2024 Edition of the Corps Foundation Newsletter.*

Have something you want to share? Send us an article!

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## **A Special Connection: Natural Resource Management Employees and the Corps Foundation**

Board members for the Corps Foundation regularly travel the country to meet the men and women who manage recreation areas for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A common question board members receive relates to membership in the Foundation as a non-profit partner to USACE- "Are USACE employees allowed to join the Foundation"? The answer is yes, please do!

Why? The prohibition of government employees from soliciting for donations and legislative advocacy is the #1 and #2 reasons those employees should join. Employees are not allowed to go to the local boating shop to solicit for donated life jackets, but the Foundation can. The Foundation has the non-profit legal status to ask private donors for assistance toward the good works of the field employees. The Foundation supports the volunteer and water safety programs at local field projects. It is also the voice of advocacy for new legislation and authorities that benefit the recreation program within the Corps. What happens in the halls of Congress can directly filter down to the field level. Since 2007, the Foundation has been instrumental in advocating for changes in assessing the recreation facilities managed by USACE for improved awareness of deferred maintenance, introduced legislation for fee retention and changes to the Cooperative Joint Management authorities.

The list is long to bring the USACE recreation program up to the level of other Federal public land agencies. You have the Foundation's permission to join an organization that extends an employee's influence beyond the boundaries of a field project. If you are a USACE employee- please become a member so we can continue our good work that benefits you!!!

[Join Donate - The Corps Foundation](#)

# LAKES Act Introduced into the House of Representatives!

Congressmen Steve Womack (R-AR-3), Bruce Westerman (R-AR-4), and Jared Huffman (D-CA-2) introduced H.R. 6906, The Lake Access Keeping Economies Strong (LAKES) Act on January 4, 2024.

The LAKES Act would:

- Allow USACE to retain 80% of recreation fees collected onsite for operation and management expenses at that location.
- Amend the Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Agreement authority to allow nonprofit entities to enter into cooperative agreements.
- Keep resources and decision-making related to operation and maintenance of recreation facilities with local managers.
- 

**L**ake **A**ccess **K**eeping **E**conomies **S**trong  
**ACT**

Senator Kevin Cramer — Senator Martin Heinrich

**The LAKES Act expands opportunities to improve and develop outdoor recreation facilities at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers managed areas.**

Outdoor recreation is a vital economic driver in local economies across the U.S.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers assets are one of the nation's largest federal outdoor recreation providers

**1.9%** of U.S. GDP  
**\$454B** in gross economic output

**257,000** facilities  
**43** states

**Retention of Recreation Fees:**

Under current law, local units of federal land management agencies at the Departments of Interior and Agriculture can retain 80% of recreation fees collected on site. These funds are then dedicated to the site's operation and maintenance needs without approval from headquarters, allowing them to be nimbler and more responsive with their planning decisions. Currently, USACE recreation facilities are excluded from this benefit.

**The LAKES Act rectifies this discrepancy by enabling recreation sites and facilities under the jurisdiction of USACE to retain 80% of recreation fees collected at a particular location for its operation and maintenance.**

This funding would supplement annual appropriated funding, while the other 20% of collected fees would be available for operations and management at any Army Corps recreation facility. This authority provides for more expedient reinvestment of recreation fees by USACE in local recreation infrastructure.

**Joint Recreation Management:**

- The LAKES Act amends Challenge Cost Sharing Cooperative Management Agreement authority, enabling private nonprofit entities to enter into cooperative agreements with USACE to operate and maintain recreation facilities under USACE jurisdiction.
- The LAKES Act will foster agreements between nonprofits and the USACE, as well as affirm the authority of the USACE to enter into cooperative joint management agreements with Tribes.
- The LAKES Act fixes issues with the USACE's inability to collect and send funds to partners under existing CCSMA authority using the Recreation.gov system. This issue has deterred partners interested in cooperatively managing parks with USACE. The LAKES Act would allow USACE to handle partner-collected fees and return them to the partner after processing.

What YOU can do is to Contact your state Senator and local Congressional representative to support the LAKES Act NOW!

## Foundation Joins Partnership Discussion

The Corps Foundation was honored to be invited to and participate in the Discussion on Partnerships feedback session hosted by Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, USACE commanding general at USACE Headquarters on January 17, 2024.

Foundation Board Member, Nancy Rogers joined Whitney Swartz from the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable and 18 other partners representing construction, engineering, environmental, outdoor recreation and academia that support USACE missions throughout the United States and around the world. The discussion was an opportunity for this diverse group to provide feedback on partnering efforts undertaken throughout USACE offices. General Spellmon has a strong commitment to successful partnering as a critical component to delivering vital services to the nation.



From left to right: Whitney Swartz - Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, Nancy Rogers - Corps Foundation and LTC Scott Spellmon - Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

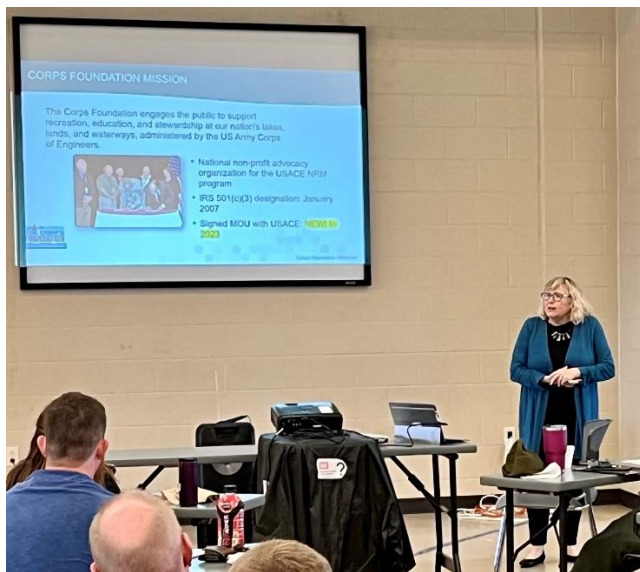


## Foundation Board Members Spread the Word!

Members of the Board kicked off 2024 with a busy travel schedule to spread the good work of the Foundation. Park Ranger annual training and program updates are held every year throughout USACE Districts and Divisions, and the Foundation is grateful the organizers invited board members to present an update on Foundation activities. Over 470 contacts were made in January-March.



Board Member Nancy Rogers visited park rangers from the Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Albuquerque Districts at their annual park ranger training in Monterey, California. Photo by Nicole Arbelo



Corps Foundation Board Member Avis Kennedy offered presentations for LRN and LRL rangers at their annual workshops. Here she is on March 19, 2024 in Richmond, Kentucky.



Nashville District Rangers and other participants in the 2024 Nashville District Ranger Workshop, held in Paducah, Kentucky. Ms. Avis Kennedy, member of the Corps Foundation Board of Directors, addressed the group on March 7, familiarizing them with the Foundation's goals, accomplishments, and advocacy in support of the Corps' Natural Resources Management program.

## Important News from the US Army Corps of Engineers

The Annual USA Today Army Corps of Engineers 2024 Special Edition is out! Read about the important current work and support to missions of USACE here.

<https://usatodaysspecial-va.newsmemory.com/?special=Army+Corps+of+Engineers&date=20240610>

## What's Happening in the USACE Recreation Program!

Check out the latest issue of '**The Recreation Retreat**', a quarterly publication that is a testimony to the USACE outdoor recreation professionals and the evolving recreation program. Read Here

<https://corpslakes.erd.c.dren.mil/employees/recreation/pdfs/news/V6N2-0524.pdf>

Check out the spring edition of the partnership and volunteer program newsletter "Bridging the Gap," produced by our USACE Partnership Advisory Committee. This newsletter provides current information about partnerships and volunteer programs around the country.

<https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/partners/pdfs/newsletter/24Mar-PartnersV8I1.pdf>

## Restitution Agreement and Donation for Huntington District



The Corps Foundation accepted a large donation as part of a plea agreement in connection with the trespass and illegal dumping of catfish in a river in the state of West Virginia. The Corps Foundation subsequently used the funds to partner with Clendening Lake to enhance a USACE Handshake project to complete a 1.1-mile wetland loop trail. The donated funds were used to purchase interpretive signs to highlight different ecosystems and habitats, and a permanent spotting scope that allows visitors to overlook an osprey nesting platform, wetland, and Clendening Lake. The three 18 x 24 interpretive signs describing forest ecology, wetland ecology, and pollinator habitat are pictured below. The signs were installed on the wetland trail in the summer of 2023.



## Tom Dye Recognized for Good Work at Burchfield

**Branch Park** Francis Ferrell, Chief Ranger - Falls Lake, US Army Corps of Engineers. *The Corps Foundation thanks Chief Ranger Ferrell for again taking the time to nominate people who deserve to be recognized for their good work. Editor*

Tom Dye has been a volunteer Park Host at Burchfield Branch Park since August of 2016. Tom takes pride in his work, and it shows in how clean the park is. Tom is always the first one to volunteer to cover someone's shift when needed and is a great teammate overall. Tom has repeatedly stepped in when we've been short-staffed to keep the park up to USACE standards. Tom is very knowledgeable about the native wildlife and shares his knowledge with the public. Tom is quick to help the public with planning their activities, such as directing them to local attractions. Tom has a love and knowledge for fishing and shares this knowledge, as well. Not only is he a great volunteer, but he's a great teammate and his fellow volunteers adore him. He's also a favorite of the Rangers here on the BWT Project. Tom's 8 great years of service should be commended.



Park Ranger Shaun Ray presented a certificate and Corps Foundation Coin to Tom Dye



## **Kim Goins Recognized for Customer Service at Deerlick Creek Park**

Kim Goins has been a volunteer at Deerlick Creek Park since June of 2017 as both Park Host and Gatehouse Attendant. She is our “Park Mom” and is a big reason why our park receives so many good ratings for the customer service. Kim takes pride in the park and not only makes sure it looks great but goes above and beyond to provide great customer service. Our repeat customers ask for her by name. She is not only loved by the public, but she is loved by her fellow volunteers and by the park rangers here at Holt. Kim has adjusted to the many changes thrown at her in the last few years and has picked up the slack when we’ve been short-staffed. She has also assisted in the training of new volunteers and is quick to lend a helping hand wherever she can in the park. Our parks cannot run without volunteers like Kim. She’s a great volunteer, she’s a great teammate and most of all, she’s a great person. Kim’s 7 great years of service should be commended.

## **Thank you to Franklin Star**

The Corps Foundation would like to thank Franklin Star for his generous donation to support and promote sustainable safe and recreation through advocacy and education. Mr. Star worked with the Corps of Engineers for over 32 years on a wide range of projects, local and national. After he retired from St. Paul District, he began volunteering with various federal, state and local agencies. He became a Minnesota Master Naturalist.

During his career, Franklin became aware of the importance of strong public-private partnerships and advocates in support of an agency’s missions and programs.

## W. Kerr Scott Volunteers Receive National Volunteer Award

On Thursday April 18, 2024, W. Kerr Scott staff held an appreciation luncheon and ceremony for volunteers Randy and Debbie Connor who were awarded a 2023 National Volunteer Award certificate and coin from the Corps Foundation. The Connors have been volunteers at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir since 2017. They have accumulated over 5,185 service hours to date at a value to the Corps of at least \$148,917. Their service supports recreation, shoreline management, interpretive services, outreach, partnerships, trails, and natural resources. Their tireless efforts, selfless commitment, and unending dedication to the Corps' missions ensure our visitors will enjoy the recreational opportunities and natural resources at W. Kerr Scott in a safe and enjoyable manner for years to come.



Randy and Debbie Connor were presented with a National Volunteer Award certificate and coin. From left to right, Park Ranger (Volunteer Coordinator) Johnny Jones, Debbie Connor, Randy Connor, and Operations Project Manager Thomas Nicholson.

## Like what you've read? Can we count on your support today?

You can make the difference in programs and partnerships that are to providing improved services to the visiting public- *like you!* We are fully managed and operated by volunteers so your support is used directly for priority program initiatives, not administrative overhead.

Please join by visiting our website at [www.CorpsFoundation.org](http://www.CorpsFoundation.org), and clicking on the "Donate Now" button takes you to our membership form.

Both new and renewed memberships, at the \$50 level or higher, will receive a Corps Foundation t-shirt (size XL only) as a thank you gift.

Follow us on [Facebook!](#)

## Membership Renewal: Your Support Makes a Difference!

Please enter your contact information in the space below.

Name:

Address:

Email:

ZIP:

Phone number:



## Contribution Level Payment

Please return this form with your check payable to CNREF, c/o Dave Wahus, 422 Silver Fox Lane, Pisgah Forest, NC 28768. If you prefer, you can renew your membership online by visiting the Foundation's website at [www.corpsfoundation.org](http://www.corpsfoundation.org)

Please indicate your contribution level:

\$25                       \$250                       Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

\$50                         \$500

\$100

## Your Support Makes a Difference!

*Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization, tax ID #20-5545091, doing business as The Corps Foundation.*

Your donation may be tax-deductible for you as permitted by Federal law for nonprofit organizations. Your support of the Corps Foundation helps U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers (USACE) projects and friend's groups connect, grow, and increase their capacity to fulfill USACE's natural resource education mission on lakes and waterways across the United States. Find out more at the Foundation's website:

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

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**Corps Foundation Volunteer Board Current Members:**

Greg Miller, Board Chairperson  
Marilyn Jones, Treasurer  
Sue Clevestine, Secretary  
Rich Deline, Founding Director  
Nancy Rogers, Director, Advocacy and Outreach  
Avis Kennedy, Director  
Sam Wagner, Director  
Peter Lewis, Founding Board Chairperson Emeritus  
Darrell Lewis, Founding Director and Treasurer Emeritus

**Associates:**

Pat Barry, Newsletter editor  
Heather Burke, USACE National Partnerships Program Manager  
Rachel Garren, Special Programs Director  
Christine F. Hamman, Assistant Treasurer