

NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

2019 ANNUAL REPORT



U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS



Photo: Melissa Bean

MESSAGE FROM THE NRM CHIEF

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

2019

2019 marked my first full year as your Chief of Natural Resources Management. What a year it has been! Every day I continue to be inspired by the dedication, resourcefulness, and innovativeness of our Community of Practice. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring visitor safety and environmental conservation while embracing the diverse role of protecting all project purposes and missions.

We started 2020 with a lot to be excited about in the NRM program, but were quickly thrown a new challenge with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. As always, our NRM staff adapted quickly to the daily changes as a result of many years of experience working in a dynamic and continually evolving program. 2020 and beyond will continue to challenge us with additional threats such as invasive species, climate change, and increased pressures on our green spaces and aging infrastructure facilities. Success will be our ability to partner and work collaboratively with our federal and state colleagues, tribes, educational institutes, businesses, and non-profit organizations to deliver a vibrant, sustainable Natural Resources Management Program.

WHO WE ARE

Our Mission



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is the steward of the lands and waters at USACE water resources projects. Its Natural Resources Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with ecosystem management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.



Jeff Krause
Chief, Natural Resources
Management

2020

WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2020

There is a lot to be excited about in 2020. Our program is dynamic and continually evolving to meet current and future demands. We would like to take this opportunity to highlight a few key initiatives that are close to completion and are planned to be available this year.

NRM STRATEGIC PLAN

The broad responsibilities of the Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program across the nation emphasize the need for a focused vision to make smart, well-informed, and consistent decisions. To make our efforts transparent we will implement a 10-year strategic plan designed to guide our service and action. A dedicated Project Delivery Team has been focused on the development of a Natural Resources Management Strategic Plan for the past 9 months. Through engagement and input from external and internal stakeholders, leadership teams, and members of the NRM community at all levels, this plan will provide long-term internal guidance for the USACE NRM Program. The plan is expected to be completed by fall 2020 with implementation occurring immediately after.

NRM GATEWAY

This past year the NRM Gateway turned 18! The Gateway has served as a vital tool to capture and distribute the institutional knowledge of the NRM Community of Practice. The need for the Gateway is as strong as ever. Over the course of the next year, you will notice changes to this knowledge management site as we embark on an effort in modernization to ensure the relevancy of information and the enhancement of effective communication tools.

NATIONAL INITIATIVES VIEWER

Environmental challenges affecting large geographic regions demand cohesive management strategies for organizations to make effective progress. The Environmental Stewardship (ENS) National Initiatives Viewer filters large amounts of data and information at the program level. Individual projects will be empowered with information to aid in the advancement of larger conservation efforts. Availability of the tool is anticipated in 2020.

ASSET MANAGEMENT & NRM

Assessment of the operational condition of each asset is a crucial fundamental step to creating an effective, risk-informed budget. The Recreation Program has successfully implemented an Operational Condition Assessment (OCA) process for the past few years. In 2020, the ENS program will roll-out the first stages of an OCA process focused on boundary management.



Photo Alicia Palmer

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP MISSION



The Environmental Stewardship Program protects, preserves, and restores significant ecological and cultural resources at Civil Works projects nationwide while balancing land use activities. These efforts contribute to the quality of American life by managing and conserving natural resources consistent with ecosystem management principles and provide a sustainable environment for future generations.



Photo Justin Kerwin



The breadth of the Environmental Stewardship Mission included the management of nearly 11,000 acres for pollinator habitat in 2019.

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP MISSION



12 Million

ACRES OF PUBLIC LANDS AND WATERS MANAGED



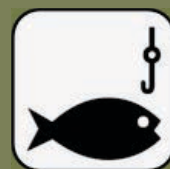
45,700

CULTURAL RESOURCE SITES



7 of the Top 10

MIGRATORY BIRD FLYWAYS CROSSOVER USACE WATERS



18%

FRESHWATER FISHING

TRIUMPHS

MASTER PLANS. We successfully revised nearly 20 Project Master Plans over the past two years with over 40 revisions scheduled to begin in FY20. These revised plans enable our resource professionals to make sound land use management decisions ensuring sustainable lands and waters.

BOUNDARY PROTECTION. USACE is responsible for protecting over 38,000 miles of boundary line which is 6 times the length of the Mexico and Canada border combined. New policy issued in 2019 demonstrates program commitment to ensuring the integrity of USACE boundary and protecting the full capability of all project missions. The development of OCA's for the boundary program are well underway and will result in the development of a condition-consequence index framework.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES. The presence of special status species are recorded near or on almost all USACE project lands and water. One example of a success story is related to the interior least tern. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service noted that "The most notable partner aiding in the recovery of the least tern is the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers." Five USACE divisions have been involved in recovery efforts.

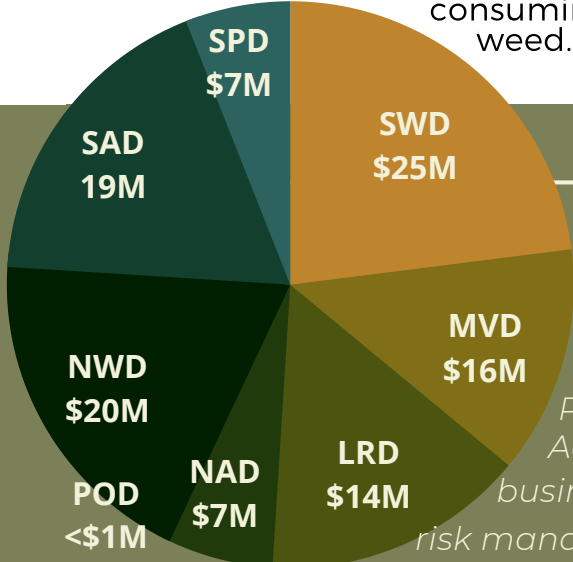
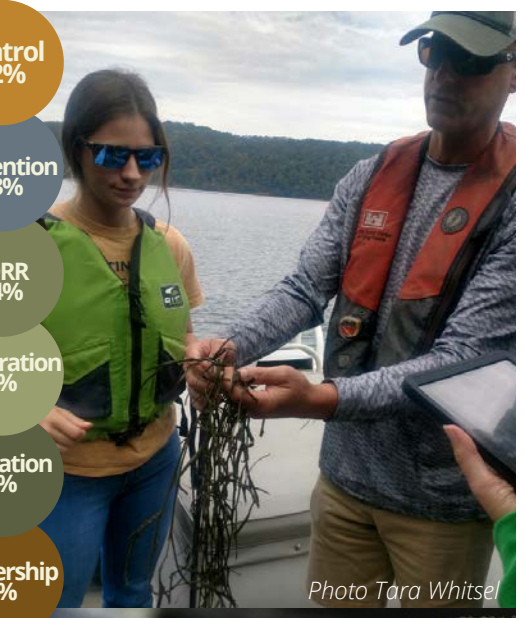
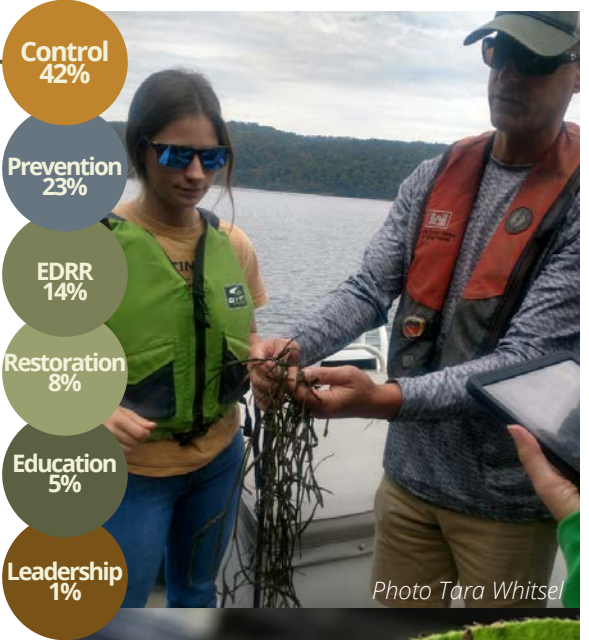


CHALLENGES

INVASIVE SPECIES. The presence and establishment of invasive species on project lands and waters continues to challenge all aspects of the program, with over **\$8.3 million spent** in the Stewardship Mission alone. Across all USACE Civil Works business lines it was estimated that over **\$145 million** was utilized on invasive species with **42%** focused on control measures.

During FY19 annual reporting, the NRM Community of Practice estimated that over **3.2 million acres** of USACE lands and waters are impacted by one or more invasive species. Innovations and collaboration have been key to successful education, prevention, and control. One such example lies in the Alligator Weed Flea Beetle Program of Jacksonville District's Invasive Species Management Branch.

The Alligator Weed Flea Beetle Program collected nearly **40,000** beetles in FY19 and shipped them to over **13** different agencies across eight states that have Alligator weed infestations. The beetles have been a successful biological control agent selectively consuming only Alligator weed.



\$115,000,000



FY19 ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP FUNDING

In FY19 a total budget request of \$110 million was submitted for the Environmental Stewardship Program with \$115 million appropriated by Congress. Additionally, \$50 million was requested by other business lines such as navigation, hydropower, and flood risk management for work associated with biological opinions and mitigation requirements. In FY20 we are set to execute a budget request nearing \$125 million with an additional \$50.5 million requested for work associated with other business lines.



RECREATION MISSION



Photo Cynthia Mitchell

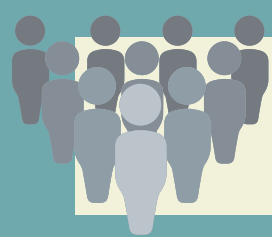
USACE is one of the leading federal providers of outdoor recreation in the nation. Over **400** lake and river projects in **43** states provide a diverse range of recreational opportunities.

- By providing controlled access and management on USACE lands and water, recreation program managers play a role in the successful execution of all project missions.
- Recreational programs and activities at USACE lakes also help strengthen family ties and friendships; provide opportunities for children to develop personal skills, social values, and self-esteem; and increase water safety.
- The money spent by visitors to USACE lakes on trip expenses adds to the local and national economies by supporting jobs and generating income. Visitor spending represents a sizable component of the economy in many communities around USACE lakes.
- By providing opportunities for active recreation, USACE lakes help combat one of the most significant of the nation's health problems: lack of physical activity.

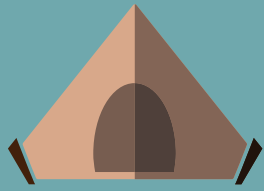
RECREATION MISSION



On an annual basis, USACE manages more visitors at our projects than the number of people that visit New York City, Chicago, Atlanta, Orlando, and Los Angeles combined.



262 Million
VISITS PER YEAR



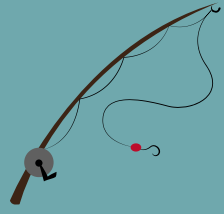
91,583
CAMPSITES



7,773
MILES OF TRAIL



3,713
BOAT LAUNCHES



2,000
FISHING TOURNAMENTS



\$12.7 BILLION
SPENT BY VISITORS

TRIUMPHS

RANGER SAFETY SURVEY. The Park Ranger Community of Practice conducted a Safety Survey for all personnel who serve as Park Rangers for the NRM Program. This survey, conducted for the third straight year, consolidates safety concerns and works toward resolutions for ensuring a safe work environment.

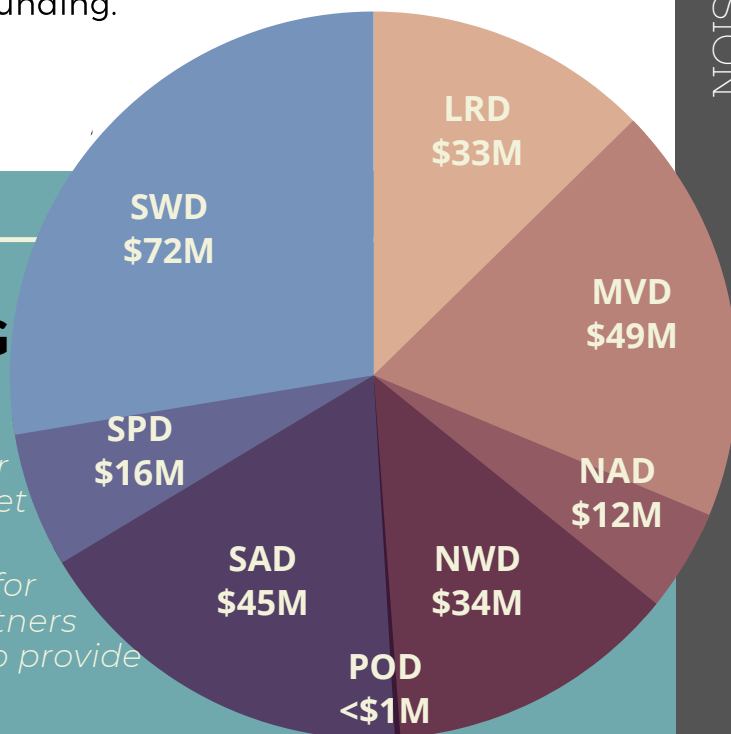
FEDERAL LANDS TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM (FLTP). The FLTP has been a great asset to improve road infrastructure and bridges with over **\$45,429,153** received since FY13. Four new projects were funded for FY20.

CHALLENGES

PROGRAM FUNDING. The past year has been challenging in terms of funding availability for our Visitor Centers along with the ability to complete major maintenance projects to ensure the safety and viability of our aging infrastructure and facilities. Work to enhance the energy efficiency of our facilities is occurring through additional sustainability funding.

\$262,000,000
FY19 RECREATION FUNDING

In FY19 a total budget request of \$755 million was submitted for the Recreation Program with \$262 million appropriated for work at our projects. In FY20, the Recreation Program is set to execute a budget of \$266 million with an additional \$27 million in supplemental funds for storm damage repairs. The efforts of our partners and volunteers have been vital in our ability to provide continued exceptional services to our visitors.



3.2 Million PUBLIC OUTREACH CONTACTS

Recreation experiences increase motivation to learn more about the environment; understanding and awareness of environmental issues; and sensitivity to the environment.



PARTNERSHIPS

The challenges facing the NRM mission require a new way of doing business, by increasing community engagement and collaboration to ensure we meet the needs of the public. We partner with volunteers and organizations who want to give back to their communities and are interested in being involved in the USACE NRM program.

We strive to match our volunteers' talents and interests with work to be done, in order to achieve a shared vision. While partners and volunteers are not a substitute for USACE management of federal resources, they help accomplish programs and activities for which funding is not available and therefore would not normally be performed.



Photo W. Kerr Scott Lake

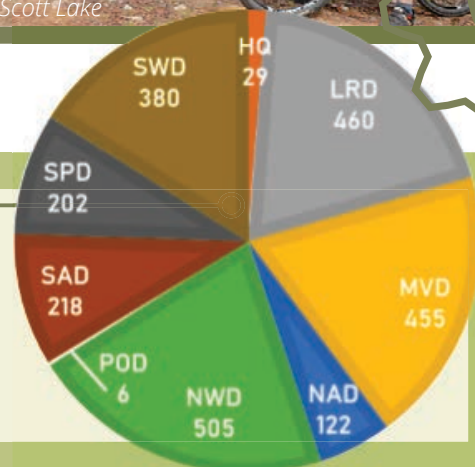


2,377

TOTAL PARTNERS

(9.6% increase from FY18)

PARTNERS ENGAGED



\$118,367,539

TOTAL VALUE OF PARTNERSHIPS

(68% increase from FY18)

\$23.6 Million
USACE INVESTMENT

\$94.8 Million
PARTNER INVESTMENT



**NEW NATIONAL PARTNERS
IN 2019**



Union Sportsmen's Alliance

The Great Outdoors Fund

A non-profit organization comprised of union workers around the country who are dedicated to volunteering their skills and expertise through USA's Work Boots on the Ground initiative to complete hands-on, community-based volunteer projects to improve public access to the outdoors, enhance wildlife habitats, restore America's parks, and engage youth in the outdoors.

A non-profit organization which seeks donations from individuals, corporations, and foundation to provide grants to federal, state, and local public agencies, and non-profit partners for improvements to recreation infrastructure, access, and habitat.



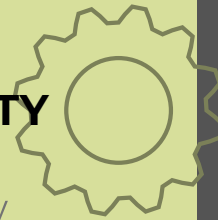


Photo Sylvia Guerrero



Photo Viola Bramel



Photo Tulsa District



Photo Alicia Palmer



CVBS, BUSINESSES, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

More than 1,000 businesses and community organizations partnered with USACE to offer recreation related service and supplies to visitors while also generating an economic benefit to their local communities.

Cooperating Associations

53 non-profit associations held special events, operated bookstores, fundraised, gave interpretive programs, and served as community advocates for USACE.

Boy/Girl Scouts

3,688 scouts from 118 troops were able to complete eagle scout projects, learn new outdoor skills, beautify parks through shoreline cleanups, raise funds by recycling, perform service projects, earn badges, and participate in interpretive programs presented by Park Rangers to learn about careers in natural resources.

Educational Institutes

USACE lakes provided **137** universities and schools with hands-on learning in an outdoor classroom setting, research projects, volunteer projects to meet service goals, water safety and environmental interpretive programs, and career days.

Youth Service and Conservation Corps

34 USACE lakes worked with conservation service corps organizations to provide 16 to 25 year-old youths with job training, academic programming, leadership skills, and experience in environmental stewardship and recreation projects.

National Organizations

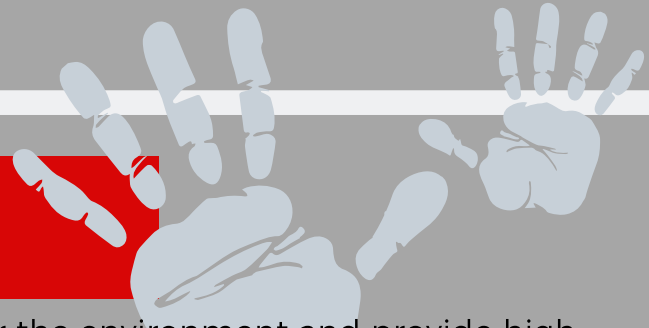
153 USACE projects partnered with 32 national organizations to improve access, upgrade facilities, and create new opportunities for their members and the public.

Public Organizations

240 public groups including federal and state land management agencies, local government agencies, military organizations, and tribal entities completed projects to improve recreation, restore habitat and meet environmental stewardship goals.

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 LRD - Great Lakes & Ohio River Div. POD - Pacific Ocean Division
 MVD - Mississippi Valley Division SAD - South Atlantic Division
 NAD - North Atlantic Division SPD - South Pacific Division
 NWD - Northwestern Division SWD - Southwestern Division

VOLUNTEERS



Volunteers play a valuable role in helping care for the environment and provide high quality recreation opportunities. Each year, people generously give their time, expertise, and resources to serve millions of visitors who enjoy USACE managed lands and waters.

HOW OUR VOLUNTEERS HAVE HELPED

RECREATION

- Built and maintained trails
- Served as campground/visitor center hosts
- Conducted interpretive programs and tours
- Developed and built displays
- Maintained facilities
- Collected fees

ADMINISTRATION

- Wrote and edited materials for publication
- Photography
- Computer/database entry

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

- Removed invasive species
- Planted native vegetation
- Built and installed nesting structures
- Monitored wildlife



28,550

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS



1,505,860

VOLUNTEER HOURS



\$38.3 MILLION

VALUE OF VOLUNTEER SERVICE

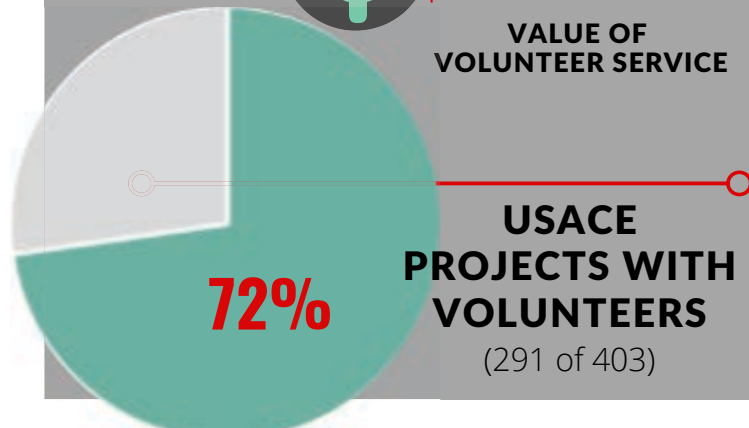


Photo Mariah Blackhorse

Whether it is an environmental ethic, a love of parks, or enthusiasm for the outdoors, like-minded partners and volunteers share their expertise, resources, time and energy to work together toward common goals.

VOLUNTEERS



Photo Alicia Palmer



Photo Sylvia Guerrero

RECOGNITION

Beginning in 2016, volunteers who served 250 hours with USACE or other participating Federal land management agencies became eligible to receive an America the Beautiful (ATB) Interagency Volunteer Pass. In FY19, **321** America the Beautiful Volunteer passes were issued to USACE volunteers for their service. In addition to the ATB pass, **105** USACE volunteers who served 100 hours received a USACE annual day use pass.



Volunteers who perform exceptional service are also eligible to receive a Corps Foundation Volunteer Excellence coin, and can be nominated for the Corps Foundation sponsored National Volunteer of the Year Award or the Enduring Service Award. In FY19, **44** Volunteer Excellence coins were awarded for exceptional volunteer service.

NATIONAL PUBLIC LANDS DAY

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) is the largest single-day volunteer effort for America's public lands. NPLD took place on Saturday, September 28, 2019. Together **10,252** USACE volunteers:



Photo Heather Dumais

37,103 Hours Worked

488 Tires Removed

112,254 Lbs of Trash Removed

89 Miles of Trail Improved

85 Miles of Roadway Cleared

177 Acres of Habitat Improved

2,953 Trees/Shrubs Planted

296 Partners Involved



Photo Jennifer Mullins

WATER SAFETY PROGRAM

The popularity of USACE waterways, which attract more than 260 million visits every year, requires effective interpretive programs and campaigns. Utilizing national campaigns can encourage the public to be safe and responsible when enjoying our Nation's waterways.

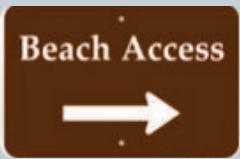


1,229,313
ON-SITE
1,485,205
OFF-SITE

**DIRECT
INTERPRETIVE
CONTACTS**



Photo Alicia Palmer



887
BEACHES



798
**LIFE JACKET
LOANER STATIONS**



505
MARINAS



366
**USACE BOAT PATROL
HOURS PER WEEK**



NATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

- Bobber the Water Safety Dog Campaign is the USACE National Youth Campaign.
- Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns is the USACE National Adult Campaign.



WATER SAFETY PROGRAM



Photo Mike Watkins



Photo USACE



The USACE National Water Safety Program works in cooperation with the Corps of Engineers Natural Resources Education Foundation (The Corps Foundation) to enhance and promote the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns Campaign.

In 2019, The Corps Foundation received a **\$175,000** Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund grant, administered by the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) that was used to enhance and promote the campaign.

The "Please Wear It" Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages are the official social media pages of the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns Campaign and the USACE National Water Safety Program. These social media pages are managed with The Corps Foundation utilizing the USCG grant funds.

In 2019, an online survey was conducted for the Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns Campaign. The survey had a completion rate of **96.1%** with **441** people responding. On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being the highest, **52%** rated the campaign as a 10 and the average rating was 8.5.

THE CORPS FOUNDATION

OFFICIAL NONPROFIT OF
AMERICA'S LAKES AND WATERWAYS



2,771,737

FY19 TOTAL FACEBOOK REACH



Photo Bill Donnellan

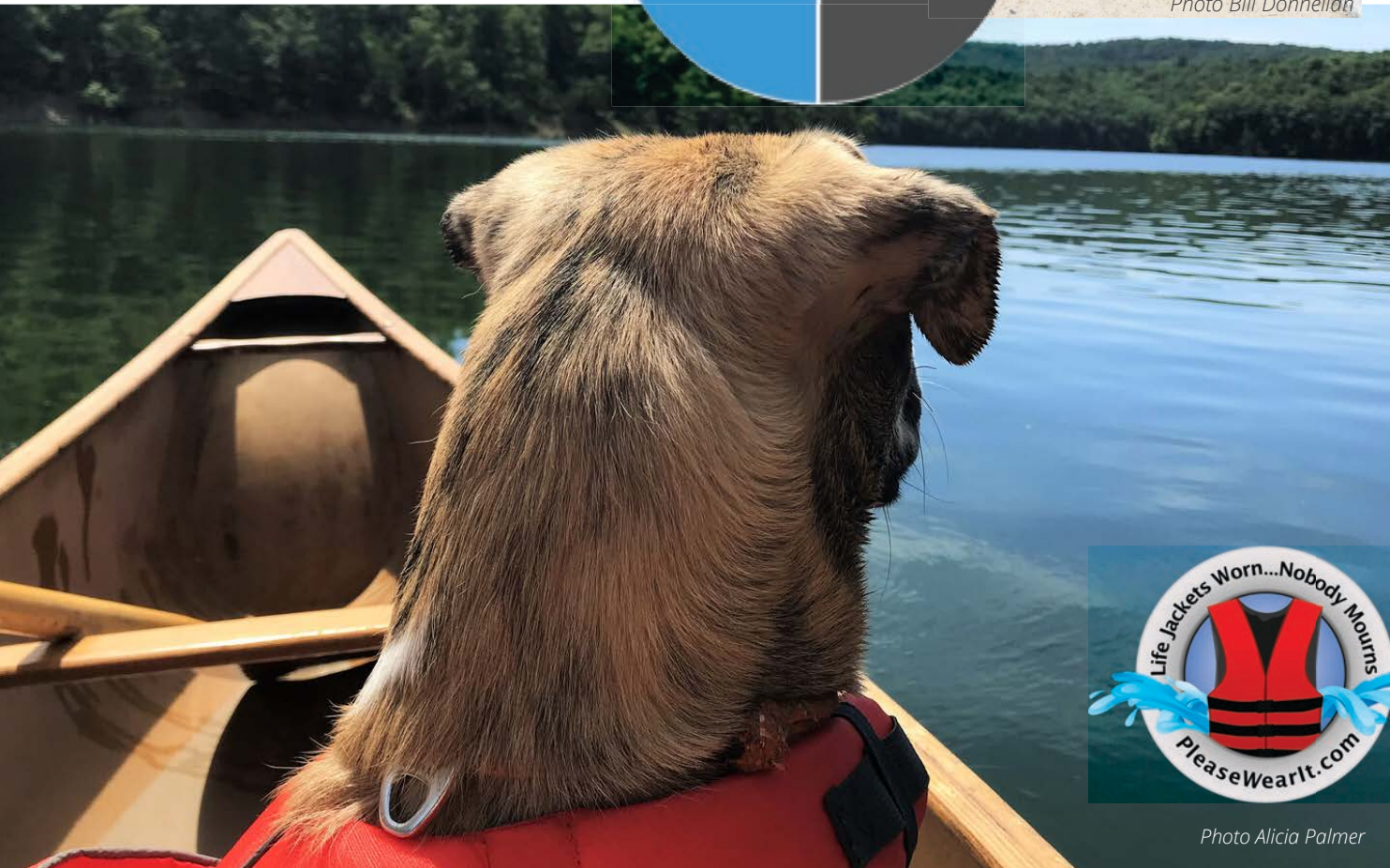
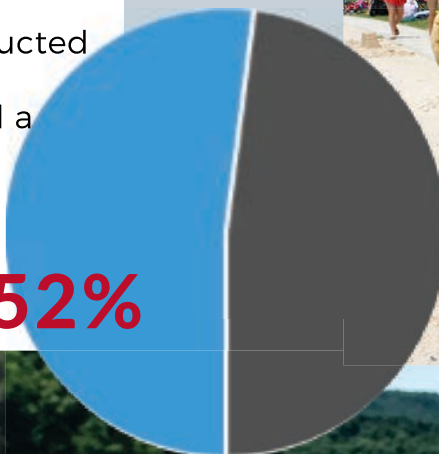


Photo Alicia Palmer

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE



HIRAM M. CHITTENDEN AWARD

The Natural Resources Management Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence acknowledges an individual who has done exceptional work in the interpretive services profession.

The 2019 recipient of this award is Park Ranger Amber Tilton of the Dalles Lock and Dam in the Portland District. Amber has been a park ranger for USACE for 14 years and has taken the initiative to develop relationships with partners, schools, and visitors, both locally and regionally.



Photo Amber Tilton

To compliment her many accomplishments in interpretation, Amber serves on water safety committees at the project, district, and division levels and served on the National Water Safety Committee. She also appeared in an Oregon Public Broadcast production and StemPunx film as a subject matter expert in the field of interpretation.

OPPORTUNITIES

The NRM Program is supported by several key leadership teams. These teams serve in an advisory capacity to HQ USACE, providing strategic planning, policy guidance, budget recommendations, and much more.

RLAT (RECREATION LEADERSHIP ADVISORY TEAM)

Members of the RLAT continued to focus on many issues surrounding funding within the Recreation program. In addition, the RLAT is supporting and aiding in the development of the NRM Strategic Plan.

SAT (STEWARDSHIP ADVISORY TEAM)

Members of the SAT supported the development and pilot offerings of a course designed to educate our personnel in all aspects of the Environmental Stewardship Program.

ISLT (INVASIVE SPECIES LEADERSHIP TEAM)

Members of the ISLT completed a new program management plan for the next 5 years. New specimens were added to the Travelling Trunk for invasive education.

PAC (PARTNERSHIP ADVISORY COMMITTEE)

Members of the PAC continued to execute the Handshake Partnership Program in addition to serving on the Partnership course teaching team.

NRM EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



Photo Derick Walker

The NRM Employee of the Year Award is awarded to an individual who has exhibited exceptional leadership and selfless service to the NRM Program.

The 2019 recipient of this award is Supervisory Natural Resources Specialist Derick Walker, Lake Ouachita Field Office in the Vicksburg District. Derick leads a staff of 13 individuals committed to ensuring the protection of the 68,000 acre Lake Ouachita Project which includes nine major concessions and three quasi-public lease areas. Among his many accomplishments Derick, has served on the Recreation Leadership Advisory Team and the VERS CATT.



2019 EXCELLENCE IN PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Excellence in Partnership Award is co-sponsored by The Corps Foundation in recognition of exceptional contributions to the natural resources management programs at USACE projects.

The Lake Shelbyville Fish Habitat Alliance (LSFHA) is an outstanding example of a successful USACE partnership that is comprised of anglers, local businesses, volunteers, and local, state, and federal agencies with the common goal of improving the environmental stewardship and recreation at Lake Shelbyville. The LSFHA has made significant accomplishments since their formation in 2016, including placing more than 875 artificial structures and numerous aquatic plantings into the lake. LSFHA helped expand the number of partners in the Lake Shelbyville partnership program, secured two grants totaling **\$87,000**, and held fundraisers netting more than **\$20,000** for the project.



NRM CAP (CAREER ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM)

Heather Wood, a NRM Specialist from Pittsburgh District served as the NRM CAP from July through December of 2019. Heather noted that, "My time in the NRM CAP position has been an eye opening and enlightening experience. It gave me the opportunity to work on a wide range of programs at a national level. I was involved in policy issues covering everything from firearms, invasive species, shoreline management, National Public Lands Day, and the national strategic plan update."

PARK RANGER CoP ADVISORY BOARD (COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE)

Members of the CoP expounded upon the history of the USACE Park Ranger with the development of Park Rangers: A USACE Legacy.

NATIONAL WATER SAFETY COMMITTEE

Members of the committee provided national campaign resources, tracked USACE public recreation fatalities data and trends, managed partnerships, websites, and social media pages.

NRM USERS GROUP

During 2019, members of the Users Group evaluated the NRM Assessment Tool and proposed changes to improve the quality of data that is collected annually.

INNOVATIONS TEAM

During 2019, members of the Innovation Team expanded their reach and moved to completion on many new and useful tools for our Community of Practice.



2019 NATIONAL VOLUNTEER AWARD

The National Volunteer Award is co-sponsored by The Corps Foundation in recognition of the extraordinary service provided by volunteers. This award distinguishes individuals, couples, and families who give their skills, talents, and time beyond the normal call of duty and whose credible service to USACE has resulted in the significant enhancement to one or more of the USACE business lines.

The Wall family (Eric, Cathy, Alec, and Harrison) has been selected for this award for their dedicated service to the natural resource program and efforts at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir. Together they have donated over **3,100** hours of volunteer service in a three year period.



The Wall family has demonstrated their dedication to USACE through their efforts in maintaining trail systems, facility maintenance, community outreach, a pollinator garden, water safety outreach, and educational interpretation.



The Natural Resources Management Annual Report is an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This is produced with the purpose of providing its readers information about the USACE Natural Resources Management Program. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

Cover Photo provided by Jenna Conner, Raystown Lake.