



Recreation – Healthy, Accessible, Outdoor Opportunities for America

“Today’s listening session ... brought to light the importance of conserving the nation’s water resources and connecting with the environment. The people living here are true environmental stewards and have a passion for our American outdoors—their drive and commitment to the outdoors will serve as a foundation for 21st century conservation.”

**– Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army
for Civil Works at the Great Rivers listening session, Alton, Ill.**

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) is the largest federal provider of water-based outdoor recreation in the nation. Its 422 recreation projects—each of which has numerous parks—spread across 43 states provide diverse and dynamic recreational opportunities. Corps recreation projects, 90 percent of which are within 50 miles of metropolitan areas, host more than 370 million visits a year. These recreation projects are also a significant economic driver for many communities and the nation—visitors spend \$16 billion a year to visit Corps lakes and support 270,000 jobs¹ to the nation’s economy.

Funding

The President’s fiscal year 2013 budget of \$4.731 billion for the Corps includes \$252 million for the recreation program. This program directly supports the President’s America’s Great Outdoors (AGO) Initiative. A number of actions identified for the Corps in the Interagency Report to the President (Feb 2011) and the Progress Report (October 2011) are underway and are expected to continue within the FY 2013 budget. The Corps is committed to providing visitors a level of service that will enable a secure, safe, quality experience. FY 2013 funding will be directed toward maintenance of grounds and sanitary facilities, protection of project assets and public property, security, and visitor safety. The budget was developed using a risk management approach to provide support to the Corps recreation projects, provide health and safety services on about 2,500 parks managed directly by the Corps and provide management oversight to an additional 2,000 parks that are out-granted to our partners. Risk management entails prioritizing both routine and non-routine maintenance activities, including visitor health and safety services, accessibility improvements for persons with disabilities, facility efficiency improvements that result in decreased future operation and maintenance costs, and new construction. Our recreation facilities contribute to the quality of life of park visitors and neighboring communities, as well as being a key element of state and local government economic development and job creation.

Program Objectives

- Provide outdoor recreation opportunities in an effective and efficient manner at all Corps-operated water resources projects.
- Provide a safe and healthful outdoor recreation environment for Corps customers.



Key Messages

- Visitor safety at Corps projects is our highest priority—we promote water and boater safety and education.
- The Corps is the largest federal provider of outdoor and water-based recreation in the nation—90 percent of Corps lakes are within 50 miles of metropolitan areas.
- The Corps manages nearly 12 million acres of public lands and waters including natural landmarks, cultural resources, open space, and provide important habitats for fish, wildlife, special and endangered species.
- We work to build strong local relationships and provide opportunities for thousands of volunteers.
- Corps projects provide environmental learning opportunities for schools and youth organizations, introducing young people to conservation and appreciation of the outdoors.
- Approximately 700,000 reservations are made at Corps campsites and shelters annually.
- Corps-managed waters provide 33 percent of all U.S. freshwater fishing.
- More than 55,000 volunteers worked 1.4 million hours at Corps projects providing \$28.3 million in value of service a year.
- Seven of the top 10 migratory bird flyways in the U.S. cross Corps-managed waters.
- The Corps recreation program manages 55,000 miles of shoreline, 6,900 miles of trails and 3,600 boat launch ramps.
- For more information about the Corps efforts, visit <http://www.usace.army.mil/>

¹ US Army Corps of Engineers IWR- Regional Economic System. Computer Model and Online Database. Alexandria, VA: Institute for Water Resources, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.