Making a Difference...

in Recreation & Park Management

The Corps of Engineers is responsible for the stewardship of 11.7 million acres of federal land and water located at more than 460 water resources projects in 43 states. On site of these projects are more than 4300 recreation areas that attract Americans to make approximately 414 million visits each year. The $9 billion spent by visitors at Corps projects has generated more than 600,000 full or part-time jobs resulting in $11 billion of income in the United States.

While most federal lands that provide public recreation opportunities are either located in the West or are remote from major population centers, most Corps projects are in locations which are convenient to the

Lake Lanier: America's Fresh Water Ocean

From the air, Lake Sidney Lanier is gigantic. It touches five counties in Georgia and covers 38,000 acres. Amazingly, prior to 1950, it didn't exist at all.

After World War II, the rivers that went through western and northern Georgia could no longer accommodate a growing population's water needs. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was directed to design and build a series of dams and lakes along the Chattahoochee River which begins in northern Georgia and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Buford Dam and Lake Lanier would be located the farthest upstream in the headwaters where the river is born. In 1950, the Corps began to clear 58,000 acres of land for the lake's 540-mile shoreline. Although construction of Buford Dam and Lake Lanier was completed in 1956, it took two years for the lake to fill up with water.

Today, Lake Lanier is not only the primary power and water source for metropolitan Atlanta, but also America's most popular man-made lake. Every year more than 18 million visitors visit the lake's 42 public park areas, 18 beaches, 10 marinas and 10 campgrounds. Overseeing the operation of these facilities are 40 Corps' personnel. These professionals include managers, park rangers, clerks, landscape architects, construction technicians, foresters, biologists, real estate specialists and maintenance personnel.

public. In fact, 80 percent are within 50 miles of a major metropolitan area, and 94 percent are within a two-hour drive. On an average summer weekend, many Corps projects grow in population to the size of small cities, complete with many of the difficulties associated with an urban area. Management of these rapid influxes and outflows of people with a minimum impact on the environment and neighbors is an integral part of the Corps' recreation and management mission area.

Over the years, the Corps has developed a flexible management approach to recreation use at Corps-administered projects. More than 40 percent of the Corps' separate recreation areas are managed by entities outside the Corps. This includes other Federal agencies, state and local governments, quasi-public organizations and the private sector. The Corps directly operates and maintains more than 2500 recreation areas. Another 1800 are operated under a lease or license agreement by other program entities.

At the heart of Recreation and Natural Resources Management are park rangers. Typical duties include: administering contracts for recreation area cleaning, mowing and fee collection services; presenting water safety and interpretive programs; coordinating work activities with volunteers; providing visitor assistance; and operating and maintaining project visitor centers.

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