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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

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Army Corps of Engineers trails designated as National Recreation Trails

WASHINGTON – Today the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) announced that four U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) trails are among 41 trails designated as national recreation trails by DOI. These trails will join the national network of more than 1,100 recreation trails that span from coast to coast and encompass more than 13,000 miles of existing trails and trail systems.

The national recreation trail designation recognizes those trails that link communities to recreational opportunities on public lands and in local parks across the nation. The first national trails were established in the early 1970s.

Today's designation of 41 new national trails will add almost 650 miles of trails to the National Trails System. These land and water trails will continue to connect people with nature and the great outdoors as part of a healthier lifestyle, a core principle behind President Obama's *America's Great Outdoors* and First Lady Michelle Obama's *Let's Move Outside!* initiatives.

Each of the new trails will receive a certificate of designation, a letter of congratulations from the Secretary of the Interior and national recreation trail markers.

As the nation's largest federal provider of outdoor and water-based recreation, USACE's 422 lake and river projects in 43 states provide more than 4,500 miles of diverse trail systems. USACE officials credit the support of local public and private organizations and the thousands of volunteers annually in helping to make these trails available for public use.

The following four USACE trails have been designated as national recreation trails:

Old Post Mountain Bike Trail, Lake Dardanelle, Ark.

The Old Post Road Park near Russellville, Ark., hosts a series of 12 interconnecting loops offering the mountain bike enthusiast more than eight miles of trail in one great place. The loops vary in difficulty. Easy Rider Trail is a great trail for beginning mountain bikers and also a perfect place to warm up or cool down from a great ride. All other trails interconnect and vary from modest to intermediate skill level allowing everyone the opportunity for a personalized ride.

Springhill Park Mountain Bike Trail, John Paul Hammerschmidt Lake, Ark.

USACE partnered with the Mercy Cycling Club (Mercy Cycling) to construct a mountain bike trail in Barling, Arkansas' Springhill Park. The ten-mile route, with three loops, twists and winds like a spider web. Regionally known as a "fast" trail by experienced mountain bikers, monthly races are held for area riders and two annual competitions are sanctioned by the International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA). The trail provides an escape from the urban and congested Fort Smith/Van Buren metro area. Families, hikers and bikers benefit from the safe and healthy trail

environment. Low impact bridges, built to IMBA standards, cross gullies that empty into the Arkansas River. Volunteers maintain the trail. A long-lasting relationship has resulted between USACE, Mercy Cycling and the St. Edwards Mercy Medical Center in Fort Smith, Ark.

Quinebaug River Water Trail – Thompson Section, West Thompson Lake, Conn.

This five-mile water trail within USACE's West Thompson Lake project is an excellent three-hour outing for paddlers who are comfortable with moving water and enjoy seeing varied landscapes of forests and fields along with extensive wildlife habitat. The quiet, slow-moving Quinebaug River abounds with unique history and culture. This segment of the river has moving water (but no rapids), flat water, and no portages. The upper three miles seem isolated except for two bridge crossings. USACE and the Thompson Trails Committee work collectively to maintain the entire length of the trail, the put-in at the 1804-constructed Fabyan Dam, and the take-out at the West Thompson Lake Boat Ramp.

Blue Marsh Lake Multi-Use Trail, Blue Marsh Lake, Pa.

This 29-mile trail encircles USACE's Blue Marsh Lake project in Berks County, Pa. It is open to all non-powered uses, such as hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding. The trail travels through various habitat types ranging from open fields in grass and other crops, to shrubby or brushy areas, to mature forest. The surface varies from mowed grass to compacted soil and gravel to abandoned roads. The trail varies from wide open spaces to winding single-track through the forest. The trail was constructed by USACE employees, local Scouting groups, school classes, civic organizations and community service workers.

For more on National Recreation Trails visit <http://www.americantrails.org/nationalrecreationtrails/>.

For more information on USACE land and water trails and the many other recreation opportunities available at USACE sites, please visit www.corpslakes.us.