

Headline: Portland District partner named best in nation

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A key Portland District recreation partner has been named best in the nation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Senior members of the Corps' National Resources Management community of practice presented the Linn County Parks and Recreation Department with the Corps' 2013 National Excellence in Partnerships Award in a ceremony April 15 at the Sweet Home, Ore., Community Center. Linn County Parks Director Brian Carroll accepted the award on behalf of his 11-person staff.

The Corps of Engineers and the Corps Foundation, a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Corps-managed rivers and waterways, present this annual award to recognize outstanding contributions by a partner to the Corps recreation and environmental stewardship programs.

"What you've done here in Linn County is a sterling example of what (the Corps) should be doing with partnerships around the country," said retired Portland District Operations Division chief Debby Chenowith, now a Corps Foundation director.

Nominations are judged on partners' creativity and originality in serving the public, improvement of public awareness and support of the Corps missions, increased public education, accomplishment of Corps management objectives, involvement of other partners to increase community involvement, and development of programs accessible to diverse audiences.

Mary Coulombe, the Corps' chief of natural resources, said Linn County Parks' nomination stood out because of three key accomplishments: Developing a new recreation plan for Green Peter Reservoir, engaging other partners like the U.S. Forest Service and the City of Sweet Home in mutually beneficial projects, and working with the Linn County Road Department to secure a \$6.2 million grant to make improvements to the Quartzville transportation corridor along Green Peter Reservoir's north shore.

The Green Peter recreation plan aims to reduce environmental damage and increase public safety by phasing out dispersed camping and offering more developed recreation facilities.

Among its many community engagement efforts, Linn County Parks is a founding member of the "Sweet Home All Lands Collaboration" coalition of public agencies, private companies and local citizens working to find ways to increase tourism, promote healthy lifestyles and create jobs in the community.

As for the transportation grant, "The Corps is the largest federal recreation provider, with 370 million visitor days on our 422 lakes and reservoirs, and 12 million acres of land and water," Coulombe said.

"The roads are how we get people out to our recreation areas to camp, fish and boat."

Roger Nyquist, chairman of the Linn County Board of Commissioners, said, "It is a proud moment and day for all citizens of Linn County." He acknowledged the work of other Linn County agencies – particularly the county's road and GIS departments – that have supported parks department initiatives.

"They are often called on to help make the parks department projects happen and they never say 'no,'" he said.

Dustin Bengsten, deputy operations manager for the Corps' Willamette Valley Project, which oversees the Foster and Green Peter dam and reservoir projects in Linn County, has worked for the Corps in the Willamette Valley for the last 20 years. He admitted that in the past, "It could be difficult to do business with us at times."

"I believe we've come a long way because of Linn County's perseverance, patience and perspective," Bengsten said. "The successes we're celebrating today are the result of relationships that have developed over a long time ... Our vision has changed and we have come to a community understanding about managing public resources."

"It's great to see this community come together to provide great recreational opportunities and protect natural resources," said Heather Burke, the Corps' National Partnership Program manager. "We rely on our partners more and more to help us accomplish those missions as we face difficult budget situations."

Linn County Parks and Recreation manages six recreation areas on Corps land in the South Santiam Basin, including two campgrounds and several heavily-used boat ramps. The county also recently assumed management of an RV campground and marina on the southwest corner of Foster Reservoir.

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Sidebar: None

Photos (Embed in article submission. All photos should be Virin'd with meta data, including photo caption):



140415-A-JM613-009.JPG: Linn County Parks and Recreation Department Director Brian Carroll (center) accepted the Corps' 2013 National Excellence in Partnerships Award at a ceremony April 15 in Sweet Home, Ore. The Corps' Chief of Natural Resources Mary Coulombe (left) and Corps Foundation Director Debby Chenoweth presented the award.



140415-A-JM613-003.JPG: The Corps of Engineers and the Corps Foundation, a nationwide nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting Corps-managed rivers and waterways, present this annual award to recognize outstanding contributions by a partner to the Corps recreation and environmental stewardship programs.



140415-A-JM613-005.JPG: Roger Nyquist, chairman of the Linn County Board of Commissioners, said, “It is a proud moment and day for all citizens of Linn County.”



140415-A-JM613-014.JPG: Linn County Engineer Chuck Knoll explains transportation and infrastructure challenges at Green Peter Reservoir to the Corps’ National Partnership Advisory Committee during a site tour. The county recently secured a \$6.2 million grant to make improvements to the Quartzville transportation corridor along Green Peter Reservoir’s north shore.



140415-A-JM613-011.JPG: Willamette Valley Project Park Ranger Christie Johnson provides an overview of Corps recreation facilities in the South Santiam Basin. Linn County Parks and Recreation manages six recreation areas on Corps land in the South Santiam Basin, including two campgrounds and several heavily-used boat ramps.



140415-A-JM613-012.JPG: Willamette Valley Project Park Manager Tami Schroeder discusses recreation challenges and opportunities at Green Peter Reservoir with members of the Corps' National Partnership Advisory Committee.

WordPress Web links:

Foster Dam and Reservoir: <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/WillametteValley/Foster.aspx>

Green Peter Dam and Reservoir:

<http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/WillametteValley/GreenPeter.aspx>

Linn County Parks: <http://www.linnparks.org>

Corps Natural Resource Management Partnerships:

<http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/visitors/partners.cfm>

WordPress Keywords (*Use same as those used in photo/image metadata*):

Foster, Green Peter, Recreation, Santiam, Willamette

WordPress Categories:

1. Office: Operations Division
2. Program: Recreation
3. Project: Willamette Valley Project

Flickr Gallery: None

YouTube Video: None

To be distributed to another U.S. Army or Corps publication/website? HQ NRM page, per Doug Garman

FaceBook Post: Already posted at time of award:

<https://www.facebook.com/#!/PortlandCorps/posts/10152383240578792>