

Promoting America's Great Outdoors on the Upper Savannah River

With more than 153,000 acres of water and 2,700 miles of shoreline, the Savannah district's three lakes serve as some of the nation's most beautiful outdoor treasures. Located on the Upper Savannah River, Hartwell, Russell and Thurmond lakes provide a variety of recreation opportunities, including water sports, hunting, hiking, camping and fishing—all in very different settings.

The Corps team—project managers, rangers, natural resource specialists, biologists and others—that oversees the lakes shares a deep-seated responsibility to promote the natural resources that make up this part of "America's Great Outdoors."

In fact, their daily outreach with local communities and visitors epitomizes a program launched by President Barack Obama to reconnect Americans, especially young people and families, with the lands and waters that are used for farming and ranching, hunting and fishing. The "America's Great Outdoors" initiative was created based on the premise that Americans are "losing touch with the places and proud traditions that have helped make America special," as described by the White House, when the initiative was launched. The goal is to encourage activities that enhance health and wellness, encourage appreciation for natural and cultural resources, and present enjoyable opportunities to connect with family and friends.

As the nation's largest federal provider of outdoor recreation, the Corps operates more than 2,500 recreation areas at 463 projects. Ninety percent of all Corps projects are within 50 miles of a major metropolitan area, making

them easily accessible. In fact, one out of every ten Americans visits a Corps lake, totaling 360 million visits a year.

Hartwell Dam and Lake, located close to a major population area, has high public use (more than 10 million

Corps Lake visitors enjoy an abundance of water-based recreation activities, including swimming, jet-skiing, boating, and fishing. *Photo by J. Weaver.*



Corps campgrounds, like the one shown here at Hartwell Lake, offer a variety of amenities, such as restrooms, showers, boat ramps, sanitary disposal stations, playgrounds, electric and water hook-ups, courtesy docks, group camping, and designated swimming areas. *Photo by Brad Keshlear.*

visitors annually) and a decidedly suburban flavor, while Russell offers a more rural, pristine setting. Thurmond, with its large lake and land base, offers a combination of the two environments and unique features such as the Dorn Sport Fishing and Boating facility, one of the largest boat-launching facilities in the southeast.

This issue of *The Castle* focuses on some of the ways the Savannah district is promoting "America's Great Outdoors" at the Hartwell, Russell, and Thurmond projects. Some of these efforts include:

- Partnering with local, state, and federal organizations to promote participation in outdoor recreation;
- Providing volunteer opportunities to engage the community; and
- Educating the public, especially youth, about the environment and water safety through outreach programs.

For more information on the Savannah district's recreation sites, visit <http://www.sas.usace.army.mil/SASDamsLakesnew.html>.

Enjoy America's Great Outdoors! 

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