



NEWS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

BUILDING STRONG®

For Immediate Release:
August 17, 2012
News Release No. 12-43

Contact:
Tracy Robillard, Public Affairs Specialist, 912.652.5450
Tracy.K.Robillard@usace.army.mil
Billy Birdwell, Public Affairs Officer, 912.652.5014
Billy.E.Birdwell@usace.army.mil
After hours: 912-677-6039

Corps signs cooperative agreement with non-profit group for campground operations

SAVANNAH, Ga. – The [U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District](#) has signed a cooperative agreement with Outdoor Recreation and Outreach Inc. (OR&O) for the daily operations of five campgrounds at [J. Strom Thurmond Dam and Lake](#) in Clarks Hill, S.C.

OR&O is a Georgia non-profit organization that provides operations and maintenance for public parks and recreational facilities.

The agreement, signed July 25, will go into effect on Oct. 1 at the following campgrounds: Modoc, Petersburg, Raysville, Ridge Road, and Winfield. The Corps anticipates that campers will not experience any significant changes in facilities and services; however, the new agreement will change the way camping fees are spent.

“Our park visitors will see very little difference in the way our parks are operated,” said Scott Hyatt, Corps Operations Project Manager for the J. Strom Thurmond Project. “Instead of camping revenues going to the U.S. Treasury, this new agreement will allow fees collected at a campground to be re-invested in that particular campground.”

Fees will be used for maintenance and upkeep, as well as enhancement projects at the campgrounds.

“This is a significant change that will help us keep the campgrounds in great shape and provide a source of funding for future improvements,” Hyatt said.

The Corps will continue to provide visitor assistance, perform maintenance, and oversee all operations in these parks.

“We are very excited to have formed this new partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District,” said Michelle Wilson, OR&O Executive Director. “The Corps and OR&O have a common vision for success in the parks. This partnership will allow us to continue to serve visitors with the excellence they expect year after year.”

While other Corps projects in the country use cooperative agreements to operate parks, this is the first of its kind for the Corps’ Savannah District, which oversees three dam and lake projects on the Savannah River—Hartwell, Richard B. Russell and J. Strom Thurmond.

-MORE-

“Declining federal recreation budgets in recent years require an innovative approach to operating our nation’s parks,” Hyatt said. “By collaborating with partners like OR&O, we can keep parks open and continue to offer quality recreation to millions of visitors every year.”

Thurmond Lake is one of the nation’s largest and most popular public recreation areas with 151,000 acres of land and water. Each year, an estimated 5.5 million people use the many public parks, marinas, and campgrounds conveniently located around the lake, making Thurmond one of the 10 most-visited Corps lakes in the nation.

Thurmond Lake is also home to the popular [Bartram Trail](#), which was designated this year by the Department of Interior’s National Park Service as a national recreation trail.

For more information about Thurmond Lake, visit: www.sas.usace.army.mil/lakes/thurmond.

- 30 -

ABOUT US: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ [Savannah District](#) manages [three lakes and hydroelectric dams](#) along the Savannah River. It also oversees a multi-billion dollar [military construction](#) program at 11 Army and Air Force installations in Georgia and North Carolina. Corps’ projects range from barracks, hospitals and clinics to maintenance facilities, headquarters buildings and aircraft hangars. The Savannah District also has oversight and maintains additional civil works projects – from the Savannah and Brunswick harbors to the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.