



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership-Small Projects Grant Program

- **Name of Friends of Reservoirs Member Sponsoring Project**
Southeast Arkansas Crappie Federation

- **Project Leader Contact Information**
 - Terry Alpe &/or Don Cash
Southeast Arkansas Crappie Federation
1012 South Lakeshore Drive
Lake Village, AR 71653

- **Location of project (reservoir name, location (GPS coordinates of dam, if available) *reservoir must be open to public access to be eligible;**

Lake Chicot, Southeast Arkansas, Chicot County, Lake Village, AR 71653

33°19'21"N 91°16'42"W

- **Describe the Project Objectives**

Overall, we want to improve fisheries habitat and make user friendly fishing areas for family and youth shoreline access and boating fishing.

Specific project objectives are:

- 1) Construct or acquire habitat structures (PVC trees, see Attachment A and B images of the construction site and deployment of structures) for placement in Lake Chicot,
- 2) Build spawning beds, primarily for bream, accessible to youth and senior fishing from the shoreline,
- 3) Rehabilitate public launch sites on Lake Chicot,
- 4) Purchase gravel for an all-weather access to our workshop that would allow us to continue the construction of habitat structures during rainy weather.

- **Describe the Methods being used to Address this Need**

The construction, assembly and placement of fish habitat (PVC trees) in Lake Chicot with cooperation of Arkansas Game and Fish Commission biologists is the primary and ongoing activity of the Southeast Arkansas Crappie Federation. We have constructed or assembled more than 300 PVC trees over the past two years, and we hope to continue this work for several more years.

Manpower – We have members of retired and working professionals (i.e. business owners, professors, attorneys, bankers, farmers and public officials) that volunteer time, labor, money and other resources such as

equipment, shop locations, and public awareness, needed for donations and community support.

Knowledge of Need and Location – We work closely with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) regarding construction and assembly of the structures and with location and placement. The location of the deployed structures are GPS referenced and available on the AGFC website (www.agfc.com/fishing/). We also assist AGFC biologists with data gathering. The club membership has an excellent relationship with Lake Village city officials (Mayor Ed Bush) and the Chicot County Judge (Tom Mosely). These joint associations provide good community relationships and access to city and county sites for our projects.

Timing of Project – The U.S. Corp of Engineers requires a drawdown in depth of Lake Chicot every five years. We are now in the middle (2024) of a drawdown. This reduction exposes lake bottom that gives an opportunity to build spawning structures.

- What are the expected outcomes? (decrease shoreline erosion, provide cover for sport fishes, etc.)

By adding fish habitat, we expect to increase the abundance of black bass, crappie, and bream in Lake Chicot. The additional physical structures should help slow the negative impacts of sedimentation and erosion on the lake's biotic organisms and help maintain the overall fishery of this large oxbow lake. Adding spawning beds for bream should build interest in fishing, especially among youth and seniors who fish from the shoreline.

- **A letter of support from a representative of the state fish and wildlife.**

A letter from Kris Nault, AGFC District 5 Fisheries Supervisor, is enclosed as Attachment C.

- **What species will the project affect?**

The spawning structures will primarily help shad, plankton, bream and sunfish, secondarily largemouth bass, catfish and crappie. These structures will be located near public use areas for the youth and elderly anglers to access from shoreline. The PVC structures will help the survival rate of fingerlings and small fish of all species of game fish.

- **Outreach**

- Include an outreach plan

The spawning bed and structures will be located on the property of the City of Lake Village. The site is accessible by foot traffic (sidewalks) or auto (parking area). If the timing permits, county and state access parks will also be utilized.

All PVC structures were constructed and donated to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission. We also helped with the placement. These sites are mapped by GPS technologies and provided to the public through their website.

We also publicize the placement and accessibility to these areas in our state and local newspapers (see Attachment D as an example article).

Our membership has developed a slide presentation that we have and will present to civic groups or any potential donors and school groups.

- **Partners**

Our partners in all manpower and resources are volunteer membership. Our public officials and state, city and county partners are the Arkansas Game and fish Commission, Chicot County (Judge Tom Mosely), City of Lake Village (Mayor Ed Bush) and all enforcement agencies they oversee (game wardens, sheriff deputies and city police). We also partner with local businesses such as the Bank of Lake Village, Simmons Bank, Epstein Land and Gin Company, Chicot Irrigation Company, Lake Village Civic Clubs, Southern Aquaculture Company and Shield of Shelter Insurance Company.

- **Budget**

| Partner | Cash Contributions | In-kind Contributions (type: labor, supplies, equipment) | In-kind Contributions (cash value) |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|---|---|
| Friends of Reservoirs | \$2000.00 | | |
| Friends of Reservoirs | (\$320.00) | Bags of Dry Mix Concrete (200 total) | |
| Friends of Reservoirs | (\$1500.00) | Rock | |
| Friends of Reservoirs | (\$180.00) | Lumber, bed liners | |
| Volunteers | | | \$2500.00 |
| Volunteers | | Labor (estimated as described below) | (\$720.00) |
| Volunteers | | Bags of Dry Mix Concrete (200 total) | (\$1000.00) |
| Volunteers | | Equipment (tractors, trailers, backhoe, etc.) | (\$300.00) |
| Volunteers | | Utilities for Workshop | (\$480.00) |

Attachment A. Donated PVC Pipe and Working Materials at Epstein Gin Worksite.



Attachment B. Loading Fish Habitat Structures onto Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Boat for Deployment in Lake Chicot.



Attachment C. Letter of Support from Kris Nault, AGRC District 5 Fisheries Supervisor.



Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

August 2nd, 2024

Mr. Doug Nygren
Friends of Reservoirs
PO Box 134
Garden Plains, Kansas, 67050

Dear Mr. Nygren,

It is my pleasure to write a letter of support for the proposal being submitted to the Reservoir Fisheries Habitat Partnership – Small Projects Grant Program by the SE Arkansas Crappie Federation.

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) personnel have worked with the SE Arkansas Crappie Federation on two separate occasions to improve offshore fish habitat in Lake Chicot, a 5,500 acre Mississippi River oxbow lake located in Chicot County near the City of Lake Village. Lake Chicot supports economically important fisheries for Largemouth Bass, crappie, catfish, and bream. During March of 2023, myself and another AGFC biologist helped Federation members deploy 125 PVC trees at 17 fish habitat sites in Lake Chicot. Federation members assembled these structures with materials that were either donated or that they purchased themselves. During February of 2024, Federation members helped AGFC personnel assemble and deploy 162 PVC trees and Mossback Trophy Tree XL's into Lake Chicot at 16 fish habitat sites. These projects have improved offshore fish habitat in Lake Chicot and have improved some angler's catch rates. However, there are still offshore areas void of cover that could benefit from receiving fish habitat structures.

In conclusion, I fully support the efforts of the SE Arkansas Crappie Federation as they seek funding for materials to build habitat structures that will be deployed into Lake Chicot. Any efforts to continue deploying habitat structures into Lake Chicot will improve fish habitat and will be beneficial to anglers and the local economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kris Nault".

Kris Nault, AGFC District 5 Fisheries Supervisor

Attachment D. Local Newspaper article describing Southeast Arkansas Crappie Federation activities.

...ing new growth rates. The confined waters of a drawdown also allow predators an opportunity to grow because they have more access to their prey. Those same prey species will later have an opportunity to grow two to three years would be better for anglers but extending it out past five years would allow fish levels to drop too low for sport fishing. And while boaters would prefer drawdowns to start in fall, summer is necessary for



Lake Village Crappie Club members volunteer their time to build fish habitat structures from PVC and work with Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to sink the "trees" in Lake Chicot in an effort to improve fishing in the lake.

AGFC, Crappie club sink fish habitat structures

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) worked with Southeast Arkansas Crappie Federation (Lake Village Crappie Club) last month to assemble 165 fish habitat structures and create 16 new offshore habitat sites on Lake Chicot.

The fish habitat structures, which consisted of PVC and Mossback Trophy Trees, were deployed in the northern portion of the lake on flats adjacent to drop-offs in 12 to 15 feet of water.

In 2023, Lake Village Crappie Club assembled 125 PVC trees and donated the structures to AGFC. They also worked with AGFC to deploy the PVC trees at locations in the central portion of the lake.

These structures were placed on flats adjacent to drop-offs in 10 to 20 feet of water.

The coordinates for the newly-added habitat sites will be available on AGFC's website at the Fish Attractors page shortly.

The collaboration between AGFC and Lake Village Crappie Club is a prime example of how fishermen can work together with fisheries biologists to improve habitat and fishing on local lakes.

AGFC staff members that participated in the recent habitat project were Fisheries Supervisor Kris Nault, Fisheries Management Biologist Spencer Dorsey, Habitat Biologist Elizabeth Chambers, and Extra Labor Marvin Winnight.

Lake Village Crappie Club members that participated in the recent habitat project were Bob Kleser, Tommy Norris, Mark Freeman, Randy Luttrell, Sam Pope, and Terry Alpe.



Lakenport to host Mississippi River reading retreat