

**Bureau of Reclamation
Legends Award, 2009
Mr. Jay Leasure**

Jay Leasure, Natural Resource Specialist, Bureau of Reclamation, Nebraska Kansas Area Office, Grand Island, Nebraska.

Jay Leasure's duties include the management and administration of recreation and natural resources at 13 Reclamation reservoirs located in Nebraska and Kansas. These reservoirs are managed on a day to day basis by "managing partners" that include the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC), the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP), and the Lower Loup Natural Resources District (LNRD). Jay's responsibilities in administering the management agreements between Reclamation and the partners requires him to lead and participate in health and safety reviews of concession and recreation areas; prepare Resource Management Plans; prepare National Environmental Policy Act documents; review plans for new construction; review concession contracts; resolve trespass issues; and all those "other duties as assigned" that are recreation or land management in nature.

Jay is instrumental in assisting the partners in bringing their recreation facilities up to accessible standards. Numerous accessible retrofits and new construction have been completed ranging from the installation of new vault toilets and full service shower houses; leveling walkways, and installing new camping pads. Jay is also very successful in assisting the partners in prioritizing projects and obtaining funds for cost sharing the construction of new recreation facilities and enhancing existing infra-structure such as roads, boat launch ramps and campsites. Over the past several years approximately \$7.6 million have been spent on accessibility (\$5mil) and recreation (\$2.6 mil) improvements - half the cost paid by Reclamation and the other half by the managing partners. Despite many years of drought and more recently the recession, the managing partners Jay works with have not "turned-back" recreation management of the reservoirs to Reclamation.

In 2004, Jay was selected as Reclamation's recipient of the Department of the Interior Annual Safety Award. Jay received this award for his work coordinating annual health and safety inspections of recreation and concession areas. Jay utilized an inspection process that brought together the managing partners, concessionaires, and various state and local regulatory agencies. Jay's efforts resulted in the identification and remediation of numerous health and safety issues.