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Union Sportsmen's Alliance and West Virginia American Water Complete New Accessible Fishing Pier at Coonskin Park

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (Dec. 2, 2015) – A new fishing pier at Coonskin Park designed to accommodate individuals with physical disabilities was unveiled at a ribbon cutting today by the Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA), West Virginia American Water and local union volunteers. The project, valued at \$60,000, is a joint effort between the USA's Work Boots on the Ground volunteer conservation program and the American Water Charitable Foundation's Building Better Communities initiative.

The completed project includes three handicap designated parking spots, concrete ramp from the parking lot to the pier, retaining wall alongside the new ramp and large wheelchair accessible floating dock with handrails. The American Water Charitable Foundation partially funded the project with a \$25,000 grant, which was awarded to USA earlier this year. The Foundation supported three conservation projects that improve public access to water-based recreation activities in Tennessee, Illinois and West Virginia. West Virginia American Water contributed an additional \$10,000 to the project, and a number of local businesses donated services and materials.

"This is the third project we have completed with funding from the American Water Charitable Foundation," said USA CEO and Executive Director Fred Myers. "These projects allow us to give back to communities where American Water serves and where our members live and recreate. West Virginia American Water went the extra mile by donating extra funds to ensure a successful endeavor. This partnership has been positive for everyone involved, and I hope to see it grow in the near future."

USA organized a group of skilled union volunteers through the Charleston Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO to complete the project, located on the south side of Coonskin Lake near the Elk River Trail.

"More than half of West Virginia American Water's 300 employees are represented by unions, and they are among the most talented and skilled professionals in the state," said Jeffrey McIntyre, president of West Virginia American Water. "We are proud to support

this Work Boots on the Ground project, which will enhance the outdoor experience of our customers, our employees and their families.”

During the ribbon cutting, West Virginia AFL-CIO president Kenny Perdue stated how pleased his organization was to partner with West Virginia American Water in making Coonskin Park more accessible to everyone.

“So many of our members volunteer to work with the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance because it combines their love of the outdoors and hunting with their desire to use their skills to give back to their communities,” Perdue said. “We are grateful to Paul Breedlove of the Charleston Building Trades for taking the lead on organizing the project, and to the many volunteers from the Carpenters, Finishers, Electrical Workers, Operating Engineers, Ironworkers, Laborers, Pipefitters, Roofers and Sheet Metal locals.

Jeff Hutchinson, director of the Kanawha County Parks and Recreation Commission, applauded the project and stated that the park was honored to receive this generous gift. “The addition of the new fishing pier will allow the lake to be more accessible for citizens with disabilities and will increase usage of the lake by all Kanawha County citizens,” Hutchinson said.

[The Union Sportsmen’s Alliance \(USA\)](#) is a union-dedicated, 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose members hunt, fish, shoot and volunteer their skills for conservation. The USA is uniting the union community through conservation to preserve North America’s outdoor heritage.

[Work Boots on the Ground](#) is the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance’s flagship conservation program that brings together union members willing to volunteer their time and expertise to conservation projects that improve and enhance public access, wildlife habitat and outdoor experiences for communities across America. It works closely with federal, state and local agencies and other conservation groups to provide manpower needed to complete critical projects that may otherwise go undone.

[The American Water Charitable Foundation](#) was established in 2010 with a founding contribution from American Water. It is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides a formal way to demonstrate the company’s ongoing commitment to being a good neighbor, citizen, and contributor to the communities where American Water and its employees live, work and operate. The Foundation helps support American Water employee-identified nonprofit endeavors.

[West Virginia American Water](#), a subsidiary of American Water, is the largest water utility in the state, providing high-quality and reliable water services to approximately 550,000 people. Founded in 1886, American Water (NYSE: AWK) is the largest and most geographically diversified publicly traded U.S. water and wastewater utility company. With headquarters in Voorhees, N.J., the company employs 6,800 dedicated professionals who provide regulated and market-based drinking water, wastewater and other related services to an estimated 15 million people in 47 states and Ontario, Canada.

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