



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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**Three-district team marks
trends in forest growth**

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Service knows no border

By Col. Robert Ball
District Engineer

May is the month we traditionally honor those who have served our nation.

This year, it is particularly meaningful because of world events and the number of Americans who are serving overseas.

Counted among those are a number of members of the district who are either overseas now or who are preparing to deploy soon.

Those members of the district who are deployed as part of a Field Engineering Support Team or Corps Real Estate Support Team or as part of their activated reserve component unit are certainly worthy of being honored. They have left

family, friends, familiar surroundings and safety behind to use their skills to make the world a better place.

Sacrifice and service doesn't stop with those who serve on these deployments.

We are also getting ready to deploy our temporary housing Planning Response Team for the fourth summer in a row in response to a natural disaster. They will be going to Illinois instead of Iraq or Afghanistan, but they will be using their skills in the same way to improve the lives of people impacted by natural disasters.

The sacrifice and service doesn't stop with those who serve on these deployments.

Every one of those folks leaves behind a position with critical tasks that need to be done. It falls upon those of us who stay behind to pick up the slack and make sure we continue providing the support to our region that we are called upon to do.

It will mean sacrifice on the part of many to do that and, while we won't be doing it in a foreign land or a disaster area, we will have to work longer and harder to make sure the mission is done

We salute those who deploy, and rightfully so. I also want you to know that I also salute those who stay behind and keep up the good fight.

We all have our parts to play, and I am proud to command an organization with such a large number of selfless servants – you do yourself proud.

Out-sourcing updated

Condensed from a Corps-wide memo by Lt. Gen. Bob Flowers
Chief of Engineers

Many of you are concerned about the strategic sourcing program currently underway in the Corps, and the impact the Army Third Wave and the President's management agenda will have on your jobs and organizations. I will keep you informed as events progress.

The Corps will begin implementing our strategic sourcing plan this summer to meet the requirements of the agenda. Updates are on the Corps' web site: <http://www.hq.usace.army.mil/cepa/compsource/compsource.htm>.



US Army Corps of Engineers
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Crosscurrents

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Photo by Randy Urich

Cover, left to right: Rob Cosgriff, Illinois natural history survey, Kurt Brownell and Jon Sobiech, both from the St. Paul District natural resources office in La Crescent, Minn., determine the age of a green ash on a plot within pool 22 near Hannibal, Mo. See Page 5 for "St Paul District partners to establish trends in forest growth ..."

Vennemann applies real estate skills in Turkey

By Peter Verstegen

Bill Vennemann, a St. Paul District realty specialist, quickly shifted gears when a change in international policy impacted his mission in Turkey.

Vennemann arrived in Turkey in February to negotiate U.S. access and use of property as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. His unit's mission changed to disposal and close out when the Turkish government declined to authorize U.S. use of portions of the country as part of the operation.

Along the way, he met people in a different country, negotiated through an interpreter, adapted to operate in spontaneously changing conditions and learned "how much the Army is really hurry up and wait." He waited in lines, waited for planes and waited on diplomacy.

Vennemann left St. Paul, Minn., as part of a Contingency Real Estate Support Team Feb. 9.

His first stop was Ft. Benning, Ga. "I spent four to five hours filling out papers," he said, "mostly with the same information: name, social security number, age, rank, sex." Army officials checked his medical records for 14 vaccinations. He already had nine of 14 shots.

With paperwork done, Vennemann and other Corps civilians drove to Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., to board a military aircraft to Germany. The team waited a day for a layover in Germany and took another military aircraft to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey.

CREST functions in Turkey had been in a holding pattern in March, waiting for the Turkish government to authorize the U.S. use of portions



St. Paul District photo

Wearing BDU's for the first time, Bill Vennemann, a realty specialist with the St. Paul District, worked in Turkey beginning Feb. 20. His initial duty station was Incirlik Air Base, Turkey.

of the country as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The primary role of CREST members in this deployment was to acquire, manage and dispose of real estate within the assigned theater of operations - southern Turkey in this case. Outside the combat zone, it acquires leases for properties such as ports, staging areas, training and maneuver areas, supply depots and installation headquarters.

Vennemann and members of the CREST team supplemented a group from Germany that had been in Turkey for a couple of weeks. He was assigned to Iskenderun, a port city in the Mediterranean Sea in southeast Turkey, to assist with acquisition of leases and easements for the port facilities to unload ships. The city is near the border with Syria.

He spent three to four weeks assisting the group and then returned to Incirlik just before the war started

March 19.

At Incirlik Air Base, Vennemann assisted with reports and managed information in the office. "We have terminated all but two of the easements that were acquired [as part of Operation Enduring Freedom]," he said.

He experienced his first taste of barracks life at Ft. Benning. He also stayed in a tent the first week at Incirlik Air Base and again when he returned from Iskenderun.

"You need to be in half-way decent shape," he said. "They issue you two to three 40-plus pound duffel bags of equipment along with the personal stuff you bring." A helmet, flak vest, gas mask and chemical suit were part of his equipment.

He returned to his job in St. Paul April 25.

District celebrates Earth Day along Mississippi

By Bob Espenson

Youth groups from the Mississippi River Headwaters area planted seedlings, identified plants and cleaned up litter during the week of April 21. Rangers at six St. Paul District recreation sites coached the youth in environmental stewardship to commemorate Earth Day April 22.

Crosslake

On April 22, 19 Brownie and Daisy Girl Scouts from troops 322 and 369 in Crosslake, Minn., joined rangers Bob Gossett and Deb Griffith in planting approximately

125 trees at the Crosslake Recreation Area. Seven adults, including troop leaders, helped the kindergarten through third grade group. After brief Earth Day interpretive and planting instructions, the scouts paired up with a leader, equipped themselves with a tree planter and seedlings and hiked to planting sites, where they gingerly placed seedlings into freshly dug holes.

Later, the scouts made dinner over a wood fire, with a main course of "gypsy gumbo." They roasted marshmallows at the end of the evening.

Lake Winnibigoshish Recreation Area

Cub Scouts from Deer River, Minn., observed Earth

Day by using planting bars to place 400 tree seedlings in the Lake Winnibigoshish recreation area campground April 22. The trees were ordered from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources nursery at St. Andrews, Minn. U.S. Forest Service loaned the planting bars. The scouts were rewarded for their efforts with a wiener roast and picnic when the planting was completed.

"Earth Day is a chance for area youth to celebrate their surroundings and to have some fun," said Jeff Kleinert, park manager. "The group did a fine job of placing supplemental plantings for the benefit of wildlife and the enjoyment of future park users," he said.

Gull Lake

Rangers Mary Kay Larson and Bob Espenson from Gull Lake Recreation Area in Brainerd, Minn., helped 12 junior Girl Scouts and their leaders from Brainerd plant and water seedlings to replace thinning vegetation around campsites April 24. With planting complete, the crew prepared and ate wieners, potato chips, pop, and s'mores.



Photo by Jeff Kleinert

John Zahalka (left), assisted girl scouts with planting of shrubs at Pokegama Dam and Recreation Area near Grand Rapids, Minn., May 2. Rangers from Pokegama and Winnibigoshish also helped cub scouts roast wieners after planting activities at Lake Winnibigoshish Recreation Area April 22.

Earth, continued Page 5

Earth, continued from Page 4

Sandy Lake

The staff at Sandy Lake Recreation Area, near McGregor, Minn., picked up litter along two miles of State Hwy. 65 April 24. Eleven National Honor Society students from McGregor helped the staff plant 200 seedling trees in the park April 26.

Leech Lake

Leech Lake staff at Federal Dam, Minn., and area youth planted trees around the recreation area and picked up litter.

Pokegama Dam

John Zahalka, Mississippi Headwaters area park ranger, assisted girl scouts who were planting shrubs at Pokegama Dam and Recreation Area in observance of

Earth Day/Arbor Day. Four girl scouts from Junior Troop 1495 and seven from Brownie Troop 1485, Cohasset, Minn., participated. Their troop leader and two parents helped to supervise activities held at Pokegama, located near Grand Rapids, Minn. Park Rangers James LuMaye, Patrick Duffney and Chris Kalahar also helped the kids with scouts dig holes, plant trees, pat the soil and water the new plantings.

Cover story

St. Paul District partners to establish trends in forest growth on Corps lands

By Kurt Brownell

Personnel from the natural resources project office in La Crescent, Minn., partnered with St. Louis and Rock Island Districts to decide how best to establish permanent forest monitoring plots on Corps lands within the three districts.

Randy Urich, Jon Sobiech and Kurt Brownell met natural resources personnel from the other two districts in Hannibal, Mo., from March 31-April 1 to establish a protocol to monitor forest lands in the three districts.

The primary objectives of the monitoring is to document long-term trends in forest growth, health and vegetative changes resulting from site elevation, soil structure and disturbances such as large floods or wind damage.

The group visited islands in pools 22 and 24 and established two plots. The meeting objective was to standardize data collection techniques and discuss data needs while in the field.

All species of plants within the plots were identified, trees heights and diameters were measured and elevations were surveyed. The sites were marked with metal posts and by blazing (cutting the bark) trees surrounding the posts and then painting the blazes.

Team members hope to begin establishing plots within their respective districts this summer. "I felt the experience was extremely advantageous to all those involved, it is nice to have all districts on the same page," said Sobiech.

Team members have a goal to establish 100 plots in each of the districts within three years. Plans are to revisit the plots on a periodic basis every five-10 years.



Photo by Gregg Struss

Mary Kay Larson (left) and Bob Espenson, show junior girl scouts and their leaders techniques to plant seedlings at Gull Lake Recreation Area. Sunshine, a slight breeze and temperatures in the high 60s supported the outdoor experience .

St. Paul District, Fish and Wildlife Service create island habitat

By Stephanie Ehnstrom and Kurt Brownell

The St. Paul District teamed up with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to better the environment and protect the wildlife along the Upper Mississippi River April 24.

Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, and Lt. Col. Tom O'Hara, district



Photo by Kurt Brownell

Nearly 40 volunteers from the Corps and Fish and Wildlife Service planted approximately 1,700 shrubs, including red osier dogwood, high bush cranberry and chokecherry on Polander Island in Pool 5A on the Mississippi River near Fountain City, Wis., April 24. The Mississippi River island is in the Environmental Management Program. The planting, conducted during Earth Week, celebrated the National Wildlife Refuge System Centennial.

deputy engineer, joined Randy Urich, Jon Sobiech and Kurt Brownell from the natural resources office in La Crescent, Minn., along with Fish and Wildlife Service employees, to plant trees at Polander Island April 24.

Polander Island, constructed about three years ago, is located on the Mississippi River near Lock and Dam 5A, Fountain City, Wis.

The group planted approximately 1,700 shrubs of three different species, including red osier dogwood, high bush cranberry and chokecherry.

On April 26, the Fish and Wildlife Service supervised a group of private citizen volunteers who completed planting the remaining trees and shrubs. Volunteers planted green ash, silver maple, swamp white oak and hackberry trees. A total of 3,625 trees and

shrubs of seven different species were planted. The plants will provide wildlife benefits, as well as help stabilize the island against erosion.

The leadership development team participated in the environmental stewardship to enhance their leadership skills. Team building is also a requirement in fulfilling their leadership development. Sharonne Baylor, a member of the leadership development program fiscal 2003 class from the eastern area engineer office, coordinated this venture.

Participating LDP team members included: Lupe Santos-Jensen, civilian personnel advisory center; Stephanie Ehnstrom, resource management; Deb Griffith, a ranger at Cross Lake; Michelle Schneider, project management; and Tammy Moore, contracting division.



Photo by Cindy Samples, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Randy Urich (left), a forester with the Corps in La Crescent, Minn., and Keith Beseke, a retiree from the Fish and Wildlife Service office in Winona, Minn., plant tree at Polander Lake Environmental Management Project April 24.

Corps stewardship of Mississippi River continues with Big River Cleanup

By Dennis Erickson

The Corps' St. Paul District is working to clean up the Upper Mississippi River beginning June 17. The exact date, still under discussion at press time, will be distributed by e-mail throughout the district.

The district's participation is part of a 400-mile cleanup from the Twin Cities downstream to the Quad Cities from June into August 2003. The cleanup is sponsored by Living Lands & Waters in East Moline, Ill., and the Audubon Upper Mississippi Campaign in St. Paul, Minn. The group has a towboat and barges to load the debris.

The St. Paul District operates and maintains the nine-foot channel on the river for navigation and recreation. Cleaning up the river is an important aspect of maintaining the environmental health of the river.

The district is assisting the cleanup in the following ways:

- Assisting with coordination and information to help support the cleanup effort;
- Encouraging employees to volunteer to help with the cleanup on their own time.
- With supervisory approval, employees may use up to four hours of administrative leave under the Corporate Citizenship policy to assist with the cleanup. This includes both district office and field site employees during the regular scheduled tour of duty. At the locks, participation is limited to those working day shifts, Monday-Friday.



St. Paul District Photo

The Mississippi River cleanup in the Twin Cities will focus on river miles 810-854, roughly from St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis to Prescott, Wis.

Employees must provide their own transportation to and from the work site. The Corps will provide gloves to these employees.

Each year, the district has cooperated with a program to celebrate the Solstice at Upper St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam. This year, cleanup organizers plan to lock a tow and barges filled with debris down bound during the celebration. The Corps will insure that the tow is locked down sometime during the celebration.

Debris traditionally accumulates in Pool 3 north of Red Wing, Minn. Dick Otto, natural resources manager in La Crescent, Minn., is assisting with the cleanup in both Pools 3 and 9. In three, he will provide two boats and two people on official time to cleanup Corps' land in the pool. Here, the Corps owns most of the land adjacent to the river. The Corps' staff is looking to sign up about 20 official Corps' volunteers to assist with the cleanup.

Blackhawk Park lies in the upper end of Pool 9. As in Pool 3, Otto

will run a similar program in Pool 9. Cleanup will be limited to Corps-owned land in the pool.

The Corps will attempt to remove large items along the channel that are too big or too heavy for the volunteers and small boats. The cleanup group will mark the items and provide the Corps a list and location. When the Corps floating plant is in the area, physical support branch staff will attempt to remove the items and dispose of them in an acceptable manner.

To volunteer, e-mail or call Mark Davidson, public affairs office.

Big River Cleanup by community

- June 27-28:** Red Wing, Minn.
- July 8-9:** Pepin, Wis.
- July 11-12:** Wabasha, Minn.
- July 19:** Winona, Minn.
- July 23:** Lansing, Iowa
- July 25-26:** Prairie Du Chien, Wis.
- July 28:** Cassville, Wis.

Additional information at:
<http://www.rivercleanup.org>



Minnesota State Historical Society photo

The short-lived Meeker Island Dam about 1908. The Corps of Engineers left the Meeker Island Dam in place but demolished the top five feet of it to assure the necessary clearance for boats passing over it. As noted by historian Raymond Merritt, “The structure still remains in the river, a monument to inter-city rivalries.”

Meeker Island Lock and Dam nominated for listing on the National Register

By Matt Percy, historian

The remnants of Meeker Island Lock and Dam, the first lock and dam to straddle the Mississippi River, have been recently nominated to the National Register of Historic Places.

Dr. John O. Anfinson, a former St. Paul District historian now with the National Park Service, wrote the nomination and secured its approval by the Minnesota State Historic Society. The National Park Service in Washington will make the final evaluation, but the agency typically defers to the state historic societies.

The story of the Meeker Island Lock and Dam goes back nearly 150 years and is closely tied to the early St. Paul District.

In 1857, Bradley B. Meeker, a territorial judge in Minnesota, organized a group of Minneapolis businessmen for the purpose of constructing a lock and dam below the Falls of St. Anthony. Meeker and his supporters sought to bring river traffic into the heart of

the city and to move the head of navigation up-river from St. Paul, Minn., to Minneapolis. The financial panic of 1857, and later the Civil War, delayed the project, but Meeker’s efforts eventually succeeded in securing congressional support through a large land grant to the state of Minnesota in 1868. Congress appropriated the first monies for the project in 1873, but contentious negotiations for land acquisition pushed the project back another 20 years.

Finally, in 1894, Congress authorized construction of not one, but two, dams, dubbed Lock and Dam 1 (also called the Ford Dam) and Lock and Dam 2 (the Meeker Island Dam). Curiously, Lock and Dam 2 was to be built upstream of the proposed Lock and Dam Number 1, contrary to the current system which numbers the dams in order going downstream.

The decision to build two dams rather than one was rooted in the long-standing rivalry between Minneapolis and St. Paul. As Maj. Francis R. Shunk of the Corps of Engineers later explained, “There is the city of St. Paul, and there is the city of Minneapolis. For physical reasons, a single lock and dam must lie entirely within the limits of Minneapolis, or entirely within the limits of St. Paul... Enough said. There are two locks.”

Construction on the Meeker Island Dam, to be located just above the Lake Street Bridge between Minneapolis and St. Paul, began in 1899, and the structure became operational eight years later, with the first vessel, the power boat “Itura” passing through on May 19, 1907.



Minnesota State Historical Society photo

Construction on the Meeker Island Dam, located just above the Lake Street Bridge between Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minn., began in 1899. The structure became operational eight years later.

Bits and Pieces

Landscape architects honor Fisher for Grand Forks design

By Shannon Bauer

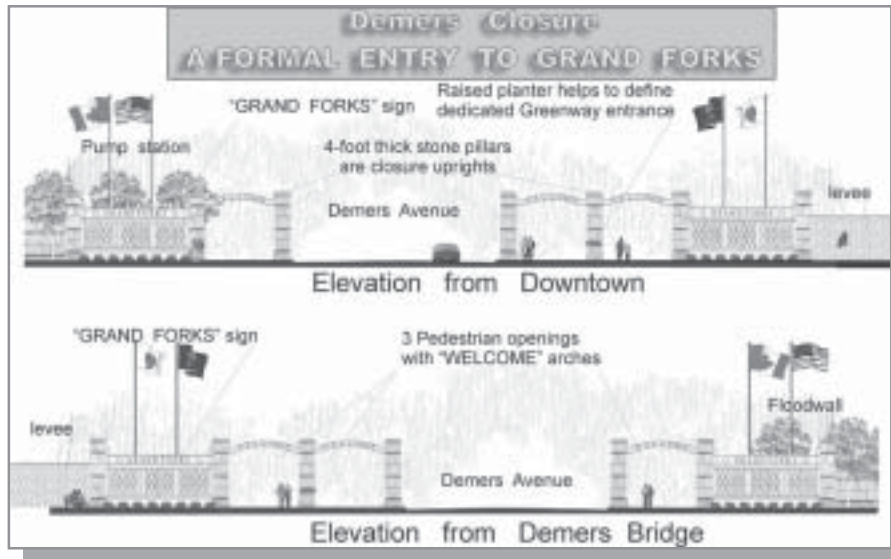
The Minnesota Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects presented its annual Public Service Award to Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, landscape architect John Fisher in late March.

MASLA presents this award each year to a landscape architect working in the public sector. The recipient must have demonstrated service to the public through projects or advocacy.

Fisher received this award for his accomplishments on the Corps of Engineer's Grand Forks/East Grand Forks flood control project, which is in the Red River Valley in North



Photo by Peter Verstegen
John Fisher



Design by John Fisher

The above illustrates integration of welcoming design and the function of flood protection at the Grand Forks Project.

Dakota and Minnesota. He is one of three Corps' landscape architects responsible for the Red River Greenway proposal following the devastating flooding in the Red River Valley in 1997.

Tom Whitlock, MASLA president-elect, said, "Fisher has worked with the cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks over the past five years in the rebuilding of their cities and has been a strong advocate of the greenway concept

that will knit these communities together and provide a long-term vision for the future."

Fisher started working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, in 1991. Additional projects he has worked on include Upper Saint Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis; Lock and Dam 7 Visitor's Center in La Crescent, Minn.; and the Mississippi River Whitewater Park in Minneapolis.

Public affairs team recognized for excellence

The St. Paul District public affairs office earned a Locke L. Mouton Award for Excellence in Public Affairs from Corps headquarters April 10.

This award is for the team effort that took place during four consecutive natural disasters in 2002 to provide public safety and other information as well as highlight the missions and efforts of the Corps of Engineers.

This is the second consecutive time the St. Paul District public affairs team has achieved Corps-wide recognition for excellence in emergency/disaster response. Team members include Mark Davidson, Shannon Bauer and Peter Verstegen.

Save June 19 for Awards Ceremony

Save June 19 to attend the St. Paul District's Family Picnic and Awards Ceremony at Eau Galle Lake Recreation Area in Spring Valley, Wis.

Picnic activities offer food, team-building games and children's activities.

Organizers have arranged a menu of hamburgers, bratwurst, hot dogs, baked beans, potato chips, trays of vegetables, watermelon, cookies, Sno Cones, popcorn and beverages.

Team-building games include a softball tournament, bocce ball, golf, volley ball and horse shoes. A water-balloon toss, plank races, sack races and a tug-of-war are planned for additional fun.

Activities for children and families include the moon walk (jump house); kids-in-boats (miniature boats for children with instructors present); a presentation of the Lewis and Clark expedition; tours of Crystal Cave; a playground and pet contests.

Selling tickets contacts in the district office are:

Fourth floor:

Lorraine Blake, Sari Xiong;

Fifth floor:

Sarah Super, Theresa Thury;

Sixth floor:

Marilyn Caturia, Vicki Johnson

and Julie Ritter.

Field and retirees:

Field personnel and retirees may arrange tickets by contacting Janet Golubski at 651-290-5423 or e-mail her at:

janet.m.golubski@mvp02.usace.army.mil.

Tee-off for golf is 7:30 a.m. Many games begin at 9 a.m. Lunch starts at noon. Check brochures for details.

Mary Chang acclaimed as March Employee of the Month

Mary Chang, the March employee of the month, made computing secure and user-friendly at the St. Paul District. Chang served as acting chief of systems operation branch in information management division from December 2002 to April 2003. She supervised 18 federal and contract employees whose work contributed to productive systems and applications for district users.

"She is considerate of her employees and peers and has consistently worked to a foster team spirit in daily operation of the office," said Dave Himmerich, acting chief, information management. "She built bridges of understanding between IM and the district users, served users beyond their expectations and was sensitive to user needs as her group managed the computer systems in the district."

Chris Afdahl, design branch, said, "Mary looks at things from the CADD user side." Computer-assisted drafting and design applications are mission-critical applications in design branch. "She took the time to talk with me one-on-one about problems that I and those in our office were having," said Afdahl, the second of three who nominated Chang. "She listened to what I was saying and we came to an answer together."

Lori Taylor, design branch, who also nominated Chang, said, "She has worked hard to develop a balance between IM's security requirements and design branch's operational needs. Whenever I contacted her with a problem, I always felt she was looking for the win-win solutions. "She has gone out of her way to assist design branch in solving a number of challenges [with applications, security and operating systems]," said Taylor.

Coming events

- June 14 Pine River dam dedication, Ray Nelson, point of contact;
- June 19 Summer awards ceremony and picnic at Eau Galle recreation site, Spring Valley, Wis.;
- Aug. 6 M/V Mississippi enters in the district for community relations and employee events;
- Aug. 11 Mississippi River Commission visit officially starts;
- Sep. 11 Retiree luncheon in St. Paul, Minn.;
- Sep. 21 Upper St. Anthony Falls lock and dam at Minneapolis, 40 years old;
- Dec. 12 Holiday awards ceremony and luncheon.