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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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A black and white photograph of a man in a US Army Corps of Engineers uniform. He is wearing a cap with the Corps of Engineers logo and a jacket with a name tag that reads "RANDY BRIDGEMAN FORESTER". He is looking down at a large, wet metal pipe that is part of a structure, possibly a dam or a bridge. The background shows a body of water and a distant shoreline.

**District revives mussels on the
Mississippi River**

People, projects, participation make a difference

By Col. Robert Ball
District Engineer

Ever feel like you are in a thankless job and that no matter what you do, nothing really changes?

I certainly do at times.

With all of the training we have done on Project Management Business Process, none of us should have these feelings; but just in case you do, let me give you an example I saw this week that shows the positive impacts we can have.

Ed McNally, project management; Peter Verstegen, public affairs; and I went to Wahpeton, N.D., on a beautiful fall day to participate in a ground-breaking ceremony for the Wahpeton flood reduction project.

During the course of the afternoon, a lady who lived in the town came up to us with a number of concerns about the project. Verstegen sat with her and listened very patiently to her concerns for some time. I watched from a distance as her expression went from one of frustration and concern to a more relaxed one. He skillfully directed the lady to McNally, who also listened attentively to her concerns. None of what she was concerned about could be solved by McNally, Verstegen or the Corps.

Her concerns were either local government responsibility or things citizens just needed to get together and do themselves. McNally informed her of that but continued to listen to her concerns with great empathy and patience. As we were departing, Ed remarked that he was sorry he could not solve those things that were bothering her. The lady, who had started the afternoon looking as if she were carrying the weight of the world on her shoulders beamed at Ed and said, "That's OK, I feel so much better just to have gotten to know the person who is leading this project – I know you care about doing it right." She walked away with a spring in her step because two Corps employees took the time to listen and talk with her about things that bothered her.

Even if folks don't tell you, you have the same impact on people. Whether you are donating to Combined Federal Campaign, bringing canned goods in for the food shelter or doing as McNally and Verstegen did with a customer – you can make a positive difference for people. We can't always have the answers, but we can always care. I am honored to serve with so many folks who do care and who do make a difference every day.

Chile cook-off makes winning Meet and Greet recipe

By Michael Knoff

Thanks to everyone who participated in the "Meet and Greet," to welcome newcomers to the St. Paul District Oct. 16. The cook-off winners in each of the categories were:

Hottest: Bill "Hot and Spicy" Vennemann;
Mildest: Jim Mosner's and Rick Femrite's "Low-Bid Chili;"
Spiciest: Liz Dvorak's "Dead Chicken Chili;"
Beaniest: Ivette "Mild and Mellow" Garrett;
Most Surprising: Col. "MacArthur Chili" Ball;
Favorite: Kurt "Who Needs a Cookbook" Heckendorf.

District newcomers

Penny L. Adams, construction-operations;
Donald Brantner, C-O;
Nicholas T. Domer, C-O;
Vernon Hadley, contracting;
Molly A. McKegney, office of counsel;
James Roloff, contracting;
Kristopher Taverna, C-O;
Sherryann Tarte, C-O;
Alan Vanguilder, C-O;
Chao Yang, C-O.

Cover photo



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Randy Urich, natural resources manager, lifts a cage of mussels at Old Frontenac, Minn.



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Destination Baghdad

Al Canfield, information management, left the Twin Cities in mid-September for a 120-day tour of duty in Iraq. He provided this first-person snapshot of his trip by e-mail. It has been edited for brevity.

By Allen G. Canfield, II

My trip to Baghdad started on Sept. 14, when my wife and my brother accompanied me to the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport. My immediate destination was Fort Bliss, Texas, near El Paso. Fort Bliss was

a good place for this process because it is in the desert and not unlike Baghdad.

We spent four days there for “processing,” getting a full compliment of shots (yep needles and injections), filling out paperwork, being issued identification cards, being fitted for gas masks (for which I had to shave some of my beard) and then had more processing.

I had my first taste of the military’s Meals Ready to Eat. We were much to busy for a regular sit-down style lunch. Now for you prior military, these are not your daddy’s C or K rations. These meals have this amazing little pouch with what looks like a pad of

steel wool, just add water, put the spaghetti or stroganoff and green bean pouches inside and, in about 15 minutes, there is a hot meal. Have a bottle of water, add in the ice tea or fruit-juice powder-mix and your meal is ready.

With processing complete, we rode a bus to the air terminal for our departure to Iraq. This terminal is only for military style deployments, so it was nothing like a civilian airport.

As we walked out to the airliner, the base command and staff saw us off. When we got to the airliner, there was another delegation that greeted and thanked us for what we were about to undertake.

I sat in first-class on an MD-11 – the only misfortune of this trip was that service didn’t go with it. We enjoyed several current-release, in-flight movies and flew to Iraq via intermediate stops in Europe and Kuwait. We were in the air about 12 hours once leaving Fort Bliss.

We arrived at Camp Wolf in Kuwait, a tent city located at the airport, about 2 a.m. We had been in the air for about 12 hours. I felt jet lag kick in pretty hard and my cold, on idle for two weeks, surged into high gear. Our temporary lodging at Camp Wolf was a tent with air conditioning and a wood floor.

We left Camp Wolf under cover of darkness aboard an Air Force C-130. The plane was so loud, we all wore ear plugs. I sat in the plane on a web seat and passed the time, with lights out, ear plugs in and sang songs.

After a brief stay at the “being renovated” Baghdad International airport and another night of cots, our group reached our destination, the Al-Rasheed in downtown Baghdad.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

Al Canfield, information management, met Teri Alberico, project management, in Baghdad.



Photos by Shannon Bauer

This is the second year the St. Paul District has been raising the Higgins' eye pearly mussels (above). The juvenile mussels are less than one inch long.



Kurt Brownell, natural resource specialist at LaCrescent, Minn., picks mussels out of a protective cage at Old Frontenac, Minn. To his back is Mike Davis with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources office in Lake City, Minn.

District flexes its mussels on river

By Shannon Bauer

Sifting through the sediments and muck of the Mississippi River, biologists and natural resource managers picked out endangered Higgins' eye pearly mussels one by one.

A tedious process, divers spent two dreary September days pulling out 28 cages from the riverbed. From there, representatives from the Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District; the Genoa National Fish Hatchery of Genoa, Wis.; the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service carefully sifted through the contents of each cage to monitor, clean and consolidate a batch of Higgins' eye that were hand propagated, or bred, earlier in the year and placed in the waters of a public beach in Old Frontenac, Minn.

"It's fun," said Dennis Anderson, Corps' project manager and fisheries biologist. "It's like an Easter egg hunt."

This work is part of a 10-year, \$2.4 million

Corps of Engineers' project to revive the Higgins' eye. It involves placing juvenile mussels on host fish species and then raising them in cages in the river or at the hatcheries, as well as collecting adult Higgins' eye from areas heavily infested with zebra mussels, and relocating them to 10 new sites with minimal to no zebra mussels in the hope of at least five of these populations surviving.

The non-native zebra mussels cover the native mussels completely, so the Higgins' eye is suffocated to death. Zebra mussels, an invasive species, were transported to the Mississippi River by commercial and recreational watercraft. The Corps of Engineers is concurrently conducting a study to control the zebra mussel population in the Upper Mississippi.

This is the second summer that this multi-agency group has been raising Higgins' eye. Anderson explained that in April, the group extracts glochidia, or juvenile mussels, out of female Higgins' eye and places them on the gills of large-mouth bass at the Genoa National Fish Hatchery. Then in May, the fish are placed in cages at selected nursery locations throughout the Upper Mississippi River system for a few weeks to allow the glochidia to mature and fall off the fish. The juvenile mussels are allowed to grow in the cages, safe from predators throughout the summer.

"The adolescent mussels aren't kept at the hatchery, because they survive much better in the river in about four to six feet of water," said Anderson. They're kept there until they're 2 years of age and at least one-and-a-half inches in length. At this size, it's difficult for predators to get them, and they have a much better chance of surviving a normal Higgins' eye lifespan, which is about 30-40 years.

"At 2 to 3 years old, they are moved to their final relocation sites throughout the Upper Mississippi River basin, where we hope to establish new populations," said Anderson.

This summer, the biologists were pleased. Whereas last summer only 1,100 mussels

Mussels, continued next page

Mussels, continued from Page 4



Dan Kelner (above), Corps' fisheries biologist, counts and consolidates mussels.

survived in the cages, this summer, more than 7,000 survived. "This is just great," said Dan Kelner, Corps' fisheries biologist. "We found more than 800 in each of two cages alone."

These efforts, in addition to saving this species from extinction, will greatly assist in the recovery of the species and may eventually lead to its removal off the endangered species list, said Anderson. Also, the lessons learned on raising Higgins' eye will greatly assist other mussel conservation efforts across the nation, including the winged mapleleaf mussel conservation plan the St. Paul District will be working on during the next couple of years, he added.

District sends McMillan Island up the creek

By Peter Verstegen

On the operating table, it's an angioplasty. On the Mississippi River, it's dredging. They both keep open vital arteries.

Dredging material out of the navigation channel keeps open shipping arteries for commerce and recreation. But the material has to go somewhere and be put to good use – beneficial use. "The Corps' St. Paul District met its goal and more in an operation at McMillan Island," said Scott Baker, project manager. The site is about three miles north of Guttenberg, Iowa. The island had been a temporary placement site for dredged material from maintenance of the nine-foot navigation channel for years.

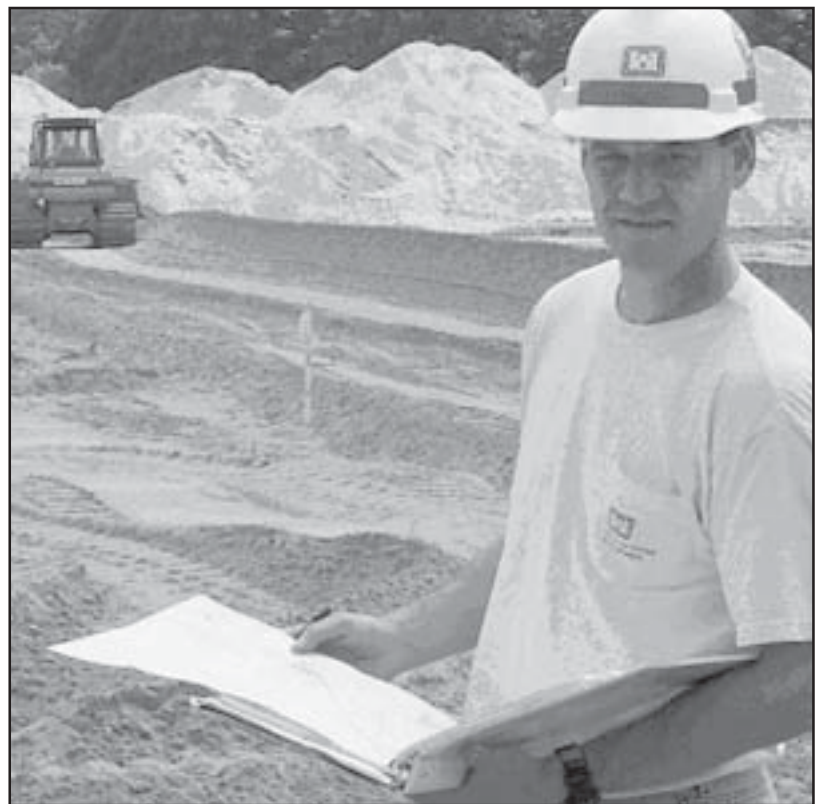
But the island had become a mountain of

Dredging, continued Page 8



Photos by Scott Baker

A cutterhead at the front of the dredge churned away at McMillan Island.



Paul Machajewski (right), channel and harbor's unit at Fountain City, Wis., reviews progress at the Buck Creek placement site near Guttenberg, Iowa.

Project ground-breaking held in Wahpeton, N.D.

The city of Wahpeton, N.D.; the St. Paul District; and federal and state officials joined the public in a ribbon-cutting ceremony Oct. 6 to celebrate the start of construction of the city's new flood control project.

The event acknowledged the cooperation of many individuals and organizations involved in the efforts to protect the Wahpeton community from record floods. The ribbon cutting and dedication took place in what will be Volunteer Park on the bank of the Red River of the North.

Since the 1997 flood of record in Wahpeton, the city has been working with the district to provide permanent flood protection that would protect residents from future major floods. This project was designed to provide certifiable flood protection, which will remove the city from the 100-year regulatory floodplain.

Recreational features incorporated in the project include 1.7 miles of bike and walking paths and "Volunteer Park," to recognize the 1997 heroic efforts of the sandbaggers.



Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, stands at the marker where the confluence of the Bois de Sioux and Otter Tail rivers form the Red River of the North. From that site, the Red River flows 550 miles north to Lake Winnipeg, Canada. The ground on which Ball stands, in Breckenridge, Minn., was under water during the flood of 1997.



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Wahpeton project manager Ed McNally (left) replies to questions from Jeff Baird, reporter for the Fargo Forum, Fargo, N.D.

Construction began this summer with a Phase I cost of \$4.5 million (part of a \$10.5 million total project cost). Phase I will be completed by June 1, 2004, and the remaining levee construction will be done concurrently with implementation of the ongoing Breckenridge, Minn., flood control project.

Breckenridge is located directly across the river from Wahpeton, and the flood control projects of each are closely intertwined.

Wahpeton Public Works Director Jerry Lein said residents have been anticipating this improvement in protection from floods since 1997. One of the additional advantages, he said, is that the certification of the levee will negate the need for flood insurance anywhere within the city limits.

U.S. Senator Byron Dorgan, U.S. Senator Kent Conrad, U.S. Representative Earl Pomeroy and North Dakota Governor John Hoeven attended. Wahpeton Mayor Duane "Bud" Schmitz acted as emcee. Col. Robert Ball, St. Paul District commander, represented the Corps of Engineers.



The city of Wahpeton held the ground-breaking ceremony at Volunteer Park Oct. 6, where citizens successfully fought the flood of 1997.

Compiled from information provided by the city of Wahpeton, N.D., and a St. Paul District news release.

Bits and Pieces

Retirements, honors, promotions

Bryan Peterson, equipment specialist from physical support branch, Fountain City, Wis., has been selected as acting chief, logistics management office, for a 120-day detail, Oct. 19.

Therese Jaszczak was promoted from secretary in construction-operations to transportation assistant in logistics management. She will manage the district's vehicle fleet.

Ken Schroeder retired as head lock operator from Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa, Oct. 4.

Eugene Alm was promoted to the head operator position at Lock and Dam 10, Oct. 5. Steve Moore has been promoted to the 8-10 month lock operator's position that was vacated by Alm.

Jane Groth was selected as head lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 6, Trempealeau, Wis., Oct. 5.

Dave Himmerich has been selected as chief, information management.

Carolyn Krick has been selected to fill the information management secretary/office assistant position. She was in contracting.

Marianne Price, equal employment opportunity officer, received recognition at the Minnesota Resources Center awards program Oct. 1 for her contributions and partnership with the Minnesota Resource Center. MRC is a community advocacy organization the district partners with in recruiting people with disabilities. The district was one of four businesses recognized for their contributions.

Health care open season information

The Federal Executive Board of Minnesota is sponsoring health care open season information sessions through Minnesota, beginning Nov. 10 and ending Dec. 8.

The session closest to the St. Paul District office will be at the Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 316 N. Robert St., St. Paul, on Dec. 3, 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Health care representatives will be at the GSA Oval Room.

The first session is at the V.A. Medical Center, 1 Veterans Dr. (Auditorium), Nov. 10, 7 a.m.-4 p.m. The last session will be at U.S. District Court, 300 South 4 St., Room 259, Minneapolis, Minn., Dec. 8, 11 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

CFC sales raise \$305

The district bake sale for the Combined Federal Campaign raised \$160 Oct. 9 for the Neighbor-to-Neighbor food shelf in St. Paul. The 2003 CFC started Oct. 6 and ends Oct. 31.

The district CFC campaign also held a book sale, titled "A buck-a-book," on Oct. 23 which raised \$145.

"By now every employee in every division and office in the district office should have received a letter of instructions, CFC brochure and a pledge card. If you have not, check with your supervisor," said Mark Davidson, chief of public affairs and the district CFC manager.

The public affairs office served as the point of contact to drop off pledge forms for the CFC.

CFC allows federal employees to support international, national and local charities of their choice through payroll deduction or a one-time contribution.

Personnel realigns

Some St. Paul District civilian personnel advisory center staff began reporting to the Army's new Civilian Human Resources Agency, Oct. 5.

Personnel, continued Page 8

Wanted: Your news!

PAO seeks information about special events in you life (e.g., births, deaths, marriages, engagements). If you would like to share these items, please contact Public Affairs at 651-290-5202, -5108 or 5201 or send an e-mail to: cemvp-pa@mvp02.usace.army.mil.

Dutta honored as August Employee of the Month

Team leadership, volunteerism, engineering with spaghetti and marshmallows and a legislative initiative earned Jodi Dutta, engineering division, August Employee of the Month.

“She created an amazing children’s activities program, with many more activities than usual, for the 2002 and 2003 employee awards picnics,” said

Michelle Schneider, her nominator. Dutta’s inspiration came from Girl Scout orienteering games. She worked with Tom Crump, now executive assistant, to integrate the games into awards day.

Dutta and Bob Dempsey reached for an even younger audience with hands-on practice in structural engineering by engaging middle school students in building models of truss bridges with spaghetti and marshmallows.

Dutta and members of the Special Emphasis Program Committee’s race/ethnicity subcommittee initiated a student housing initiative in response to a recruiting challenge. The committee provides advice concerning issues and employment practices that affect people of racial and ethnic heritage outside the majority in the workplace. The draft proposal, now at Corps Headquarters, removes a recruiting barrier by providing housing incentives for students from historically black colleges and universities. The draft is modeled on legislation approved for the Department of Agriculture.

Outreach activities at the Science Museum of Minnesota organized by Dutta included a children’s day event, celebrating Hispanic and Southeast Asian children. Team-members Stephanie Ehnstrom, Lupe Santos-Jensen, Mee Yang, See Xiong and Autri Dutta captivated children with exercises in buoyancy and construction of geodesic domes.

Dutta also teamed with SEPC committee members for a breakfast with school career counselors on the Motor Vessel Mississippi, updated the *MVP Job Guidebook* and initiated a review of work climate and retention issues. Dutta credits Stephanie Dupey, Mike Dahlquist, Linda Haberkorn, Mike Knoff, Lupe Santos-Jensen and ad hoc members Yvonne Berner and Russell Williams with the success of the outreach.

“She is a very caring, responsible and hard working employee,” said Schneider.



Photo by Jon Lyman

Col. Tom O’Hara, deputy district engineer, and Jody Dutta, engineering division.

Personnel, continued from page 7

“Although this will result in some administrative changes for the CPAC, our roles will not change,” said Linda Krueger, civilian personnel advisory center chief. “The district engineer will retain day-to-day operational control over CPAC,” she said.

“This realignment, part of Army’s ongoing regionalization ... will affect the chief and three specialists – myself, Liz Dvorak, Amy Hingsberger and Ann Mershon,” said Krueger. “Lupe Santos-Jensen and Mary Pat Rogers will continue to be district employees.”

Dredging, continued from Page 5

dredged material – 182,000 cubic yards – so the district hired a contractor to move it upriver to Buck Creek for permanent storage. The contractor used a hydraulic dredge to pump material off the island through an 8,800-foot pipeline. The project began August 2002.

“Buck Creek site work is nearly completed with tree planting and final seeding activities currently underway,” said Baker. The contractor graded Buck Creek for beneficial use, paved it for access and installed entrances this summer. The landowner will develop four acres for wildlife viewing. The southern six-acre end of the site will be open for beneficial use, the dredge material will be available for free to the public.

The contractor completed work at McMillan in June with removal of dredge material and construction of a new containment berm. The job restores McMillan Island as a placement site for channel maintenance material.