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of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Crookston calls on Corps to assess landslide



Succession planning offers career opportunities

By Ben Wopat, Assistant Chief Construction-Operations Division

What's in your future? This is a question that most employees have spent considerable time thinking about and have carefully planned, so they will have the time and financial resources to enjoy their retirement years. A failure to do the necessary planning can seriously affect the timing and quality of the retirement experience.

The same problem faces an organization. To retain the skills and capabilities required to effectively and efficiently serve our customers, managers must conduct succession planning to replace workers who are nearing retirement age.

Succession planning is not a new

concept. Managers have always had a responsibility to develop their staff and to hire the best qualified personnel to fill vacancies.

What has changed? The answer is that there is a heightened awareness of the need to do effective succession planning because of the increased number of our personnel who are nearing retirement age.

Succession planning enables the organization to estimate how many employees are eligible to retire in a given year, what types of skills must be replaced, what needs can be met through properly-focused training of our current staff, what opportunities may be available to achieve desired diversity in our workforce and what programs or resources are available for the recruitment of qualified personnel to backfill behind retirees.

Concurrently, programs for developing the skills of current personnel to fill anticipated vacancies have evolved and become better structured during the past three to four years. Training initiatives include the wage grade career development plan, the St. Paul District leadership development program, the lockmaster development program, the establishment of a lock-and-dam operator/equipment repairman curriculum at several vocational schools within the St. Paul District and the increased use of developmental assignments.


Similarly, managers have several avenues for the recruitment of new employees. They include veterans' preference programs, student cooperative/internship programs and special hiring programs for handicapped persons, as well as the traditional civil service employment

programs. These varied alternatives provide managers with the flexibility and efficiency to recruit well-qualified personnel and to meet the goals of special emphasis programs.

In summary, succession planning is as essential to the future success of the district as sound financial planning is to ensuring an enjoyable retirement experience.

While employees may elect to work well beyond the time they are eligible for retirement, and new, unanticipated missions and programs may arise, managers must exercise their best judgment now to predict the future personnel needs of the organization and how these needs can best be satisfied.

This situation presents a planning challenge to managers and great career growth opportunities for current and future employees.



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Cover photo



Photo by Virginia Regorrah

Left to right: Grant Riddick, Tricia Liggett and Chris Behling with the St. Paul District brief a reporter (back to camera). Evidence of the landslide is visible to the back of Riddick and Liggett, who straddles a fissure in the earth.

Corps responds swiftly to Crookston landslide

By Virginia Regorrah
East Grand Forks Resident Office

City officials in Crookston, Minn., immediately turned to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after a landslide fractured their community early in September.

The parched earth in Crookston began cracking open in late August. The fractures widened Sept. 3. When dawn broke Sept. 4, residential and public property, along with a quarter-mile section of riverbank along the Red Lake River, had slumped and slid, opening deep, wide fissures. A fault line, several feet deep in some places, had emerged parallel to the river.

The slide in the earth threatened eight homes and one business, disrupted Otter Tail Power Company's main transmission lines to the city and jeopardized U.S. Highway 2, the major east-west highway through Crookston, a community of more than 8,000 people in northwestern Minnesota.

An escarpment had reached within 20 feet of the highway. A garage had dropped about six feet at one residence. Another residence lost a huge oak tree, when it toppled over the newly created soil bank.

City officials enlisted the expertise of the Corps of Engineers representatives and called an emergency meeting Sept. 4.

Virginia Regorrah, Tricia Liggett and Perry Tobin of the St. Paul District's East Grand Forks, Minn., resident office attended the meeting called by the Crookston mayor. Regorrah is the resident engineer, Liggett is a project engineer and Tobin works as a construction representative.

The mayor, several aldermen, the city engineer, fire chief and emergency operations manager, as well as representatives from the Minnesota departments of Natural Resources, Transportation and Otter Tail Power attended as part of the crisis team.



Photo by Grant Riddick

Mike Yavarow, city of Grand Forks, N.D., engineering department is on the left. Chris Behling, geotechnical engineer with the St. Paul District, is at right. They are examining an escarpment that had reached within 20 feet of U.S. Highway 2.

The first order of business was to “focus on what we must do immediately to protect lives and property,” said Mayor Don Osborne. “Then, we’ll look to the long-term fix.”

The St. Paul District responded quickly. Liggett forwarded the city's request to district readiness officials to begin the process of mobilizing specialists in soils and geology. The deputy district commander authorized the use of funding under the authority of Army Regulation 500-60 to deploy experts.

Meanwhile, Regorrah affirmed the initial response by the city — cutoff affected utilities, evacuate residents, limit movement on the highway and begin surveys to monitor the movement of the earth.

District geologist Grant Riddick and

Crookston, continued on Page 4

“The low river level is a landslide trigger...”
– Chris Behling,
geotechnical engineer



Photo by Tricia Liggett

Left to right are Virginia Regorrah, East Grand Forks, Minn., resident office, Minnesota State Rep. Bernie Lieder and U.S. Rep. Collin Peterson.

“Big chunks of earth split vertically 10-12 feet.”

– *Tricia Liggett, project engineer*

geotechnical engineer Chris Behling arrived in Crookston Sept. 5 to assess the site and to advise city officials.

At an information meeting held at City Hall Sept. 5, Behling explained that the process of slumping occurred due to several factors. “The low river level is a landslide trigger,” he said. “The weight of the water in the river exerts a stabilizing force and helps to hold the slope in place.” Another factor, he added, was that this area had experienced slides in the past, further weakening the soil at those locations.

“The soil is composed of highly plastic clays,” said Behling. “These are weak, soft soils.”

The slide’s location on the outer bank of a meander of the Red Lake River also contributed to the slide. The river erodes soil from the outer bank and deposits it on the inner bank, undercutting the outer bank and creating or exacerbating instability.

Behling and Riddick suggested the city monitor other areas of the river for slumping.

A moderate drought in the region contributed to the landslides and slumping. The National Weather Service drought

severity index placed northwestern Minnesota in a “moderate drought,” rating the soil through Sept. 6.

The Minnesota climatology office web site reported the parched earth reflected a longer dry spell. “The 1990s have been notable for the lack of growing seasons with below average precipitation,” for the Red River Basin.

Despite the hardship and the pending losses, the residents maintained their sense of humor. “The one year I decide not to put a garden in the back, that’s the year ... everyone looks at it,” said Tanya Flikka, a resident with an escarpment of nearly 1,500 feet that split through her back yard into two levels. She had invited city officials, engineers from the Corps, news reporters and others to inspect the dislocated earth in her back yard.

“Big chunks of earth split vertically 10-12 feet,” said Liggett. “There was quite a bit of horizontal movement as well.”

Flikka had been granted a leave of absence from her job as a junior high school teacher in South Fargo, N.D., to move belongings out of the house on the condition that she document the slide for her science class.

The landslide also generated headlines in Grand Forks and Fargo, N.D.; Crookston, Minn.; and the Twin Cities media for three days. Four news crews shadowed district personnel as they surveyed the site and took measurements with a hand-held global positioning system.

The slide has slowed into mid-September, but the earth is still adjusting. Residents are keeping a wary eye on the weather forecast, and city officials and the East Grand Forks resident office continue to monitor the soil instability.

In the short term, city officials and residents are waiting for the slide to stabilize. Mayor Osborne expressed his thanks to the Corps representatives on site Thursday, Friday and Saturday. He said, “It means a lot to us to have you here, and to have you respond so quickly. Thank you.”

Corps and Cromwell, Minn., to renovate city's water structures

By Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District and the city of Cromwell, Minn., signed a project cooperative agreement Labor Day, Sept. 1, to renovate the city's existing sewer line and water storage tank.

The signing ceremony took place at the Cromwell Park Pavilion and Community Center.

U.S. Representative James L. Oberstar, instrumental in initiating the project agreement, attended and spoke at the event.

"The congressman stated that he wanted the Corps to manage the Section 569 program because of the Corps' excellent work history and ability to get things done," said Roland Hamborg, project manager.

The project will consist of replacing 1,600 feet of sanitary sewer line along the east side of



Photo by Dick Beatty

From left are Mayor Richard Huhta; U.S. Representative Jim Oberstar, author of the Section 569 authority; and Col. Robert Ball, district engineer.

Trunk Highway 73, cleaning and painting the city's water tower and properly closing two contaminated

water wells. It will take 18 months and cost around \$200,000 to complete. The federal government will pay 75 percent with the city paying the remaining amount.

The project updates the city's water and wastewater systems which were constructed more than 30 years ago and are starting to deteriorate.

The project was authorized and funded under the Northeastern Minnesota Section 569 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1999. The program provides design and construction assistance to non-federal public interests for carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource projects in the 17 counties of northeastern Minnesota.

Corps' Seamoor teaches water safety at Science Museum of Minnesota

By Frank Star

Children flocked to see and hear Seamoor the Sea Serpent, the Corps' remotely controlled mobile water-safety exhibit, at the grand opening for the National Park Service's Mississippi River Visitor Center at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 9.

The Mississippi National River and Recreation Area in St. Paul, a unit of the National Park Service, operates the new visitor center in

the lobby of the museum. The St. Paul District participated in the opening of the visitor center as a partnering agency.

Seamoor "talks" to children and adults via wireless link with a nearby operator.

Mary Kay Larson, a ranger at Gull Lake in Brainerd, Minn.; Scott Tichy, a ranger at Lake Ashtabula in Valley City, N.D.; and Frank Star from the district office in St. Paul guided Seamoor throughout the day-

Safety, continued Page 7

Project partnering produces new recreation area

By Ryan J. Otto
East Grand Forks Resident Office

A partnership among a city, a state resource agency and the Corps' St. Paul District helped produce opportunities for community recreation and made the flood-prone areas of East Grand Forks, Minn., more attractive and useful.

The result of this partnership was the Red River State Recreation Area in East Grand Forks.

Representatives of the district, the city of East Grand Forks and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources celebrated the opening of the Red River State Recreation Area by holding a public dedication on the boardwalk in East Grand Forks Aug. 2.

The dedication was part of the city's annual "Catfish Days" alongside the banks of the Red River of the North.

The recreation area is located along the banks of the Red and Red Lake rivers in East Grand Forks and is contained by the levees constructed by the Corps of Engineers and offers several recreational areas built by the Corps.

It is part of a planned regional greenway, which planners envision stretching from Lake Traverse, N.D., to Lake Winnipeg, Canada.

Recreational features include trails, picnic shelters, playgrounds and rest rooms. The full-service complex eventually will offer boating facilities, a visitor and



Photo by Ryan J. Otto

"I feel the recovery effort, the tremendous things that have been accomplished in the Grand Cities, serves as a splendid example of the courage and spirit of the people of the Red River Valley," said John Fisher, right. With him are Virginia Regorrah of the East Grand Forks, Minn., resident office, and Helen Cozzetto, Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources Red River state recreation coordinator,

interpretive center and pedestrian bridges.

The campground first hosted campers during the weekend of Catfish Days, although the entire campground is not slated to be fully operational until early fall.

The Mayors of Grand Forks, N.D., and East Grand Forks, the East Grand Forks city council, State Senator Keith Langseth and Bill Morrissey, the regional director of the DNR attended.

Each mayor took a break from the annual chili cook-off near the East Grand Forks floating boat docks to attend the event in their chef's uniform.

Virginia Regorrah, the East Grand Forks resident engineer, and John Fisher, the lead landscape architect on the project with the district, spoke at the dedication.

Fisher, who designed most of the Corps' recreation areas, gave a well-received speech during the dedication, citing the "tribute to the human spirit" that motivated his conception for the project. Fisher viewed photos of flood recovery and cleanup from the scrapbook of Dan Speulda, son of Don Speulda who works in the Grand Forks Resident Office. Fisher praised both cities for their ability to move on after the devastation of the flood, calling it a "triumph."

During the design and construction of the facilities, the Corps worked intimately with the DNR and the city to develop a project that serves the need of the community. Mayor Lynn Stauss of East Grand Forks said, "The partnership between the city, the Corps and the Minnesota DNR has made this happen."

Safety, continued from Page 5

long event.

Seamoor made hundreds of new friends of all ages, as he wandered inside the museum and outside on the plaza. At times, he had so many new friends crowding around him, he couldn't move without running over toes of the surrounding children.

Seamoor even visited with Fran Mainella, park service director. Seamoor talked to everyone about the importance about being safe around lakes and rivers and reminding kids and adults alike to wear their personal flotation devices while on the water.

Recreation area and museum staff gave Seamoor a standing invitation to return.

Mainella also expressed her appreciation and personally thanked each participant from the Corps and the park service. She also complimented the Corps for its professionalism.



Photo by Mary Kay Larson

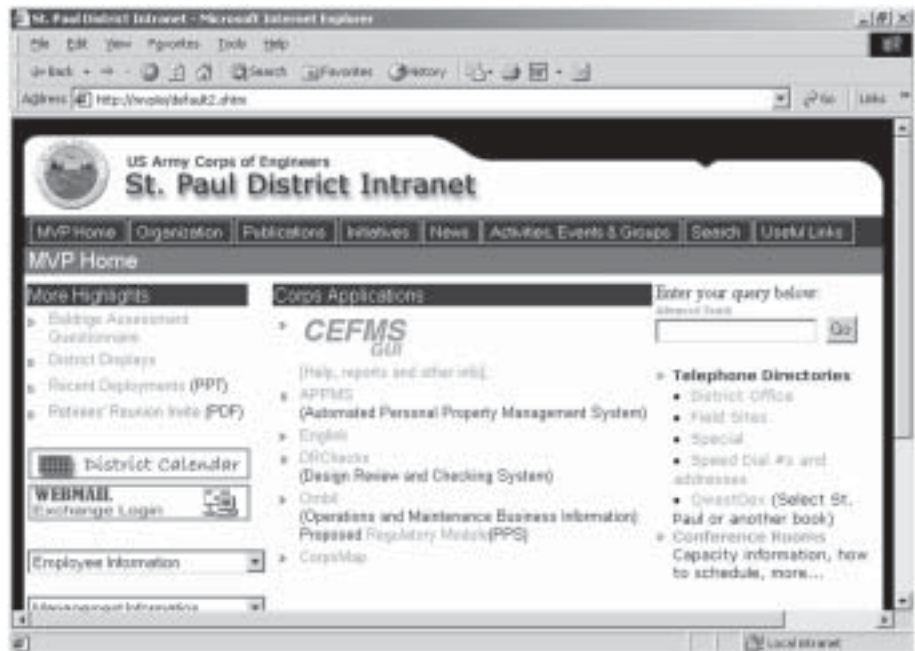
Children surround Seamoor at the Science Museum of Minnesota. Seamoor is the Corps' remotely controlled mobile water-safety exhibit. Corps' ranger Scott Tichy, center, stands nearby with headset and control panel.

Intranet to feature new look

Information Management activated a new design for the St. Paul District's internal web page Sept. 26.

"New to the navigation bar are events, which have been added to the activities and groups category," said Holly Zillmer, webmaster. "The main reason we went to the new page is that Internet Explorer version 6 does not work with the old navigation bar," she said.

IM will be upgrading web browsers from 5.5 to 6.0 throughout the district in the next few months.



State, federal and local officials tour Grand Forks project

Christine Paige Diers
City of Grand Forks

For the first time since 1998, the North Dakota State Water Commission held its meeting in Grand Forks, N.D., Aug. 6. As part of that meeting, the commission and other special guests toured the [Army Corps of Engineers'] Grand Forks permanent flood protection project.

Governor John Hoeven, a member of the state water commission, brought guests on the tour to show the scope of the project and how the construction is progressing.

Joining the governor and the other members of the state water



Photo by Melissa Lembke

Darren Bergsgaard, an engineer at the Western Area office in Grand Forks, N.D., briefs Dave Maurastad, Federal Emergency Management Agency.

commission were the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Region VIII director, David Maurstad; state emergency

management director, Doug Friesz; state insurance commissioner, Jim Poolman; and state agriculture commissioner, Roger Johnson.

The group viewed various areas of construction along the Grand Forks project, including construction of pump stations and progress on recreation features within the greenway.

Local Army Corps of Engineers officials also provided a tour of the inside of one of the flood protection pump stations.

The North Dakota State Water Commission administers the \$52 million in state funding that is helping to pay for the Grand Forks portion of the flood protection project.

Reprinted with permission from Flood Protection Update, city of Grand Forks, N.D., Aug. 28, 2003.

Contractor achieves 'superior safety' on Homme Dam spillway

By Tom Eidson, Western Area Office

The St. Paul District presented its "Contractor Superior Safety" Award for 2002 to Jeff Hawkinson, superintendent for Park Construction, Co., Inc., of Minneapolis, in June. Park Construction earned the



Photo by Judd Getty, Park Construction

From left are Pat Trudel, project engineer; Jeff Hawkinson, superintendent for Park Construction Co., Inc.; Tom Eidson, Western Area Engineer; and Tom Barickman, construction representative.

construction safety award for a superior safety record during construction of the \$7.8 million concrete spillway at Homme Dam near Park River, N.D.

"Park encouraged everybody to participate in work safety through their 'Toolbox Meetings' and exhibited a positive attitude toward safety," said Pat Trudel, project engineer, Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D. "It had zero accidents during the fiscal 2002 construction season."

Construction of the new spillway took three years. Much of the project was completed this summer with demolition of the old concrete spillway and with installation of spillway piezometers. New spillway walls required backfilling, and the landscaping will provide finishing touches. The top soil has been graded.

"The only remaining piece of work is planting of trees and shrubs," said Trudel. "The grass seeding and tree planting are not yet done, but will be underway in October. Otherwise, the project is substantially complete this fall."

Also contributing to the project safety were Jackson Hoffman, office engineer, and Dennis Jones, construction representative. Jones retired in the summer 2002.

Speulda assures quality of Afghan army training facility

Don Speulda, a construction representative with the St. Paul District in Grand Forks, N.D., provided Mark Davidson, public affairs chief, a brief account of his two-month tour (April-May) in Afghanistan.

How long have you been with the St. Paul District?

Two years.

And with the federal government?

Twenty years with the Department of Defense.

Where were you deployed?

Kabul, Afghanistan.

What training did you get for your deployment, and where did it take place?



My training took place at the continental U.S. replacement center at Ft. Benning, Ga. It included protective masks,

medical threats, anti-terrorism, a country overview, rules of engagement and M-9 firearms qualification.

Briefly describe your duties.

I did quality control for a training facility being built for the Afghan army.

What was the reaction of your family when you returned home?

My family was very happy that I made it back in one piece.

How did your friends and fellow workers respond?

My friends and fellow workers were happy that I made it back okay, and I'm glad to be back.

Bits and Pieces

Take Your Child to Work engages children



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Helen Pang (left), Edith Pang's daughter; Terry Williams, engineering division; and her daughter, Shelby, were among more than 40 to participate in Take Your Child to Work Day, July 31. Their hands-on learning included using pasta and marshmallows to teach bridge building. Events included a tour of Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, a visit to exhibits at the Science Museum of Minnesota and job shadowing. The gender subcommittee, part of the special emphasis program committee, coordinated the day's events.

Take Your Child to Work: adults and chaperones

Chris Afdahl
Shannon Bauer
Stephanie Dupey
Jodi Dutta
Craig Evans
Kris Fairbanks
Dan Ford
Greg Frankosky
Lisa Hedin
Jan Lassen
Mary Kay Linder
Marsha Mose
Theresa Teed
Byron Williams

Terry Williams
Vivian Wippler
Eric Wittine
Terry Zien

Children

Angie Ahlness
Danielle DesHarnais
Marie DesHarnais
Heather Dupey
Rachel Evans
Allison Fairbanks
Joey Fairbanks
Gilly Ford
Matt Ford
Melissa Hurley
Collin Knoff
Camden Knoff

Laura Lassen
Charlie Linder
Alice Martin
Lucy Martin
Leo Mose
Torrey Owens
Helen Pang
Jade Robinson
Sierra Robinson
Paula Schmidt
Kenneth Schuster
Caleb Teed
Rachel Teed
Connor Thury
Samantha Thury
Shelby Williams
Stephanie Wippler
Elana Zien
William Zien

Robinson receives July Employee of the Month honors

Sue Robinson, resource management, had just completed the 6,000 item unliquidated obligation review.

Resource management, under Robinson's supervision, reviews ULO's three times annually. They account for unpaid and open transactions in the Corps of Engineers financial management system. It's part of how the district pays its bills.

During the most recent review, she received call after call. Her callers, not familiar with accounting processes, asked: "Why me?" "What am I supposed to do?" "What do I do now?" And many more.

Robinson handled each question with grace, a smile and a pleasant word.

Meanwhile, she performs her regular duties as the main operating accountant in resource management.



Photo by Jon Lyman

Col. Robert Ball, district engineer, honored Sue Robinson as July Employee of the Month.

Plus, she has inherited the duties of two co-workers who have left the district and does key tasks from their jobs.

"She never waivers in her pleasant, positive and professional attitude, willing to help whomever should stop by or call," said Wayne Scheffel, a co-worker in resource management who nominated her.

"Her work ethic, demeanor and willingness to help others, regardless of her personal work load and stress level, is well deserving of Employee of the Month honors," said Scheffel.

Mississippi River deepens to 65 feet

"Within the St. Paul District, we have several deep scour holes on the downstream sides of our locks and dams, some of them reaching 80-plus feet.

"Two locations in the main channel have depths significantly deeper than most areas.

"At mile 764.8 near the foot (downstream end) of Lake Pepin, there is a hole that is about 65 feet deep. At mile 729.8, just upstream from Lock and Dam 5A, in Fountain City, Wis., there is a hole that is about 55 feet deep."

– Steve Tapp, channels and harbors project manager, Fountain City, Wis.

"At its headwaters, the Mississippi is less than three feet deep. The river's deepest section is between Governor Nicholls Wharf and Algiers Point in New Orleans, La., where it is 200 feet deep."

– National Park Service web site: www.nps.gov/miss/features/factoids/

Cin selected for Hall of Fame

Dennis Cin, retired chief of operations branch, entered the ranks of the St. Paul District's Hall of Fame at this year's retiree reunion in St. Paul, Minn., Sept. 11. As a civil engineer in the district from 1965 to 1999, he revolutionized channel maintenance practices at a pivotal time and introduced both innovative and efficient dredging techniques and equipment changes.



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Hall of Fame members are (from left): Bill Spychalla, Robert Fletcher, Dennis Cin, Dave Haumersen and Jim Kursu.