



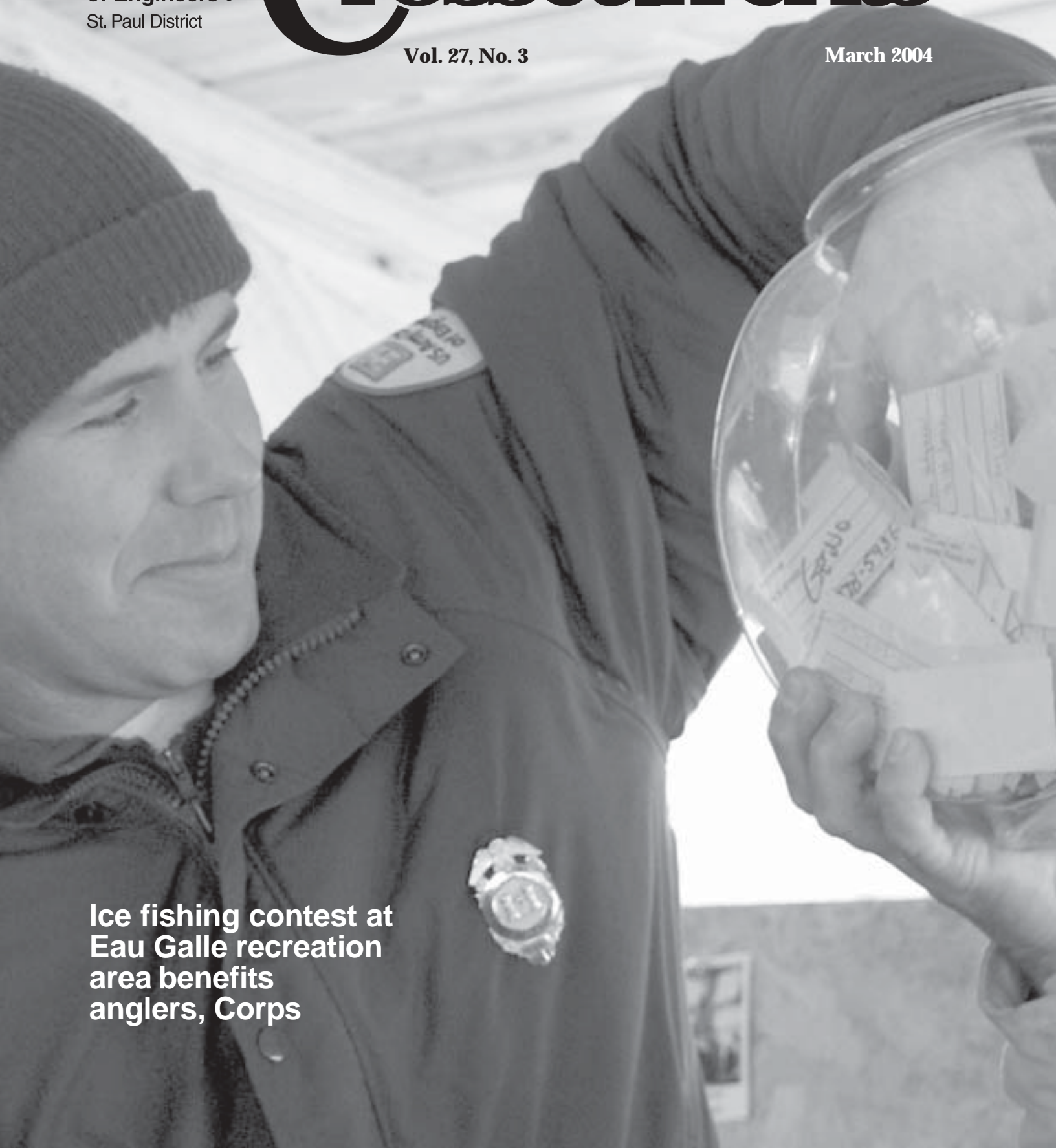
US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 27, No. 3

March 2004

*Crosscurrents suspends print
edition. Watch for web version
in April 2004.*



**Ice fishing contest at
Eau Galle recreation
area benefits
anglers, Corps**

District displays best of projects, people

Col. Robert Ball
District Engineer

I thought you deserved to hear some good news – seems like all I have been doing lately is telling you about budget cuts or sacrifices we need to make. There is a lot of good going on and sometimes that is lost amidst the daily grind.



Corps of Engineers Headquarters has just announced that the Pool 8 Islands Habitat Project, done under the Environmental Management Program, has been selected as the winner of the Chief of Engineers Award of Excellence –

Environmental. The chief of engineers design and environmental award program recognizes the design excellence of projects accomplished by Corps’ team members working in partnership with the private-sector design and construction community. This year, there were 17 projects nominated and Pool 8 Islands was chosen as the best in the Corps. Good job to those who worked on that!

In a totally unrelated event, T.C. Teed, project management, was just awarded the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service by Lt. Gen. Flowers in Iraq. She is working in the Gulf Region Central District as an administrative assistant and last week showed great skill and coolness under pressure in saving a soldier’s life. A young soldier came rushing out of a dining facility making the universal choking sign and she had the presence of mind to react immediately. She removed his flak jacket and applied the Heimlich maneuver, saving his life. While T.C. doesn’t want a big deal made of this, the chief of engineers decided differently.

Recently, Judy DesHarnais, Tom Crump and I visited 21 of the congressional offices that we serve. Across the board, the members and their staff were highly complimentary of the work you are doing and the spirit you doing it in. The thing I kept hearing over and over was how user friendly you are. That is a great compliment, and you should take great pride in having that reputation.

And to finish up the good news, I got to meet your next district engineer and spend a few hours with him. Col. Mike Pfenning is a great guy and is eagerly waiting to work with you. It is a part of an

Army officer’s life to have to move frequently. I don’t like that but it surely makes it easier when I have someone like Pfenning to take my place and serve with you.

Inside

- District displays best of projects, people Page 2
- Valen powers up Iraq Page 3
- Kabul tour begins on mail truck Page 4
- When carp fly Page 9
- Con-Ops Briefs Page 10
- Most excellent: Pool 8 Islands project. Page 12
- Linder to retire Page 12


Bits and Pieces and Employee of the Month will return in April.

Cover



St. Paul District photo

Dave Reynolds, park manager, draws names for grand prizes in the Spring Valley, Wis., Lions Club ice fishing derby held on Eau Galle lake and dam, Feb. 14. The Lions Club contributed \$2,400 in 2003 from fishing contests at Eau Galle toward an accessible fishing pier and improvements at the Corps’ recreation site.



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

Phone: 651-290-5202

<p>District Engineer Public Affairs Chief Media Specialist Editor E-mail:</p>	<p>Col. Robert L. Ball Mark Davidson Shannon Bauer Peter Versteegen cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil</p>
--	---

Valen powers up Iraq

By Mark Davidson

Dave Valen helped restore electricity to the people of Iraq in 2003. He says there is lots more work to be done in that country, but most Iraqi people appreciate the American's efforts.

Valen is an electrical engineer who works in the district's design branch, part of the engineering division. He has been with the district 27 of his 30 years in the federal government.

In May 2003, Valen went with other district personnel to Vicksburg, Miss., for a week of orientation. Valen's training companions later became his co-workers in Iraq.

His next stop was the Continental United States, or CONUS, Relocation Center on June 15, which was then located at Fort Sill, Okla. He spent a week there processing, doing paperwork, getting medical exams and vaccinations and training in such skills as chemical and physical warfare survival.

Valen's flight to Iraq saw him go through Atlanta, Rome and then finally Kuwait. From Kuwait, Valen's group rode in a vehicle convoy to Baghdad.

"It took about 11 hours to get to Baghdad from Kuwait," said Valen. "We were told not to stop, even if we hit a pedestrian, because it might have been a setup for an ambush. One of our vehicles in the convoy quit running and had to be towed part of the way."

Valen said the trip from Kuwait to Baghdad was a long and strenuous



Photo by Lt. Col. Allen Griffith

Dave Valen (left), an electrical engineer in design branch, started work in Baghdad on June 25. Armed security was required when flying or driving to project sites. Above, Valen is in the middle of a trip in southern Iraq to inspect power plants.

trip, but he saw a good portion of Iraq from the deserts of southern Iraq to the irrigated farmland near Baghdad.

"The most striking memories," said Valen, "were of the living conditions of the people in the southern rural areas. They were living in small brick huts with no utilities and sometimes no roof."

Valen started work in Baghdad on June 25. The office in Baghdad that Valen worked in was called the Iraqi Reconstruction Office. His job title was senior electrical engineer, but his duties were mostly in power engineering management. He was the sector manager for the electrical power sector.

Valen and his fellow Corps' workers were working for the U.S.

Agency for International Development, or USAID, office. His duties were providing planning, design and construction oversight of work on power projects. Bechtel, Inc., was the primary contractor for the USAID contract. "When I left Iraq in December, there was about \$450 million worth of contracts in place for the power infrastructure rebuilding."

The main objective of Valen's work group was to improve the power production and distribution of electricity in Iraq. "There was very little damage caused by U.S. bombing in the latest Gulf War," said Valen.

Most of the damage was done because of lack of maintenance over an extended period of time in

Valen, continued Page 8

Kabul tour begins on mail truck

By Bob Dempsey

The C-17 finished its steep decent into the 2 a.m. darkness of Bagram Airbase, and the red cargo bay lights did little to illuminate what would be my first glimpse of Afghanistan. The air was heavy with the smell of dust and sand, as we walked down the rear cargo ramp and were guided by starlight across the tarmac into a small wood framed building that served as both customs and arrival area for Operation Enduring Freedom.

After a quick check of our passports and orders, we were pointed in the general direction of a small hut lined

with cots on either side of the hall. I quickly picked one out with most of its original parts and let the never-ending drone of some nearby diesel generators blank out any thoughts of the 7,000-mile journey we'd just completed.

The 120-day assignment to the Corps' Afghanistan Area Office started out a few days earlier. Accompanying me, in the relative comfort of the Transatlantic Programs Center in Winchester, Va., was Mark Koenig, St. Paul District construction branch. We completed our medical and command briefings and were issued desert camouflage uniforms and a plane ticket

and were sent on our way.

The hardest part of the trip to Afghanistan turned out to be the last 50 miles. We made near record time getting to Bagram via commercial and military aircraft only to find limited available land transportation to our duty station in Kabul. After making contact with the Afghanistan office, we had been instructed to "locate" a ride on one of the mail or supply trucks running between the two cities.

Lugging three months worth of gear only made our transportation needs harder to meet.

Eventually, we were able to hitch a ride with an Army mail

truck from Bagram to the compound in Kabul, located less than a mile from our destination. The compound is considered a “safe” house, as it is a guarded, walled complex that served as the principle Corps’ residence and operations center in Kabul.

CBS news and the Taliban were among the former residents of the house before being adopted by the Corps. There is a main house with a kitchen, dining room and quarters, as well as three annex buildings that serve as quarters for 50-60 personnel and includes offices, a small exercise room, a garden area and parking. One surprising element of life in Kabul was the excellent phone and Internet service provided in the complex. Almost every room had a direct dial number that routed through Virginia,



Army Corps of Engineers photo

The Transatlantic Program Center (inset photo) managed Corps’ work in Afghanistan. Mark Koenig is at left, Dempsey at right. The background photo by Bob Dempsey views the construction site on which Dempsey worked. New Corps’-built Afghan military barracks are white. Dempsey also worked on the new addition to the dining facility next to the bombed-out Taliban tank factory at left and below. “B-52’s did a nice job of missing the mess hall, although there is some debris damage,” he said.

making connections home cost no more that standard long distance in the U.S.

The Afghanistan Area Office mission consists of several construction projects, including reconstruction of the former presidential palace; construction of facilities for the new Afghanistan National Army; construction of U.S. military facilities at Bagram and Kandahar; and an emerging road and recruitment center construction initiative. Staff deploying to Afghanistan have opportunities to work on a wide variety of construction, demolition and renovation projects in a wide variety of

fields and situations.

Deployed as a project engineer, I was assigned to work on the \$45 million Kabul Military Training Center construction project. Mark Koenig, starting his second tour in Afghanistan worked on Pol-E-Charkhi, another construction project for the Afghanistan National Army.

With the bulk of work in Afghanistan being design-build facilities, the job consisted of design review, field modifications and construction inspection. Each facet of construction was impacted by the availability of supplies, the quality of local materials, an

Kabul, continued next page

Kabul, continued from Page 5

international labor and management pool, changes requested by embedded U.S. and French trainers and the base commander, as well as design changes from the Trans-Atlantic Programs Center. Adding to the mix was the Afghan custom that things on the job happen “*Enshalla*” or “God willing,” which effectively transfers responsibility for schedule problems the contractor may be having to a higher power. “It will be done tomorrow, *Enshalla*.”

Construction at the Kabul Military Training Center site is focused on completing new barracks and classrooms for up to 6,000 soldiers by July 2004. The project also includes features for force protection, medical care, dining services and utilities.

Evident upon my arrival at the training center, was the general lack of maintenance the facility received under Taliban rule. Originally constructed by the Czech's

during Russian rule of the area in the 1960s, most of the structures being renovated were built using precast concrete designs that were impressive for their age and location. Everything was in disrepair, however, leaving what could be described as a small city needing a facelift.


The construction crews in Afghanistan are an interesting mix of Americans, Egyptians, Indians, Turks and, of course, local Afghan subcontractors. Equally as diverse are the international troops (Canadian, Korean, German, Italian, Norwegian, Swiss, French and British) that both guard Kabul and train the new Afghanistan National Army.

At the end of each day, each project engineer would brief the resident and area engineers with progress reports from their respective sites. At these construction interchange meetings, the staff would update schedule and design issues and report on any unusual construction

issues encountered. Among the more unusual briefing were reports of finding hidden rooms containing arms caches at construction sites, finding artillery shells or land mines, having drone recon aircraft crashing on the jobsite, hearing sniper fire and minor vehicle crashes.

Safety of the staff was always a major concern. Working out of the Trans-Atlantic Programs Center house required a daily commute through Kabul to the various jobsites around town. Travel while wearing flak jackets and being accompanied by an armed soldier was required when leaving the compound. Two-way streets could quickly become one-way streets, if traffic was snarled, and anything that got you through town as quickly as possible was attempted.

Traffic consisted of at least nine conveyance types at all times: foot, bicycle, donkey cart, ox cart, horse and wagon,



Mark Koenig worked as resident engineer at Pol-E-Charkhi, Afghanistan, pictured in this photo overlay. He worked there from April to December 2003. The white buildings at left are the Afghan National Army dining hall and a headquarters. At right is a Russian-made tank and tank tractor. Koenig took the photo to capture the snowfall on the mountain slopes.

motorcycle, auto, bus and taxi. Speed bumps were constructed everywhere in an attempt to slow people down. At times, traveling through Kabul seemed like a road rally, other times, a parking lot.

The climate is good and can be compared the arid climate of New Mexico. The surrounding mountains topped with snow in November were quite majestic.

The one complaint I had about Kabul was the air pollution. With the only fuel being diesel, exhaust fumes from the older vehicles, combined with limited air movement in the mountainous area, literally choked the town with smog, adding to the ever-present dust content already in the air. On busy traffic days, visibility in town was two to three blocks, at best.

Redeploying back to the states in December was possibly the hardest part of my

tour. Once we got back to Bagram on another mail truck, waiting for a seat out of Afghanistan took nearly four days. Being bounced off flight after flight by soldiers on leave was difficult, but knowing they had to return in 14 days helped to extend our patience level. Compounding this experience was an early morning rocket attack that sent us scurrying into our sandbagged shelter at 3 a.m. – only the second one I'd witnessed, but the thoughts of ending my trip with a bang wasn't on my agenda.

Things I don't want to overlook were the care packages we received from the various home districts while deployed. Some of the little things like toothbrushes and shampoo, snacks and Halloween candy came regularly and narrowed the 7,000-mile distance from home. Some, we packaged up and

donated to area orphanages and schools. If there is anything I will never forget from my tour, it is the smiles we received, especially in the girls' school, from the kids. The girls hadn't been allowed to attend classes in more than 10 years.

People are moving back to Kabul, the smiles tell the most important part of the story.



St. Paul District photo

Left to right are Mark Koenig, Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Bob Flowers and Bob Dempsey. The photo was taken in Afghanistan in September 2003 during their tour of duty.





Photo by Darrell Morey

Valen's family and friends asked whether U.S. efforts made a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. "I indicated from the contact I had with the Iraqi people that I believe the majority of them appreciate what the U.S. is doing for Iraq," he said. Valen (above) stands between two Iraqis engineers with who he worked. They stand in front of a power generating station.

Valen, continued from Page 3
Iraq. The power plants and distribution equipment was poorly or not maintained at all since 1990. Saddam did not provide funding for maintenance, and the sanctions on Iraq starting in 1991 made it difficult to get materials into Iraq.

After the latest war, according to Valen, substations were ransacked and power stations were looted in many places. Looters were pulling down the transmission line towers. They would steal the copper and aluminum wire to sell for scrape metal. As fast as the towers and lines were fixed or replaced, looters would come along and topple the towers. Eventually, security patrols were put in place to cut down on the power line looting.

After the current war ended, Iraq was in a complete blackout. By

June 2003, the electrical system was operating at about one third of its capacity. Most of Iraq had electricity about half of the time. The projects managed by USAID-Bechtel and by the Corps of Engineers' Task Force Restore Iraq Electricity should provide for about two thirds of the original capacity of the system by the summer of 2004.

"My family was very happy when I returned," said Valen. "They were especially concerned for my safety after a rocket attacks on the Al Rasheed Hotel on Oct. 26. The personnel in our office and several hundred other people were staying at the hotel at the time. We had to relocate to different accommodations after the incident. I stayed for about a month in Saddam's former palace. It was a large room, and I stayed with about 300 other people; one

good thing was that it was right next to the dining facility."

"My family and friends were curious about the living conditions and attitude of the Iraqi people," said Valen. "They wanted know if our efforts were making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi people. I indicated from the contact I had with the Iraqi people that I believe the majority of them appreciate what the U.S. is doing for Iraq. The problem is with the terrorists and the people who were living well under Saddam's regime. They are trying to disturb the rebuilding and peace process.

"I really appreciated the job the soldiers are doing over there," said Valen. "They were working under harsh and hostile conditions and did not complain. They provide the civilian personnel protection as best as possible."



Photo by Dave Valen

Most of the damage to the power stations was because of lack of maintenance over an extended period of time, such as the one above in northern Iraq.

When carp fly

Dan Wilcox, fisheries biologist

The reason Asian carp are in the news these days isn't only because they are invading northward up the Mississippi River, it's because they also look so strange, grow so big or pose a threat to aquatic ecosystems. They leap out of the water and smack boaters.

The invading Asian silver carp spend much of their time basking near the surface, sucking down plankton. When startled by an approaching motorboat, they can jump more than six feet out of the water and have hit recreational boaters and fisheries biologists. These collisions make news.

Common carp originally from Europe, were introduced to North America in the 1800s and now occur throughout the lower 48 states and Mexico. The four species of Asian carp poised to invade rivers and lakes in our region are silver carp, grass carp, bighead carp and black carp. All these fish species were brought into the United States from Asia and used to manage water quality and vegetation in catfish aquaculture down south. These fish escaped into the lower Mississippi River and have spread northward. Grass carp have been stocked widely and are now found throughout much of the country and in some rivers and lakes in Wisconsin. Bighead and silver carp have invaded the Mississippi, Missouri, Illinois and Ohio rivers. A bighead carp was captured in Lake Pepin last fall, the northernmost record in the Mississippi River to date. The leaping silver carp have



Photos by John Chick, Illinois Natural History Survey

This silver carp, startled by motorboat, jumped more than six feet above the surface of the Illinois River.

invaded the Mississippi River as far north as Pool 18, upriver of Burlington, Iowa. Black carp have been found in a floodplain lake along the Mississippi River in southern Illinois.

Unlike common carp, the grass, silver, bighead and black carp don't have a bottom-oriented sucker mouth or barbels. They are all elongated fish with big scales, eyes placed low on their head and can grow big, to more than 50 pounds.

Asian carp pose many threats to native fish and aquatic ecosystems. Grass carp eat aquatic plants. Silver and black carp compete for plankton with native fish like paddlefish and gizzard shad. Black carp eat snails and clams. Zebra mussels, another exotic invader, stress native mussels in the Mississippi River. Although black carp may eat zebra mussels, they also eat juvenile native mussels and snails.

The St. Paul and Rock Island districts; the Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois state natural resource agencies; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and the U.S. Geological Survey are cooperating

to find effective ways to limit the invasion of Asian carp and other non-indigenous fish up the Mississippi River.

Various technologies are being considered to deter fish from moving up the river: an electrical barrier, sonic bubble curtains (an air hose and a set of speakers that emit an annoying sound to fish) and pheromones (chemical fish attractants/repellants). If any of these options are feasible, they may be implemented somewhere in the Upper Mississippi River, including this district. An electronic fish barrier is already in place on the Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal to keep fish from moving between the Illinois River and Lake Michigan.

Private entrepreneurs are commercially processing silver and bighead carp caught from the Illinois River. The flesh of fresh silver and bighead carp is firm, slightly translucent, and is white and mild tasting when cooked. Maybe chef Paul Prudhomme of New Orleans will invent a wildly popular recipe for Asian carp. If we can't stop the invaders, let's eat them!



The silver carp (*Hypophthalmichthys molitrix*) is an elongated fish with big scales, eyes placed low on its head and can grow big, to more than 50 pounds.

Con-Ops Briefs

The following provides highlights from Construction-Operations Division for late February. The background photo by Mick Weburg shows the St. Croix River at Taylors Falls, Minn., last May.

Construction branch

Received funding for Ambrough Slough Environmental Management project, near Prairie du Chien, Wis., and Wahpeton, N.D., project. Mark Koenig worked on modifications for Afghanistan projects at Transatlantic Program Center, Winchester, Va. Construction branch has deployed eight individuals overseas for part of fiscal 2004. Total deployed time projected is nearly 150 weeks or the equivalent of 2.9 full-time equivalents.

Operations branch

Business center

Marc Krumholz forwarded a request for approval and funding of a quarters boat to Mississippi Valley Division and headquarters. Provided information on the process for acquiring a dredge when it is retired to interested communities.

Navigation

The survey crew measured ice thickness on Lake Pepin.

Budgets

Sheryl Hurley and Tony Zacheretti continued developing projections for full-time equivalents for fiscal 2006 budget.

P2

Planning and preparations continue for deployment of P2 and next of electronic document management system.

National Sign Program

Development continues on sign

program software and a sign-training workshop in Huntsville, Ala.

Flood damage reduction

Dana Werner provided technical assistance to various municipalities on flood-reduction issues.

Physical support branch

Conducted winter maintenance on Dredge Thompson, executed administrative duties, conducted consideration of others training, acknowledged the absence of personnel deployed overseas, fabricated parts for dam gates and barge ramps and assessed lock and dam repairs.

Readiness

Engaged in equipment upgrades, attended Minnesota state emergency management conference, worked on environmental cleanup, flood planning and temporary housing project response team coordination.

Regulatory

Trimmed expenses, investigated the compatibility of regulatory geographic information systems to meet mission requirements, examined Section 404 violations, examined procedures for regulatory jurisdiction on American Indian reservations.

Channels and harbors

Discussed budget-cutting ideas, met with river stakeholders, provided historic surveys of the Mississippi River at the confluence of the Upper Iowa River at the request of local stakeholder.

Surveys and Inspections

Surveyed Wabasha small boat harbor and Red Wing, Minn., commercial harbor, tested global position unit.

Dredging

Posted 2003 dredging summary on the Internet and prepared for



Photo by Kenneth Mertes

Leo Hentges (right), head lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 5A, has been with the district since 1965. Leo's son, Dan, a mate on the Dredge Thompson, has been with the dredge since 1988, where he began in the galley as a temporary worker.

dredging for the coming navigation season.

Channel Management

Discussed channel modifications and project impacts with stakeholder, attended Pool 5 planning meetings.

Headwaters

Conferred to develop plans for budget cuts for current coming fiscal years.

Gull Lake

Conducted safety training, coordinated seasonal staffing needs, discussed municipal sewer easements, monitored lake elevation and dam discharges.

Pokegama-Winnibigoshish

Reviewed mandatory training requirements, accommodation policy, participated in media interviews on winter lake levels and reviewed shelter maintenance plans, monitored lake elevation.

Cross Lake

Monitored repairs of real-time lake and downstream gauges, presented Lewis and Clark

program to service clubs, attended city council meetings to discuss municipal sewer connections, addressed computer reservations malfunctions, coordinated fourth-grade water safety poster competition and monitored lake elevation and dam discharges flow.

Leech and Red lakes

Coordinated volunteer schedules and updated their duties, updated reservations computer system, performed security and safety actions, monitored lake elevation and discharge flow.

Red Lake

Coordinated procurement of stop logs for dam and developed strategies to cuts costs and increase efficiencies.

Sandy Lake

Replaced bathroom partitions in the comfort station, met with local officials to develop a hazard mitigation plan to address county-wide disasters. Monitored lake elevation and discharge flow.

Locks and Dams project office

Verified compliance with security directives.

Upper St. Anthony Falls

Conducted safety briefing, attended river stakeholder conference, assisted Minneapolis public safety officers with recovering a body from the Mississippi River.

Lower St. Anthony Falls

Conducted weekly safety briefing, attended river stakeholder conference; acknowledged 19 years of service and retirement of Don E. Schroeder, head operator.

Lock and Dam 1

Completed maintenance and repaired electrical fault on upper lifeboat. Prepared project database for upcoming season, worked on maintenance plan, completed refurbishment of miter gate hydraulic ram, attended river stakeholder conference.

Lock and Dam 2

Conducted weekly safety briefing, conducted sign maintenance,

prepared maintenance plan, reinforced covers on old lock chamber.

Lock and Dam 3

Conducted weekly safety briefing, worked on replacement of shaft seals on tainter valve machinery, cleaned and painted equipment and deployed new lines for small-boat lockage. Contractor completed installing re-bar and forms and placed second lift of concrete on downstream land wall slot.

Lock and Dam 4

Conducted weekly safety briefing, reviewed staffing and schedules, performed maintenance on handrail in pier houses.

Lock and Dam 5

Conducted weekly safety briefing, repaired light fixtures, prepared workboat for painting, prepared new mast for wind gage.

Lock and Dam 5A

Conducted weekly safety briefing, reviewed safety and health plan, repaired snow blower.

Lock and Dam 6

Conducted weekly safety briefing, cleaned and painted tainter valve machinery, completed maintenance on life boat.

Lock and Dam 7

Conducted weekly safety and security briefing and maintenance on safety line blocks for dam, replaced tire on electric cart, performed administrative duties, updated computer maintenance records.

Lock and Dam 8

Conducted weekly safety and security briefing, installed hydraulic drive pump motor, tested upper tow haulage.

Lock and Dam 9

Conducted weekly safety and security briefing, met with contractors, de-iced tainter valves and miter gates, tested gate operations, met with river stakeholders.

Lock and Dam 10

Conducted safety meeting and security inspection, removed

timbers from miter and picked up aerators.

Natural Resources Office

Prepared response to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Comprehensive Conservation Plan, interviewed candidates for park manager position, coordinated internally an Iowa Department of Natural Resources' shore fishing and boat ramp initiative, met with federal and state resource agencies to coordinate tree planting at projects, prepared for inventory of general vegetation maps for Eau Galle dam and recreation area, discussed deer management proposals.

Blackhawk Park

Reviewed safety procedures for CPR, met with city officials of Guttenberg, Iowa, pertaining to river front development, discussed flows into Green Lake through the aeration channel and possible gate adjustments with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Eau Galle Dam

Updated safety files. Collected \$120 in day-user fees, most related to icehouse access. Anglers are starting to tow icehouses off the lake.

Ashtabula

Updated procedures to collect recreation fees and coordinated interpretative and environmental activities with local interests.

Lake Traverse

Frequently monitored Reservation Dam for malfunction of gages, hosted meeting for project managers on operations, safety and return to work dates for season workers.

Lac Qui Parle

District gage crew serviced water-level recording instruments and equipment, monitored pool elevation and discharge flow.

Orwell

Monitored pool elevation and discharge flow.

Most excellent: Pool 8 Islands project

By Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District received a 2004 Chief of Engineers Environmental Award of Excellence for its Pool 8 Islands habitat project near La Crosse, Wis., from its headquarters in March.

Corps of Engineers' headquarters established this biannual awards program in 1965 to recognize and promote excellence in design and environmental achievement by its engineers and professional contractors. This year, the mostly non-Corps judges received 17 entries in the environmental category, eight of which were selected for awards. Only St. Paul District received the highest award presented, the award of excellence.

The Pool 8 habitat project is part of the Upper Mississippi River Environmental Management Program and was planned and designed in cooperation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin and Minnesota Departments of Natural Resources and local interests.

The project took almost 10 years and \$4.5 million to complete. It consisted of rebuilding more than four miles of islands in Pool 8 that eroded between 1939-1989, following lock and dam construction on the Mississippi River. This erosion was caused by wave action,



St. Paul District photos

This downstream view shows the portions of Horseshoe and Boomerang islands on the Mississippi River, mid-left to top right, near mile 687 on the river. They protect backwaters in the foreground.

floods, river currents and ice action and resulted in a decline of more than 1,000 acres of aquatic habitat for waterfowl and fish.

“By restoring the islands, we were trying to do what would happen naturally without the locks and dams,” said Jon Hendrickson, hydraulics engineer. “River currents and sediment transport were returned to more natural conditions, wind-driven wave action was reduced and diversity of habitat was restored.”

About the project, the panel of judges said, “This comprehensive project documents the success of restoration over time. A combination of hydraulics, geotechnical and biotechnical improvements was used to set an example for successful

floodplain restoration along the Mississippi. [It is] an outstanding example of an engineering solution that has stood the test of time and successfully integrated itself with nature.”

Numerous individuals from the district office and other agencies supported the completion of the Pool 8 Islands habitat project. About receiving this award, Corps' project manager Don Powell, said, “The award recognizes the expertise of the multi-agency team that planned and designed the habitat restoration project along with local public input. The success of the project in achieving the return of aquatic vegetation to the area is a result of many people working together toward a common goal.”

Linder to retire

A retirement coffee will be held for **Mary Kay Linder**, administrative assistant to the district commander, April 29, 1 p.m.-3 p.m. in the Executive conference room. She has worked for the district since July 1976 and as administrative assistant for 20 years.

A retirement luncheon will be held at Blackie's Restaurant on Tanners Lake, 271 Geneva Ave., Oakdale, May 4 at 11:30 a.m. The \$12.50 includes buffet, beverage, tax and gratuity. RSVP to Linda Haberkorn, 651-290-5405.