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Students learn about forestry at Spring Lake Islands dedication





Photo by Shannon Bauer

Ray Marinan (center), La Crescent, Minn., Natural Resource Office, conducted interpretative programs for students and their teachers from schools in Cochrane-Fountain City, Wis., at the Spring Lake Islands project dedication on Oct. 12. He discussed bottomland forest and demonstrated the use of forestry tools.

Command Corner by Col. Jon Christensen

by District Commander Col. Jon Christensen

Teammates,

The holiday season is once again upon us – the lights are up, snow is on the ground and the bearded one is busy loading his sleigh.



It is hard to believe another year has passed – it seems like only yesterday I was enjoying the warm bike ride into work. But the bike is now warmly secured in the garage, behind the snow shoes and winter running gear that now serve as the tools for a good winter workout.

This past year has been a productive one for the district – filled with the regular district workload, regional work, support to the global war on terror and some disaster response thrown in for good measure. We have achieved 100-year flood protection for East Grand Forks, Minn./Grand Forks, N.D. The rehabilitation of Lock and Dam 10 is nearing completion. The Environmental Management Program is progressing nicely, highlighted by the Spring Lake Islands dedication this past October. Regulatory is leading the way nationally with innovative methodologies for speeding up the permitting processes for linear projects. We have had a successful year for navigation and recreation. And along the way, we have successfully responded to many disasters – to include tornadoes in Kansas; flooding along the Red River, Southeastern Minnesota, and Southwestern Wisconsin; the I-35 bridge collapse; and wild fires in California. We have survived pay pools and a district change of command. The Water Resources Development Act finally passed; and, hopefully, we will find an appropriation somewhere within the depths of our stockings.

We have also transitioned a new Chief of Engineers and have adopted a new philosophy based upon Jim Collins’ book “Good to Great.” This coming year, under Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp’s guidance, we will continue to move the district and the Corps along the path towards greatness. I encourage you to “get on the bus” and read Mr. Collins’ book if you haven’t already done so.

The Senior Executive Team is meeting once a month to help guide us on the voyage, but we can’t do it alone. “Good to Great” is a journey that starts from within as we become better as individuals, the district is bound to improve as well. I challenge you to find ways to help each other and the organization move towards greatness in the coming year.

Finally, I want to personally thank you for all you have done this year. It has truly been a team effort, resulting in many successes. Have an outstanding holiday season, be safe, sharpen your axe and continue taking care of each other.



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Spring Lake Islands project enhances wildlife habitat on Mississippi River

By Kurt Brownell
natural resource specialist

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Paul District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wisconsin and Minnesota departments of natural resources hosted a celebration for the completion of the Spring Lake Islands habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project Oct. 12.

The public celebration included a dedication ceremony, interpretive programs and displays. The new island complex is located near

Buffalo City, Wis., and the event was held in conjunction with the celebration of the fall bird migration during National Wildlife Refuge Week.

The habitat project was prompted by the erosion and disappearance of natural islands in the Spring Lake area since the building of Lock and Dam 5 and the creation of Pool 5 in the 1930s. These islands had protected Spring Lake from the effects of the main river channel and had reduced wind fetch and the associated wave action. Loss of the islands

resulted in less vegetation in the lake, and, thus, less food for fish and wildlife.

The project was completed in the fall of 2006 by L.W. Matteson Company of Burlington, Iowa, at a total cost of \$4.3 million. It involved constructing six islands within and along the west side of Spring Lake to restore habitat and diversity in the lake.

Four of these islands were constructed using \$3.5 million from the Environmental Management Program. Materials for these



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Larry Matteson, Jr., contractor; William Bruegger, mayor of Buffalo City; Scott Humrickhouse, regional director of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources; Judy DesHarnais, district deputy for programs and project management; and Robin Thorson, regional director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, dedicate the completion of the Spring Lake islands project, Oct. 12, near Buffalo City, Wis.

islands were hydraulically dredged from 15 acres within the lake and pumped to form the islands. Rock was used to stabilize both the new and existing islands. The dredging also created deeper water to create better fisheries habitat and to facilitate boat access through the area.

The other two islands were constructed with materials dredged from the navigation channel and \$800,000 in channel maintenance funding. This allowed the district a way to beneficially use these materials to improve habitat. The district was further able to avoid the cost of double handling these materials, which would be the case if they were first placed in a temporary placement site and later moved to a site outside of the floodplain for permanent storage or reuse later.

The design and placement of these islands will be evaluated in upcoming years; and if they prove to be effective at enhancing habitat in the Spring Lake area, more islands may be built in the future using dredged material.

To reduce the amount of rock stabilization and associated costs, native prairie grasses and willow switches were planted to initially stabilize the islands. Shrubs and trees will be planted in 2008 to further stabilize the islands and to provide additional habitat benefits.

The 32 acres of islands will also improve the growth of aquatic vegetation and enhance habitat diversity. The project will ultimately protect about 500 acres of valuable backwater fish and wildlife habitat.

The dedication ceremony included remarks from representatives of the Corps, the



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Kurt Brownell, right, from the natural resource section office, LaCrescent, Minn., provides a student demonstrations of how to use various forestry tools in a bottomland forest environment.

Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the mayor of Buffalo City and U.S. Representative Ron Kind's office. One highlight of the ceremony included the announcement of the winning entries for the "Name the Island Contest." The Fish and Wildlife

Service sponsored the contest. Bob Drieslein, former Winona district manager, now retired, announced the contest winners. Drieslein was heavily involved in the planning and design of the Spring Lake project. A ribbon-cutting ceremony followed the announcement of winners.

Approximately 175 students plus teachers and helpers from the Cochrane-Fountain City, third through fifth grades and ninth and 10th grade science classes participated in interpretive programs and viewing displays staffed by the Corps of Engineers, other partner agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and volunteers.

Kurt Brownell and Ray Marinan, La Crescent natural resource section office, and volunteer Michelle Jerome taught four groups of students about the bottomland forest and provided hands-on demonstrations of how to use various forestry tools.

The Corps and Fish and Wildlife Service also provided boats and transported roughly 55 people into

Spring Lake to view the islands up close.

Said Don Powell, St. Paul District EMP project manager, "The event appeared to be an enjoyable experience for those that attended. We received many words of appreciation for the ongoing habitat restoration efforts on the Upper Mississippi River."



Photo courtesy U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Spring Lake Islands named

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsored a "Name the Island Contest" for the Spring Lake islands project. Bob Drieslein, the retired Winona district manager for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, announced the winners during a dedication ceremony at the Lower Spring Lake boat landing in Buffalo City, Wis., Oct. 12. Five islands in the Mississippi River project area now have names. *Pelican Island*: submitted by Scott

Mehus, Buffalo City, Wis.; Robin Grawe, Winona, Minn.; Joni MacLeod, Fountain City, Wis.; Margaret and Mac McCauley, Winona; and Margaret Kiihne, Winona. *Deer Toe Island*: submitted by Scott Mehus, Buffalo City, Wis. *Water Snake Island*: submitted by Brian Pember, Winona, Minn. *Deep Hole Island*: submitted by Emmett Keller, Chippewa Falls, Wis. *Bulrush Island*: submitted by Sharon Grawe, Northfield, Minn. *Snipe Island*: submitted by Ron Burfield, Houston, Minn.

What's the word on pandemic flu?

*Courtesy of Corps'pondent,
Portland District, March 2007
Edited for St. Paul District*

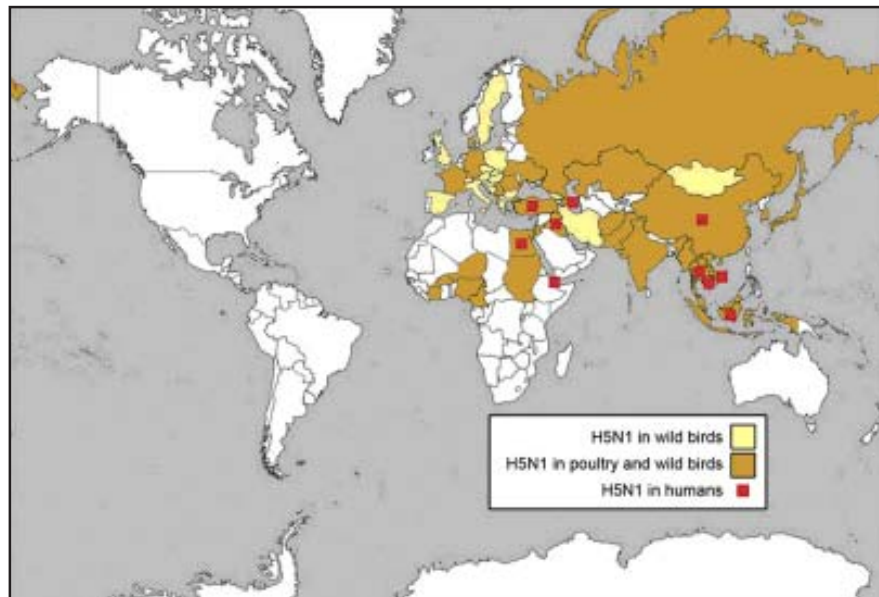
By Carolyn Markos, safety office
and Capt. Brian Szydluk,
emergency management branch

There's a lot of talk in the media about bird flu and the possibility of a global pandemic – about mass slaughters on farms in countries like South Korea to stem the virus causing bird flu. These actions may seem far removed from the St. Paul District, but bird flu is a topic being discussed by emergency managers around the world.

Seasonal flu outbreaks follow predictable patterns. They usually occur each winter. Previous exposure often causes some immunity to build up, which means healthy adults usually are not at risk for serious complications. The most vulnerable to seasonal flu are the elderly, young, or those with compromised immune systems; vaccines based on known flu strains can help protect them.

A pandemic is an outbreak of an infectious disease that spreads across a large region – a continent, for example – or worldwide. Pandemic flu has occurred three times in the 20th century: 1918, 1957-58 and 1968-69. When a new influenza virus emerges against which people have little or no immunity and no effective vaccine is available, a pandemic occurs.

During a pandemic, healthy



Source: pandemicflu.gov

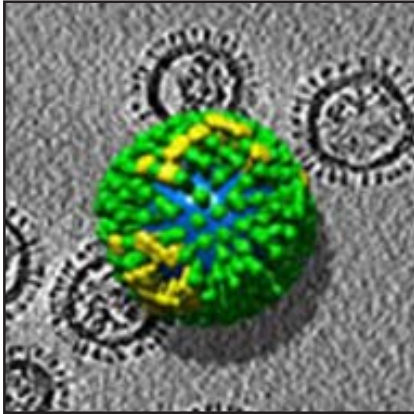
Nations with confirmed cases of H5N1 Avian Influenza. Note: numbers are confirmed by World Health Organization and may not reflect news or country reports.

people may be at increased risk for serious complications as vaccines would not be available during the early stages. Society would face crises such as school and business closures, overburdened hospitals and widespread restrictions on travel.

Avian influenza viruses, also known as bird flu, occur naturally among birds. Wild birds throughout the world carry these viruses, but usually do not become sick from them. Domesticated birds, however, including chickens, ducks and turkeys are very susceptible to bird flu. The avian flu currently of concern is identified as H5N1.

H5N1 is one of the few avian

influenza viruses that has crossed the species barrier to infect humans. It is also the deadliest. To date, the virus has not spread beyond a first generation of close contacts, nor has it caused illness in the general community. Data from these incidents suggest that transmission requires very close contact with an ill person. Human cases of bird flu have occurred primarily in Asia. The Indonesian and Egyptian ministries of health announced new cases of human infection by the H5N1 avian influenza in January 2007. Initial investigations indicate both individuals were in the presence of sick and dead poultry.



Source: National Institutes of Health

The three-dimensional structure of influenza virus from electron tomography. The viruses are about 120 nanometers – about one 10,000th of a millimeter – in diameter.

Since all influenza viruses have the ability to mutate, scientists are concerned that H5N1 may adapt to more easily infect humans and spread from person to person in the future; currently there is no vaccine that protects humans against the H5N1 virus.

The St. Paul District's emergency management branch develops plans, training and exercises to ensure the delivery of mission-essential functions following a catastrophic disaster and includes an action plan to manage operations in the event of a pandemic. Each district's Pandemic Flu Plan identifies critical functions and processes during a pandemic, including key positions, providing health management and communications procedures if personnel become ill or are forced to work from home;

informing employees of health-related travel advisories and any steps each division must take in order to protect employee health and continuity of operations.

"Being located in the Pacific Northwest, the Portland District has always had plans in place to address earthquakes or floods," deputy commander Lt. Col. Phil Kaufmann said. "Based on outbreaks of bird flu during the past several years, the federal government has recognized how important it is to plan for a possible pandemic." Plans include exercises designed to test procedures developed to cope with a pandemic.

Similarly, the St. Paul District coordinates with other federal, state and local agencies.

Although the United States isn't experiencing a pandemic now, being situationally aware of the potential for a pandemic is important. As with earthquakes or floods, the United States will face this challenge again some day. How St. Paul and other districts meet that challenge will depend on how well the planning process has prepared each employee to be able to accomplish his or her task in the face of adversity.

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en/index.html>

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/>

[home_work_school.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm)

How can you prepare for a pandemic?

As with most emergencies, planning ahead can make all the difference for you and your family. As you plan, it is important to think about the challenges you might face. You should plan for the possibility that many services may be disrupted. Services provided by hospitals and other health care facilities, banks, grocery stores, restaurants, government offices and post offices may not be available.

Preparations

- Store adequate (two-week minimum) supply of water and food. Don't forget about your pets.
- Ensure you have an adequate supply of prescription and nonprescription medicines.
- Create a family communication plan and a list of emergency contacts.
- Talk with family members and loved ones about how they would be cared for if they get sick.
- To limit the spread of germs, wash hands frequently with soap and water. Cover coughs and sneezes with tissues. Teach kids these good habits, too.
- Have your family stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick. Stay home from work or school if sick.

News and Notes

Announcements

John Zahalka, Headwaters, was selected to serve as the acting area manager for the Headwaters section of the natural resources office, beginning mid-November. **Kristin Kosterman**, Army Corps of Engineers-Information Technology customer relations manager, was selected in late December as the new executive assistant for the district.

Tom Crump, Combined Federal Campaign coordinator and project management branch chief, reported 42 people participated in CFC pledging and many more participated in other fund-raising events. The drive raised \$18,926.06.

The Retired Enlisted Association selected **Mark Davidson**, public affairs chief, as its 2007 Member of the Year.

TREA represents and lobbies on behalf of the hundreds of thousands of retired military enlisted men and women in the United States. Davidson has been a member of TREA since 2001.

TREA recognized Davidson, of Bloomington, Minn., for his dedication and tireless efforts in the support of TREA Minnesota Chapter 115 and national efforts.

Davidson served in the U.S. Air Force from 1974-1978. He joined the Air Force Reserve in 1979, starting at the 914th Airlift Wing in Niagara Falls, N.Y., and then transferring in 1980 to the 934th Airlift Wing in Minneapolis. He retired from the Air Force Reserve in 1998, attaining the rank

of Senior Master Sergeant (E-8).

He has been employed by the Corps since 2000.

In other activities, Davidson coordinated the 2007 food shelf program at the district office. Employees donated 335 pounds of food and \$260 to the food shelf program at Keystone Community Service at the Holiday Awards Banquet Dec. 14.

Corps' Heritage Toastmasters Club hosts outside speakers

Heritage Toastmasters recently gave two speakers the chance to practice their speeches in front of a friendly and supportive audience. Ms. Mary Skupa, a representative of the pharmaceutical company Glaxo Smith Kline, and Ms. Freddie Becker, a youth minister, spoke in front of 10-12 Toastmasters on Nov. 27 and Dec. 4.

Skupa practiced her educational presentation on the topic of prescription drugs in a 20-minute Powerpoint show. She is the sister of Joe Skupa, a member of Heritage Toastmasters.

Becker presented her first sermon for her entry into the ministry at Progressive Baptist Church in St. Paul, Minn.

Club members critiqued their presentations and offered constructive feedback, including suggestions for improving the style of presentation, changes in speaking voice and controlling nervousness in front of an audience.

Toastmasters is a learning organization that seeks to help members improve their public speaking skills. The group meets Tuesdays from noon to 1 p.m.

Contact Tim Paulus, project management, at 651-290-5530 for more information.

Newcomers

Connie Brantner, Dredge Goetz

Jill Clancy, student

Ryan Price, intern

Mai Vang, student

Retirements

Thomas Langreck, Lock and Dam 4, effective Sept. 30, after more than 24 years federal service.

Sue Lenski, real estate, effective Sept. 28, with more than 30 years federal service.

Births

Erin Kiminski, construction operations, and her husband, Kyle, celebrated the birth of a son, Kameron Shea, Nov. 27. Kameron arrived at 6 pounds, 20 ounces and 20 inches long.

Elliot Stefanik, environmental, and his wife Teal, celebrated the birth of a daughter, Gianna, Aug. 14. Gianna weighed 5 pounds, 4 ounces.

Julian and **Miray Welle**, surveys, celebrated the birth of their daughter, Eva Michele, Sept. 13. Eva weighed 8 pounds, 14 ounces and was 22 inches long.