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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Lock 2 undergoes major maintenance





Photo by Tim Meers

Diver Bob Sikkila, with diving helmet on, is just out of water at Lock and Dam 2, Hastings, Minn., Dec. 1. From left are Tom Hemstreet, head lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 3 near Red Wing, Minn., Mark Edlund, district diving coordinator, and Sikkila. Sikkila is head operator at Lock and Dam 5A, Fountain City, Wis.

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Crosscurrents

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Major changes to affect many district employees

Non-bargaining general schedule employees begin NSPS in October 2007

by Ashley Schnable
and Linda Krueger
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

During 2007, employees can expect to see progress on several initiatives that have been in the works for some time. Below is a brief update on those items.

NSPS

General Schedule, or GS, supervisors and managers converted into the Department of Defense's new pay-for-performance system, National Security Personnel System, known as NSPS, on Jan. 21. These supervisors received two full days of training given by our civilian personnel advisory center staff and Marsha Mose, chief of design branch. This training prepared supervisors for changes in the areas of classification, compensation, staffing and performance management. The current NSPS implementation schedule calls for conversion of the remaining non-bargaining unit GS employees into NSPS in October 2007. Similar preparation and training will be given to employees prior to their conversion date.

Logistics Management High-Performing Organization Program

Implementation of the Army Corps of Engineers logistics high-performing organization program, or HPO for short, is now in its final stages with the Logistics Activity Center, scheduled to stand up in March 2007. The centrally managed LAC will be located in Millington, Tenn. Regional logistics liaisons, located at Corps' divisions, will serve as commander's staff officers and supervise logistics staff working at the local delivery points. LDPs will be located on-site at districts and will execute local mission requirements, such as fleet dispatch, supply services, emergency response, quality control and facility management. The district will be served by four employees located at the St. Paul local delivery point and one at the Fountain City Service Base, Fountain City, Wis. Two current district employees will work for the LAC from their current locations.

Operation and maintenance of navigation locks and dams HPO Initiative

In October 2006, it was decided that a proposed A-76 competition on the operation and maintenance of navigation locks and dams would instead be done as a high-performing organization study, similar to that done for the logistics function (see above).

A nationwide team of Corps' employees has been formed to develop and implement the most

efficient organization for the operation and maintenance of navigation locks and dams, as well as other civil works operations activities.

The Upper Mississippi River lock and dam system is represented on the national team with individuals from Rock Island and St. Louis districts and the Mississippi Valley Division. Within the St. Paul District a "reach-back" team has been formed to supply the national team with information and to assist the district in evaluating proposals from the national team. The HPO process is expected to take approximately 18 months to complete.

Information management-information technology A-76 Initiative

The Corps of Engineers has been undergoing a full A-76 competition for information management-information technology since June 2004. After assessing the bids from both public and private entities, the Source Selection Authority selected the government's most efficient organization, or MEO, as their choice service provider. In response to the initial decision, a protest was filed with the Federal Claims Court by Northrop Grumman Corp., a private-sector bidder. At present no resolution has been announced, but the judge's decision is expected in the near future. The IM-IT A-76 initiative will establish a centrally-managed, common operating environment that fully leverages technology, products and services.

District tackles major maintenance and repairs at Hastings lock and dam

Lock and Dam 2 dewatering demonstrates regional cooperation

by Jim Ulrick, P.E.
project manager

Shannon Bauer, public affairs, also contributed to this article.

Partnering between the St. Paul and Rock Island districts on major maintenance at Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minn., has helped both districts sharpen maintenance and repair skills of their personnel as well as control costs by sharing equipment and expertise.

Lock and Dam 2 on the Mississippi River is undergoing scheduled maintenance this winter. The lock was placed into service in 1948. Major maintenance happens every 15 to 20 years on each St. Paul District Mississippi River lock and dam. Lock and Dam 2 has not been dewatered since 1987.

The work this year is a joint effort between the St. Paul District and Rock Island District maintenance and repair crews.

The current dewatering is special for three main reasons.

The first is regional teamwork. “We learn from each other,” said Bryan Peterson, chief of the St. Paul District maintenance and repair section, Fountain City, Wis. “There is a give-and-take that indicates acceptance as one team.”



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Dan Kircher, normally a Lock operator at Lock and Dam 4 (left) and Knute Knutson, physical support branch, prepare a scissors lift for use in repairs to the concrete lock walls at Lock and Dam 2, Hastings, Minn., on Jan. 22.

L&D 2, continued on Page 5

Rock Island District contributed the use of a 350-ton capacity crane on floating plant, and its crew, to place the bulkheads. The St. Paul District does not own a crane large enough to set and remove the bulkheads.

Second, new stop logs, pickup-beam and stop-log slots were used for the first time. Stop logs are the same as bulkheads – they seal the lock chamber to keep water out to allow maintenance on gates, valves and keep the lock chamber dry. The stop-logs fit inside slots cut into the sides of the lock wall.

Dewatering required an extensive effort to prepare both the upstream and downstream sill. The sill on the bottom of the lock chamber and the seal on the stop logs work together like a rubber strip at the bottom of a shower door. If the stop logs would have been set without preparing the sill, the result is like water draining out from the shower to the floor outside. The bottom stop-log skin plate would have had no place to bear against and form a watertight seal.

The St. Paul District dive crew placed a stay-in-place form, tied rebar and conducted an under water concrete placement on the upstream side.

On the downstream side, divers placed a built-up box beam which formed the sealing surface for the bottom downstream stop log. Divers worked underwater in near total darkness in water temperatures near 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

The third special aspect is the replacement of the miter gate diagonals and gusset plates. Previously, two diagonals failed

and had to be replaced in the wet. “A gusset plate is a large piece of steel in the corners of the miter gate that the diagonal fastens to, which keeps the gate plumb – similar to the diagonal piece that is attached to an old time screen door to keep it plumb,” said Peterson.

Because of this history of diagonals failing, Rock Island and St. Louis districts contributed a design that places the tensioning system above the water line. To facilitate the installation, workers from the Rock Island maintenance and repair crew who had

L&D 2, continued on Page 6



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Lowell Moline, normally an operator at Lock and Dam 4, is working during the winter on the dewatering project.

L&D 2, continued from Page 5

experience installing these components traveled to Lock and Dam 2 and led the gusset plate/diagonal installation effort.

The usual dewatering work activities were also completed, such as sand blasting the miter gates, inspecting the miter gates for cracks, repairing gate cracks, repainting the gates, installing new seals on the miter gates, replacing the bubbler system, concrete repairs and other maintenance.

Conducting routine maintenance on a regular schedule has helped the district minimize unscheduled lock closures and also minimize impacts to the towing industry. Nearly 40 workers, 30 from St. Paul and nine from Rock Island, are on the project.

The district operates and maintains 13 locks and dams beginning at Upper St. Anthony and ending at Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa.



Photo by Tim Meers



Photo by Tim Meers

Divers place concrete under water

Divers Randy Piel, left, and Bob Sikkila facilitated the pouring of concrete under 22 feet of water in Lock and Dam 2 on the Mississippi River in Hastings, Minn., Dec. 1. The objective was to increase the size of the upper sill for a proper foundation for installation of new bulkheads. The work is part of the dewatering – emptying water from the lock for major maintenance. Tim Tabery, head operator at Lock and Dam 1 (wearing hard hat) and Josh Rye, physical support branch, tended the umbilical cords supplying the divers with air, communications and hot water for suit warming.

The suits replace the old dry suits. Said Mark Edlund, district diving coordinator, “A hot water boiler heater circulates 95-degree water through out the divers suit keeping the diver comfortable. It has a safety device that shuts off the heater at 104 degree’s so it won’t burn the diver. This was a real lifesaver as we can stay down longer and before hypothermia and fatigue set in.”



Photo by Tim Meers

Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander (at right), recognized the diving crew for outstanding service Jan. 16. From left: Randy Piel, Lock 5A; Bob Sikkila Lock 5A, Josh Rye, Fountain City Service Base; Eric Lockington, Lock and Dam 8; and Mark Edlund, diving coordinator. Divers not pictured: Thomas Hemstreet, Lock and Dam 3, and Tim Tabery, Lock and Dam 1.

New Orleans, continued from Page 7

storm damage reduction. Others are Marsha Mose, chief of design branch; Bill Csajko, project manager; and Rick Femrite and Neil Schwanz, design branch. As needed, the team enlists additional members for special expertise.

The district's specific reach is the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity 103 (graphic below). The objective is to expedite the design and construction of the reach, which includes raising the existing levees up to authorized levels of protection and strengthening existing flood walls to meet post-hurricane design criteria.

Phase one is scheduled for completion this summer.

Said Hokens, "Our first phase of construction for 2007 will be to add the erosion protection and seepage cutoff to the walls that have not received them yet. We have also recently been tasked to start looking at providing 100-year protection levels along the three interior drainage canals to connect the lake-front levees to the temporary pump stations. The temporary pump stations were recently completed about 1/4 mile down the canals from the lake-front levees.

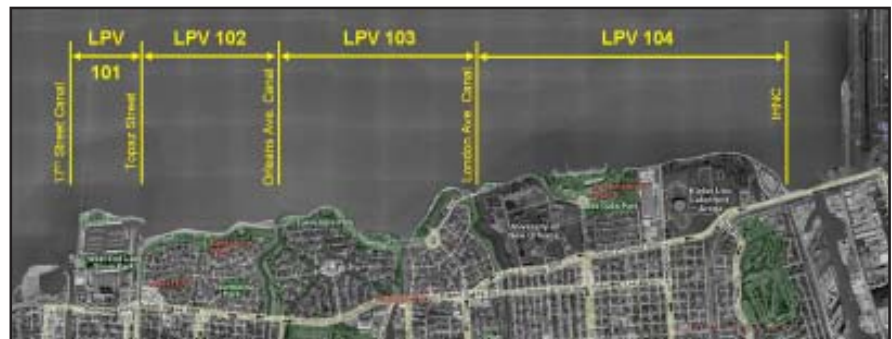
The construction window for phase two is one year. "The second phase of construction would be added, to raise flood walls to 23 feet to the 100-year elevation," Hokens said. "To do that the existing I-wall will be removed and a T-wall will be installed in its place."

Said Csajko, "St. Paul and the U-5 could potentially expand into more work, such as St. Bernard Parish." This depends on funding decisions made by Task Force Hope.



Photo by Kent Hokins

Above is an I-wall the Corps will replace at Bayou St. John. The I-wall will be removed and a T-wall will be installed in its place. On site are Rick Femrite (left) and Neil Schwanz (second from right), design branch, and engineers from Stanley Consultants.






The upper-five districts in Mississippi Valley Division are coordinating on projects in the Lake Pontchartrain vicinity. The St. Paul District designing hurricane and storm damage reduction features between the Orleans Ave. Canal and the London Ave. Canal, LPV 103.

Regulatory branch field offices manage permit programs in Minnesota, Wisconsin


This map shows regulatory office locations and overlays the boundaries of district's regulatory programs and separate civil works jurisdiction. Page 10 presents "Regulatory branch manages programs for wetlands, clean water and rivers and harbors." Also, "Click 'Permits' for the word on wetlands" highlights offerings on the district's regulatory website.



St. Paul District (MVP) Regulatory Offices

-  Regulatory Field Office Location
-  District Regulatory Boundary
-  District Boundary for Civil Works

Graphic by Mike Walker



Regulatory branch manages programs for wetlands, clean water and rivers and harbors

Corps' affirms 'no-net-loss' of wetlands in Minnesota and Wisconsin

by Shannon Bauer

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, is revising its wetlands compensatory mitigation policy in Minnesota to

better achieve the federal 'no-net-loss of wetlands' policy through the Corps' regulatory program under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act.

The St. Paul District's regulatory jurisdiction covers the states of Minnesota and Wisconsin.

A Corps' permit is required to discharge dredged or fill materials into waters of the U.S., which includes most lakes, rivers and wetlands, as well as conduct any work below the ordinary high water mark of a navigable water of the United States.

Permit applicants are generally required, as a condition of the permit, to replace wetland functions lost due to authorized dredged and fill activities. This is called compensatory mitigation and involves restoration, creation, enhancement or preservation of wetlands, as well as providing adjacent natural areas known as upland buffers. This will not change.

The proposed compensatory mitigation policy for Minnesota is being called "In-place, In-Kind and In-Advance" by the district's regulatory staff. In-kind means the same wetland type, such as replacing a wet meadow with a wet meadow. In-place refers to on-site or within the same sub-watershed, of which there are 81 in Minnesota, or within the same mitigation banking service area. In-advance means the compensation site is successfully completed before any discharge of dredged or fill material occurs.

Compensatory mitigation that

Regulatory, continued on Page 11

Click 'Permits' for the word on wetlands

by Peter Verstegen

About 56 people in eight field offices, plus personnel in the St. Paul District downtown office in regulatory branch, manage the Army Corps of Engineers permit programs in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Clicking "Permits" on the district's home page at mvp.usace.army.mil, will take users to the district's regulatory web pages, which allows users to e-mail specialists in regulatory, lists frequently asked questions, offers links to wetland delineation manuals and field office locations and more.

Under Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act, a Corps' permit is required to do any work in, over or under a navigable water of the U.S.

Waterbodies have been designated as navigable waters of the U.S., based on their past, present or potential use for transportation for interstate commerce. These waters include many of the larger rivers and lakes, such as the Minnesota, St. Croix, and Mississippi rivers; and Lake Superior and the

Mississippi headwaters lakes.

Under Section 404, a Corps' permit is required for the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. Many waterbodies and wetlands in the nation are waters of the U.S. and are subject to the Corps' Section 404 regulatory authority.

Early in 2000, the St. Paul District replaced all Corps' Section 404 nationwide permits across Minnesota and Wisconsin with a combination of state-wide regional general permits and letter-of-permission evaluation procedures known as GPLOP 98.

Proposed permit projects that the Corps is presently seeking public comment about may be viewed by going to the "Permits" section of the district's web site and clicking on the state the project located on the left-hand corner under "Regulatory Notices." To find out more about a specific permit or project notice, the Permits-Regulatory pages on web site provide contacts and e-mail links for project manager listed by county for Minnesota or Wisconsin.

Regulatory, continued from Page 10 meets all three of these criteria will generally be required at an acre-for-acre basis. Compensation that fails to meet one or more of those three criteria will require more wetland compensation. For example, replacing a forested wetland with a shallow marsh would require more replacement acreage.

“Basically, the new program is designed to ensure we are adequately replacing wetlands and the important natural functions they provide,” said Robert Whiting, the district’s regulatory chief.

These changes stem in part from a 2001 National Academy of Science report criticizing the Corps’ regulatory program for failing to ensure a ‘no-net-loss-of-wetlands’ policy.

In response, Corps’ headquarters staff implemented a National Wetlands Mitigation Action Plan to address these criticisms and better protect the nation’s aquatic resources.

Specifically, when NAS officials investigated wetland sites that were created as mitigation required by

the Corps, they found that many of the sites had numerous problems. Many were not the specified acreage required by the Corps’ permit. Many were dependent on man-made structures, such as dikes, that had not been maintained. Many were dominated by invasive or nonnative plants or fish, degraded by stormwater, or adjacent to incompatible uses. Additionally, the wetlands needed adjacent natural areas to serve as buffers, as well as long-term legal protection, for long-term sustainability.

Whiting said the district reviewed its own regulatory program and found the same problems locally that NAS found nationally. In response, the district changed its mitigation policies in Wisconsin in 2002 and then began drafting a new policy focusing on Minnesota. Corps’ staff have been coordinating with the Minnesota Interagency Wetlands Group and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. “We didn’t want to be providing developers with opposing federal

and state guidance,” said Whiting.

Whiting said the Corps realizes that changing the mitigation requirements will be controversial, especially in northern Minnesota, where counties still have more than 80 percent of their pre-European settlement acreage of wetlands. “People look around and see an abundance of wetlands and see these changes as an intrusion,” he explained. “But what we all need to realize is that while wetlands can be locally abundant, they are a high value national treasure at risk.”

The Corps’ policy, however, incorporates special considerations for northern Minnesota due to the lack of sites for traditional wetland restoration and creation. One of these special considerations includes allowing permit applicants to use wetland mitigation banks in a broader area of the state.

The district is currently working with the Board of Water and Soil Resources on developing an interagency memorandum of understanding on compensatory mitigation in Minnesota.



Photo by Steve Eggers

The Weaver Bottoms wetland on the Mississippi River is similar to the cover photo on “Wetland Plants and Plant Communities of Minnesota and Wisconsin,” by Steve Eggers, regulatory branch, and Donald M. Reed, chief biologist for the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission. The book is available on-line by clicking on the “Environment” link on the district’s home page.

News and Notes



Photo by Shannon Bauer

Steven Adamski, office of counsel, is the 2006 Ramon J. Powell Legal Scholarship Legacy Award recipient.

Announcements

St. Paul District attorney receives national legal award

Headquarters U.S. Army Corps Engineers recently selected St. Paul District employee **Steven Adamski** as its 2006 Ramon J. Powell Legal Scholarship Legacy Award recipient.

The Ramon J. Powell Legal Scholarship Legacy Award is given out annually to recognize excellence in legal scholarship throughout the Corps of Engineers. Adamski received his award from the commander of the St. Paul District, Col. Michael Pfenning, who presented the award on behalf of Corps' Chief Counsel Earl H. Stockdale earlier this month.

Adamski is an attorney in the

office of counsel and works extensively with the members of its regulatory branch. He received this award for providing outstanding legal advice, for possessing an in-depth knowledge of the law and for possessing the highest ethical standards, as well as for his continued selfless service on behalf of the Corps.

Adamski has been a federal employee for more than 21 years, all of them working for the St. Paul District.

"Adamski is one of the most respected attorneys in the Corps of Engineers," said Ed Bankston, his supervisor and the St. Paul

District's senior legal officer. "His hard work, his professionalism and his commitment to integrity are in the finest tradition of the Corps of Engineers."

Michelle Shafer, emergency management, was selected as the district's new emergency management team leader late November.

St. Paul District employees donated 276 pounds of food, \$135 and 60 toys to Keystone Community Services of St. Paul, Minn., last December.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (right), Mississippi Valley Division commander, awarded Michael DeRusha, Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, a division coin at the 2006 MVD Senior Leader Conference held in Rock Island, Ill., Nov. 7-9. DeRusha received the coin for participating in the MVD Emerging Leaders Program and assisting in planning and facilitating the conference.

Newcomers

Joetta Grant, clerk, Lock and Dam 1, Minneapolis

Laurie Muir, records management contractor, district office

Catherine Voce, regulatory assistant, district office

Retirements

John Baures, channels and harbors, Fountain City, Wis., with more than 35 years federal service

Yvonne Berner, regulatory, district office, with more than 37 years federal service

John Calhoun, program analyst, district office, with more than 31 years of federal service

Dave Christenson, emergency management team leader, district office, with more than 30 years federal service

Larry Ecker, lock and dam operator, Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, with more than 35 years federal service

Albert Pallas, lock and dam clerk, Upper and Lower St. Anthony Falls locks and dams, with more than 30 years federal service

Francis Schanilec, construction representative, Western Area Office, with more than 39 years federal service

Births

Ann Banitt, hydraulics and hydrology, and her husband Troy celebrated the birth of a baby girl, Sarah Helen, Jan. 2. She checked in at 7.8 pounds, 19.75 inches.

Taps

Wallace 'Red' W. Farrand, former lockmaster, Lock and Dam 5A, located near Fountain City, Wis., passed away Dec. 31.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

Left to right: Pam Hill, Sacramento District; Doris Sullivan, St. Paul District; Jeffrey Linkinhoker, Nashville District; John Fisher, St. Paul District; Lindy Wolner, Corps of Engineers Headquarters; and Kevin Holden, Rock Island District. Russ Snyder, St. Paul District, also manned the exhibit but was not in the photograph.

District represents Corps at landscape architecture conference

by Peter Versteegen

Three St. Paul District employees were among eight members of the Corps of Engineers' landscape architects community of practice to attend the American Society of Landscape Architects and International Federation of Landscape Architects annual conference in Minneapolis, Oct. 6-10.

Doris Sullivan and John Fisher, engineering and construction, and Russ Snyder, project management, joined representatives from Rock Island, Sacramento, Nashville and Europe districts as well as Headquarters to staff an exhibit for the Corps.

"The booth displayed selected projects from the Chief of

Engineers Design Awards Programs and provided general information about how individuals and firms could compete for Corps of Engineers' job and contracting opportunities," said Lindy Wolner, strategy and integration directorate at Corps' headquarters.

Said Sullivan, a landscape architect, "We also attended educational sessions. Jean Michel Cousteau, educator, environmentalist and film producer, was the keynote speaker at the opening general session." Cousteau heads the Ocean Futures Society in Santa Barbara, Calif.

Representatives from 46 countries attended and nearly 4,400 registered for the 2006 ASLA annual meeting and 43rd IFLA World Conference.



Lowell Hanson, left, accepts Employee of the Month honors from Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander.

Hanson exemplifies reliable, professional public service

Mike Evenson, area engineer, nominated Lowell Hanson, construction representative in the Western Area Office. Hanson is the September 2006 Employee of the Month. Here's what Evenson wrote:

Recently, Lt. Gen. Carl Strock, chief of engineers, provided guidance to the Corps' family to facilitate transformation. One such tenant, Reliable Public Service Professionalism, is embodied by Lowell Hanson, construction representative for the St. Paul District's Western Area Office in Grand Forks, N.D.

Hanson's credibility in the realm of professionalism is demonstrated by the repeated requests received from local units of government for his expertise – whether it be during flood fights, civil works projects or general advice pertaining to municipal construction projects.

Essentially, he is sought by others because of his "Reliable Public Service Professionalism." This was again demonstrated recently, when the Spirit Lake Nation sought Hanson for his quality assurance expertise on the "Roads Acting as Water Barriers" project near Devils Lake, N.D. The project involves multiple federal agencies. Also, the City of Grand Forks, N.D., has consulted Hanson on several public construction matters.

Hanson's professionalism has enhanced trust in Corps' among many stakeholders.



Liz Dvorak, right, accepts Employee of the Month honors from Col. Mike Pfenning, district commander.

Dvorak initiates personnel framework for recovery field office, plans for pandemic

Linda Krueger, chief of the civilian personnel advisory center, nominated Liz Dvorak, the October 2006 Employee of the Month. Here's what she wrote:

Liz Dvorak of the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center was one of the first to deploy after Hurricane Katrina hit last year. As the first human resources team leader for the Louisiana Recovery Field Office, Baton Rouge, La., she put into place many of the policies and procedures that would be used throughout the lifetime of the RFO. Dvorak received the Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Charles O. Smithers, commander of the Louisiana RFO, for her excellent support.

But the pioneering effort didn't stop when she returned to St. Paul. Since then, Dvorak has developed a process for personnel accountability in the event of emergencies, drafted human resource policies and forms for the St. Paul operations plan for a future Louisiana RFO, and is currently serving on a team to plan for pandemic flu outbreak.

Postcard from Iraq



Alda [Ottley] and I met here at Tikrit [Iraq] while she was here for a quality assurance training class. She is up at Mosul, which is one of the sites I support. I'll be up her way before my tour is over, so we will see each other again.

Sincerely,
Mike McGarvey
Logistics Management



Postcard from Iraq



A care package from the St. Paul District arrived at my duty station in Iraq on Dec. 16. The mood was very festive! The guys really loved the magazines! Only to be surpassed by their joy of the food! Everyone enjoyed the treats, all the while complaining of their waistlines being stretched out due to the St. Paul District's generosity!

Sincerely,
D.J. Moser, lockmaster

