



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
St. Paul District

# Crosscurrents

Vol. 31, No. 5

May-June 2008

**District celebrates  
Earth Day with tree  
planting on  
Spring Lake Islands**







Photo by Don Powell

**Tom Novak, project management, plants a Swamp White Oak tree on Deep Hole Island, part of the Spring Lake Islands project on the Mississippi River. It was one of 330 seven-foot potted oaks the district, partner agencies and volunteers planted on Earth Day, April 22.**

**Command Corner**  
 by Col. Jon Christensen  
 St. Paul District Commander



Teammates,

I have had the honor of being part of this organization for a year now. It is hard to believe the time has gone by so fast – working with such a professional work force has truly been a pleasure.

From the Interstate 35-W bridge collapse response to the co-sponsorship of the 2008 Society of American Military Engineers National Joint Engineers training conference, the district has clearly demonstrated its professionalism, dedication and competence. I couldn't be prouder being a part of it.

This year will prove to be even more exciting and challenging than the last. The Mississippi Valley Division has a clear vision on how to operationalize its regional interdependent business model, and each of us will have a role in ensuring we efficiently and effectively focus the region's entire resources on project delivery. We need to set aside some of our past methodologies, challenge assumptions and move toward interdependency with conviction. These changes are a matter of necessity – we must all work together as a region in order to successfully execute the largest civil works workload in Corps' history.

This path to interdependency will require not only disciplined thought but a change in culture. It will require innovative ideas, flexibility and a degree of risk taking. It will be difficult and challenging, but it is essential change in order to deal with our large regional workload. The expectation is to have a regional culture, regional program development, regional workforce management and a regional acquisition strategy within the next three years.

Some new initiatives to guide us toward interdependency have already been implemented. Mississippi Valley Division will have regional pay pools for functional areas. District engineers have been assigned as functional group champions. Other initiatives have just begun, including increasing our full-time-equivalents (where it makes sense), becoming the Corps' experts in P2 (project management application software), developing methodologies to share best practices across communities of practice and becoming more efficient in an effort to drive down total labor multipliers [a measure of the cost of doing business].

The framework for interdependency is there – all it requires is some hard work, innovative and disciplined thought and conviction to bring it to fruition. I am eager to hear your ideas on how to best implement this interdependency vision, and I look forward to traveling down this path with you.



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 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

**District Commander** Col. Jon Christensen  
**Public Affairs Chief** Mark Davidson  
**Media Specialist** Shannon Bauer  
**Editor** Peter Versteegen  
**E-mail:** cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

## 900 trees and counting Corps' employees celebrate Earth Day

by Jon Sobiech

More than 30 people from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and volunteers got together on Earth Day, April 22, to plant more than 900 trees on the newly created Environmental Management Program islands located in Pool 5 near Buffalo City, Wis.

"Interagency cooperation and collaboration within the Corps was key to the success of the planting," said Kristin Moe, natural resources office, LaCrescent, Minn.

Three of the four islands created through the \$3.4 million EMP project were planted with trees and shrubs typical of a floodplain forest: red-osier dogwood, silky

dogwood, nannyberry, high bush cranberry, ninebark, swamp-white oak, silver maple and hackberry. The islands that were planted are Big Hole Island, Bulrush Island and Snipe Island as named during the Name the Island Contest held during the fall of 2007.

The Spring Lake site is a 500-acre backwater lake located on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River in Pool 5, at the south end of Buffalo City. The site lies within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge.

Natural islands along the west side of Spring Lake have eroded and many have disappeared since the creation of Pool 5. Previously, these islands protected the lake from the effects of the main river channel and served to reduce wind fetch and the associated wave action. Loss of the islands is degrading the shallow water fish and wildlife habitat in the lake because of higher turbidity levels and undesirable conditions for aquatic plant beds and fisheries

overwintering habitat. Aquatic plant beds provide a valuable food source for fish and migrating birds.

The planting effort kicked off on Earth Day and was continued on several later days. On Earth Day volunteers planted 550 three-foot bare-root swamp white oak seedlings, 40 three-foot bur oak seedlings, and 330 seven-foot containerized swamp white oak trees on two of the three islands. Corps employees from La Crescent and Winona offices planted an additional 815 trees and shrubs on May 2. On May 8, more than 60 high school students from the Cochrane-Fountain City school district worked with Corps and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees to plant another 1,475 trees and shrubs. The students protected half of the trees with weed barrier mats and tree tubes. The mats keep surrounding vegetation from overgrowing the trees while the tubes protect them from rodents. To date, 2,995 trees and shrubs have been planted on

*Trees, continued on Page 4*



Photo by Don Powell

**Kristin Moe, natural resources office, LaCrescent, Minn., and Curtis Marty and Nathan Van Loon, Lock and Dam 5, ferry trees and shrubs typical of a floodplain forest across the Mississippi River to the Spring Lake island site in a 500-acre backwater lake located on the Wisconsin side of the river in Pool 5, at the south end of Buffalo City, Wis. Volunteers and project personnel planted trees on Earth Day, April 22.**



## Crosscurrents

the islands. Another 430 trees and shrubs will be planted in the near future.

“It was great to have the support of Corps team members from Lock and Dam 5, the district office and La Crescent and Winona field offices. The planting was a wonderful way to celebrate Earth Day,” said Moe.

**With Col. Jon Christensen, district commander, standing at left, Randy Urich, district forester, briefs volunteers from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Cochran-Fountain City High School, Fountain City, Wis., and state natural resource agencies.**



Photo by Don Powell

## District restricts firewood on project sites

By Kristin Moe

The St. Paul District instituted a new firewood policy at its recreation areas this summer. The new policy places restrictions on transferring firewood onto project lands. The culprit behind the restrictions is the invasive insect emerald ash borer which poses a grave danger to forests.

Emerald ash borer is an exotic beetle discovered in southeastern Michigan in the summer of 2002. It is believed the insect was introduced to the United States sometime in the 1990s. EAB is native to Asia and likely arrived in the United States on solid wood packing material carried in cargo ships or airplanes.

EAB is an extremely destructive pest that attacks only ash trees. Adult beetles feed on ash foliage, causing minor damage to the tree.



St. Paul District photo

**Kristin Moe, natural resources office, LaCrescent, Minn., holds a poster on display at the district's recreation sites, "Please ... buy firewood where you camp." She highlighted firewood restrictions at recreation sites for interpretive presentations on Earth Day, April 22.**

Larvae feed on the vascular tissue producing tunnels that disrupt the transport of water and nutrients

throughout the tree. These tunnels eventually girdle and kill branches as well as entire trees. EAB has killed more than 30 million ash trees in Michigan alone. Tens of millions more have been lost in Ohio and Indiana. It has also been found in Illinois, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ontario, Canada. Signs and symptoms of EAB include presence of adult or larva, canopy dieback, sprouts growing from the roots and trunk (epicormic shoots), bark splitting, presence of serpentine tunnels, and increased woodpecker activity.

Ash trees are an important component of forests within the St. Paul District and are found in both bottomland and upland settings. Minnesota has the third largest volume of ash timber in the nation. In Wisconsin, ash makes up 6.8 percent of forest species. Ash is part of the most common forest type of North Dakota. The destruction of this resource would

*Firewood, continued on Page 5*

*Firewood*, continued from Page 4

have considerable ecologic and economic impacts. Ash seed and twigs provide a significant food source for wildlife. Birds such as the wood duck use trunk cavities for nesting. Ash wood is valued for its hardness and strength and is used in products such as flooring, furniture and sports equipment.

In 2006, U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Division in Wisconsin contacted federal land managers with the goal of forming a coordinated strategy to combat the spread of EAB. As a result, a partnership has formed among the district; U.S. Forest Service; National Park Service; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the U.S. Army at Fort McCoy; Wis., the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection; and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

Subsequently, the state of Wisconsin developed the *Wisconsin Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan* in preparation for an EAB infestation in the state. Minnesota soon followed with the *Minnesota Emerald Ash Borer Response Plan*. The plans seek to minimize the destructive effects of EAB on the states' ash resources by identifying appropriate and effective response actions to infestations. These actions include prevention, detection, communication, regulation and eradication activities. To assist with detection, the U.S. Forest Service has set up EAB trap trees at state and Corps' recreation areas including Eau Galle and Blackhawk recreation areas. These trees are frequently monitored for the presence of

EAB.

In support of state efforts, the district formed a product delivery team to draft the district's firewood policy. The purpose of the policy is to reduce the

likelihood of EAB and other damaging forest pests from spreading onto project lands and adjacent areas by limiting the movement of potentially infested

*Firewood*, continued on Page 6



Troy Kimoto, Canadian Food Inspection Agency, Bugwood.org

**Bark stripped off ash tree cuttings shows serpentine tunneling created in wood damaged by the emerald ash borer. Larvae feed on the vascular tissue producing tunnels that disrupt the transport of water and nutrients throughout the tree.**





David Cappaert, Michigan State University, Bugwood.org

**The adult emerald ash borer beetles feed on ash foliage causing minor damage to the tree. Ash trees are an important component of forests within the St. Paul District and are found in both bottomland and upland settings.**

firewood and through education of the public. The team consists of Kurt Brownell, Deb Griffith, Frank Starr (retired), Scott Tichy, Randy Urich, all in operations, and Peter Versteegen, public affairs. Col. Jon Christensen, district commander, approved and signed the policy in October 2007. The staff at district recreation areas are educating campers throughout the season.

The district firewood policy is consistent with policies implemented by the state natural resource agencies. No out-of-state firewood will be allowed on Corps' project lands. Firewood originating more than 100 miles (50 miles in Wisconsin) from project lands, or the current state limit if more restrictive, is also prohibited. An exception will be made for firewood that is officially certified as pest-free by designated state agencies.

Visitors to Corps' recreation

areas will be asked upon check-in if they brought firewood from more than 100 miles (50 miles in Wisconsin) away and educated on the policy. Visitors who bring firewood from this distance will be asked to show proof that their firewood was purchased from an approved, pest-free vendor. If the visitor is not able to provide proof of purchase, then the firewood will not be allowed in the recreation area. When a violation occurs, verbal warnings will be issued in the majority of cases, but punitive fines may be assessed in response to especially difficult situations.

Implementation of the policy will focus on informing and educating the public through visitor contacts, signage, interpretive displays and programs, as well as other methods. Signs are being installed at Corps' parks to inform visitors of the new policy. Posters will be placed throughout campgrounds,



St. Paul District photo

**Blackhawk Park posted "Firewood Alert" signage to deter the spread of emerald ash borer in firewood. The park is on the Mississippi River 30 miles south of La Crosse, Wis.**

picnic areas, boat landings and at other appropriate locations. A fact sheet is available for public viewing and dispersal. Currently, an informational brochure is being designed to hand out at Corps' project lands and will be accessible for use by other agencies.

Interagency cooperation is a key component of the firewood policy. Response to the policy from other agencies has been encouraging. The FWS will be incorporating similar guidelines into their public use policy. The policy has been shared with the rest of the Corps via the Natural Resources Management Gateway Web site. Two other districts, including Rock Island, are using St. Paul's policy as a template.

*Amantes de la ciencia*

# District presents lock and dam display at 'Lovers of Science' exhibition

by Jon Sobiech

More than 1,500 people walked by a variety of exhibits at the Science Museum of Minnesota in St. Paul, April 26.

They attended the museum to celebrate the ninth annual event that focuses on introducing visitors to science and education professionals from the Twin Cities Latino communities.

I did a presentation on the Corps' navigation mission by demonstrating how boats lock

through the locks and dams operated by the Corps of Engineers on the Mississippi River.

A toy model of a lock was filled with water to allow the children and adults the opportunity to physically move a boat up-river and into a lock chamber, then close the lock chamber, fill it with water using a pump, release it out the other side and repeat the process in reverse to send the vessel back downstream.

The model gave more than 150 kids an opportunity to learn the

basics of locking through.

There were many comments from the parents including, "Oh, that is how that works," or "I have always wondered how those huge barges get through."

Stephanie Ehnstrom, resource management office and a member of the diversity/ethnicity special emphasis program committee, provided hands-on experience building geometric domes out of marshmallows and toothpicks. She said both children and adults expressed excitement to see the end product.

Ehnstrom and Sobiech handed out brochures on how locks and dams operate on the Mississippi River and the Illinois Waterway, on lock and dam safety and handed out Spanish-language booklets on water safety.

"Participating in the Minnesota Science Museum events has always been a favorite of mine," said Ehnstrom. "So many different government agencies and businesses volunteer at the science museum's cultural events. Being a representative from the Corps' community is a great feeling."

*"La gran diversion era tenida por todos,"* or loosely translated, "A great time was had by all."



St. Paul District photo

**Jon Sobiech (right), environmental branch, used a model to show Spanish-speaking students how a boat transits through a lock on the Mississippi River. The display was part of a "Lovers of Science" exhibition at the Science Museum of Minnesota, April 26.**



Photo by Jon Lyman

**Col. Jon Christensen, district commander, honors Amy Hingsberger as the January Employee of the Month.**

**January Employee of the Month  
District honors  
Amy Hingsberger**

*David Christenson, former acting logistics chief, nominated Amy Hingsberger, civilian personnel advisory center.*

Christenson wrote:

“I am nominating Amy Hingsberger, civilian personnel, for her support to me during the hiring and selection process of logistics delivery point staff. Hingsberger took the time to provide guidance and advice on selection criteria, hiring process and sponsorship programs for the new employee. Her support was critical in making an effective decision.

“Her efforts are noteworthy as Hingsberger went beyond what was expected, as the Memphis District civilian personnel was handling the personnel action.

“Hingsberger was willing to help ensure the St. Paul District and

logistics office had a qualified and valuable asset. She readily responded to help me accomplish a difficult task.”



Photo by Jon Lyman

**Col. Jon Christensen, district commander, honors Amy Rothstein as the February Employee of the Month.**

**February Employee of the Month  
District honors  
Amy Rothstein**

*Three people coordinated separate nominations for Amy Rothstein, project management: Melissa Gulan and Natalie Siok, representing the Eastern Area Office, nominated her; Paul Machajewski, representing channels and harbors unit, Fountain City, Wis., also nominated her.*

Machajewski wrote:

“Amy Rothstein is always willing and able to help determine a solution to any and all financial issues, from the Corps’ financial management system application to P2, the project management application program.

“Most of the time she is available

at a moment’s notice. She is always calm and cool and knows our funding situation down to the penny.

“She is punctual in approving purchase requests and commitments and in assuring certification of funds. Rothstein consistently performs her duties in a reliable, capable, friendly manner.”

Wrote Gulan and Siok:

“The Eastern Area Office has reached the milestone of fully funding the Lock 10 contract, the last of the old continuing contracts. Rothstein has been very helpful in the funding process on this and every other operations and maintenance contract.

“She responds promptly to our funding requests to assure funds availability under the Prompt Payment Act.

“She is extremely timely in approving the purchase requests and commitments and in assuring certification of funds by resource management.

“These are only a few instances of Amy’s tremendous help to us in the field. She performs her duties in a reliable, capable, friendly manner.”

**March Employee of the Month  
District honors  
Carolyn Nolan**

*Virginia Regorrah, Western Area Office, nominated Carolyn Nolan. Here is what she wrote:*

“Carolyn Nolan was hired as the construction support clerk, a GS-04 position for clerical duties

*Nolan, continued Page 9*





Photo by Mark Krenelka

**Michael Bart, chief of engineering and construction, honors Carolyn Nonan as the March Employee of the Month.**

*Nolan, continued from Page 8*

within the Western Area Office, Grand Forks, N.D.

Just three months after she was hired, the office's technical support assistant, a GS-07 position, departed the Corps of Engineers. For the last year, she has been performing the duties of both positions in an exemplary manner. In addition to being the receptionist for the office and filing correspondence and administrative paperwork for more than 20 active projects, Nolan is responsible for managing the fleet of General Services Administration vehicles assigned to the office, provides monthly project updates to the district, reviews pay estimates for accuracy, completes contract closeout requirements, completes individual development plans, travel orders and timesheets for the office. She may be just one person, but she does the work of two."

# News and Notes

**Announcements:**

**Terry Fluekiger**, Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, and **Bill Kriesel**, Lock and Dam 5A, were selected early April for the district's Lockmaster Development Program.

Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh selected **Jane Groth**, Lock and Dam 6 in Trempealeau, Wis., late April for the Mississippi Valley Division's Emerging Leader Program.

**Laurie Muir**, contract records manager, was selected as an Army Corps of Engineers-Information Technology management analyst, effective May 12.

**Amy Rothstein**, program management, was selected as the chief of programs management branch April 7.

**Corrine Hodapp**, park ranger, was selected as the new lake manager of the Eau Galle Lake Project, Spring Valley, Wis.

The **Special Emphasis Program Gender Subcommittee** collected 545 items of clothing from district employees during its annual clothing drive. These items were donated to the Listening House of St. Paul, Minn., through the Federal Executive Board of Minnesota.

**Newcomers:**

**Mark Blanchard**, student, Pokegama Dam and Recreation Area

**Leslie Day**, student, Steven's Point regulatory office

**Eric Dore**, equal opportunity officer

**Lynnette Gandl**, emergency management, district office

**Jeff Grow**, Crosslake Dam and Recreation Area

**Tamryn Johnson**, student, Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area

**Ashley Kiley**, Blackhawk Park

**Rachel Nuetzel**, student, Upper Saint Falls Lock and Dam

**Chad Rethwisch**, Blackhawk Park

**Daniel Ryba**, student, Lake Ashtabula

**William Storm**, student, Pokegama Dam and Recreation Area

**Sarah Wingert**, student, Green Bay regulatory office

**Retirees:**

**Helen Lunsford**, information management, after more than 23 years federal service.

**Daniel Krumholz**, chief of locks and dams, after more than 35 years federal service.

**John Bailen**, retired chief of engineering and construction, arrived in New Orleans District April 13 and will be there three to six months. Bailen is filling in as chief of engineering control branch in engineering division, until the district selects a permanent branch chief.

## Rangers from Lake Ashtabula site teach safe boating

Park rangers Scott Tichy and Chris Botz taught rules for safe boating to more than 400 youth and nearly 90 adults in Grand Forks, N.D., April 28-30

The Safe Kids Coalition in Grand Forks sponsored the three-day event.

Tichy and Botz work at the district's Lake Ashtabula recreation area, Valley City, N.D.

"We presented our 'Kids in Boats Program' during the three days," said Botz. "We taught water safety to school groups during the day and had two evening sessions when we used the pool at the University of North Dakota to operate the electric boats that we use to teach the rules of the road for boating.

"The kids are taught to always wear their life jacket, the different types of life jackets for different uses, what to do if someone falls in the water, as well as the dangers of hypothermia, the dangers of drinking and boating in addition to learning how to operate the small electric boats," he said.



St. Paul District photo

**Chris Botz (left) and Scott Tichy, rangers at Lake Ashtabula, N.D., presented the Kids in Boats program on safe boating and water safety at the University of North Dakota pool, Grand Forks, April 28-30.**

## Blackhawk Park boosts boat safety

"What were doing here is putting an increased emphasis on water safety," said Tom Novak, manager at Blackhawk Park, DeSoto, Wis. "The banner is put up a couple of times each month with different messages focused mainly on water safety. It is located at the entrance to the park so all day users as well as campers get the message."



Photo by Tom Novak