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Intercom

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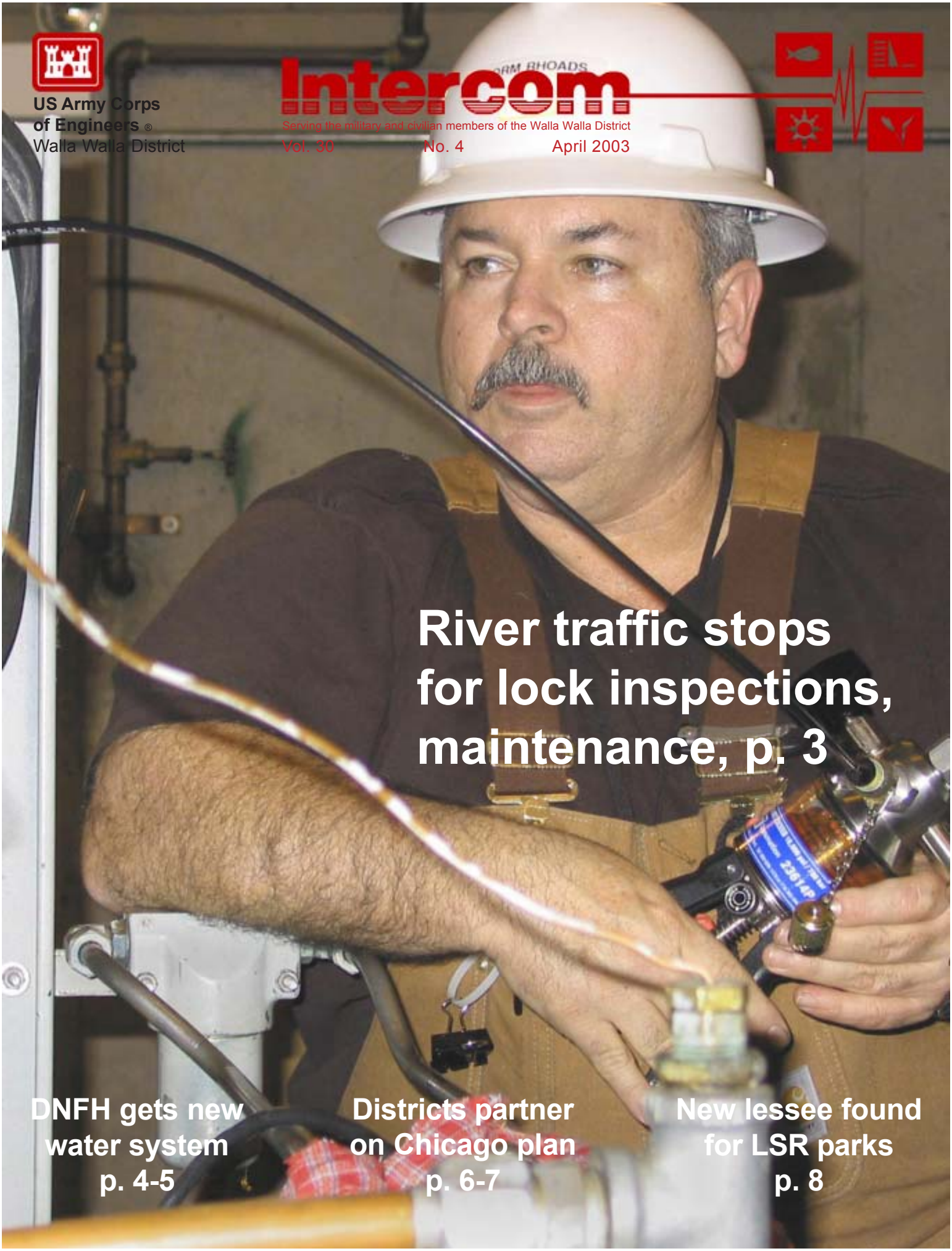

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Small Business Office supports presidential policy

Julie Dockery

"Hickory, Dickory, Dockery." You may have heard me say this to people when telling them my last name. I started my U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' career in Contracting Division at the Walla Walla District in August 1988 on a not to exceed 90-day appointment.

Here I sit 15 years later as the Deputy for Small Business. Do you know where my office is located? Do I still work for Contracting Division? Hopefully, you answered one of these questions with a "yes" and the other with a "no".

Yes, my office is located in the Contracting Division area, but no, I do not work for them – I work with them. I actually work for the commander. "Since when?" you ask. October 2001. Wow, how time flies when you're having fun! Are you now wondering just what a Deputy for Small Business does? Well, you might say that I'm the program manager for the Small Business Program. What is a Small Business Program?

U.S. Code, Title 15, states, "The essence of the American economic system of private enterprise is free competition. The preservation and expansion of such competition is basic not only to the economic well-being but to the security of this Nation. Such security and well-being cannot be realized unless the actual and potential capacity of small business is encouraged and developed. It is the declared policy of the Congress that the Government should aid, counsel, assist, and protect, insofar as is possible, the interests of small-business concerns in order to preserve free competitive enterprise, to insure that a fair proportion of the total purchases and contracts or subcontracts for the Government be placed with small-business enterprises, and to maintain and strengthen the overall economy of the Nation."

In order to carry out these policies, the Small Business Administration was created which is under the general direction and supervision of the president. Annually, the president is required to establish governmentwide goals for procurement contracts awarded to small business concerns, and commanders are responsible for the attainment of these assigned goals. Each fiscal year, data is collected for the purpose of providing congress information on the economic condition and the expansion or contraction of the small business sector.

The fiscal 2003 goals are:

Small Business (SB)	43.8%
Small Disadvantaged Business (SDB)	18.0%
Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB)	6.5%
Historically Underutilized Business Zone Small Business (HUBZone)	3.0%
Veteran-Owned Small Business (VOSB)	3.0%

I'm proud to tell you that our district carries the Northwestern Division in the above SB goal by annually awarding more than 60 percent of our contracted dollars to small businesses.

Each year, Contracting Division, with information provided by project managers, prepares an acquisition plan for the following fiscal year, and from that plan, I develop a small business forecast. If you were at the last award ceremony, you may have noticed that two project managers received awards for their support of the Small Business Program. This is what I call the power of the Project Management Business Process team.

Since I'm the initial point of contact for both large and small businesses wanting to do business with our district, if you are contacted by a business wanting to give a capabilities presentation, please make those arrangements through me. I thank you in advance. I hope that I have been able to give you some insight into what I do. If you have any comments or questions, please feel free to call or e-mail me or stop by my office.

Essayons!

Julie Dockery,
Deputy, Small Business

FRONT COVER: Inside the walls of Lower Granite Dam's navigation lock, Norm Rhoads, a utilityman, tests individual components' performance on the hydraulic unit that operates movement of the south miter gate. All gate functions and machinery were inspected and tested during the annual maintenance period at Walla Walla District's navigation locks. (Photo by Gina Schwetz)

District inspectors find "no surprises" during annual lock maintenance outage

Story and photos by Gina Schwetz

River traffic stopped March 8-22 so Army engineers and their contractors could perform annual inspections and maintenance on the navigation locks at the eight dams between Portland, Ore., and Lewiston, Idaho.

In the Walla Walla District, this outage put a pause on inland navigation at McNary Lock and Dam on the Columbia River, and Ice Harbor, Lower Monumental, Little Goose and Lower Granite Locks and Dams on the Lower Snake River.

Maintenance crews at the dams performed in-depth inspections of the locks' structural integrity and the mechanical and electrical systems that operate the locks' functional components.

"The lock is completely dewatered for this inspection," said James Holston, power plant mechanical crew foreman at Lower Granite Lock and Dam. "Everything is checked – from the top of the lock gates to the internal structure of the galleries that run underneath the bottom of the lock."

Inspection results were recorded and analyzed for operational impact.

"First, the inspection team decides if a wear and tear finding needs to be immediately dealt with or simply recorded for future referral," said Holston. "Immediate repair needs are then categorized as either easy fixes that our maintenance folks can address or bigger repair projects that may need to be outsourced."

"There were no real surprises found at any of the locks during this inspection. Many of the locks even went back into service early," said Jim Bluhm, a technical support maintenance engineer in Operations Division. "We're pleased that no major problems were found that required significant additional repair efforts before next year's planned maintenance outage."

Any time the District's locks are closed for service, Operations Division coordinates with inland shippers and cruise lines. The District's five navigation locks are used by commercial and recreational vessels. The locks are used to move vessels from one water elevation to another. Since April of 1975, an average of 1,500 vessels pass through the locks every year, about 70 percent of them are commercial barges carrying two million tons of grain, wood products, petroleum and other products up and down the Snake River.

Jim Holston points out the concrete floor slabs on the bottom of Lower Granite Dam's navigation lock that water has shifted during the past year.

Brett Gillis, power plant electrician, and Norm Rhoads, utilityman, conduct annual maintenance and inspection on the hydraulic unit that opens and closes the navigation lock's south miter gate.

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District improves fish hatchery water systems

District engineers at the headquarters in Walla Walla try to troubleshoot a flow difficulty by analyzing how the micro-grooved bio-filter bead media flows through the draft tube of their field-expedient test model of a hydrodynamic filter.

Story and photos by Gina Schwetz

Walla Walla District's Construction Division recently tackled the challenge to improve water management facilities at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery in Ahsahka, Idaho.

The hatchery, designed and built by the District as part of the Dworshak Dam construction project in the late-1960s, is operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The hatchery produces millions of juvenile steelhead trout and chinook salmon to facilitate higher numbers of fish returning from the Pacific Ocean to the Clearwater River.

Starting in June, quality assurance inspectors monitored contracted workers as they replaced an aging water-heating system and modified bio-filtration tanks, allowing water to be recycled through the hatchery by improving water quality.

"The water heaters were so outdated we were having to buy parts from South America to maintain them. It was a supply and demand issue – U.S. sources stopped stocking the parts because the old technology simply wasn't widely used in the states anymore," said David Owsley, USFWS deputy complex manager at the hatchery. "It was time to install a more modern and efficient system."

District engineers designed the plans and specifications for the new heating system. Shannon Plumbing and Heating of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, won the nearly $1.4-million contract to replace the ceramic coil electro-boilers with an automated water-heating system that works somewhat like residential water heaters.

"These new boilers process 5,000 gallons-per-minute, providing a more accurate and more efficient supply of heated river water for the facility," said Owsley.

Water filtration improvement efforts at the hatchery proved to be a much more complex project.

With the goal of modernizing five bio-filters and the hatchery's water clarifiers, the District tapped into the latest methods of water-quality improvement technology.

"First, we made modifications to the clarifier system," said Dan Forge, a construction division project engineer. "We improved the sediment scraper system and updated the electrical system."

A $1.3-million contract was awarded to R. H. Grover, Inc., of Missoula, Mont., to prepare the old sand-filter tanks to use a more effective, plastic bead technology. The tanks were extended in height, fitted with a weir system and provided with some additional framing and support structure around the tanks, said Forge.

The District hired Inca/Beck, an architectural-engineering firm from Belleview, Wash., to fabricate the filter tank modifications which cost about $230,000 . District in-house engineers designed modifications to some of the water supply systems, rerouting the water supply directly to the fish nursery. Quality assurance inspectors ensured the specifications of the project were met and safety standards were implemented on the work site.

"A lot of what we do is contract administration and spot checks on the job site for safety and product quality," said Del Gehrke, Construction Division's primary on-site inspector at the hatchery. "Throughout the course of any project, we try to facilitate a good working relationship between us and the contractors to ensure we get a really good product."

John Junius, owner of A-1 Aquaculture, who holds a

(Left) Dworshak National Fish Hatchery is located downstream of Dworshak Dam at the mouth of the Clearwater River's North Fork in Ahsahka, Idaho.

(Above) Del Gehrke, one of Construction Division's quality assurance inspector, and John Junius, designer of the bead filter, inspect boxes of bio-filter beads delivered to the hatchery in February. (Left) District engineers (from left) Bob Williams, specifications section, Brian Miller, mechanical design branch chief, Daniel Katz, hydraulic design section, and Kevin Renshaw, mechanical design branch, experiment with a field-expedient scale model of a hydrodynamic filter tank

patent on the filter design and has a patent pending on the micro-grooved beads, was on site Feb. 10-21 to help evaluate the media's performance in the newly-modified filter tanks. He explained how the new filter system would improve water quality for fish at the hatchery, and ultimately save maintenance dollars at the hatchery.

"Unlike the sand filter process, the bead media not only degasses fish-harmful nitrogen out of the water, the beads also aerate oxygen back into the water as they move through the filter," said Junius. "The beads also require less maintenance because they are hydrodynamically driven – there are no moving parts in the filter. And, the beads are continuously self-cleaning, so the filter never biofouls."

Quality assurance inspectors found room for improvement in the flow function of the filter system during initial testing. District engineers analyzed the testing data, and on March 19, recreated a scaled-down, field-expedient model of the hydrodynamic filter in back of the District headquarters building. Mechanical, hydraulic and civil experts observed how the plastic beads flowed through the "draft tube" pipe of their improvised test model.

"We're trying to determine what type of adjustments are needed to get the filter's draft tube to optimum performance levels," said Brian Miller, project manager, Engineering Division.

Testing and adjustment of the filters at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery will continue with a completion date yet to be determined, Miller added.

Inside the filter tanks at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery, welders from R. H. Grover, Inc., make structural modifications to accommodate the new plastic filter beads.

Districts team up to solve smelly problem

By Carl Knaak,
Maintenance Engineering chief

How do you keep a billion gallons of flood and sewer water from smelling up the neighborhood? That is the question facing Chicago District as they plan a large-scale floodwater control project located in the city of Chicago.

The Chicago Underflow Plan (also referred to as the Tunnel and Reservoir Plan) is a metropolitan flood control plan designed to contain combined sewer overflow (a mixture of floodwater and sewer water), preventing local flooding problems and also eliminating the environmental impacts caused by sewer overflow discharges. The plan relies on deep tunnels constructed in limestone bedrock and several large surface reservoirs to store combined sewer overflow. The surface reservoirs are the focus of the odor question.

Scientists recommended aeration to control the anaerobic bacteria that would cause the stench. But, hard data for designing an aeration system for a 250-foot deep floodwater reservoir is non-existent. So, Chicago District turned to a sister district for help.

Walla Walla District's navigation locks are 86 feet wide, 675 feet long and up to 115 feet deep – a perfect test bed for deep-water aeration experiments.

In January 2002, Heather Henneman, a Chicago District hydraulic engineer, contacted the Operations Division here to see if one of the lower Snake River locks could be used for deep-water aeration experiments. The experiments would investigate gas transfer and turbulence resulting from coarse bubble diffusers, an aeration system alternative.

Walla Walla District Operations personnel were eager to help a fellow district, but there were some hurdles to overcome.

"The experiment they initially proposed would have super-saturated the lock water above acceptable limits for protected fish species. The Engineer Research and Development Center staff were able to revise the experiment to meet environmental requirements," said Wayne John, operations division chief. "Walla Walla and Chicago are sensitive to the environmental impacts and really worked hard to meet the experimental and regulatory requirements."

While Ben Tice and Russ Heaton of planning division worked with the Chicago District staff to get the necessary permits for this work. Operations Division members checked the calendar and planned for the best time frame to conduct the testing.

Each year, Walla Walla District takes their locks out of service for two weeks to make needed repairs, inspections and maintenance. Lower Granite Lock and Dam had extensive work done to its lock in the past few months. That meant the anticipated workload at Lower Granite during the lock outage would be less than normal, giving time for the Chicago District team to install their equipment and perform their experiment during the outage window.

The team coordinated with Lower Granite's Chief of Operations Dick Hammer to plan this experiment around the dam's annual navigation lock maintenance needs.

"Because our District offices are separated by nearly 2000 miles, we used telephone conferencing and email to coordinate the deep-water research. Prior to executing the experiments, I met Dick Hammer in person only twice," said Heather Henneman, who led the coordination

Mark Plummer, a fishery biologist from Ice Harbor Lock and Dam, discusses water quality aspects of the deep-water aeration testing with Gary Johnson, a researcher for U.S. Geological Survey. (Photo by Chris Koch)

Eric Tsai, University of Minnesota student, prepares water samples for testing. (Photo by Chris Koch)

(Above) Lower Granite Lock and Dam personnel installed a floating dock across the navigation lock, giving researchers better access to gather test samples. (Photo by Gary Johnson, USGS) (Left - wearing hardhats) Bill Rose, maintenance worker, and Mark Plummer, fishery biologist, help Gary Johnson, USGS researcher, remove equipment from the lock. (Photo by Chris Koch)

effort. "With 17 deep-water researchers, numerous Walla Walla District personnel, and various equipment suppliers, all located around the country, it was a true example of virtual teamwork."

The experiment required time to set up the aerators while the navigation lock was dry March 10-14, then filling the lock to perform the in-water tests the following week.

Mechanics, electricians and other maintenance personnel at Lower Granite helped U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) personnel lower their equipment into the navigation lock for testing.

Several other Lower Granite personnel assisted USGS, ERDC, students and professors from the University of Illinois and the University of Minnesota and LRC team members during the experiment's in-water testing phase. Throughout the test, operators raised and lowered the water level in the lock to meet experiment requirements.

"From time to time, project folks were asked to provide material and hardware to repair some of their sophisticated test equipment," said Dick Hammer. "We also helped with equipment transport on the dam and safety training."

Fish safety was of concern during the experiment. Members of both districts coordinated the design and execution of the experiment to ensure water quality stayed within required levels.

"We made sure that all the environmental laws and regulations that applied to the proposed project were properly addressed," said Ben Tice, a Walla Walla District biologist. "Before the tests ever started, we coordinated with the Washington State Department of Ecology on water quality issues, the Washington State Historic Preservation Office for cultural resource issues and the National Marine Fisheries Service to address Endangered Species Act issues."

"The deep-water experiments were a success. The research team could not have done it without the outstanding support of the Walla Walla District. It was a pleasure working across District and Division boundaries with another Corps District," said Heather Henneman.

While Walla Walla District didn't have a starring role in the multi-faceted, interagency project, its support to the Chicago Underflow Plan project was essential for Chicago District to gather the test data needed to continue their work. Once the 250-foot deep overflow reservoir is constructed, the data gathered at Lower Granite will help Chicago District engineers determine the rate of air flow required to keep sewage-contaminated flood water from stagnating and developing potentially harmful (and extremely smelly) bacteria.

U.S. Geological Survey researchers installed course bubble diffusers mounted on I-beams in the bottom of the navigation lock at Lower Granite Lock and Dam to conduct in-water testing for the Chicago Underflow Plan. (Photo by Gina Schwetz)

Corps parks get new lease on life

Story and photo by Gina Schwetz

Outdoor recreation enthusiasts will be able to continue camping, boating, swimming and picnicking at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers parks along the lower Snake River this summer. During a ceremony held April 17 at Chief Timothy Park near Clarkston, Wash., Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr. signed lease contracts with Eric Mart, president of Northwest Land Management, for the company to operate facilities at Chief Timothy, Lyons Ferry and Central Ferry parks.

The parks' futures had been in question after the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission announced a year ago their plans to terminate their leases with the District. District officials went to great effort to find a qualified operator to lease the parks.

"These parks have been immensely popular with the public since they opened in the mid- to late- 1970s. You can't begin to imagine the volume of phone calls, e-mails, letters and visitors my District has gotten since first word around a year ago that these facilities might not stay open," said Kertis. "The Army Corps of Engineers wanted to find a way to keep these recreation jewels open for everyone to be able to enjoy. Thanks to the hard work and talent of a lot of folks on my staff, support and encouragement from many elected officials and an unmistakable pattern of public concern about access, we have made it happen. This new lease covers an initial 10-year period with options for as much as 35 years. That's a lot of recreation for the public to enjoy."

Corps officials selected Northwest Land Management from among eight proposals submitted to the District in January to manage recreation facilities at the parks.

Jana Brinlee, a Walla Walla District real estate specialist, shows Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr., commander, and Eric Mart, president of Northwest Land Management, where to sign on the new lease contracts.

"With more than 11 years operating in Washington, Northwest Land Management has extensive experience in managing federal recreational facilities," said Jana Brinlee, a District real estate specialist and project manager for the parks issue. "They're a solid company with a history of success in parks management."

NLM plans to reopen the parks by Memorial Day weekend.

"Northwest Land Management plans to operate these parks much like they have been in the past," said Mart. "After an assessment period we'll plan any needed changes and improvements to better accommodate the public's recreation needs."

The parks are located along the historic Lewis and Clark Trail. The parks' yearly attendance rate typically exceeds 250,000 visitors.

WWII D-Day participants decorated for Operation Overlord roles

Bryce Boylan, making remarks, was one of 12 D-Day warriors honored in a ceremony April 25 at the Jonathan M. Wainwright Memorial Medical Center in Walla Walla, Wash. The awards were presented by Rep. George Nethercutt (WA-5th), assisted by Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis Jr., Walla Walla District commander and master of ceremonies for the event.

Each former soldier, sailor, airman and marine mustered his military bearing, stood proudly and marched front and center as his name was called. After receiving his "Jubilee of Liberty" medal and certificate, each warrior reflected on D-Day .

When called, most told their branch of service, specialty, campaigns they were in, the combat paratroop jumps they made, and the pride in their sense of duty. One aging soldier, however, offered the briefest remarks in the group but touched every heart in the 50-person crowd when with tear-filled eyes he said: "I accept this honor not for myself but for my buddies, those brave boys who didn't make it back."

The honorees from all over southeastern Washington were: Bruce Boylan, Vince DeLiso, Lester Eckman, William Fleenor, Jack Folsom, Robert Franco, Gerald Gifford, Donald Hadley, James Hansen, John Hunter, Orvis Kutschkau, and Alan Victor. They received the Jubilee of Liberty medal, which was ordered by the Governor of Normandy, France, to be presented to veterans of Operation Overlord, after the 50th anniversary of the Allies' D-Day invasion of Europe, marking the beginning of the end of the war in Europe. (NWW PAO photo)