

Contracting offers convenience checks for non-VISA purchases

The Contracting Division recently announced that convenience checks are now available to use in District. Convenience checks are third-party drafts issued using the Government Purchase Card account. The Rocky Mountain Bank Card System/First Bank issues the VISA checks in conjunction with the Government Purchase Card Program.

Convenience checks offer an alternative to cash for official expenses that activities previously used imprest funds — after purchase cards and other alternatives have been determined unusable.

“These checking accounts are essentially ‘card-less accounts’ under the Government Purchase Card Program,” said Connie Oberle, chief of Contracting Division.

“They may be used for purchasing nonrecurring supplies or services up to \$2,500 when the vendor does not accept the purchase card, when the supplies or services are available for delivery within 15 days and if the purchase does not require detailed technical specifications or inspection. They may also be used for construction up to \$2,000,” she said.

“However, every effort must first be made to use the purchase card to make the

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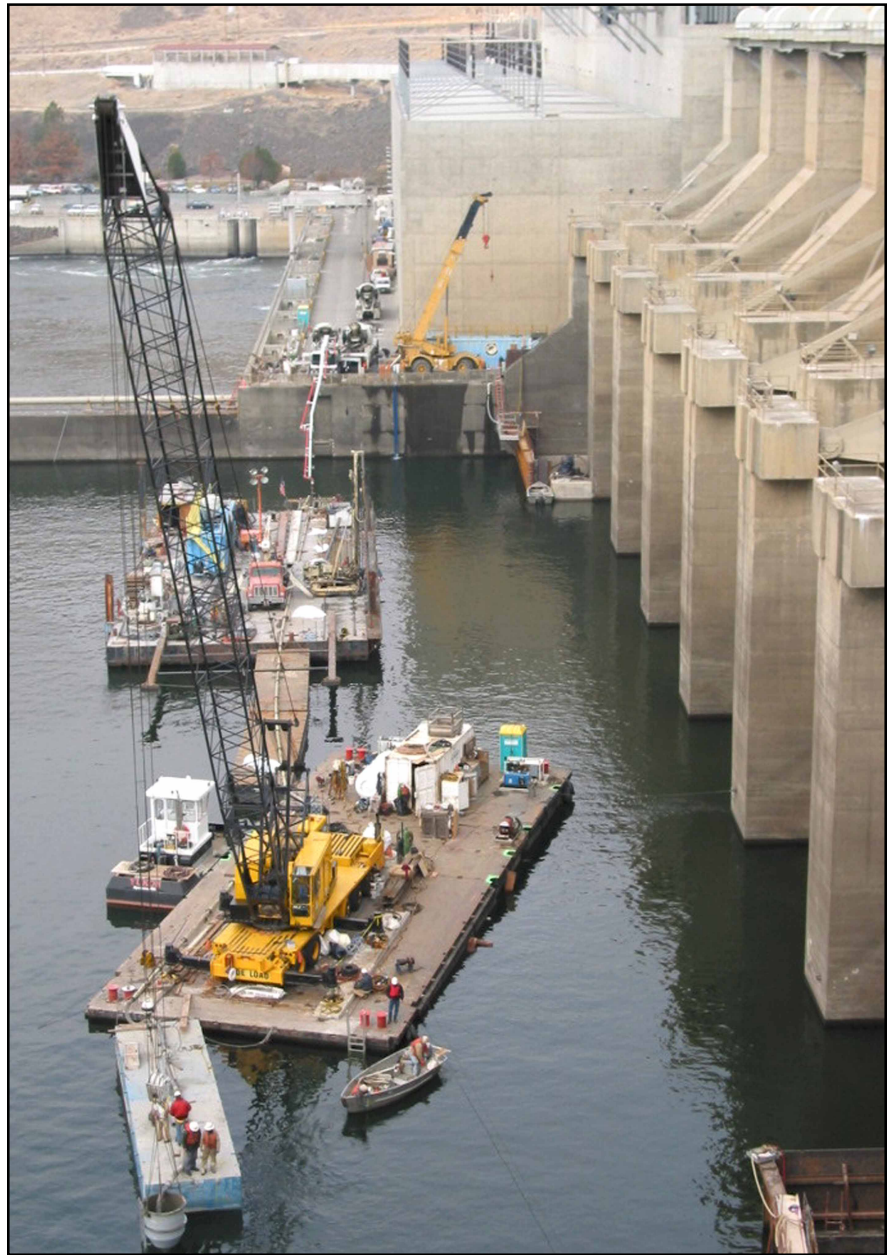


Photo by Gina Schwetz

Monumental task

Construction workers tag team truckloads of concrete into a pumper truck, providing a continuous flow through several hundred feet of pipe. The material is funneled down the stilling basin repair site below bay 2 on Nov. 26. Story and photos on page 4.

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DE discusses, defines who can 'get the word out'

I received an interesting "anonymous" e-mail recently. I've included it below.

"I find it interesting that the Department of Justice filed an appeal on the issues surrounding the Kennewick Man and we have yet to have a formal announcement of this in the district and we have to find out these things by reading the local newspaper (or in this case, the clippings from the newspapers which are 2 weeks old).

"This issue has been significant for this district but yet we know nothing about the appeal or on what it is based.

"Individuals do ask us what's going on and it's hard to tell our story when we don't know our story except through the news media (which I'm sure has told us everything correctly)."

This person presents a great observation, and I wish to address it here. I have already told everyone that my second command priority is "get the word out," meaning that we should all be public ambassadors for the Corps and our District. The dilemma this presents is knowing where our lanes of expertise and authority are and knowing enough of the facts about a particular situation to be able to address them coherently. I just can't imagine having to discuss the removable spillway weir with my neighbors. But I know those in Engineering who can.

It becomes even more complicated when the subject is a legal issue, as pointed out above. Legal issues cry out for a balance between "getting the word out" and saying something we are not supposed to say. I must tell you that I have already dealt with some extremely negative feelings towards us in several local communities because some long-ago retired District employee made a promise at a public meeting that we could not back up, nor that they were ever authorized to promise in the first place.

As serving members, we all represent the Corps. A quote given to the media from any member of the Corps will generally morph into the "position of the Corps" or "the Corps says..." Our Public Affairs Officer is the District's official spokesperson. That task may be delegated to a PAO staff member on some occasions, and they will probably work with one of you to be the interviewed subject matter expert. Everett Wright and Matt Allen were on the local news several weeks ago. They did an absolutely outstanding job! This is a testament to their communication skills, as well as the preparation given to them by the PAO. Even I don't talk to the media without first consulting someone in PAO. I did have two TV stations show up at a speech in Richland recently. I was surprised. I did grant an interview but realized afterward that I had answered a question about the DoD that I had no business answering. I did okay, but thank goodness,

they didn't use it.

I don't expect each and every one of you to be able to discuss all the District's issues. But, as my anonymous correspondent points out, some issues just can't be ignored. The DoD and the Army periodically publish "talking points" that senior leaders use to give the Army position on sensitive issues of interest. However, as a result of the e-mail I received, I am going to have the PAO and Office of Counsel ensure we have some useful information about hot topics on our Intranet site so that you will know the facts of who, what, when, where and why of our more sensitive issues. This will help us get the word out to you, and will prevent some well-intentioned employee from misspeaking on an issue.

Finally, I love dialogue. Before you send me an anonymous e-mail, ask yourself if what you are about to send is something you are proud of. If so, don't use the anonymous link. Send it over your name and let's talk about it. I love good ideas, I love discussing them, and I love recognizing people that bring them forth. I often get these notes and want to thank someone with a commander's coin, or "Message to Garcia" book. Since it is better to give than to receive, help me be a giver.

Best holiday season wishes from my family to yours.

Essayons!

Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis, Jr., District Commander



Photo by Chris Koch

It's okay to have fun

Charlie Chaplin, left, (Lt. Col. Ed Kertis, District commander) and Dracula (Maj. Harry Cunningham, deputy commander), joined in Halloween festivities and dressed up for the day. "It's okay to have fun at work," said Kertis. "This is a great group of professionals that continued to get their work done that day, yet brought a little bit of laughter into the workplace."

District members join local Veterans Day celebration

District current and former military members rode on a vintage U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' fire truck borrowed from Bonneville Dam in the Walla Walla Veterans Day parade on Nov. 11. Lt. Col. Edward J. Kertis, Jr., District commander, Maj. Harry Cunningham, deputy District commander, and military veteran Corps employees, participated in the event. Employees participating included: Debbie Lynch-Christian, Equal Employment Office; David Hays and Dave Parker, Mill Creek; Dave Piper, Security Office; James Baker and Robert Eskildsen, Office of Counsel; Erick Knotts, Dworshak Dam; Brian Hood, Information Management Office; Lisa Rodighiero, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division; and Scott Shelley, Contracting.

Photos by Chris Koch



Intercom



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Checks

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necessary purchase. While the purchase card convenience check provides an expedient solution, additional fiscal controls and automation of the checks are necessary.”

Oberle advises District staff to first check with a point of contact for more information, before initiating the purchase request. She also notes that the same rules that apply to the Government Purchase Card, apply to the use of the checks.

A significant change with the convenience checks is the flexibility and authority it gives contracting representatives to make purchases \$2,500 and less to a source that does not accept

VISA.

Three VISA checking accounts have been established in the District – Contracting Division, Eastern and Western Area Projects. The POCs are:

- Contracting Division, Mary VanSickle, (509) 527-7204.
- Eastern Area Office, Laura Heaton, Lower Granite Dam, (509) 843-1493, Ext. 242.
- Western Area Office, Barbara LaGarde, Ice Harbor Dam, (509) 543-3248.

For more information, the policy and procedures for establishment and use of convenience checks are posted on the District's Intranet Web Site at w3.nww.usace.army.mil/ct/else.htm.

LoMo basin repair work improves safety, helps fish

Story and photos by Gina Schwetz

Construction workers at Lower Monumental Dam recently completed a repair job essential to ensuring dam safety.

Over two days, they poured about 2,200 cubic yards of concrete into two large holes in the dam's stilling basin. The holes were created by erosion over the years since the dam was built in 1969. One of the holes, about 100-by-80 feet in size, and in some places, extends almost 14 feet in depth through the original concrete basin pad and into the bedrock, according to Spillway Stilling Basin Erosion Repair Project Manager Everett Wright, Engineering Division.

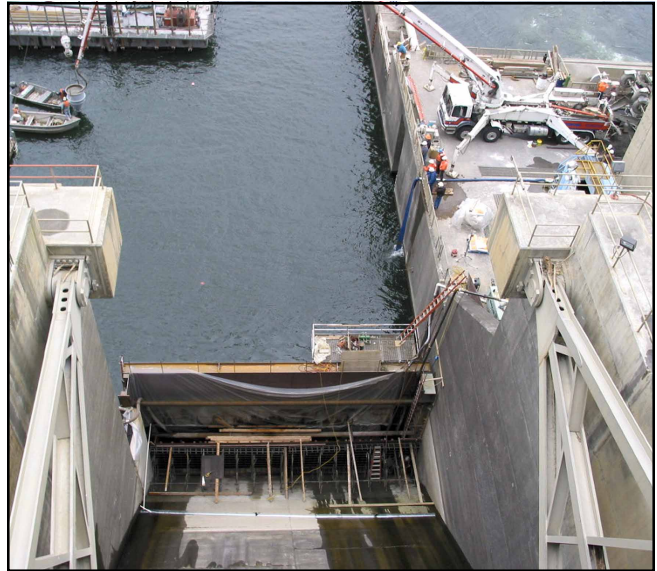
The smaller of the holes, located near spill bay 7, took almost 900 cubic yards of concrete to fill on Nov. 19. Workers spent almost 18 hours Nov. 26 filling the larger hole near bay 2 with almost 1,300 cubic yards of concrete, said Wright. Filling the holes reduces safety-impacting uplift pressures that occur during spill conditions.

While workers kept the concrete flowing, Ben Tice, a wildlife biologist, monitored the river downstream for any impact the project may have on the environment. In the basin, bubble screens deterred fish from the project area and biologists monitored the water's oxygen content, turbidity and alkalinity, said Matt Allen, operations manager at the dam.

"We've taken all these precautions to ensure minimal risk to the fish," said Allen. "We even sent divers down there to scare fish away from the fill sites before the work started."

Winter weather cooperated with workers, enabling them to finish the basin repair job with plenty of time for the concrete to cure before expected January flows, said Wright. Construction will continue through mid-

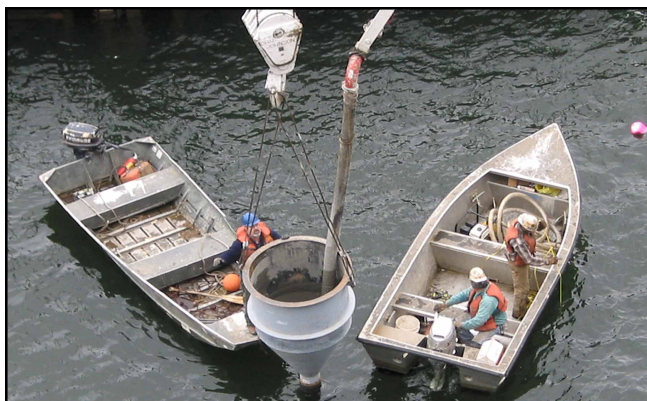
February at Lower Monumental as workers install new spill deflectors for bays 1 and 8 which will improve fish passage conditions.



While concrete flows to fill the hole near bay 7, construction workers install rebar near the base of bay 8 in preparation for adding a spill deflector.



Steve Tatro, orange coat, a Walla Walla District concrete expert, inspects progress on the basin repair work done Nov. 26. Behind Tatro, wearing blue jeans and an orange safety vest, Steve Thompson, a Mill Creek park ranger and certified dive inspector, monitors diver activity at the repair site.



Goebel Construction, Inc. workers ensure concrete flows unobstructed from the pumper truck into a funnel-topped pipe running 45 feet underwater to the bay 7 repair site. Another worker uses measuring devices to monitor concrete levels in the hole.

Dworshak workers rescue stranded hunter

by Gina Schwetz

Two Walla Walla District maintenance workers found a stranded hunter near the Swamp Creek area of the Dworshak Reservoir on Nov. 4 and helped him return to civilization.

Butch Hall and Sam Turney, maintenance workers at Dworshak, were traveling by boat to winterize minicamp facilities along the shoreline when they found an unmanned fishing boat floating in the middle of the lake.

They soon spotted a stranded hunter, Steve Kennedy of Mammoth Lakes, Calif., waving a white flag and shouting to get their attention. Turney and Hall picked up Kennedy and gave him a ride out to his boat.

Kennedy had been camping at Dent Acres since Oct 27, using the campground as a base camp while he hunted elk.

He traveled by boat on Nov. 3 to hunt in the Swamp Creek area. While hunting in the forest, strong winds picked up on the lake and dislodged his boat from its shoreline mooring, said Kennedy.

"I was feeling really lost out there ... I'm sure they saved my life."
Steve Kennedy, rescued hunter

When he returned to the mooring site that afternoon, his boat was floating on the reservoir far from shore.

"When you come down off the hill from hunting and your boat's floating out in the middle of the lake...it's almost shocking," Kennedy said during a telephone interview.

"I built a lean-to and inventoried my daypack. I had one apple and a few granola bars – I was already thinking about rationing food. I spent the rest of the afternoon and most of Monday morning sitting on the bank, watching my boat float from one side of the lake to the other, just staying about 100 feet offshore.

"I knew the water was too cold to risk swimming out there, so there was nothing I could really do about it."

Kennedy said he expected to be stranded for several days.

"Elk season ended Sunday," he said. "I figured I'd have to wait it out until some deer hunters wandered in during the Veterans Day weekend.

"I was feeling really lost out there. When those Army Corps of Engineers guys came around a corner of the lake, my eyes lit up. I don't think I've ever been so relieved. I'm sure they saved my life."

Hall and Turney downplayed their roles in the rescue, saying they just happened to come along at the right time.



Photo by Mario Guzman, Dworshak Dam park ranger

Butch Hall, left, and Sam Turney, maintenance workers at Dworshak Dam, stand near the boat they use to access facilities along the reservoir's shoreline. They were enroute to winterize minicamps when they found stranded hunter Steve Kennedy.

"When we saw that boat floating out in the middle of nowhere with nobody in it, I started scanning the shores with my binoculars," said Hall. "It didn't take too long to find him (Kennedy). He was just tickled to death to see us. We took him out to his boat, and he had a big smile on his face when he cranked-up the engine."

Kennedy made it safely back to his camping trailer at Dent Acres and departed for home on the following day.

The windstorm that unmoored Kennedy's boat also dislodged two Corps-owned floating boat docks, according to Dworshak officials.

"I thought that vandals may have pushed them out on the reservoir," said Heather Burke, a park ranger at Dworshak.

"I asked to see the security video tapes from Sunday and, for only 15 or 20 minutes, there had been lots of wind and high waves around the docks. It was just an odd, unexpected weather phenomenon that took our docks and Kennedy's boat out there."

District officials encourage visitors to plan for the unexpected when hunting, hiking and camping in remote locations.

"Had he (Kennedy) been less prepared, this situation may not have had a happy ending," said Burke. He did all the right things – carried extra food, built a shelter, made a campfire and waited for help. The smartest decision he made was to not swim out to his boat. This time of year, the water temperature is about 37 degrees. That's cold enough to cause hypothermia in a swimmer," she said.

Kennedy added that the next time he hunted in a remote area he would bring a high-frequency radio so, if necessary, he could contact emergency officials.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

Logistics chief spends spare time on the football field

Story and photos by Nola Conway

Al Butts, chief of the Logistics Management Office, sees a lot of similarities in being a manager and working as a referee on a football field.

Butts started as a baseball umpire in 1972 and took on officiating at football games in 1994.

"It was something to do in the fall and winter," he said. Though he coached Little League baseball, he never was a player.

"I got involved in umpiring because there was a need. My boys were in baseball and they needed a coach. Then a neighbor asked me to help out with umpiring a game," he said.

Butts is a member of the Washington Intercollegiate Association and referees everything from junior high to 4A high school, 8-man and 11-man football games. He retired from baseball in 2000 with 28 years experience.

There are seven teams that officiate in this area, and each group typically consists of four referees.

They usually do three to four games a week, and early season games are comfortable and local – later season games can have weather challenges like a frosty 12 degrees Fahrenheit game at Dayton, Wash., or a 200-mile trip to Deer Park, Wash., last year during the playoffs.

There are usually four referees, or "zebra backs" as the players call them, on the field. The positions include the three black hats – a line judge, linesman, umpire – and white hat serves as the referee.

Butts' favorite position is the umpire in the inside. "Some won't play that position. You really have to be aware of what is happening and stay out of the way of the plays," he said.

Not everyone always agrees with the calls. "There is no doubt that the people in the stands have the better view," said Butts. He has a field-level view crowded with 22 players.

"If you get hit, you get back up. The umpire inside can be used as a target to run a play by the team, and you really have to be ready to duck and dodge. It's part of my job to be physically in shape. I run a mile every morning. If you pull a muscle, you can jeopardize the crew by not being able to finish the game out," he said.

What makes a good game for the referees?

"Once in awhile you get thanked. But what I like to have happen is that I walk off that field and no one remembers I was there. It is a good feeling, coming off the field with everyone



Al Butts, right, gets ready with umpire Jerry Ledford to start officiating an 8-man football game held at Touchet High School in October.

thinking the officiating was fair."

How does this relate to his managerial duties?

"Officiating helps because the job I have requires consistency, that is the same on the field. You must be consistent to be effective. You must be able to manage people similarly," said Butts.

Butts has served as the chief of Logistics Management Office for the past six years. A career government employee, he has 36 years of service and previously worked for NASA and the Navy as a civilian.

As LM chief, he is responsible for eight employees who support the District for travel, transportation, storage space, headquarters building management, office supplies and property accountability.

"My responsibility as a manager is to provide guidance and allow them to make the decision. They need to have the confidence in themselves to make the right decision. They need the same guidance that ballplayers need, such as how they got the 'holding call' so they know how to hold their hands the next time," said Butts.

"Also, you don't throw flags on everything, you see if there is no effect on the play. One thing I learned is that there are different points of view, different ways to achieve an objective, but the result may be the same."

As in the game, there are really three teams on the field – the third team is the officials. Without the officials and the rules, there would be total chaos, he said.

But like the referees, Butts noted that the managers want the work to get done without employees realizing that they are there.

Regulatory chief stays in the swim of things

Story and photo by Nola Conway

No stranger to water, Brad Daly has been in the swim for most of his life. As chief of the Operations Division's Regulatory Branch, he is responsible for managing a staff that oversees regulatory activities affecting the region's waters and wetlands in Idaho. In his off-duty time he continues his focus on the water and in the center are some 35 swimmers.

Daly is the Walla Walla High School swim team coach and just wrapped up a successful girls season on Nov. 15, placing 15 out of 50 teams in the state tournament. The WaHi girls team went undefeated in its first season as a high school sport, claiming first place in the Big Nin Conference. The girls team then finished in second place in the district championships on Nov. 1-2 in Ellensburg, Wash.

Daly is now coaching the boys team during the winter sports season, which started Nov. 18 and runs through the state championships in February.

Daly grew up in Rochester, N.Y. He has worked for the Corps for the past 25 years and has a bachelor's degree in wildlife biology from Cornell University. Prior to working for the Corps, he worked temporary assignments with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in Benson, Minn., and Chatham, Mass. He also worked with the University of Washington on a fisheries research project during the construction of the Trident Sub Base in Hood Canal near Bangor, Wash.

His previous coaching experience includes 14 years with the Walla Walla YMCA swim team. He started as assistant in 1977, became head coach in 1979 and resigned in 1991, due to the time demands of coaching on his job and personal life.

Work never slowed down, but when the school gave their approval last year for a high school swimming team, he made time to reenter coaching this year and was selected as the Walla Walla High School girls and boys swim team coach for the 2002-2003 season.

Daly is well known in the local swimming circles and was a part of the local committee that was formed to establish the high school swimming program at Wa-Hi.

Coaching swim teams is a family tradition. "My Dad coached a YMCA team in his free time and my mother was involved and directed the aquatics programs at the YMCA. During my high school years, I worked at the YMCA as a lifeguard and swim instructor and helped my



Brad Daly, left, talks to the swim team poolside during a practice session at the YMCA.

Dad with the swim team," he said.

"When I moved to Walla Walla for my job with the Corps, I figured I would have some free time on my hands, so I volunteered to help coach at the YMCA. I really enjoyed working with kids in that setting and felt that I was able to help them. I cherish the relationships that I develop with my athletes and enjoy being a part of their accomplishments," said Daly.

He also competed, but was never as good as the swimmers he has coached. "I swam competitively on my local YMCA swim team in Rochester, N.Y., starting from the age of nine and then swam in high school and my first two years of college," he said.

As a swim coach, his goal is to provide a positive, rewarding experience for the athletes.

"I want them to have fun and feel good about themselves. That's possible in swimming because although not everyone can finish first, everyone can improve, and there is an absolute judge of performance, the stopwatch."

From his swim team, he learns how to communicate and motivate.

"I've learned what is really important. It's not about who finishes first, but feeling good about yourself. Only one person can finish first, but everyone who competes has an opportunity to feel good about themselves.

Daly was selected as the "All-Area Swim Coach of the Year" in November by the *Tri-City Herald* newspaper of Kennewick, Wash. An honor that both pleased and surprised him.

Daly is uncomfortable about recognition for his coaching and avoids the limelight when he can.

"I feel very strongly that it's not about me, it's about my athletes, and the focus should be on them. They deserve all the recognition for all the hard work and their accomplishments, not me."

FOCUS ON THE DISTRICT

Outreach Office serves as 'one door to the Corps' in the region

Walla Walla District Outreach Office officials, Allen Pomraning, District headquarters, and Brayton Willis, Boise, Idaho, serve as the "one door to the Corps" in the region.

They work with federal, state, tribal, county, local governments and non-governmental organizations within the district boundaries and with other Corps districts, to identify strategic opportunities.

Reporting to Paul Wemhoener, chief of Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, Pomraning and Willis assist potential and existing customers to develop programs, plans, cooperative agreements and funding opportunities for projects or partnering opportunities within the District.

The District's outreach program offers civil works customers a full of Corps' engineering and scientific expertise and solutions including environmental restoration, improving water quality and supporting other federal agencies, along with the more traditional missions of flood control, hydropower and navigation.

All across the Districts folks are becoming better "outreach" communicators so that the public better understands the Corps' service and value to the nation.

"We have to consider first and foremost the federal mission for civil works, fiscal resources we have available, the ability of potential customers to plan, execute and fund the projects, the fit of potential projects with our processes. And, we have to be non-competitive with the private sector," said Pomraning.



Cindy Boen, landscape architect, listens as a Caldwell resident expresses his thoughts on the Indian Creek restoration project. The Section 206 project is studying opening up the creek that runs through downtown Caldwell, and has had great participation from area residents.

In November 1999, the District's Boise Outreach Office was established to place a Corps presence closer to the center of the Idaho government and the 900,000 people in the Snake River Basin that the District serves.

"Our office is organized to help Idaho folks find solutions to problems facing their communities while insuring that the capabilities we offer represent a wise and effective use of federal resources," said Willis. "And that those solutions such as environmental restoration or floodplain management planning will foster the building of healthy, sustainable communities in Idaho."

Some significant collaborations include: Barber Pool Master Plan - planning assistance to a multi-stakeholder group; Lava Hot Springs - first project for environmental habitat restoration; planning assistance to Boise for floodplain benchmarking; Caldwell Section 206 - urban stream environmental restoration; Rural Community Watershed Funding Workshops; and the support for others bridge inspection programs for the Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. Forest Service.

Willis added, "The key to the successful operation of the Boise Outreach Office has been the implementation of a three-prong strategy that embodies the District's commitment to its customers." This includes:

Education: Listen to the customer, understand their needs and strategically identify Corps programs and support that best match those needs or identify other federal programs that might offer better value/match for the opportunity.

Communication: Establish and maintain a network of federal, state, tribal, local, non-government offices, and A-E contacts that are strategic to our mission execution.

Collaboration: Create strong, cooperative customer partnerships that work together to achieve project success.



Photos by Nola Conway

Wildlife biologist Ben Tice, far right, answers a question during a public meeting held in Caldwell, Idaho.