



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Walla Walla District

Intercom

Vol. 33

No. 4

August-September 2006

Eagles winter at
Lucky Peak.
See pages 6-7.

Protecting our
natural resources

FROM WHERE I SIT

Natural Resources provides quality experiences for present, future generations



Lonnie Mettler
Chief of Natural Resources

The United States Congress granted to the Corps of Engineers the responsibility to be a steward for certain lands and waters. Based on this responsibility, the Corps' Natural Resources Management Mission is to manage and conserve those natural resources, consistent with eco-system management principles, while providing quality public outdoor recreation experiences to serve the needs of present and future generations.

The Corps accomplishes this by promoting awareness of environmental values and adhering to sound environmental stewardship, protection, compliance, and restoration practices.

Within Walla Walla District the Natural Resources Management Team, which consists of the staffs located at each Operating Project and the District Office, along with various support elements, utilize two management concepts. The first concept is stewardship which focuses on sustaining ecosystems through conservation, preservation, or protection of the resources. The second concept is mitigation as authorized by Congressional legislation or approved by Corps Headquarters to compensate for ecological resources unavoidably and adversely affected by a Corps action.

The District uses a diverse group of professionals whose training includes wildlife biology, fish biology, recreation management, outdoor recreation planning, park management, natural resource management, wildland recreation, forestry, fire science, and agronomy, just to name a few. It is through the integration of this broad range of natural resource skill sets that the District is able to successfully management an array of natural resources components such as fish, wildlife, forests, wetlands, grasslands, soil, air, and water.

Walla Walla District is a recognized leader within the Corps of Engineers in managing and conserving this Nation's natural resources. We have been and continue to be a testing ground for new ways of doing business in natural resources. Many of our Natural Resource professionals have and do serve on national and regional teams for the promotion and advancement of the Natural Resources Management Program.

I have been a part of Walla Walla District's natural resources evolution over the past 27 years. I take great pride in visiting Corps facilities whether they be parks,

interpretive facilities, habitat management units, or fish passage facilities because I recognize the efforts of the many people that have contributed to providing the citizens of the United States access to this nations natural resources.

I encourage all Corps employees to take the opportunity to visit our natural resource facilities and areas and reap the benefit of this District's labors.



photo by Glen Hush

Intercom is an unofficial publication authorized by the provisions of Army Regulation 360-1. It is published bimonthly by the Public Affairs Office, Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It has a distribution of 1,000 copies. It is digitally printed by the Document Automation and Production Service. Contents of the INTERCOM are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, or the Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

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On the Cover...



photo by Glen Hush

Visitors to Lucky Peak Lake near Boise, Idaho, are thrilled during the winter to see bald and golden eagles feeding at the dam's outlet. During especially cold winters with thick ice, Lucky Peak's outlet stays clear, providing a fish cafeteria for eagles. Photographer Glen Hush used a super-sharp telephoto lens to record the large predators on the front cover and on pages 6-7.

Fair Board prez serves country and community

by Joe Saxon

Service is nothing new to Terry Atchison, an information technology specialist in the Walla Walla District.

The Walla Walla native and former Vietnam veteran who served 25 years in the Army Reserves before retiring as a



Terry Atchison

Command Sgt. Maj. in 1995, just completed his second year as President of the Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days Board of Directors. His interest in the

Fair emerged when he was about 14, while following his grandfather around in 1959

“My grandfather was in charge of the Fair’s security and maintenance crews and it was exciting greeting and meeting new people. I wanted a job with him in 1962, but he said he did not hire friends or relatives and that I needed to ask the fair manager for a job. I did so, thinking I had clout since my grandfather worked there. I got a job, but it turned out I ended up at the barn shoveling horse manure,” he laughed.

That aside, he has been a fixture at the Fair ever since, doing maintenance, security, lawn care, or cleaning the grandstands, except for three years he missed while on active duty.

As Board President, he coordinated the activities of the Board of Directors and 400 volunteers, while working with the Fair manager, her staff and Walla Walla County Commissioners.

“People are the key assets behind this – they work their hearts out,” he said. “It gets stressful, but the friendship and camaraderie of working with over 400 volunteers of various talent is a lot of fun. I also work with a tremendous board – an all working board, and you can’t say enough about the Fair manager Cory Hewitt and her staff.

Atchison, who sits on the Board of Washington State Events and Festivals, says he volunteers because “I view it as a new challenge and I see others doing the same thing and I want to be part of that.”

Cost engineers triple check the bottom line

by Rick Haverinen

Just as engineers can design a bridge, a building or a dam, the cost of completing the same project can also be a deliberative process.

The field is cost engineering, and while a first glance might make you think the adjective and noun are switched around, the discipline goes far beyond counting beans or dollars.

“We prepare cost estimates and construction schedules, and we do risk analysis. We determine contingencies, and do independent reviews and bid ability to view it from a contractor’s point of view. We also look at a contract to see how it’s put together, and then price it out,” said Kim Callan, chief of the Cost Engineering Branch at Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The Corps designated directorate of expertise has 15 branch staffers working on projects involving numerous agencies.

“The nice thing about Walla Walla is we help people across the country. We do quite a bit of hydropower; rehab, say, for Fort Worth District; for Sacramento District we do large civil works projects that are very difficult to get a handle on. Probably the biggest thing is you have so many different markets out there that getting good prices, can be challenging.”



Kim Callan

A high-level assignment for the Department of Energy (DOE) has Callan’s office looking at cost estimates by contractor Bechtel National, Inc. for construction of a nuclear waste treatment plant at DOE’s Hanford site near Richland, Wash.

Hanford was the site of the world’s first full-scale plutonium production reactor that powered the first atomic explosion at Alamogordo, New Mexico on July 16, 1945. On Aug. 9, 1945 an atomic bomb containing plutonium from the reactor was dropped on Nagasaki, Japan.

Bechtel’s December 2000 estimate of approximately \$4 billion to construct the waste treatment plant had risen to about \$12.2 billion by Sept. 2006.

Meanwhile, the District’s work on cost validation for the Hanford project has been “very challenging” according to Callan, and included a trip in April to Washington, D.C. where he testified before the House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

Because Callan’s office so frequently scrutinizes the cost for doing any kind of work, the staff digs into reference materials that provide labor, material and equipment prices. The tougher part is

knowing how many hours, days, weeks or months a particular task requires.

“A lot of it comes from our trained personnel who have either witnessed this type of thing, gained knowledge throughout their years of working, or from researching publications that provide production rates or completion estimates,” he said.

Callan’s office produces a construction equipment rate schedule that is used throughout the Corps. Because of the expertise in the cost engineering section, the staff can suggest changes internally if a proposed design might be expensive to build, or negotiate with a contractor if a bid is unreasonably expensive.

Callan’s satisfaction at the end of the day is knowing his office has saved dollars on behalf of the taxpayer.

“The cost engineering field is nice to work in,” Callan said. “A lot of times in design or management, your project goes on for a significant amount of time before you finally see it completed.”

“With cost management, you have a very short window to prepare your estimate and you have immediate results. Usually you have a bid opening, or you have some final number where you can evaluate your efforts in a timely manner. So yes, there are good results from that,” he said.

Trees take beating as timber harvested

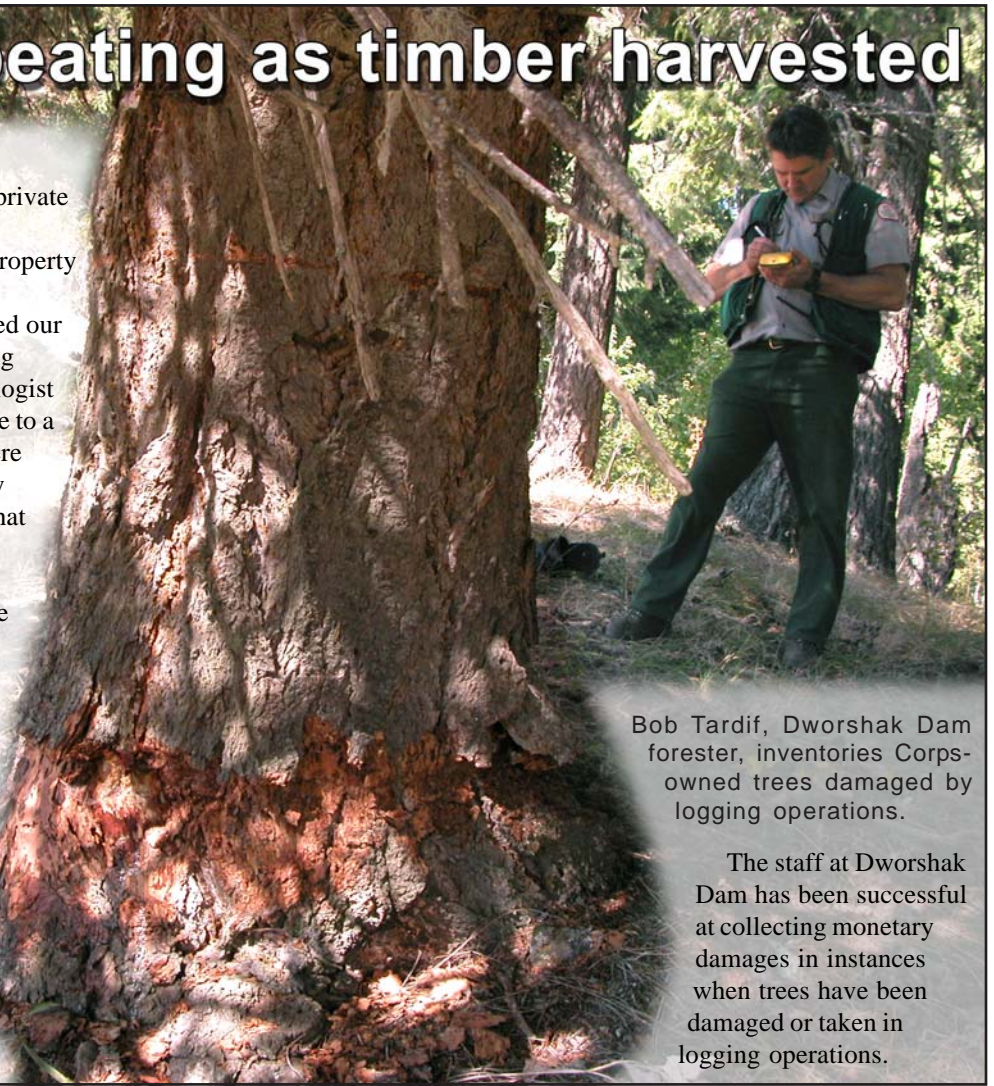
By Rick Haverinen

Managing public forest land next to private holdings can mean commercial logging operations sometimes spill onto public property with resulting damage.

“Adjacent land owners to us have used our trees for tail holds, in a cable line skidding operation,” said Russ Davis, wildlife biologist at Dworshak Dam. “They’ll attach a cable to a tree farther beyond or downhill from where they’re actually logging. Frequently they use our trees for that and a lot of times that damages the trees.”

Davis said he thinks the damage is a mixture of loggers not knowing where the property line is and others who take advantage of an opportunity.

“Our forester Bob Tardif has been really proactive in looking at these areas and identifying damaged trees,” Davis said. “Our property is not monumented in a lot of places so some of it’s negligence and some of it’s on purpose. Sometimes the forester out there is running a compass and trying to stay on a line and sometimes they don’t. We also have trees that are taken off our land as well and Bob finds those.”



Bob Tardif, Dworshak Dam forester, inventories Corps-owned trees damaged by logging operations.

The staff at Dworshak Dam has been successful at collecting monetary damages in instances when trees have been damaged or taken in logging operations.

Mona Wright takes care of cultural resources

By Joe Saxon

Part caretaker, part scientist, Walla Walla District Archeologist Mona Wright has her sights set on the past.

Wright, a trained anthropologist who spent eight years in Ecuador with her missionary parents, has dealt with cultural resource management issues for the past 28 years.



Mona Wright

The Ohio native is the Walla Walla District’s primary cultural resources caretaker which includes storing 520 collections, comprising about 56,000 cubic feet of cultural artifacts, at five public university and state repositories in Washington, Oregon and Idaho.

“The Corps assumed custody of many cultural artifacts and cultural items after

removing them from lands being flooded for dam constructions,” she said.

One cemetery removal involved the Palúus collection, which recently was repatriated to federally recognized tribes.

“The Palúus collection contained the contents of a cemetery that were removed in 1964 when one of the reservoirs was filled,” she said. “It took four years of consultation with the tribes, identification of lineal descendants and cultural affiliation, inventories and receipt of an intertribal claim before the collection could be repatriated to the rightful descendants.”

The District’s former commander, Lt. Col Randy Glaeser showed great interest in the repatriation and reburial process, and actively promoted teamwork to ensure a successful outcome, she said. “Returning cultural items to their owners simply is the right thing to do.”

Wright said there are laws in place that require federal agencies to identify archeological sites and special places before ground disturbance “to ensure we don’t damage unique resources.”

Three primary laws, the Native American Graves Protection Repatriation Act, Archeological Resource Protection Act and Sect 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act guide Wright and the District regarding archeological sites, historical items, Native American cultural artifacts and items.

They help determine “ownership or control of Native American cultural items discovered on Federal or tribal lands and help secure, for the present and future benefit of the American people, the protection of archeological resources and sites which are on public lands and Indian lands,” Wright said.

A noxious weed at Dworshak is comfy for cyphocleonus achates

By Rick Haverinen

If you're used to fighting aphids that are sucking the life out of your roses, bio-control measures using insects require a new kind of thinking. It's good when insects kill plants.

Not every plant on the planet is welcome. The Northwest has problems with unwanted weeds that displace more desirable plants, and Idaho has classified 36 exotic plants as noxious. State law requires landowners to control problem weeds on their property. Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, owns Dworshak Reservoir at Orofino, and so is responsible under State of Idaho regulation to control noxious weeds growing on Corps land.

"Rush skeleton weed is a new invader at Dworshak Reservoir," said Russ Davis, wildlife biologist, "so we have different tactics to treat that versus something like spotted knapweed, which we have everywhere." Our mandate for rush skeleton weed is to eradicate it while it's still low in numbers. With spotted knapweed our goal is to contain it. There are areas on the reservoir where



photos by Rick Haverinen

Above, spotted knapweed springs up near a boatramp at Dworshak Reservoir in Idaho. Classified in the state as a noxious plant, knapweed can be clobbered by tiny cyphocleonus achates insects (inset) that bore into the plant's roots.

it's really hard to apply herbicide and areas where we don't want herbicide at all because of sensitive plants. So we've started working with the Nez Perce Tribe Bio-Control Center. They're doing an excellent job identifying and locating weed populations, and also dispersing bio-control agents. There are various insects that attack both knapweed and yellow star thistle. We've



Paul Brusven

also started to create quite a few nursery sites for these insects to try to slow down the spread of these weeds."

Paul Brusven is the coordinator at the Nez Perce Tribe Bio-Control Center who has been working with Dworshak's forester, Bob Tardif, to use insect control on the reservoir's noxious weed populations of yellow star thistle and spotted knapweed.

"These are insects that are host-specific to certain noxious weeds," Brusven said, "so they only feed and complete their life cycle on specific noxious weeds."

The process through which insects are selected to destroy weeds in the wild is very deliberate. All but two of Idaho's 36 noxious weeds were imported from other parts of the world. Biologists travel to those areas to learn what insects prey on the specific weeds. If a foreign insect species looks promising, it is introduced into the United States under very strict quarantine conditions, usually at a university laboratory.

"There is tremendous host-specificity testing to safeguard our vegetation ecosystems over here," Brusven said, "and these insects that we bring in are very much host specific. They're not going to feed on any other plant. The biologists also make sure there are no parasites attached to these insects that are brought in so that we're not creating a problem somewhere else down the line."



Gardener Deanna Walker checks a tub of purple loosestrife in the greenhouse at the Nez Perce Tribe Bio-Control Center in Lapwai, Idaho. Loosestrife is a rapidly-spreading semi-aquatic plant with no nutritive value for wildlife, and is classified as a noxious weed in Idaho.

National emblem flies



into Lucky Peak



Winter visitors attract fans

The living United States national emblem drops in on Boise, Idaho for winter vacations.

"We have two species, bald eagles and golden eagles," said Lucky Peak Lake Natural Resources Manager Dave Brownell, "but bald eagles are drawing the most

attention because they were on the endangered species list for quite a while."

Brownell said the spectacular raptors are usually around between November and March.

"We've had some really hard winters when the two lakes above us freeze over and even Lucky Peak is frozen over some years," Brownell said. "In those years as they come down from Alaska and Canada, the first really good open water they find that's really good fishing grounds for them is the outlet area below the lake because the discharge keeps it from freezing. We had an old black cottonwood tree there and I have counted as many as 19 eagles in that tree at one time. It absolutely looked like a Christmas tree with eagles in it. Unfortunately it's about ready to die, partly because beavers have been after it."



Dave Brownell

The staff at Lucky Peak got support from the Audubon Society, Idaho Power and other partners to install two artificial perches for the eagles near the dam outlet.

"They're power poles with some perch cross members for the eagles to use," Brownell said. "Plus we've planted some new cottonwoods underneath those. They're young yet and they're getting established. For the first 2-3 years the eagles wouldn't use the power poles. This year the eagles have started to use those perches. It was a little harder winter. This year we had probably 5-6 eagles, and a couple of them would use the tree. It doesn't have very many branches left on it. But as soon as that became filled, some of them moved to the other. So we're glad to see that given not much other good natural choice, they will move to those perches. We don't know of any eagles in nest sites on the project. What we're seeing is fishing and other feeding activity here. There are some nests downstream of us actually, down around the Barber Pool area on the way to Boise, so they do nest in the area."

Photography by Glen Hush, a frequent Lucky Peak visitor.

Photo montage by Rick Haverinen.

Keeping up with

By Rick Haverinen

The natural resources staff at Dworshak Reservoir in Orofino, Idaho is working with Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game to learn what the state's fisher population is up to.

The fisher is a small mammal related to the marten and both are in the weasel family.

"Fishers are listed as a species of greatest conservation need in the state," said Joel Sauder, regional nongame biologist for the Lewiston office of Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game. "They're ranked as an S-1 which means critically imperiled, and part of that is due to a lack of information. We don't know a lot about fishers in the northern Rocky Mountains in general."

Sauder is heading the state's study which has so far used automatic cameras focused on bait stations the summer of 2005. Last winter over 100 hair snag traps were set out in wilderness areas.

"Fisher habitat is mature coniferous forests at low elevation with multi-tiered canopies and a suitable prey base," Sauder said. "Those are becoming more rare. Logging, fires, habitat alteration can impact those habitats. So we're a little bit concerned about what those possible modifications could be doing to fisher populations."

The hair snag traps are made from sheets of foam core board folded into a triangle-shaped tube about 15 inches on each side

and 33 inches long. One end is covered with hardware cloth and baited on the inside with meat while the other end is left open. The fisher, or any small carnivorous mammal, enters the trap to get at the bait and hopefully rubs its fur against metal wire rifle cleaning brushes protruding into the trap. Any hairs left on the wire brushes are sent off to a laboratory for DNA analysis.

"Only in the last 5-10 years have we gotten the genetic techniques that allow us to use non-invasive techniques like hair snagging," Sauder said. "We call them non-invasive because you don't have to handle the animal. You don't have to punch a hole in its ear for genetic samples. You don't have to capture it. You don't have to drug it. He just comes into the trap and takes off a few hairs and walks away and doesn't even know he's been sampled. Yet we've collected a very vital piece of information. We're able to identify not only what species that hair came from but also the individual that it came from. We use the information to understand what populations are doing. So it's a really new technique and it's being applied to lynx, grizzly bears, and other animals across the U.S. and around the world."

Sauder set out the hair snag traps during the winter to avoid a somewhat larger mammal.

"The primary reason (to work during winter) is so we don't have to deal with bears," Sauder said. "Bears would be attracted to these traps by the beaver and skunk scent and the scrap meat that we place in there. They would demolish the trap which would ruin our efficiency. So by working in the winter, bears are in hibernation but fishers are still out and about and so are marten, another species



photo by Rick Haverinen

Regional Nongame Biologist Joel Sauder, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game in Lewiston, left, and Wildlife Biologist Russ Davis, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Dworshak Reservoir, demonstrate how the hair snag trap is assembled. This task would normally be performed at frigid winter temperatures.

the fishers

that we collect quite a bit of information about. Winter is just before fishers breed, which is in March. So we have a lot of fisher activity in the winter when it's easier to get other information from them. Not only can we get them in a snag trap to identify the individual, but we can also see cut tracks of a fisher crossing the road. Then we know there's a fisher working in the area. So the snow actually works as a secondary detection device."

Russ Davis, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers wildlife biologist at Dworshak

issues," Davis said. "Wildlife populations don't recognize landowner boundaries so it really requires managing wildlife within regions, rather than each separate landowner. So it's good to know what Potlatch (Forest Holdings Inc.), what the State of Idaho is doing for a particular species or what the U.S. Forest Service is doing in terms of managing species. And see if there are things we can do on our land to augment what they're doing rather than just looking at our land and saying what's best for our land."

Davis said the three hair snag traps that Sauder's study used on Dworshak Reservoir property did not capture any fisher hairs, "but we did find hairs from a pine marten."

"This year we're going to be ramping up to sample a larger percentage of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer land with hair snags to see if fishers are occurring on Army Corps land," Sauder said. "We've already documented

that marten occur on Corps land, something that we originally thought was a fluke when the original inventory was done at Dworshak 10-15 year ago. Marten were seen once at a camera bait station, and we thought that was an anomaly because it was pretty low elevation. Through this project we've documented them to actually occur quite commonly. We've seen adults and young in some cameras that we've set up, and

also hair snags that we've recovered. So marten occur on their land. They have a very similar habitat requirement as fishers. It's probable that fishers are using that landscape as well."

Sauder wants to capture live fishers next winter and radio collar tag them. Walla Walla District will not only contribute Davis' support for the next phase of the study, but will help with a bit of the funding. The radio collar tags work with orbiting satellites, and that will be a costly

phase of the survey.

Sauder said the State of Idaho has wildlife interests at Dworshak Reservoir beyond the occurrence of fishers.

"Dworshak Reservoir is a really great resource for birds that are staging for migration," Sauder said. "Harlequin ducks use the reservoir when they're migrating as do common loons. A variety of shorebirds use the Corps land, and also Coeur d'Alene salamanders and Idaho giant salamanders."



photo by Rick Haverinen

Sauder peers through the bait side of the hair snag trap. Rifle cleaning brushes are arranged to collect hair samples of animals visiting the device.



photo by Dave Beaver, Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game

Joel Sauder, right, sets a hair snag trap near Hemlock Butte in Idaho in February. Jay Crenshaw, regional wildlife manager for Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game in Lewiston, is left.

Reservoir, has been working with Sauder throughout the fisher study.

While much is still to be learned about the Idaho population of fishers, the population of wildlife biologists within any Idaho government agency is quite small. Davis said the ability of specialists in his field to collaborate on wildlife studies is paramount.

"It's more than educating each other because you're dealing with regional



photo courtesy of Idaho Dept. of Fish and Game

A pair of martens springs from a baited tree in July 2005 at Dworshak Reservoir. Automatically triggered cameras were used to inventory wildlife in the area.

Put everything in its place

by Rick Haverinen

Nature has already provided a place for everything so the natural resources crew at Dworshak Dam is putting everything in its place.

Natural Resources Specialist Sam Martin is doing the work with a computerized geographical information system (GIS), which outpaces mapping with tools that include aerial photography overlays and the ability to create multiple detailed plots of an area.

“The geographical information system (GIS) is a very powerful analysis tool,” said Martin. “GIS gives us the ability to quantify a lot of things in our environment.”

Dworshak is using the system to plot vegetation, wildlife habitat, noxious

weed locations, recreation sites, and much more. One use shows where gates are on project roads.

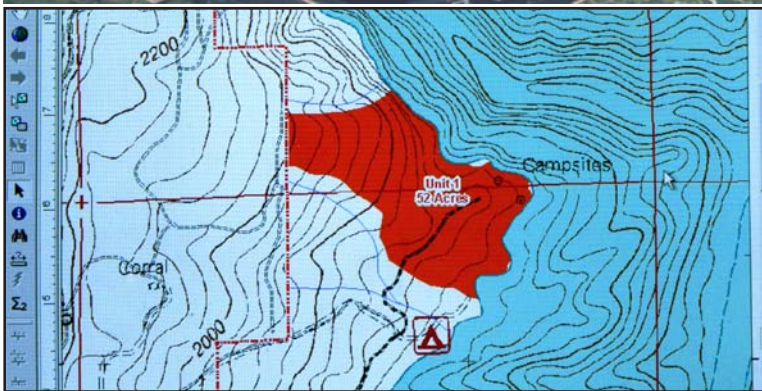
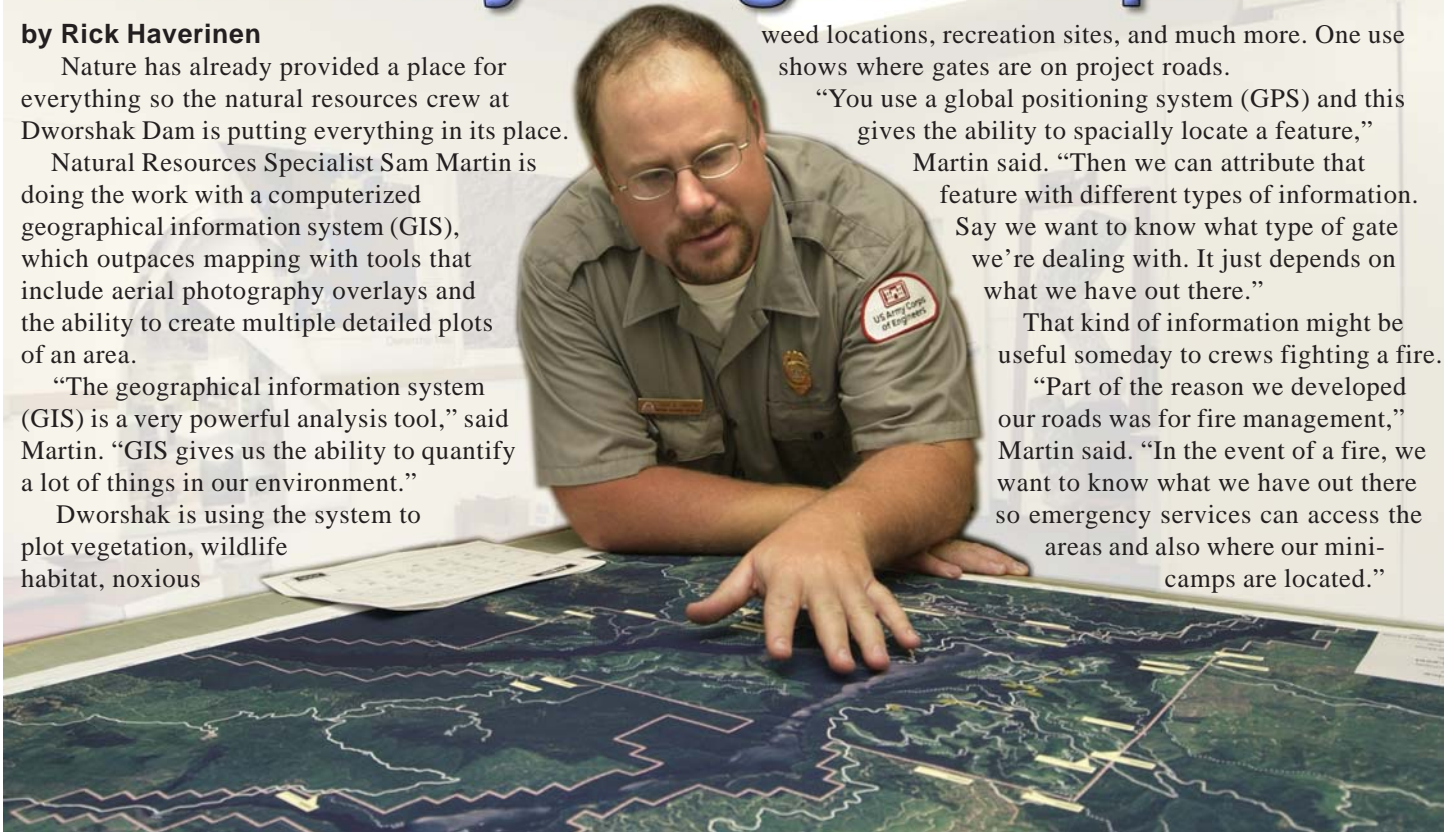
“You use a global positioning system (GPS) and this gives the ability to spacially locate a feature,”

Martin said. “Then we can attribute that feature with different types of information.

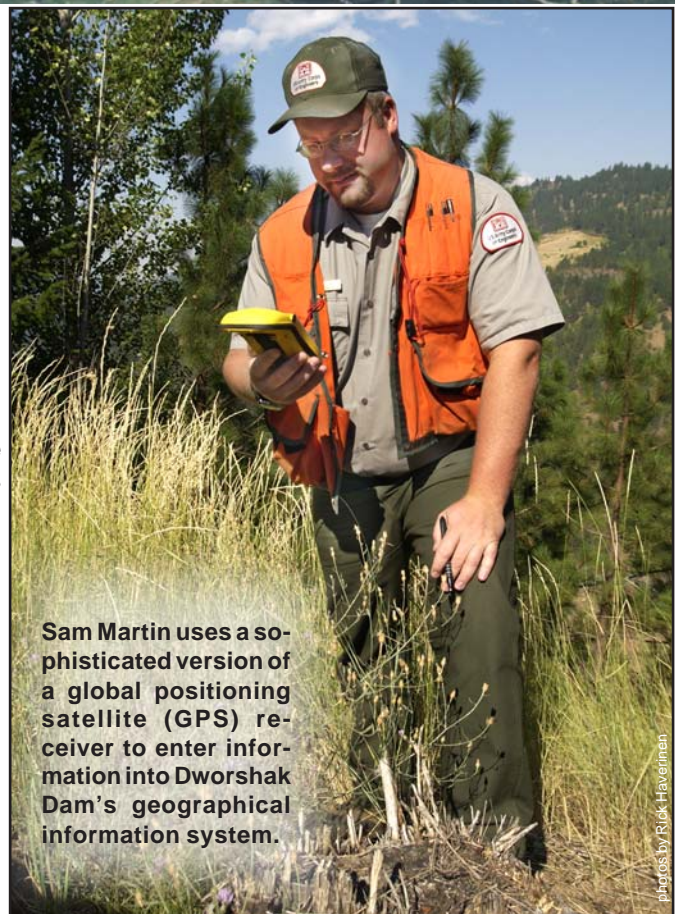
Say we want to know what type of gate we’re dealing with. It just depends on what we have out there.”

That kind of information might be useful someday to crews fighting a fire.

“Part of the reason we developed our roads was for fire management,” Martin said. “In the event of a fire, we want to know what we have out there so emergency services can access the areas and also where our mini-camps are located.”



The versatility of a geographic information system (GIS) is illustrated by overlay examples of the same area on Dworshak Reservoir. The top view from a computer monitor shows elevation contour intervals and a campsite. The bottom view from a printout shows vegetation.



Sam Martin uses a sophisticated version of a global positioning satellite (GPS) receiver to enter information into Dworshak Dam’s geographical information system.

photos by Rick Haverinen

NWW has open land, game

by Rick Haverinen

Walla Walla District gets plenty of nature watchers who like to look at the flora and fauna, but there are more than a few active hunters and fishermen who would like to take home a fish, bird or deer from Corps property.



Al Sutlick

“The primary species on our lands are going to be pheasant and California quail,” said Al Sutlick, wildlife biologist at Walla Walla District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “There are upland game bird species that are the most hunted there, and the state does stock ring-neck pheasant on our lands to supplement the hunting on a number of our habitat management units (HMUs), but there also are white tailed deer in some of our intensely-managed units, and while some of them are open to rifle hunting, most of them are archery or shotgun because of the close proximity of other hunters. You can have some pretty good hunting early in the season for some of them. Waterfowl is another big one.”

Sutlick said some of the areas around Central Ferry are very good for goose and duck hunting.



photo by Russ Davis, wildlife biologist, Dworshak Dam

Forrest Davis, 11, shot a turkey in April from about eight yards away at Dworshak Dam's Elk Creek Meadows.

“Canada geese are almost exclusively the goose species, but we have mallards,” said Sutlick. “When you get to the west end down near McNary Dam and Tri-Cities, we see a lot more pintails, and widgen, gadwall, green wing teal, a little bit of everything. On the Snake River it's more limited to mallards, and some divers, maybe some ringnecks and scaup. We're seeing more wood ducks and canvas backs towards the west end on the Columbia River around McNary pool.”

Sutlick said Corps land is technically open for elk but there are few of them.

“There's an elk herd north of our land around Hanford, but we also had various strays of elk and moose that have wandered through the area coming down from Idaho and through Colfax,” Sutlick said. “We had a group of elk that took up residence on the south shore of the Snake River across from big flat HMU a couple of years ago, and we occasionally see some bighorn sheep on McNary project down near Walulla.”

Sutlick said Little Goose and Lower Granite have good hunting for Hungarian partridge and chucker partridge.

“It's quite difficult hunting because it's very rugged territory,” Sutlick said. “You're side-hilling a lot. It's quite a dry area, but as you go upstream, say from Central Ferry area where highway 127 crosses the river, you'll get into both those species. The farther you go up, the more you'll find chucker partridge. As you get up into the Snake River above Clarkston, you get into some of the best areas. We start moving off our lands somewhat up that way, but there's quite a bit of state land that provide good opportunity.”

Sutlick said anyone looking for hunting or fishing maps on Corps property in Walla Walla District can email him at albert.f.sutlick@us.army.mil.

Keeping elk around means three squares a day

by Rick Haverinen

Dworshak Dam manages a multi-faceted program to provide elk with a culinary lifestyle they like being accustomed to.

“When Dworshak Dam was built and the north fork of the Clearwater River was inundated, experts figured we lost 16,000 acres of elk winter range,” said Russ Davis, the Dworshak wildlife biologist. “As a result of that we had a memorandum that we would maintain a 5,000 acre block for elk habitat.”

Davis said Dworshak tries to manage the 5,000 acre block with the recommended mixture of 40 percent cover and 60 percent open areas.

“The most palatable, most nutritious forest species for elk is red stem ceanothus,” Davis said. “If you have a viable plant,

the seed will remain in the ground for about 150-200 years. But it needs heat scarification from a fire to break the seed coat, and then it has to lay over a winter and get cold stratification before it finally germinates. So we try to improve elk habitat by having a hot burn to heat up the soil enough to get that heat scarification. The clearcuts and burns that they did in the 1970s created an ice cream parlor for elk. We now believe that we don't have the seed source in the ground because the red stem grew up, but it never got big enough to seed out. Elk kept hammering them down until eventually a harsh winter killed the plants off. So we're concerned about some of these areas and we're testing by doing some seeding and fertilizing to see if we can't get back a population of red stem in the area.”



Riding high, standing tall



Phil Rider distributes soccer balls and other gifts in Fallujah, Iraq, last February. Below, Rider poses with one of his security details at Camp Fallujah in March.

photos courtesy Phil Rider

By Rick Haverinen

Phil Rider remembers young people when he thinks of his deployment to Iraq. The young people include Iraqi street kids he met and the youthful U.S. Soldiers and Marines who provided security for him as he traveled

between his base camp in Fallujah and various construction sites.



“I learned a little bit of Arabic and some of the kids spoke broken English,” Rider said. “We started handing out candy, clothes and soccer balls. We got to the point when we pulled up, the kids would recognize me by my mustache.”

Rider is a power plant mechanic crew foreman at Little Goose Lock and Dam. He volunteered for a deployment to Iraq from September 2005 to April 2006, spending his tour at Camp Fallujah.

“I got sent over as a quality assurance representative,” Rider said, “but the group I

was attached to was shorthanded and I pretty much became a project engineer overnight.” He checked construction progress several times per week, traveling to Fallujah city, Ramadi and Karma. Each trip involved a security detail of British mercenaries or a mix of U.S. Soldiers and Marines.

Rider said the week was “Monday through Monday, 12 hours a day. It was tough at first, but you get into a groove as it goes on.”

Rider described his deployment in Iraq as a “fulfilling experience even though nerve-racking at times because we had about 7-8 really close calls with car bombs and IEDs (improvised explosive devices).”

Rider said the saddest part of his deployment was when two of his U.S. Marine escorts were killed by sniper fire.

“Everyone that I traveled with thought they were making a difference,” Rider said.

A poet for 40 years, Rider wrote a verse to honor the young Marines who were killed.

STANDING TALL

If you see one on the street sometime in a uniform standing tall, just walk right up and shake their hand. Tell them, “Thank you,” that is all. Just those two words to a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine will make worthwhile their commitment and justify what they’ve seen. It doesn’t hurt to clap your hands and pay them a little respect. They all have left their loved ones home. They just deal with that aspect. If you see one at the airport in a uniform standing tall, you can bet they believe in Freedom and they heard their country call. So next time you pass a Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine, and they’re standing tall and looking proud, know they’re ready for what’s unseen. Don’t look at them as killers, but as family protecting your rights, so you and your children can go to bed as they stand watch through the night. So next time you see a Serviceman in a uniform standing tall, just walk right up and shake their hand. Tell them, “Thank you,” that is all. **Phil Rider, February 2006**