



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Walla Walla District

*Special Edition*

# Intercom

Vol. 33

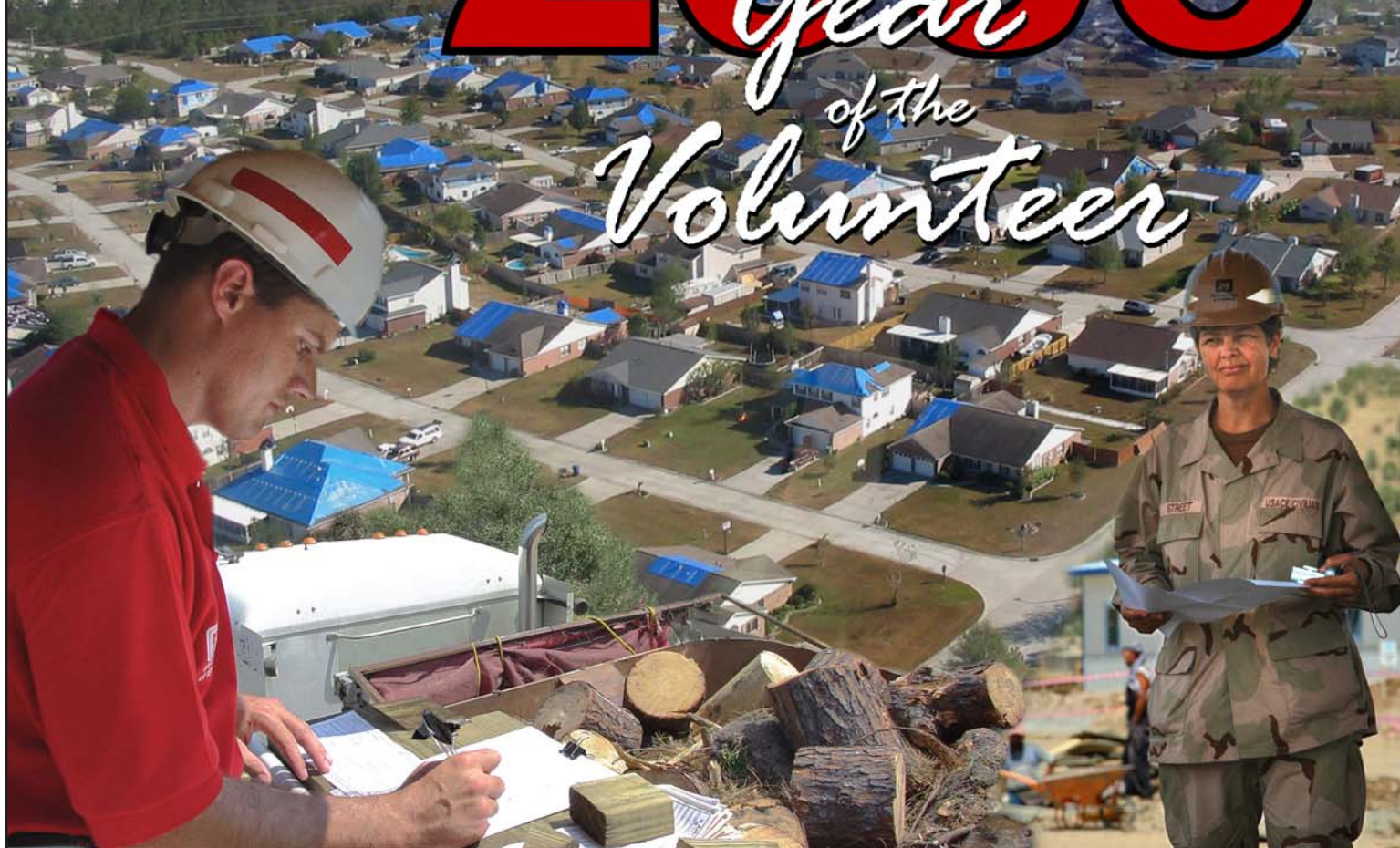
No. 1

January-February 2006

*Looking back at*

# 2005

*Year  
of the  
Volunteer*



## FROM WHERE I SIT

# Volunteers indeed a Corps multiplier



photo by Rick Haverinen

The Corps' Bob McCoy, right; and Regina Eilertson and William Armstrong of Friends of Walla Walla, loaded Christmas presents donated by Walla Walla District employees for about 60 local area kids on Dec. 21.

It's truly an honor and a privilege to serve with such a professional workforce – driven by the Army values and wholeheartedly committed to the phrase, “Mission First – People Always.”

The numbers speak for themselves, reflecting an unequivocal vow to the Army value of Selfless Service. Employees in the Walla Walla District do indeed “put the welfare of the Nation, the Army and others before their own.”

Here's the proof:

- **Unwavering support of the Corps' number one priority** – fighting and winning the Global War on Terrorism. The District has supported 100 volunteer deployments (about 14 percent of the District) to Iraq and Afghanistan, with nine employees there now and 15 others waiting for an assignment. All providing incredible support to the Army and helping the people of Iraq and Afghanistan rebuild their countries.

- **Helping others truly in need** by supporting 139 volunteer deployments to the Southeastern United States to assist with hurricane recovery and reconstruction operations.



Lt. Col. Randy Glaeser

- **Hundreds of employees here in the District filling the gaps for those deployed**, working a little harder and a little longer to ensure mission success each day.

- **Quality family support personnel** - ensuring families of those deployed are okay. Volunteers fixing a porch light, cutting grass, babysitting, or simply making a “how's it going” phone call.

- **Generous financial support** –

District personnel donating tens of thousands of dollars to tsunami relief, hurricane recovery, and many other charitable organizations through programs like the Combined Federal Campaign. The District also donated hundreds of pounds of food to local food banks, winter hats and mittens to children in need, and hundreds of toys and other Christmas presents to children who often go without.

*The list goes on ...* It's an incredible story that continues day after day. A great reflection of true Americans and genuine patriots. I'm humbled yet proud to be part of this awesome team. A sincere thanks to all.

*Keep charging!*

**Lt. Col. Randy Glaeser**  
District Commander

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## On the Cover...

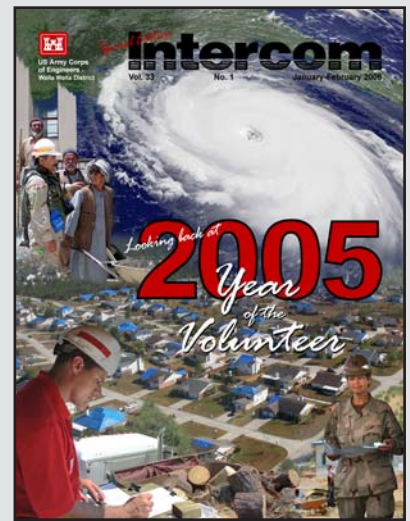


photo illustration by Gina Baltrusch

The year 2005 was the “Year of the Volunteer” due to employees stepping forward to help mitigate damage following a lethal set of hurricanes, and ongoing support of the Global War on Terrorism being waged in Afghanistan and Iraq. NWW is also helped by generous local citizens who give their time. See special coverage starting on page 8.



**Former Chief of Engineering Mike Bart, right, points out dam activities to Lt. Gen. Carl A. Strock, Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Although his plane was struck by lightning enroute to the West Coast on May 23, the Chief persevered and brought a day full of sunshine and smiles with him that included briefings, tours of Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental dams, a view of the spillway weir and a pocketful of his trademark coins.**

Photo by Joe Saxon

**Commentary by Joe Saxon**

2005 will be remembered as the year Walla Walla District members lent a huge helping hand to humanity.

That assistance extended from our neighbors in the south to those in Southwest Asia as District members headed to the Gulf Coast in droves to assist recovery work in the aftermath of the most devastating hurricane season on record.

Hurricane Katrina drowned New Orleans, wrecked Louisiana and Mississippi, killed over 1,400 people and left a nation stunned. Into this breach stepped the men and women of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

From blue roofs to debris removal to building inspections to, ice and water missions, our volunteers were there stemming the suffering, repairing the damage and giving hope where none existed. It was a team effort that personified itself in the over 120 volunteers who ventured forth in relief.

As we helped the Gulf Coast recover, we did not forget the challenges from the other Gulf region and our responsibilities to the nation

in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). By the end of 2005, Walla Walla District was near the century mark in having sent about 100 people halfway around the world to combat terrorism since the first shots were fired in the GWOT.

Volunteerism applied not only to those who stepped forward, but also to those who stayed behind and picked up the excess slack on the homefront. We spent \$170 million operating and maintaining over \$2.5 billion in infrastructure projects, managing our fish programs, running a navigation system, reducing the threat of flood damage and providing recreation opportunities for over seven million visitors. It required sacrifice, and allowed

all of us to share in the adventure. The year 2005 truly was the Year of the Volunteer.

**Navigation Locks Open** - In March, navigation locks on our dams reopened after undergoing annual maintenance. As the need arose, we continued periodic maintenance through the year.

**Fish Transport and Returns** - We began transporting juvenile fish downstream in April, and before it was all over, we had shipped nearly 22 million fish. As for adult fish returning upstream, their numbers exceeded 10-year averages for adult Chinook (570,421 vs. 528,229) and steelhead (315,773 vs. 311,916). Any way you do the math, it was a good year for fish.

**Russian Nuclear Reactors** - Walla Walla District volunteers were one wheel in a machine meant to eliminate nuclear weapons-grade plutonium from Russia. The District's Cost Engineers led a multi-district effort helping build and refurbish Siberian power plants that will allow the Russians to phase out older nuclear facilities.

See **Year**, page 4

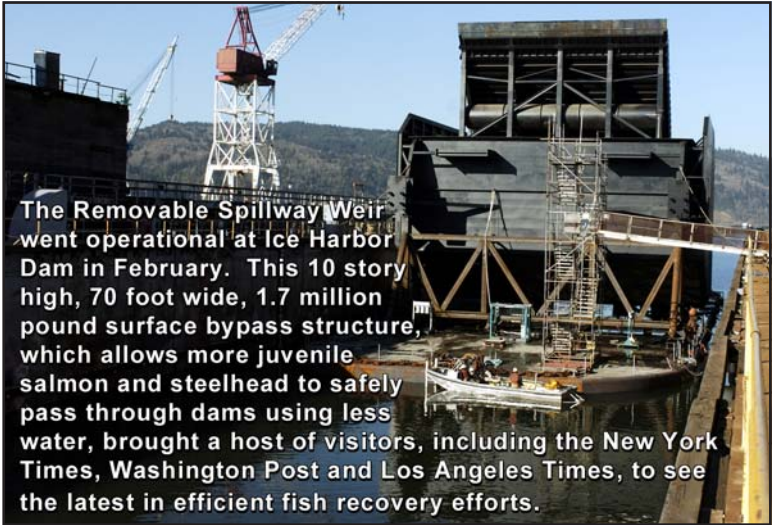


photo by Chris Koch



Ladd Marsh stream restoration - The District's Cultural Resources coordinator oversaw investigative work performed by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation that unearthed hundreds of potential artifacts during a project-associated dig. Meanwhile, planning continued on this aquatic ecosystem restoration project to improve habitat for protected fish and enhance wetlands for waterfowl.

photo by Gina Baltrusch

## Year, from p. 3

**Fishing Derby at McNary** - It was a fun-filled day at McNary Dam when those 12-and-under kids came out to learn how to fish in May.

**Other Visitors** - Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski accompanied Brig Gen William T. Grisoli to Ice Harbor Dam on May 26 where he saw the spillway weir and reviewed the District's fish management programs. Other visitors included Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works John Paul Woodley Jr., Northwestern Division's new Commander Brig. Gen. Gregg F. Martin and Deputy Secretary of the Department of Energy Clay Sell.

**Public Access Across Dams** - We opened public access across

Little Goose Dam and extended crossings at Lower Granite Dam for easier access during salmon fishing season.



Fred Miklancic

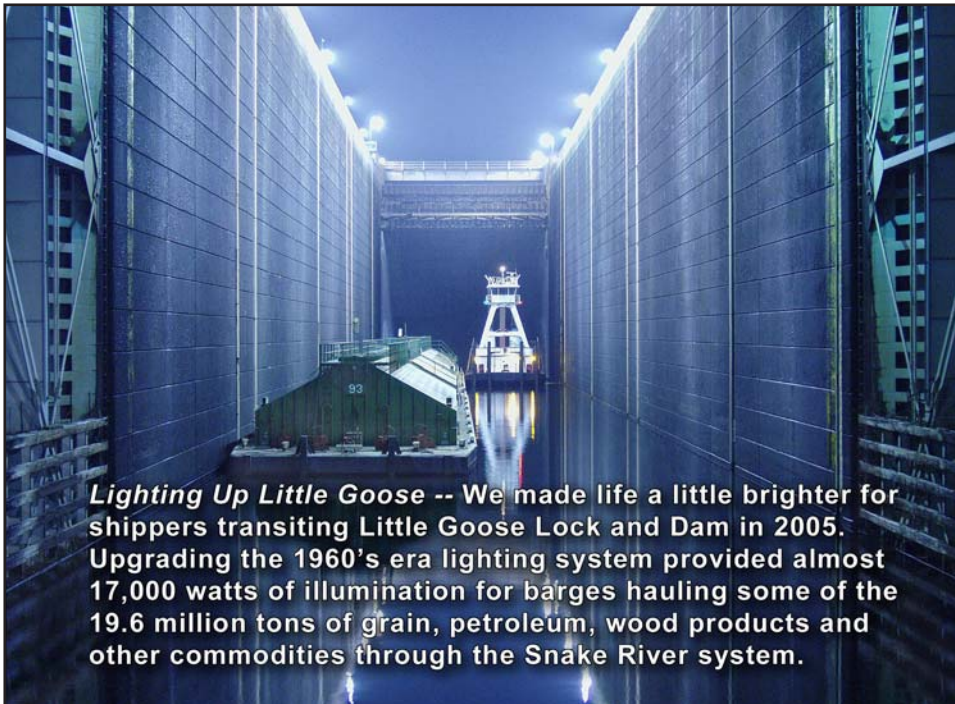
**Employees of the Year** - Outstanding Achievement Awards went to: Marlene Freels, administrative officer at McNary Dam (General Schedule); Jim Neubauer, a civil engineer in Cost Engineering Branch (Engineering); Gary Stolz, power plant electrical worker-in-charge at McNary Dam (Trades and Crafts). Rick Grubb earned USACE's National Cost Engineer of the Year honors, while retired Corps Geologist Fred Miklancic, was named Walla Walla District's 2005 Distinguished Civilian Employee. Paul Wemhoener was awarded the Bronze de Fleury Medal for his 34-plus years of outstanding Corps service.

**Lucky Peak 50th Anniversary** - For 50 years Lucky Peak

Dam stood like a silent sentinel guarding the region from devastating floods, while providing Idaho's Treasure Valley with nourishing water that created a greenbelt in this semi-arid region. On June 23rd, we celebrated this milestone with flags and flyovers, music and memories, rangers, retirees and a rooster tail, Lucky Peak's signature high-arching water discharge.

**Kennewick Man Study** - Deceased for 9,000 years, the Kennewick Man remains have been the center of attention ever since they were discovered in 1996. In July, a team of scientists conducted a two week study at Burke Museum of History and Natural History on the University of Washington campus in Seattle to determine the environmental effects on the remains since the time of Kennewick Man's death.

**Intercom** - The District's newsletter, Intercom, was USACE's best newsletter for the second consecutive year, and was third best in Army.



Lighting Up Little Goose -- We made life a little brighter for shippers transiting Little Goose Lock and Dam in 2005. Upgrading the 1960's era lighting system provided almost 17,000 watts of illumination for barges hauling some of the 19.6 million tons of grain, petroleum, wood products and other commodities through the Snake River system.

photo by Tony Sijohn, power plant mechanic, Little Goose Lock and Dam

**Biological Opinion/Summer Spill -** In June a federal court ruled that McNary, Lower Granite, Lower Monumental and Little Goose dams would spill water, through August, to effect the movement of juvenile salmon downstream.

**Lewis & Clark Corps of Discovery**— Craig Rockwell, dressed as Capt. William Clarke, made an appearance at the Hood Park amphitheater in July and reminisced about his experience along the Snake and Columbia rivers as part of President Jefferson's Corps of Discovery, an overland expedition through the Louisiana Purchase to examine the Northwest.

**Sacagawea Levee Trail -** Our Real Estate folks helped coordinate the review of plans and specifications resulting in the lowering of levees and construction of 22 miles of hiking and biking trails in the Tri-Cities.

**Walla Walla Fair -** Over 87,000 visited the Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days. The District spruced up its booth with safety, Corps of Discover and GWOT displays and featured an animated Seamoor, the Water Safety Sea Serpent.



photo by Gina Baltrusch

**Former Walla Walla Chieftan Peopeomoxmox,** in the guise of an eight-foot tall bronze statue, found an honored resting place June 10 on the District headquarters building's plaza.



photo by Gina Baltrusch

**Corps Day**— With all that happened last year, we didn't forget to take time to play. On June 17, we hosted Corps retirees, brought out our spouses and kids, chowed down, played ball, and Micah Wik made mammoth bubbles. Although Engineering was the official team winner, there were no losers that day, except boredom.

**AFEP Studies** - The Corps hosted a week-long annual review of its Anadromous Fish Evaluation Program in November at Whitman College in Walla Walla. The review provided scientists and researchers from a variety of organizations an opportunity to speak about the results of their 2005 investigations focusing on fish. Of special interest was information regarding salmon migrating from spawning grounds in rivers to the ocean.

**CFC** - From the silent auction to the yard sale, District members were very generous as they donated \$48,500 towards the Combined Federal Campaign.

**Dredging** - The road to channel maintenance was long and arduous, but a historic agreement reached in the fall resulted in a federal judge dismissing a long-standing lawsuit that enabled the Corps to start removing sediment in rivers in December.

Overall, 2005 was a year that blended a heavy workload with personal sacrifice. It was a hectic year, an emotional year, a proud year to call yourself a Walla Walla

District employee. All that, and Ray Quinn's weekly information contests.

What more could you ask for?



Photo by Gina Baltrusch

**McNary Spillway Gate Rehabilitation** - The new year began with workers rehabbing McNary Dam's 22 spillway gates, each of which are 52 feet high and 50 feet wide.

# Channel maintenance stays on track with deadline; dredged material forms new salmon habitat

by Gina Baltrusch

Dredging project workers passed the halfway mark during January and are on track to remove about 400,000 cubic yards of built-up sediment from the federal navigation channel in the lower Snake River and some ports by the end of February.

As of Jan. 31, dredging crews from the Seattle-based Manson Construction Company removed approximately 239,000 cubic yards – 190-200 bargeloads – of sediment from the navigation lock approaches at Lower Monumental and Lower Granite dams, the berthing areas at the ports of Lewiston and Clarkston and the Snake River portion of the federal navigation channel near Clarkston, Wash., said Glenn Matlock, a construction division engineer and contract manager for the project.

Manson crews work 24 hours a day in two 12-hour shifts, seven days a week, in an effort to complete dredging within the Dec. 15-Feb. 28 in-water work window established to minimize impacts to fish. After a break for the holidays, Dec. 24-Jan. 2, workers returned to round-the-clock operations.

Manson's dredging vessel uses a 14-cubic-yard hinged bucket attached to a 130-foot-tall, crane-like boom to scoop sediment from the channel and deposit it on a barge. Crews navigate the filled barges to a disposal site near Knox way

Canyon on the river between Lower Granite Dam and Clarkston where the dredged material is used to develop rearing and resting habitat for juvenile salmon, said Jack Sands, project manager.

The 44-acre mid-depth site was selected because it is reasonably close to where most of the channel maintenance is occurring and investigations showed that very few salmonids rear or loiter in the area, indicating fish would benefit by such habitat in that location, said Sands.

Establishing a large, shallow-depth area along the shoreline creates an ideal place for out-migrating fall chinook salmon to rest and find food, said Chris Pinney, a District fishery biologist.

"Raising the floor up, so to speak, mimics natural rearing habitat that juvenile salmon are known to frequent during their downstream journey," Pinney said. "It will be similar to a sandbar."

To establish the new habitat, dredged material is placed on top of an existing natural bench in the riverbed along the shoreline. Design plans call for raising the shelf about 30 feet, bringing it up to within about 1-15 feet of the river's surface and extending an average of 150 feet from the shore.

District biologists expect the new habitat will improve food abundance and diversity for juvenile salmon as early as 2007.



Photo provided by Manson Construction Company (taken by Kathleen Becker, MCC safety manger)

**U.S. Army Corps of Engineers quality assurance inspectors and Manson Construction Company officials ensure safe operations Jan. 11 while removing built-up sediment from the berthing areas at the ports of Lewiston and Clarkston.**

# Coordination proves key to navigation channel project

by Gina Baltrusch

After almost eight years of planning, some setbacks and mass coordination, Walla Walla District began navigation channel maintenance on the lower Snake River on Dec. 15.

“The successful completion of this channel maintenance is the result of many hours of coordination through numerous U.S. Army Corps of Engineers offices within the division and other agencies,” said Jack Sands, project manager.

Vertical and horizontal project delivery teams (PDT) involved members from three districts and the Northwestern Division and included consult from other state and federal agencies. Horizontal teams work at comparable levels of command – among districts. Vertical teams coordinate with higher echelons within the command structure and other agencies.

“Seattle and Portland districts – part of our horizontal team – helped us with the environmental impact statement. Portland authored the draft EIS while Seattle provided independent technical reviews of the draft and final versions of the EIS,” Sands said. “Working vertically with the division helped us to clarify that we were moving in the right direction with our planning before we got too far along and kept upper-level management informed so they could assist us in agency-to-agency coordination.”

The Environmental Protection Agency served as a cooperating agency with the vertical PDT.

“Working with their environmental compliance experts allowed us to develop a stronger EIS before releasing the draft for public and agency review,” said Sands.

“We brought all of our western districts’ expertise to bear on this project, particularly in drafting of the EIS,” said Jim Reese, vertical team leader and NWD navigation coordinator. “Portland, Walla Walla and the division coordinated a day-long workshop with the EIS Review Branch of EPA. That face-to-face review accelerated the process, resulted in a better EIS and enabled us to present a quality product for the division commander’s approval.”

Communicating with the project’s customers and the public also helped planners make sound decisions along the way.

“Involvement from stakeholders representing a variety of interests helped ensure that the final product – a one-year channel maintenance plan – balanced the environmental needs of the system with the economic needs of the region,” Said Sands.

Legal experts at the district, Northwestern Division and the Department of Justice worked litigation issues that had twice halted previous years’ dredging plans and threatened to stop the 2005-2006 channel maintenance.

On Sept. 9, a federal judge approved a settlement agreement between the Corps and conservation and fishing organizations and dismissed the lawsuit, freeing the Corps to dredge areas of the Lower Snake and Clearwater rivers. The settlement allowed the district to proceed with planned winter maintenance dredging in the lower Snake River in five key areas within the navigation channel and port berthing areas that are clogged with sediment.

Dredging activities will continue through February, restoring the 14-foot congressionally authorized channel depth.



Photo provided by Manson Construction Company (taken by Kathleen Becker, MCC safety manger)

**Above, sediment removed from the navigation channel is taken by barge to a disposal site between Lower Granite Dam and Clarkston near Knoxway Canyon on the lower Snake River to develop new resting habitat for juvenile salmon. Below, a Corps technical drawing illustrates plans for developing the new resting and rearing habitat. Dark-brown areas indicate the riverbed; light-brown areas indicate placed dredged material.**

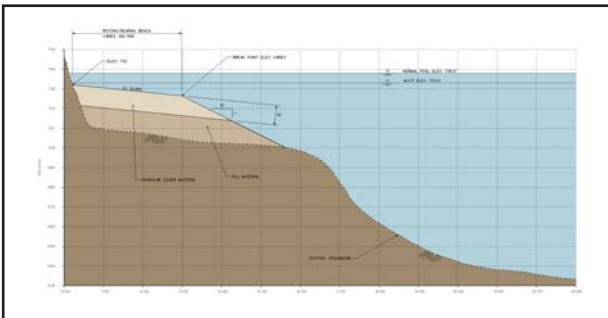


Photo by Rich Young, Walla Walla District geologist

**Working in two, 12-hour shifts, Manson Construction Company crews conduct dredging operations Jan. 8, in the navigation channel near Clarkston, Wash., and Lewiston, Idaho.**



photo by Rick Haverinen

Ruth Johnson, right, an office support assistant at Walla Walla District Headquarters, finds IT Specialist team leader Robin German to ask for a new ID card printer ribbon. At

first unable to find employment because of lack of experience, Johnson began her association with the Corps of Engineers as a volunteer and she was later hired.

by Rick Haverinen

Volunteers are a certain boon to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. They contributed nearly \$220,000 in documented labor value to the Walla Walla District by giving over 12,500 hours of their time in fiscal year 2005.

While the Corps has benefited greatly from the generosity of private citizen volunteers, a four-person sample of 543 total District volunteers reveals not only the benefits they have derived, but also a variety of reasons the relationship began. Two were work-related, one was recreational, and one was spontaneous.

John Keeney didn't like litter at the Lucky Peak Project near Boise, Idaho.

"I take my dog up there to run," Keeney said, "and she stepped on a broken beer bottle and cut her foot. I think that was the breaking point and I just said, 'No more. It's

so beautiful up here, I just can't let it be destroyed.'"

Keeney didn't ask any of the Corps employees at Lucky Peak whether they needed help controlling debris left by visitors. He just started picking it up and hauling it away. That was about 10 years ago, and Keeney and his dog Hunter are now fixtures at Lucky Peak.

"I tend to go every weekday," Keeney said. "In the winter the trash isn't that bad, but in the summer I definitely will spend at least an hour a day picking it up. I'll get at least two bags a day in the summer."

"He's the most gracious and least selfish person I've ever known," said Park Ranger Joyce Dunning.

Ruth Johnson is an office support assistant at the Walla Walla District Headquarters in the Human Resources Office. That's a paying job. Six years ago,

Johnson was graduated from an administrative training program at Walla Walla Community College but when she applied for work with the Corps she was confronted with the familiar Catch 22 nagging young job seekers.

"I didn't have any experience so I wasn't selected," Johnson said. "And I was kind of desperate, because how can you gain experience if you don't have a job? And I said I'd be willing to volunteer."

Johnson met the District's Volunteer Coordinator Scott Moore who found a volunteer position for her in the Natural Resources Management section.

"The team leader was Phil Hixson and he went to bat for me several times," Johnson said, "so when a job came open in the (human resources) office, I was hired."

Johnson said volunteering is a good way to gain needed work experience.



John Keeney



Joyce Dunning



"I don't think a lot of companies have a volunteer program, so you couldn't try it out," Johnson said. "In a sense, that's what I did. I tried it out, and it was a good fit either way, for them and for me. I think a paying job is better, but volunteering is a good way to get your foot in the door, to see if you like it, if you can handle it."

Moore, said Johnson's entry into a paying job after being a volunteer is a fairly rare phenomenon.



**Scott Moore**

have examples of that happening."

**Jeanne Fromm** came to volunteer at Walla Walla District because she already had work experience.

"I'm a natural resources specialist and in previous positions, we did have volunteers that would help in our programs," Fromm said, "so I know volunteering can be very rewarding for the volunteer and also helpful to the agency. I'm in a time of my life when I have a little extra time and can do something like that.

"There are a lot of folks who would like to get employed by us, just to show us what they can do and they want to work for us," Moore said. "I would say it is unusual, and we certainly can't guarantee it, but we



**Duane Mitchell**

Corps that have her volunteering both in and out of doors. Her office job is with the Regulatory Division but she also periodically checks water levels and fish ladders at Walla Walla's Mill Creek Dam flood control project.

In the District's Regulatory Division, Fromm helped with permit applications and she also revamped an informational brochure that had become outdated because of environmental regulation changes.

"Jeanne was very helpful," said Duane Mitchell, an environmental resource specialist. "It was nice to have somebody with the background that she had in environmental resources and environmental planning, dealing with section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and some of the work she had done in wetlands. She helped me accomplish quite a few projects while she was here."

Volunteering with the Corps can also be combined with a laid-back lifestyle. **Bob and Rosie Fuller** hooked up their recreational vehicle at a Dworshak Dam campsite last summer and volunteered about 32 hours a week at the project's visitor reception center.

"We had three tours a day, and I found I liked to do that quite a bit," Bob Fuller said. "We walked the folks through the parts of the dam that were open, and we got to meet a lot of people from different areas, and even outside of the country."

Fuller is a retired sheriff's deputy and is used to dealing with the public, but he found the summer at Dworshak more comfortable than his earlier job.

"The people wanted to come there and they wanted to know about the third-tallest dam in all of the United States," Fuller said. "My wife and I had a lot of fun telling them about the history of the dam, its place in the power grid, and the ecology and the fish hatchery."

The Fullers also found the camaraderie with the Corps employees enjoyable.

"I can't say enough about the people at Dworshak," Fuller said. "They were really good to us. They took us to dinner and one of the fellows brought us vegetables and fresh fruit. It was an up-beat, really wonderful experience."



photo by Deb Norton

**Rosie and Bob Fuller arrived with their camper and greeted visitors all last summer at Dworshak Dam.**

It gets me outdoors and keeps me involved in natural resources which are important to me, so it's been a great fit."

Fromm has found opportunities at the

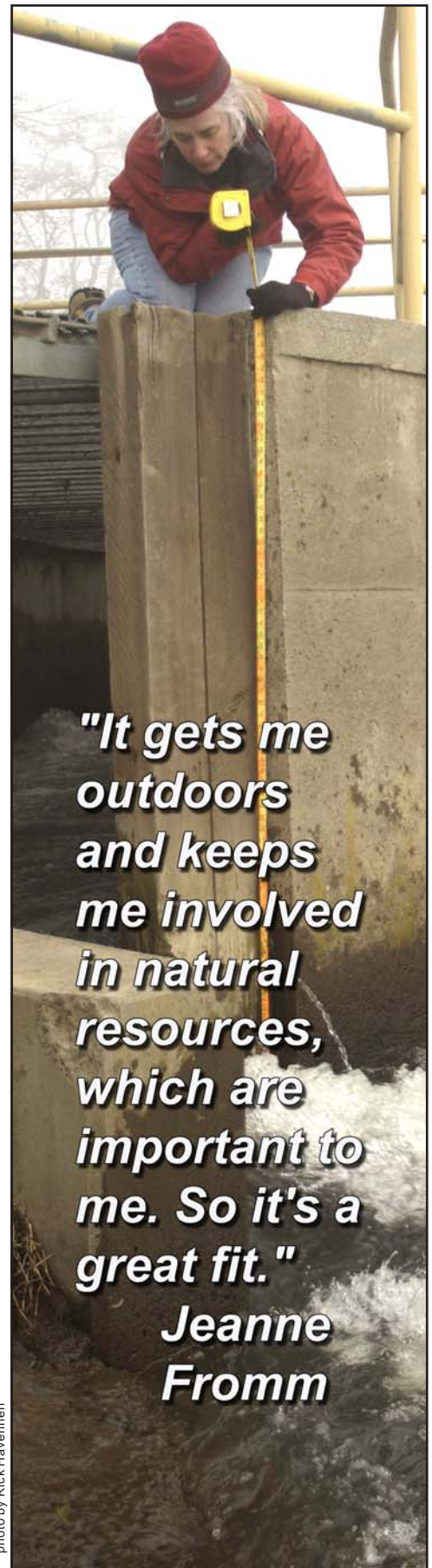


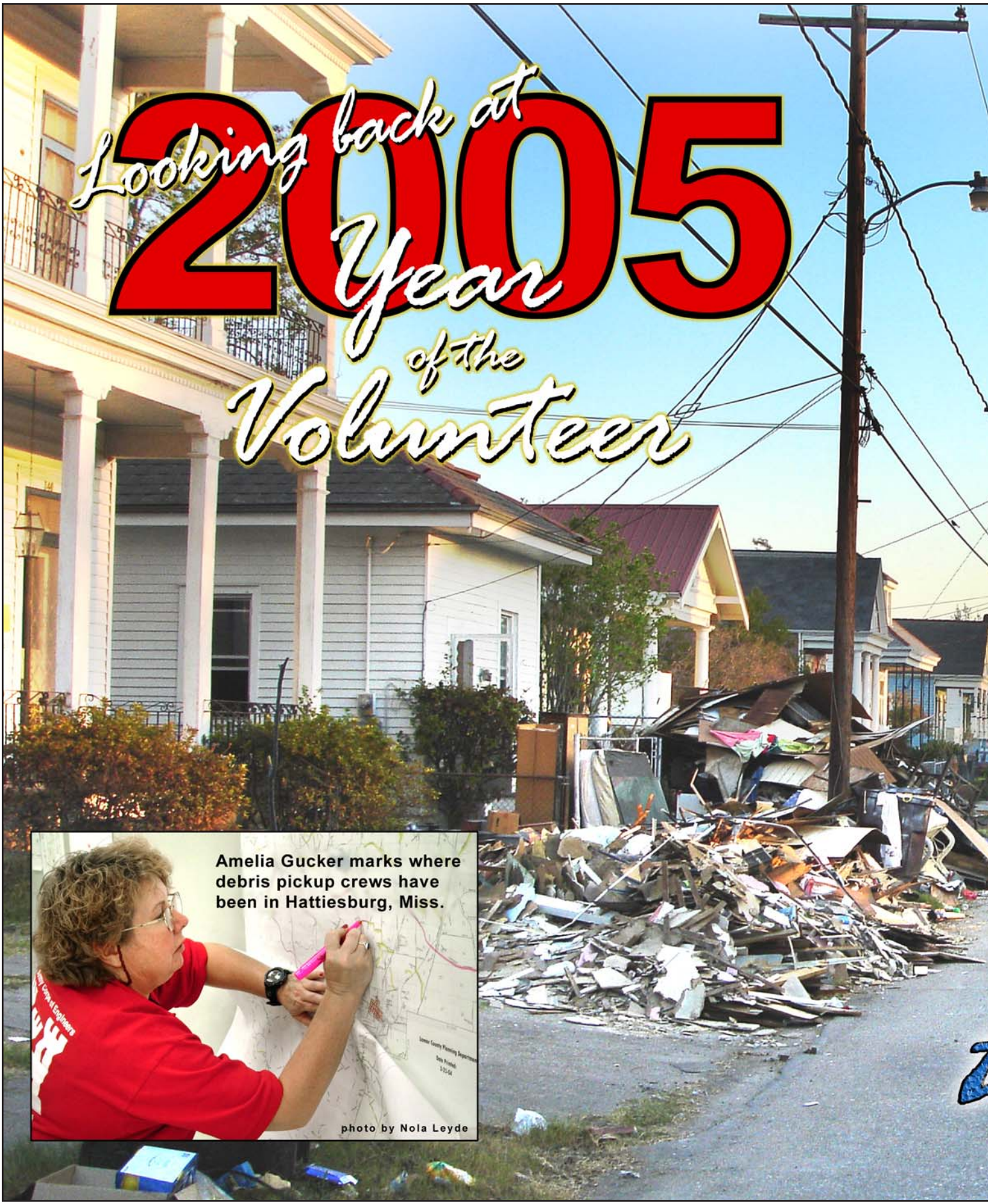
photo by Rick Haverinen

**"It gets me outdoors and keeps me involved in natural resources, which are important to me. So it's a great fit."**

**Jeanne Fromm**

**Jeanne Fromm makes a measurement at Mill Creek Project in Walla Walla.**

# Looking back at 2005 Year of the Volunteer



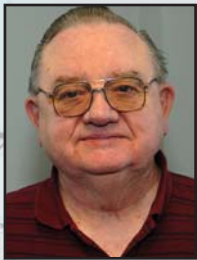
Amelia Gucker marks where debris pickup crews have been in Hattiesburg, Miss.

photo by Nola Leyde

# When need was compelling, volunteers already in motion

## *An ill wind blew in 2005.*

The terrible trio of Katrina, Rita and Wilma delivered consecutive punches to the Gulf States during a devastating hurricane season. Katrina knocked Florida Aug. 25 and clobbered Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana Aug. 29 while Rita messed with Texas Sept. 21 and Wilma struck Florida Oct. 24.



**Jim Blanscett**

They left carnage and suffering in their wake, into which stepped well over 100 volunteers from the Walla Walla District. As part of a vanguard of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' relief team, Walla Walla's volunteers helped provide power, built structures, covered roofs, removed debris and gave hope where it was in short supply.

Seeds for the District's hurricane relief effort were sown well before the storms threatened the Gulf States, and had roots in the District's Emergency Management Office.

"This is the strongest hurricane season that the Gulf Coast has experienced probably for 100 years," said Jim Blanscett, deployment coordinator at the District. "Walla Walla District wasn't impacted a whole lot in 2004. We deployed 39 people total last year. This year was different. Within the first 21 days we deployed 70 people," including



photo by Eric Walton

**Sue Walton checks a pier beneath a temporary building for the mayor's office in Gulfport, Miss. in November.**

the District's electrical power team that headed for Alabama on Aug. 28, a day ahead of Katrina's arrival in Louisiana.

Blanscett said he had 159 employees in the District signed up as hurricane recovery volunteers by last June. That's nearly 22 percent of the District's total workforce.

The District supplied recovery personnel to other Corps districts impacted by the three big hurricanes.

"As of Feb. 6, Walla Walla District deployed 139 volunteers including our power teams," Blanscett said. "Out of the 131 people that we have actually deployed, 126 of them were trades and skills not necessarily corresponding to what they did in the field. Some were structural engineers that did surveys of damaged buildings."

Blanscett said by far the greatest number of the District's recovery volunteers "went down as quality assurance debris or roofing inspectors or supervisors."

Even though the job skills of Corps disaster recovery volunteers might fall under "other duties as assigned," Blanscett said they do tasks related to construction work, the Corps' bread and butter.

"It's predisposed they will have that kind of knowledge," Blanscett said. "When they get down there they're given a training course for a day or two. It's not difficult to do, it's just that it has to be done."

Blanscett said he has heard positive reviews from returning employees.

"I think that the experiences they gained this year will be a very positive thing for them," Blanscett said, "and we will have a ready pool of volunteers for future events."

As of the end of January, Walla Walla District had 28 individuals still deployed in support of hurricane recovery efforts.

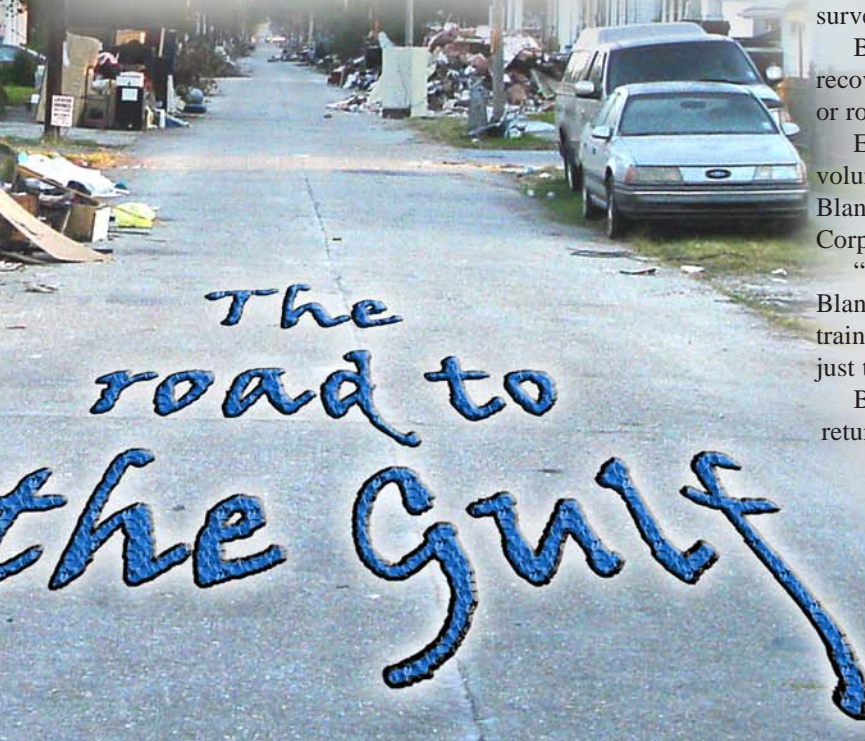


photo by Dennis Stone

# Hurricane hits family home



**Before Katrina**

**After Katrina**

Not a creature was stirring at the Alford house at Christmas 2004.

Much stirring was seen at the Alford house on Aug. 30, before the levees opened.

photos courtesy of Chris Alford

Alford said his father got out of New Orleans right before the levees let go.

“We had two feet of water outside the house at the peak, and our house is about three feet off the ground, so the air conditioners flooded,” Alford said. “We have a shed that flooded. But it wasn’t that bad. Uptown New Orleans is a little bit higher than some of the other areas. It looks like the water was about two inches below the floor. So

**by Rick Haverinen**

Hurricane Katrina hit too close to home for one Walla Walla District employee.

Chris Alford, a Natural Resource Specialist at Mill Creek Project, grew up in New Orleans, where his father and aunt still live, after temporarily leaving following Katrina. His father, Jake, actually rode out the storm on Aug. 29.

“He stayed at his office,” Alford said, “and the next day went back to our house. I called him on the cell phone and I asked, ‘How does it look?’ And he said, ‘Not too bad, the tree is down.’ I told him they were saying on TV that the levees were breaking. And he said, ‘Really?’ He didn’t know anything about it. He actually cleaned up the yard, boarded up some windows that broke, cleaned out the fridge, and left town and went to Houston to stay with some relatives there.

the floor joists got wet.”

Katrina snapped an 80-foot pine tree in the back yard and also destroyed a pecan tree in front. The wind ripped away a 10-foot square section of roofing material, but FEMA patched it up with a blue tarp.



**Chris Alford**

Elsewhere in New Orleans, the second floor apartment of Alford’s aunt, Anna, stayed dry but had mildew damage. Her landlord reacted to the storm by more than doubling her rent. Working in a hotel, she met some of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers people working on hurricane relief.

“It makes you feel good to know an organization you work for can do a lot to help your hometown,” Alford said.

## What Katrina did; how the Corps responded

### Hurricane Katrina Facts

- ◆ Sixth-strongest Atlantic hurricane recorded
- ◆ America’s most costly storm - \$75 billion
- ◆ New Orleans 75% flooded
- ◆ Over 1,400 dead, 400,000 displaced
- ◆ Began as Category 1 storm in the Bahamas Aug. 23
- ◆ Evolved over Gulf of Mexico into Category 5 storm with 175 mph winds
- ◆ Hit New Orleans Aug. 29 as a strong Category 3 storm with 127 mph winds

- ◆ 28-30 foot storm surge in Mississippi swept five miles inland



### Corps’ Response

- ◆ Over 8,000 Corps employees deployed
- ◆ 299 generators installed
- ◆ 732,000 acre feet of water removed from New Orleans in 53 days
- ◆ 123,352 temporary blue roofs installed
- ◆ 51.5 million cubic yards of debris, 63% removed

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

# Keeping the peace in the Lower 9th Ward



photo by Rick Haverinen

**Russ Heaton, a Walla Walla District water scientist, prepares a water quality test in the District's laboratory.**

**by Rick Haverinen**

The long arm of the law reached out last fall to aid hurricane victims pummeled by Katrina. That was quite a stretch, starting in Washington State and extending to New Orleans' Ninth Ward.

Russ Heaton has worn many hats for the last couple years. A fresh water scientist for the Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, Heaton is transportation officer for his Army National Guard unit, the 248<sup>th</sup> Support Center. But in New Orleans, he was a company commander for troops activated to provide security for the Ninth Ward.

"The first thing I saw was the utter devastation in the Ninth Ward," Heaton

said. "Entire blocks and neighborhoods were just completely wiped out. There was nothing but the foundation left. It seemed like every day I met somebody who had lost family members. I met one gentleman who lost his wife and children, his entire family, his home. Everything was wiped out. I think it was just the utter devastation and that these residents were American people. That hit really close to home."

Heaton, a major, and the 600 Soldiers in Task Force Raven provided security in the Ninth Ward for about six weeks from late September to early November. The members of TF Raven, of which Heaton commanded Company E, came from Washington State.

"This was the largest peacetime deployment of Washington State Soldiers for a humanitarian mission in history,"

Heaton said.

Heaton said most of the task force's work was helping emergency workers patrol neighborhoods, search for storm victims, and respond to urgent calls.

"Our number one task was to support the police and the firemen," Heaton said. "Every time there was a fire, we'd send a humvee and ten soldiers to protect the firemen because there were snipers that would shoot at them. None of the firemen were hurt while we were on our watch. The police didn't have enough manpower, so we manned the majority of the checkpoints in the Ninth Ward."

Heaton was home only four months from a 16-month tour in Iraq before he was deployed to New Orleans.

*"Everything was wiped out. I think it was just the utter devastation and that these residents were American people. That hit really close to home."*

*Russ Heaton*



photo by Russ Heaton

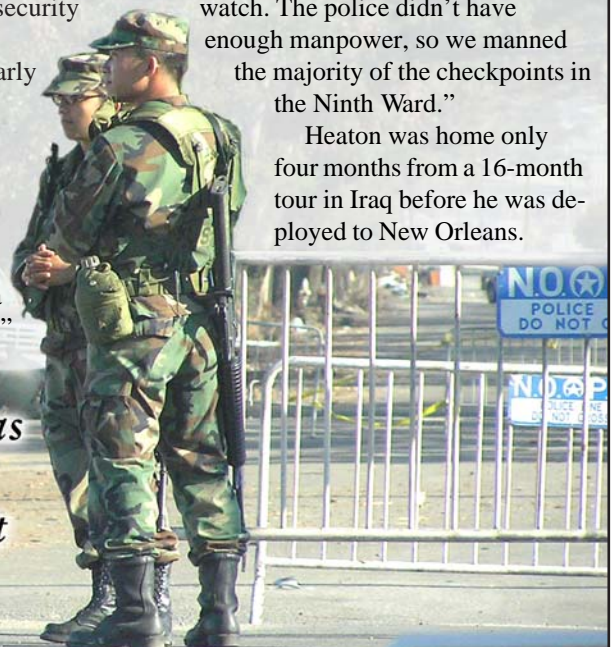


photo by Russ Heaton

# The Electric Company



photo by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The Walla Walla District Power Teams deployed to the Gulf Coast following Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma. Left to right, rear, are Staff Sgt. John Anneheim, 249th Engineer Bn.; Mike Deccio; Dave Wells; Rob Wall; Bob Minden; and Bob Williams. In the front are Patti Record and Kerry Vigue. Carl Knaak is not pictured. Also not pictured are Hurricane Wilma team members Carl Knaak, Tami Vance, Rich Hall, Anthony Finks and Wade Duvall.

people evacuated while about 100,000 residents were stranded in flooded New Orleans as communities washed away.

In Alabama, there was significant damage in the Mobile area. Initially, few generators were available. The team's challenge was just getting there, setting up, and working with available resources.

Any team member who has deployed more than once will tell you that no two hurricane deployments are the same. And at the end of the day, "We want to ensure we've accomplished the mission and captured the lessons learned from these deployments," Knaak said.

After Katrina, Hurricane Wilma trekked through 19 Florida counties, leaving 3.25 million customers without power. Incorporating lessons learned from Katrina, FEMA had generators available. The Savannah and Walla Walla District power teams worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week, and finally supplied over 200 generators to customers.

## by Joe Saxon

They help turn on the juice, light up your life and try to not keep you in the dark.

They are members of the District's two power teams. Walla Walla is one of eight Corps of Engineers districts that provide teams to help supply power during disasters and emergencies.

"The first thing to go during a hurricane is power to run the ventilators, operating theater lights and other equipment that keep people alive," said Carl Knaak, Little Goose Dam operations manager. Knaak deployed twice for hurricane relief in 2005 and four times in 2004 for hurricanes in Florida.



Carl Knaak

"Our power teams inspect hospitals, nursing homes and emergency shelters, determine the power requirements and have the right generator installed. We also monitor the installation of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) generators."

The District's power teams deployed to Alabama and Florida for Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma in 2005.

Hurricane Katrina caused monumental consequences for hundreds of thousands throughout the Gulf Coast. Over a million

## Lucky Peak wets the Gulf's whistle

by Jamie Howard

The staff at Lucky Peak Dam and Lake in Boise, Idaho was asked to support relief efforts for the Hurricane Katrina Ice and Water missions from Sept. 11-Oct. 1. The team received a total of 98 loads of ice and 56 loads of water during the three weeks.

Ten full-, part-time, and temporary employees at Lucky Peak participated. These included Dave Brownell, Operations Manager; Joyce Dunning, Park Manager; Monte Crawford, Maintenance Manager; Tim O'Connell, Maintenance; Casey Forest, Admin Automation; Jamie Howard, Natural Resource Specialist/Ranger; Paul Johnson, Maintenance;

and Alex Urquhart, Park Ranger.

For their efforts, Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. Randy Glaeser forwarded Certificates of Appreciation and Commander's coins with this comment, "For selflessly volunteering to serve our country in support of hurricane recovery operations from September to October 2005. Thanks for a job well done. Keep charging!"

Despite the end-peak of the recreation season and staff resource restraints to perform day to day operation of the project; each individual stepped forward with enthusiasm and determination to fulfill the mission.



Photo illustration by Rick Haverinen

by Joe Saxon

“Vast portions of the Gulf Coast of Mississippi looked as if B-52s bombed them flat.”

That was Robert Joshlin’s initial impression upon entering the Gulf Coast and seeing the damaged Hurricane Katrina wrought.

Joshlin and Patti Record, contract specialists with the Corps’ Walla Walla District, volunteered for the relief efforts following multiple hurricane strikes along the Gulf Coast.

A 14-foot storm surge battered the Mississippi coast and went inland five to six miles washing away entire neighborhoods, demolishing bridges in Biloxi, Miss. damaging hundreds of buildings, wrecking transportation systems, burying Interstate 90 and virtually wiping Waveland, Miss., off the map.

As Joshlin snaked his way through the streets of Biloxi “we encountered one neighborhood after another that was totally destroyed,” he said, “and where homes once stood only rubble remained.”

He then started realizing the magnitude of the hurricane’s damage and the job the Corps of Engineers’ 8,000 volunteers were undertaking.

Record was part of the initial relief effort that deployed the District’s power team to Alabama the

day Hurricane Katrina struck. She also deployed to West Palm Beach, Fla. to support Hurricane Wilma relief efforts.

Between Hurricanes Katrina and Wilma she helped write over 200 task orders for generators to power hospitals, shelters, nursing homes, law enforcement facilities and lift stations for water treatment facilities. And although “we worked 12 hour days, seven days a week,” she said, “it feels good knowing that I helped provide power for life-sustaining facilities.”

As for Joshlin, he and his Corps teammates helped install nearly 750 temporary public buildings for “emergency responders, local governments and schools.”

“We had a portable building supply contract where the contractor supplied the building while we concentrated on site preparation and placement, utilities, water sewer and electric, gravel parking, security lighting, accessibility.”

The biggest challenge he faced was continuity. “Some volunteer teams were there for only 30 days, so by the time they got their procedures down it was time to rotate out. You had to learn on the fly and that was extremely challenging,” he said.



Robert Joshlin



Patti Record



Federal Acquisition Regulation as of July 1, 2005



Department of Defense FAR SUPPLEMENT and PGI as of July 1, 2005

# Up on a roof



Debra Mallard

Lindsay Dummer

**Massive coverup helps reduce hurricane blues**

photo by Mike Remington

by Rick Haverinen

It was difficult to imagine idealistic blue sky scenarios after the U.S. Gulf Coast reeled last fall from a series of brutal hurricanes, so U.S. Army Corps of Engineers relief volunteers did what they could by providing “Blue Roofs.”

The blue color comes from the tarpaulin material used to help protect hundreds of damaged roofs from seeping more water damage into buildings.



**Matt Lierman of the Omaha District writes a blue roof estimate in Slidell, La. in September.**

photo by Ken Melhus, Omaha District

Fifteen volunteer employees of the Walla Walla District supported the roof protection mission.

Commotion at times surrounded the volunteers as they began work in the Gulf States, and in New Orleans - it could even snap and snarl.

“Many of the dogs were either running in packs or protecting their homes, so we really had to watch out for them,” said Debra Mallard, a human resources specialist.

“One of the challenging things was to find a restaurant or a store that was even open, and they might be there for only four hours a day,” said Corps Park Ranger Lindsay Dummer, from Ice Harbor Lock and Dam. “I

went to a Wal-Mart one day and every checkout line was, honestly, 20 people deep. Shelves were pretty bare and people were happy to get any bit of food and supplies they could.”

Walla Walla District volunteers encountered almost every

possible reaction to their presence. Some New Orleanians were displeased the various levels of government were not providing all the aid they expected, but other residents expressed positive appreciation for the emergency workers being there.

“At the restaurants the hostess, the waitresses, the even the cooks were so appreciative of our business,” Mallard said, “because they had very few tourists left in New Orleans. All the workers at the restaurant were happy to have us there.”

Dummer said that temporary office workers locally hired for the “Blue Roof” project were enthusiastic despite losses they had suffered.

“They always did an excellent job and didn’t complain about their situations,” Dummer said. “There was a girl in her mid-20s who not only lost her home, but her parents lost their house as well. She would work 10 or more hours a day because she was happy to have some income to help her get her life back on track.”

“The people who were at home when we did the estimates for their tarps were very appreciative of the Corps for putting on the roofs and saving their homes from further damage from the rain,” Mallard said.

“Everybody that we dealt with was really appreciative,” Dummer said. “My coworkers that were out in the field were constantly having to tell people, ‘We can’t take your cookies, we don’t need brownies, you don’t have to give us anything, the government’s doing this for free.’ People were just so happy to have something put over their roof.”

Since the Corps park rangers routinely have contact with the public, Dummer could compare those encounters with the reactions she found in New Orleans.

“People down there were probably a little more appreciative of what the Corps was doing than when they see us in a campground or a recreation area,” Dummer said. “It didn’t matter to them if I couldn’t help them; it just mattered that we were trying to help them.”



# Getting rid of **DEBRIS**

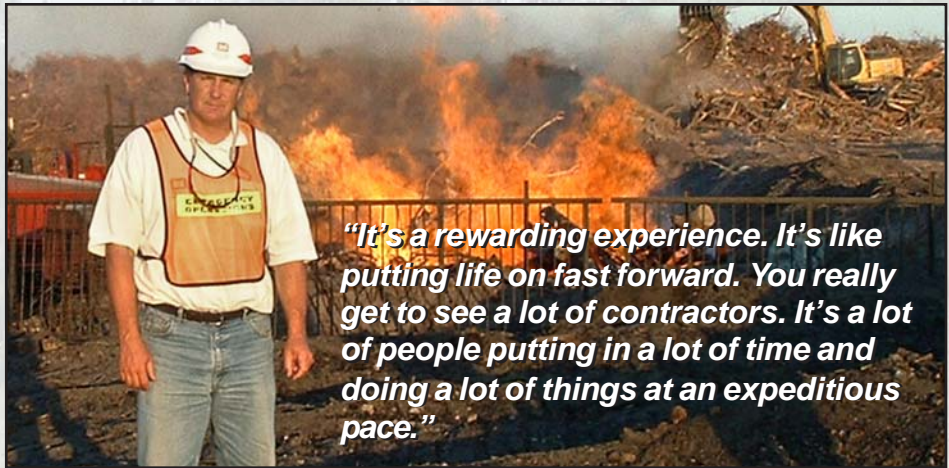
by Rick Haverinen

Over 100 employees from the Corps' Walla Walla District saw first-hand the upheaval that fall hurricanes created as they deployed to America's southland to help with recovery work.

The U.S. Gulf States got hammered by the terrible trio of Katrina, Rita and Wilma who arrived uninvited about a month apart in late August, September and October.

The Walla Walla District volunteers visited the storm-damaged areas to help create order out of chaos.

"I was expecting chaos. I just didn't know what kind of chaos to expect," said Carl Brenneise, a mechanical engineer. "There was trash everywhere. There were leaning trees, a lot of stuff broken, power poles were



*"It's a rewarding experience. It's like putting life on fast forward. You really get to see a lot of contractors. It's a lot of people putting in a lot of time and doing a lot of things at an expeditious pace."*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

**Mike Remington, Walla Walla District's Safety and Occupational Health Manager, visits a debris disposal site in Hancock County, Miss.**

out. People who did have power lived in the higher areas, but they didn't all have telephone service."

Most of the Walla Walla District deployed employees worked on getting rid of debris.

"By the time we arrived you could actually get places," Brenneise said. "People were bringing out their ruined pianos, couches, refrigerators, washers, dryers, sheetrock, television sets, we even saw crystal wear. They'd stick it out on the curb, and the contractors would pick it up from the side of the street."

Brenneise worked in New Orleans and filled out load slips for contractors working on the huge task of hauling all that debris away.

Across the state line, Jim Drake was doing similar work in Mississippi.

"I had a lot of people pat me on the back and say thanks for coming," Drake said. "In the

smaller towns you got more positive feedback."

Drake said he usually got all his meals, despite the upheaval.

"It was tough once in a while," Drake said. "You wouldn't starve to death, you know what I

mean? If you can't go without eating lunch one day, you shouldn't be there."



**Jim Drake**



**Clint LeMar speaks with a debris removal truck driver Sept. 13 at Brown's Village dump site in Slidell, La.**

photo by Mike Deitrick



photo by Mike Remington

**Contractors remove what is left of a house in October from a hurricane-ravaged street in Pass Christian, Miss.**

# Street Smart

Back from Iraq:  
winning hearts  
and minds,  
leaving her own  
heart behind

photo by Linda Carter

Looking back at  
**2005**  
Year  
of the  
Volunteer



photo by Linda Carter

## By Rick Haverinen

Some people just have a knack of turning a national commitment into something very personal.

"We made a commitment when we made the invasion, when we did what we did," said Donna Street, "and now I feel strongly that we need to follow through and not just pull away too soon."

Street, the lead of the construction quality assurance team at the Corps' Walla Walla District, did not pull herself away from Iraq too soon, in anyone's estimation but her own. When her six-month deployment in Iraq was coming to an end, she extended the tour another full year, staying on as the Corps' Kirkuk Area Engineer. She returned home in mid-January.

"I decided to stay so long because I really enjoyed the work that I was responsible for," Street said. "I honestly would have stayed (longer,) had I not had commitments and family back here."

Street has joined the ranks of believers; a

*"I thoroughly enjoyed the work that I did, both from a professional engineering aspect and from a personal satisfaction, being able to help the people in Iraq. Yes, I would like to go back."*

Donna Street

collection of American active duty Soldiers and Civilians who set their boots on the sparse Iraqi soil when something compelling takes root.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the work that I did, both from a professional engineering aspect, and from a personal satisfaction, being able to help the people in Iraq," Street said.

Street, who has worked for the Corps for 25 years, had a staff of 11 local national engineers who helped her with building, repairing or refurbishing schools, clinics, railroad stations, electrical, oil, and security

facilities in the provinces of Kirkuk and Sulaymaniyah. Street repeatedly uses the word "dedicated" to describe the Iraqis

See **STREET**, page 19



Street said Iraqi children have unending curiosity about Americans and like to visit.

## STREET, from page 18

focused on rebuilding their country.

"I'd say that all of (the 11 Iraqi engineers) were special people and they were all taking significant risks in what they were doing in helping the Americans with reconstruction," Street said. "At least seven of them in Kirkuk personally took risks to do inspections on projects that we could not visit, because of the insurgency in the area. Just the association that they had with the Americans in our reconstruction effort put them in danger. By agreeing to work with us, they were very brave people."

Many of the pictures associated with Street that came back to Walla Walla showed her with Iraqi children.

Street's walk in the hills by a border fort in Sulaymaniyah along the Iraq-Iran border provided some souvenir photos.



"Whenever we were out we got some attention," Street said, "and the kids would like to come and visit with us. Kids everywhere are cute. And the kids that we saw there were all cute, and it was hard not to want to take pictures of all of them."

Street said it was impossible to see the Iraqi children and not think what might be their future in a country that combines a chance for democracy with often deadly hazards.

"It's amazing to me when I talk to some of the kids, what they're learning in school," Street said.

The kids at one school proudly showed Street their report cards during one visit. Street said the kids in the Kurdish regions are learning English and Arabic halfway through the elementary grades.

"Sometimes they were taking Latin by the fifth or sixth grade level," Street said. "So the potential there is great. I hope that they can get past the insurgency and that some day these children will see a much better life than what they have now."

So Street has looked at Iraq closeup, and has made a bit of United States foreign and military policy her very own.

"I thoroughly enjoyed it," Street said.

"Yes, I would like to go back."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo

## *And the bride wore battle dress...*



photo by Master Sgt. George Lamboy

by **Claude D. McKinney**  
Gulf Region Division  
North District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**Mosul, Iraq** - "I do." On the other hand, is it more appropriate to say, "I did," when reenacting a marriage previously performed by proxy? In this case it was "I do."

Julie Richardson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's Gulf Region North (GRN) Resource Management Officer, left her man in the States when she deployed for her third time to Iraq in August from the Walla Walla District.

Her man, Joseph (Joe) Melow, was destined to be deployed to Iraq four months later. They were planning to wed when the call came requesting an accountant

in theater. There was no person of authority in Iraq who could or would perform the nuptials, so they found a way they could be married in Montana.

"I couldn't get back to the States," said Julie, "so we did the next best thing. We got married by proxy."

Five days after Joe's arrival, a palace ceremony was held Jan. 15 with their work "family" and friends.

Rings were exchanged as well as the obligatory first kiss. This was all listened to by friends using a conference call phone in Baghdad.

A twist was added the day before the ceremony. They went to an on-base shop to purchase the rings and the merchant tied the rings to each end of a ribbon. He explained it was a Turkish tradition for a witness to the ceremony to cut the ribbon after the rings had been placed on their fingers.

"I'm so happy about how it all worked out," said Julie. "Our wedding story will certainly be one that we will treasure always."

Not many people can boast they were married in a Middle Eastern marble palace. Their honeymoon saw them in Mosul, Iraq — the birthplace of Abraham, and the burial place of Noah.

# Turning chaos into order

The world provided plenty of upheaval last year for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to work with, whether it was created by human beings or Mother Nature. Corps employees stepped forward to help with recovery work in the American Gulf States following brutal hurricanes and in the Middle East in the wake of violent political regimes. Here are the Walla Walla District employees who went to distant places where help was needed in 2005.

## HURRICANE DEPLOYEES

Fernando Aguilar, Matthew Allen, Alex Almeida, Ronald Ashley, Phil Benge, Thomas Bradshaw, Carl Brenneise, Robert Brochu, Francis Brooks, David Brownell\*, Roy Clark, Phillip Colson, Monte Crawford\*, Lester Cunningham, William Day, Mike Deccio, Michael Deitrick, Van DeWitt, Warren Dimson, Michael Doherty, Joshua Dougan, Jim Drake, Lindsay Dummer, Joyce Dunning\*, Wade Duvall, Eric Engle, James Ezelle, Charles Fano, Anthony Fink, Steven Fink, Joseph Fisk, Casey Forest\*, James Gale, Frank Gates, Sandra Geiger, Ronald Gosselin, Amelia Gucker, Richard Halverson, Richard Hammer, Robert Harms, Jack Henson, Richard Hilt, Robert Hollenbeck, Jamie Howard\*, Sydney Hudson, Marcia Isakson, Paul Johnson\*, Tedd JoJola, Robert Joshlin, Joseph Kasper, Carl Knaak, Nancy Knapik, Jason Korn, Clinton LeMar, Dale Lentz, Kenneth LePage, Kenneth Lloyd, Robert Lustig, James Lyerly, Art Maldonado, Debra Mallard, Pat Marsh, Joyce McDonald, Jeff Mears, Margaret Anne Millard, Robert Minden, Douglas Mitchell, Gary Moore, Jean Morrow, Jamie Munson, James Neubauer, Edward Newsome, Lauren Newsome, Doug Newton, John Nordine II, Timothy O'Connell\*, Tommy Pangelinan, Wayne Plucker, Robert Radke, Jeffrey Randall, Peter Rankin, Robert Rathburn, Patti Record, Michael Remington, Norman Rhoads, Richard Robinson, Ronald Robson, Joseph Rosenthal, Juan David Salgado, David Sears, Kirt Silva, Jeffrey Simpson,

Chad Smith, Doug Smith, Richard Spooner, Danielle Stephens, Morris Stout, Pete Summerton, Russell Thornton, Alex Urquhart\*, Tami Vance, Gregory Vaughn, Kerry Vigue, Robert Wall, Eric Walton, Ray-Leean Sue Walton, David Wells, Robert Williams, Lee Wolf, David Woodland, and Karen Zelch.

Asterisks indicate Idaho Ice and Water volunteers.

## GWOT DEPLOYEES

### DEPLOYED TO AFGHANISTAN FOR OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Humberto (Bert) Cerrillo; Michael Doherty; Gregory Hernandez; Gary Moore; Joseph Noonan; Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Timothy O'Connell, *U.S. Army Reserve*, deployed as instructor to Fort Bliss, Texas, and Fort Polk, La.; Maj. Donald Pincus, *U.S. Army*; Vince Ruzicka; William Stratton; and David Wells.

### DEPLOYED TO OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

Fernando Aguilar; James Allen; Jerel Autrey; John Binford; James Bramell, *U.S. Army National Guard*; Kreg Buryta; Linda Carter; Cristy Chavez; Roy Clark; Jeremy Draggoo; Simeon Francis; Onisem Gomez; Billie Guille; Rick Halverson; Maj. Russ Heaton, *U.S. Army National Guard*; Donald Johnson; Peter McGuckin; Zachary Nelson; Lauren Newsome; Cory Parker; Staff Sgt. Ivan Parramore, *U.S. Army Reserve*; Julie Richardson / Melow; Philip Rider; Frank Scopa; Jack Sheldon; Janet Smith; Lt. Col. Jeffery Stidham; Donna Street; James Weaver; and Douglas Weldy.