



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Walla Walla District

Intercom

Sharing the wisdom and wisdom members of the Walla Walla District

Vol. 31 No. 9 November-December 2004



Room to grow

Dworshak thins crowded forest

p. 4-5



Commander expresses holiday wishes



Greetings and happy holidays to all. I'm thrilled to contribute to this festive edition of our award-winning newsletter.

Rather than bore you with some long-winded "lecture," I thought I'd change the style of my message just a bit. In the true holiday spirit, I'd like to share my thoughts in the form of a verse. Now I'm not Dr. Seuss or some other great poet and

upon reading below you too will soon know it (I couldn't resist). Here it goes – enjoy.

A Colonel's Corps Christmas

It's been almost six months since I came to this land,
and my time in the District has been ever so grand.

From our locks and our dams to our parks on the shore,
I'm continually awed as I see more and more.

We take care of the fish and produce power too,
we design new contraptions and build quite a few.

We help lots of folks solve the problems at hand,
like projects designed to prevent flooding the land.

TSP open season runs through Dec. 31

from an ABC-C news release

The Thrift Savings Plan open season, Oct. 15 through Dec. 31, allows employees to increase the maximum amount contributed to their TSP accounts.

Civil Service Retirement System maximum will be 10 percent; Federal Employee Retirement System will be 15 percent. The overall maximum allowable contributions are \$13,000 for 2004.

To make elections for this open season, employees must use the Army Benefits Center - Civilian, a centralized service center for Department of the Army civilian employees.

The ABC-C can be accessed by telephone between the hours of 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. CST at 1 (877) 276-9287. Hearing impaired, 1 (877) 276-9833 or on the Internet at www.abc.army.mil. The ABC-C automated systems are available almost 24 hours a day.

Our environment's important, we're all well aware,
it's obvious to me we're all doing our share

To respect our great history and things of the past,
to ensure in our future these riches will last.

We have some great partners who work side by side,
they're part of our team and share our great pride.

Along these great rivers, the Columbia and Snake,
we do many great things and give way more than take.

From McNary to Dworshak and all in between,
to our folks out in Boise we need all on the team.

From permits to leases and encroachments we battle,
we do the right thing and sit tall in the saddle.

Some times we're in court, it's not easy it's true,
but our lawyers and experts will always come through.

No matter the name be it Paul, Mike or Wayne,
we always succeed and that's our claim to fame.

From RM to PM to Ops in the field,
our nature is such that we never will yield.

In our service to freedom and folks of this Nation,
we do all these things without loud adoration.

The Corps is our lifeblood and we're proud of that castle,
be it in the US or Iraq it's no hassle.

We accomplish the mission no matter the task,
we do all that and then some, much more than we're asked.

We do what we do for all the right reason,
you all sure deserve a reward in this season.

A season of giving and kindness and love,
a constant reminder from the Great One above.

So as Christmas draws near let us rest and reflect,
on the good things we've done and the cause and effect.

Spend time with your families, celebrate a bit,
but remember as servants we never can quit.

With the old year gone by and the New Year soon coming,
keep those track shoes nearby, as again we'll be running.

Doing great things for others, as it's not about us,
we'll keep doing great things without making a fuss.

You're all fine Americans, the best it may seem,
and I'm honored and privileged to be part of this team.

Thanks yet again for all that you do,
and a sincere "Merry Christmas" from me unto you.

Wishing you all the magic of the season. Keep charging!
Be safe. Enjoy the Holidays.

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

31 support hurricane recovery efforts

by Gina Baltrusch

During August and September, four hurricanes struck Florida and other Southeastern states.

Thirty-one Walla Walla District employees volunteered to help Florida communities recover from damage caused by hurricanes Frances, Jeanne, Ivan and Charley. Some are still serving there.

They, and hundreds more U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel from around the country, joined on-site emergency response teams.

Corps employees helped the Federal Emergency Management Agency accomplish its recovery missions.

Four of six primary missions are considered "mission complete," according to Nov. 18 data released from USACE headquarters:

- Temporary roofs: completed 134,199 – mission complete.
- Total temporary housing (emergency group) units: completed 608 of a projected 991.
- Water: delivered 31.2 million liters – mission complete.
- Ice: delivered 163 million lbs – mission complete.
- Generators: completed 1,403 assessments and installed 585 – mission complete.
- Debris removal: removed 2.3 million cubic yards (103%) of a projected 2.25 million cubic yards.

District Commander Lt. Col. Randy Glaeser honored



Photo by Sue Walton

Eric Walton, left, a mechanical engineer from Walla Walla District's Engineering Division, trains a new volunteer how to inspect temporary roofs installed by contractors.

returning Walla Walla District employees for their selfless service by presenting them

See **Hurricane**, p. 12



Photo provided by Carl Knaak

Volunteers share limited working space inside mobile emergency offices.



Photo by Sue Walton

Emergency volunteers coordinated efforts to clear debris from hurricane-damaged homes and business.

On the Cover...

Dworkshak Project natural resources personnel manage forest habitat around Dworkshak Reservoir. Recent harvesting thinned overcrowded timber, providing more room for healthy tree growth and improving conditions for plants that provide winter food for wildlife.



photo by Gina Baltrusch

Intercom



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Veterans Day spurs thoughts of service

Commentary by Nola Conway

On Nov. 11, volunteers from the Walla Walla District braved the elements and came out to ride the Corps' float in the annual parade that honors area veterans.

The Corps float was provided by McNary Lock and Dam and driven by Donald Shaw, a rigger at McNary. He was followed by John Hendergart, a painter at McNary and an Air force veteran, driving a pickup truck. Without Shaw or Hendergart, the Corps' participation would not have been possible.

Shaw and Hendergart asked why we were participating in the parade in Walla Walla? I told them it was an opportunity to recognize our veterans.

And just when I thought I was about to meet some resistance, they both smiled and said it was great. That there were many parades in the area throughout the year, and we should consider participating in more of them.

On this Veterans Day – a crisp fall day, complete with fog and a misty rain – the expectation was that not many would show up to participate or even come to watch. But, the street soon filled up with a marching band, veterans wearing uniforms from wars past, Boy and Girl Scout groups, four wheelers from the local search and rescue



Photo by Krissy Antes

District veterans gather for a photograph before the parade starts.

team, the Army National Guard, local Army and Air Force cadet honor guards, vintage automobiles and a host of floats honoring veterans.

Just before the parade started, Shaw carefully placed the Corps and United States flags into their posts on the float. One was taller than the other.

"It has to be for the U.S. flag. It flies higher than all others," he said proudly, looking up at it.

When the time came to get on the float for the parade to begin, a quick group photo was taken.

The truck driver, Shaw, declined. He shook his head and quietly said, "I never served." He stood back while the photo was being taken.

The photo was shot, and the Corps staff climbed on the float, took their seats and traveled down Main Street to show the flag, wave at the crowd and pass out candy to the kids that lined the downtown streets.

Members of the community clapped and waved, and some veterans even saluted the float as we passed by. It was humbling to sit on that float with our veterans and wave back.

I am not a veteran, but I was invited to ride the float since I had deployed to Iraq in support of the Global War on Terror. My role, as a civilian, is entirely different from the role the soldier serves. But, I appreciated that we were being recognized for serving in combat along side the troops. It was a great honor. Just as Veterans Day is

The Soldier's Creed

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my warrior tasks and drills. I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.



Photo by Gina Baltrusch



Photo by Krissy Antes

Above, Walla Walla District veterans ride the Corps float along Walla Walla's Main Street, tossing candy and waving to downtown parade watchers. Left, Don Shaw a rigger from McNary Lock and Dam's power house, attaches a metal staircase to the float and prepares it for passengers.

meant to honor those who have done so much for this country and those who have paid the ultimate price with their lives.

And on that day, I saw an amazing sight. As the parade ended and the truck stopped to let some off the float, Shaw stepped out of the truck cab, wearing a Corps hardhat decorated with an American flag. In his face and expression, what I saw was amazing. I realized that he represented what was great about this organization and our country.

A quiet, dedicated man who graciously drove our float looking as proud as anyone of this country and the organization he served. That brought shivers to me that cold morning, and it wasn't the fog or the mist.

No, I would not say he has not served. He serves proudly. He serves as a U.S. Army Civilian and on Veteran's Day. I wish we would have insisted he be in the photograph. I am proud to serve with him.

Whether you have deployed or not, served or not, being part of this organization you are serving and we are proud of all of you. It is a good day to be a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilian.

The Army Civilian Corps Creed

I am an Army Civilian
a member of the Army Team.

I am dedicated to the Army, its Soldiers and Civilians.

I will always support the mission.

I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.

I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve the Nation and its Army.

I live the Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage.

I am an Army Civilian.



Timber harvest improves habitat

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

Dworshak natural resource personnel are improving the forest environment in the Little Bay area of the Dworshak Reservoir.

Over the past few months, loggers have selectively thinned several hundred acres of forestland there.

“The type of logging we used causes very little impact to aesthetics. Unless someone knew that logging had been done there, it would be difficult to tell from the reservoir that it had happened,” said Russ Davis, a Dworshak wildlife biologist. “We’ve been very selective about the trees to be thinned. Leaving the larger more dominant trees minimizes impacts to aesthetics, and it’s restoring a healthier forest for the trees and the wildlife.”

The stewardship project is designed to improve the health of selected U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ forestlands encompassing a portion of Dworshak Dam and Reservoir, near Orofino, Idaho. The Little Bay habitat project area includes approximately 1,300 acres located along the Dworshak Reservoir between Canyon Creek at River Mile 7 and 11.

Current forest conditions include overstocked stands, elevated forests fuels, poor-quality, big-game habitat, elevated disease and beetle infestations. These conditions resulted primarily from the lack of frequent, low-intensity wildfires that are characteristic of these forest types, said Russ Davis, a Dworshak wildlife biologist.

Selective thinning, using both conventional and helicopter logging methods began in August and will continue periodically through next year until the job is complete, said Bob Tardif, Dworshak’s forester.

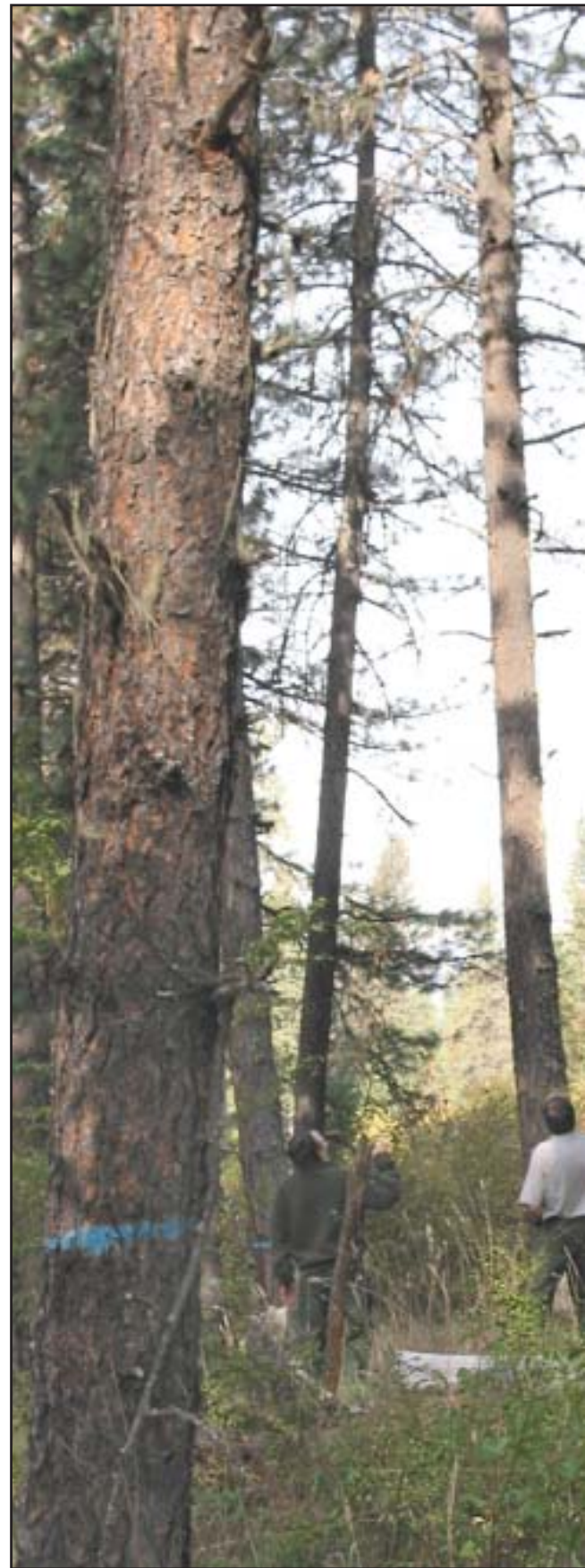
“Following the harvest, we’ll use low-intensity prescribed burns to imitate the effects of natural wildfire,” said Tardif. “This will reduce fire-fuel species and create conditions that promote healthier forest stands and the growth of big game forage.”

“People have suppressed fires in this area for about 100 years, disrupting the naturally occurring fire regimes that kept this forest healthy and provided winter food for elk and deer,” said Davis. “As a result, our ponderosa pine forest ecosystems are diminishing and more shade-tolerant species have started choking out the old-growth pine forest.

“By not allowing natural fires, we’ve changed the ecosystem here. And, those shade-tolerant species present a greater fire risk to the entire forest,” Davis added. “Should a fire break out, those smaller trees would act as tinder – we call it ladder fuel – that can keep a flash fire, like from a lightning strike, burning hot and potentially wiping out a whole stand of timber.”

The Bureau of Land Management Cottonwood District is administering this Corps’ timber sale. The sale was awarded to Empire Lumber of Kamiah through competitive bid, and Empire Lumber subcontracted with local businesses to complete the work.

“A portion of the funds from the sale of the thinned trees comes back to Dworshak for use in future land management and environmental restoration projects,” said Paul Pence, natural resource manager at Dworshak. “Also, the local jobs this habitat improvement project created is important to the community.”



Russ Davis, wildlife biologist (left), and Bob Tardif, forester (right), are in the area, Davis and Tardif have marked trees that need to be removed with blue paint so they can easily identify them. While in the area, Davis and Tardif have completed several harvest sites.



Logging crews use helicopters to remove harvested timber from areas in the forest where the terrain prevents access by trucks.



Above, Russ Davis, wildlife biologist, points out a favorite winter food of deer and elk around the Dworshak Reservoir: a moss that grows in the forest. Right, loggers de-limb harvested trees brought by helicopter to a transportation staging point in a meadow.



Bob Tardif, Dworshak's forester, discusses the selective harvest progress with one of the logging crew supervisors. Below, Russ Davis performs a safety inspection at a collection point where timber is prepared for transport by truck to local lumber mills.



Corps makes fish-passage improvements

Story and photos by Nola Conway

For years, adult fish have had the use of a fish ladder to assist them in the journey up river past the four lower Snake River dams.

Now, juvenile steelhead and salmon will have a “slide.”

Lower Snake River dams have some of the most effective fish passage facilities in the region, and the Corps is making them even better.

There are three ways juveniles can pass dams – through the spillway, diverted away from the turbines into the fish bypass structure or through the turbines.

Currently, at the Corps’ dams on the lower Columbia and Snake rivers, juvenile fish have to dive to depths of 50 to 60 feet to find the passage routes through the turbines or over the spillway.

The Corps is working with other agencies in the region to bring these survival rates even higher with an innovative structure described as a “fish slide” by National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-Fisheries).

NOAA Fisheries estimates the new structure could improve juvenile fish survival up to five percent.

Engineers call it a spillway weir. The juvenile fish bypass structure provides a more surface-oriented, less stressful, passage route for juvenile fish.

The spillway weir weighs more than 1.7 million pounds, and is 105 feet tall and 70 feet wide.

Devices to help juvenile salmon pass safely through spillways with more efficient use of water resources are examples of investments made to improve dams.

Following a successful prototype installed in 2001 at Lower Granite Dam, a new \$20 million “fish slide” will be installed at Ice Harbor Dam on the Snake River next year.

The new technology has proven so successful that similar types of technology are planned for other Columbia and Snake river dams to provide faster and safer passage for the juvenile salmon.



Media reporters and several federal executives took the opportunity to see Walla Walla District’s new spillway weir during an on-site tour of the structure-in-progress at Thompson Metal Fabrication in Vancouver, Wash., on Nov. 16.



Above, workers at Thompson Metal Fabrication in Vancouver, Wash., build a new spillway weir for installation at Ice Harbor Dam on the lower Snake River. Right, Kevin Crum, a Walla Walla District project engineer and manager of the spillway weir project, explains to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leaders and media representatives how the structure will function once in place.



Coworkers send GWOT holiday greetings

by Gina Baltrusch

On Dec. 6, District employees sent boxes of Christmas cheer to about 20 coworkers currently deployed in support of the Global War on Terrorism.

Several deployed volunteers recently sent photographs to share with District teammates. In return, District members send Season's Greetings from home to those who have sacrificed their holidays to make a difference overseas.



Sharon White, executive assistant, and Bob McCoy, family support specialist, pack boxes of treats for deployed employees.



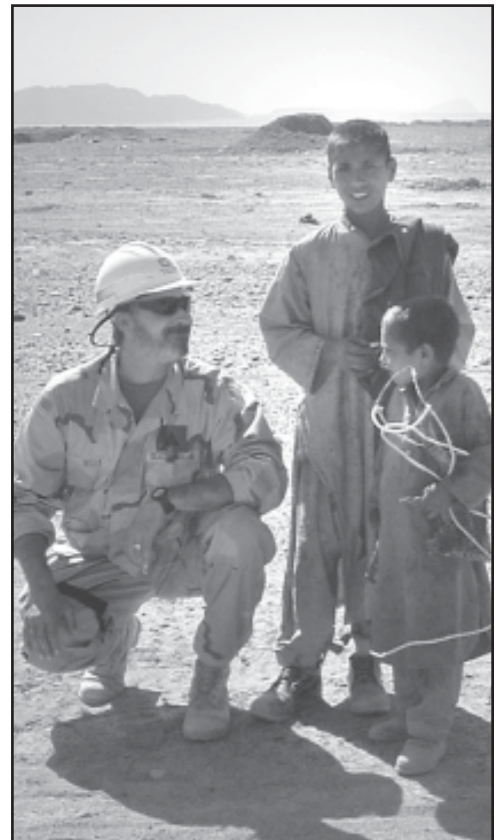
Billie Guille, a power plant shift operator from Little Goose project, and Linda Carter, an environmental protection specialist from the District headquarters, enjoy a visit with Santa Claus at the Post Exchange in Baghdad, Iraq.



Above, Rich Halverson, a painter from Little Goose project serves in Iraq. Below-left, Jim Weaver, a power plant electrician from Ice Harbor project, serves in Iraq.



Above, Donna Street, a supervisory civil engineer from the District headquarters, serves as the Kirkuk area project manager in Iraq. Below-right, Jack Sheldon, a power plant shift operator from Ice Harbor project, serves as a project engineer and construction representative in Balaad, Iraq.



Dave Wells, a power plant electrician from McNary project, serves as a quality assurance representative for the Kandahar Resident Office in Afghanistan.

FEHB: many plans to change next year

From an Army Human Resources *Civilian Personnel Bulletin*

Open season for the FEHB Program started Nov. 8 and runs through Dec. 13. Open season elections will be effective Jan. 9, 2005.

There are many plan changes that will take place in 2005 to include terminations of plans and plans reducing their service areas by terminating enrollment codes. If your plan falls under either of these categories, you will need to enroll in a plan during the open season in order to retain health benefits coverage.

Some plans will be reducing their service areas without terminating an enrollment. Employees enrolled in those plans may elect another health plan during open season or travel to the plan's remaining service area to receive benefits.

There are at least 11 new health plans that will be available in 2005 for various locations. Employees should review the information that will be available at health fairs and on the OPM website to determine eligibility, premiums, deductibles, services covered and other pertinent information prior to making a decision to enroll.

As with any open season, employees are encouraged to review their current health plans in order to determine whether it will meet their needs for the upcoming year.

Some local plan booklets are available at the District headquarters' personnel center. Additional information can be found on the Army Benefits Center Web site at www.abc.army.mil.

Close quarters

Ed Baker, a power plant mechanic at Little Goose Lock and Dam, barely has elbow room as he works within an 18-inch high area inside a generator to replace the turbine brakes.



Photo by Gina Baltrusch

HQ tackles P2 glitches

by Gina Baltrusch

P2, the Corps' new automated information system software has problems. On Dec. 2, the Corps provided some solutions.

P2 is a number of commercial off-the-shelf programs designed by different companies, yet intended to interface together and with the Corps' existing financial management software CEFMS. Only it is not working as smoothly as intended, according to many of the users.

"We've had training on each of the programs, and we know how they work individually," said Alden Foote, Walla Walla District's project business management process expert. "The problem is that the software doesn't yet interface with other systems as intended. Also, because they were designed by different companies, there was no overall users guide to refer to or one subject matter expert who knows everything to call for answers on how they are all supposed to work together. The Corps is essentially the test site for this product trying to work out the problems as we deploy it."

USACE officials recently addressed the issue. Members of the USACE project management business process program office, division regional business center members, district directors of program management, project management chiefs, P2 technicians and others interested in P2 met on Nov 9-10 in Ft. Worth, Texas, to address the major P2 concerns raised by district program managers.

The national P2 team placed a *P2 Users Guide* on the P2 Portal as a new addition to the PMBP manual on Dec. 2. While still not complete, it does provide a common source for all users to access.

The users guide is powered by a software tool called "Robohelp," according to an USACE headquarters *Corps Points!* article. It will help P2 users find answers and assist in problem solving by giving them search-and-query capabilities, as well as keyword lookups and a glossary. The P2 Users Guide is accessible through the PMBP portal.

The PMBP team also will provide feedback on the following:

- Listing of reported bugs and the dates projected to be corrected
- Configuration Control Process: addressing both bugs and suggested changes/upgrades.
- Progress to date on improving stability of the system.

For more information, visit the PMBP Portal at <https://pmbp.usace.army.mil/>.

Corps volunteers help open kids' museum

Story and photos by Gina Baltrusch

Several Walla Walla District employees took the opportunity to help make the idea of a local museum for kids a reality.

Throughout the past year, Carl Knaak, Craig Newcomb, Jeff Sedgwick and Stan Heller joined other community volunteers to prepare the Children's Museum of Walla Walla for visitors.

"The support of volunteers made this place happen," said Cathy Mebes, founding director, who spearheaded three years of planning, fund-raising and coordinating volunteers' efforts.

Thousands of volunteer hours later, the museum opened its vivid purple doors Oct. 16 to youngsters and their parents.

Knaak, lead engineer of the District's maintenance engineering section, teamed up with Tom Osborn, an engineer from Bonneville Power Administration, to build a dam model, complete with a navigation lock, a fish ladder and running water.

Newcomb, a District regional economist, designed and built a stream table for use at the District's 2003 Walla Walla fair booth. The wooden structure was replaced this year by a less-leaky, metal table built by employees at McNary's maintenance section. Instead of discarding the old table, it was donated to the museum for an exhibit called "Our Powerful Valley." Museum staff had the table coated with a waterproof polymer to stop the leaks and put an exterior finish on it that matched the room's decor. Now, the hands-on display engages museum visitors of all ages in teaching watershed and river dynamics.

The "Our Powerful Valley" room includes volunteer-made displays from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, BPA, National Weather Service NOAA, and other wind- and hydro-related organizations. The exhibit encourages children and parents to explore why the hydrologic system is so important in providing cost effective power solutions and how power gets to people's homes and businesses.

The Children's Museum of Walla Walla has more than 20 hands-on, educational exhibits. For more information, call 526-7529 or visit the museum's website at www.cmwallowalla.org.



Above, children get hands-on experience with a stream table designed and built by Craig Newcomb, a regional economist at the District headquarters, that was donated to the museum for a playroom that has a power-production and environmental-awareness theme. Below, Jeff Sedgwick, an engineer at the District headquarters, sands and paints chairs at the Children's Museum with other community volunteers.



Carl Knaak, an engineer at the District headquarters, builds cabinets for toys in the Walla Walla Childrens Museum.

Hurricane, from p. 3

certificates of appreciation and commander's coins.

District employees who deployed in support of hurricane recovery efforts to date include:

David Alexander
Phil Bengé
Bruce Crittenden
Tony Fink (deployed twice)
James Gale
Ron Gosselin
Bob Harms
Kenneth Hengen
Tedd Jojola
Joe Kasper
Carl Knaak
Larry Lewis
George Melanson
Lynda Nutt
Tommy Pangelinan
Jeffrey Randal

Rob Rathburn
Mike Remington
Ron Robson
Randy Ryan
Kirt Silva
Marcus Smith
Kip Tyler
Joe Van Winkle
Greg Vaughn
Kerry Vigue
Karen Walker
Eric Walton
Sue Walton
Aaron Wetterling
Lee Wolf



Photo by Larry Lewis

Many volunteers who deployed to support hurricane recovery efforts operated out of mobile offices.



Photo provided by Carl Knaak



Photo provided by Sue Walton

Above, Sue Walton, a mechanical engineer from Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, inspects a contractor's temporary roof installation. Left, Carl Knaak, a mechanical engineer from Walla Walla District's Operations Division, inspects a generator before it is installed at a nearby hospital.



Photos by Sue Walton

Above, employees from the Walla Walla District Headquarters, Kip Tyler, Engineering Division, and Phil Bengé, Operations Division, conduct a pre-inspection and cost estimate for temporary roof repairs. Right, the results of Corps volunteers' efforts on FEMA's Operation Blue Roof is obvious as they depart Florida by air.

