



The Palmetto Castle

Newsletter Date September 22, 2006

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS CHARLESTON DISTRICT

Volume 3, Issue 1

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FOLLY BEACH FENCING AND GRASSING PROJECT CREATES HEALTHY DUNE SYSTEM

By Carol Weart, Editor, Ted Hauser, Civil Engineer, and Tommy Socha, Engineering Technician

Sand dunes are the first line of defense against the damaging waves of coastal storms. Dunes are very susceptible to wind erosion and depend upon beach grass and fencing for their growth and survival.

In February and March of 2006 the Corps was instrumental in the installation of 1,162 20-foot long sand fence panels over 25,000 linear feet of fencing and grassing at Folly Beach. The installation was part of the 2005 Public Law 84-99 rehabilitation project. The fencing was installed in 20 foot panels spaced 7.5 feet apart. After the fence was installed 224,815 plants were planted consisting of sea oats, bitter panicum, and American beach grass.

The plant material helps to lower the wind velocities at the dune surface, causing wind blown sand to be deposited around the grass and fence line and be retained rather than blown away. The wind blown sand is trapped and dunes are created.

A healthy dune system provides a reserve and source for nourishing a beach as it erodes. The fencing breaks up the wind column transporting the sand and the grassing holds sand in place until needed by Mother Nature to reduce the rate of shoreline erosion. Establishment of healthy dunes also provide an environmental habitat for opossum, rabbits, raccoons and various shorebirds. Healthy dunes can also aid in

turtle nesting by blocking the lighting from structures so that hatchlings do not get disoriented and travel inland instead of toward the water.

In the six months since the grass has been planted at Folly Beach, the sea oats have grown from 16" to 5.5 feet and the bitter panicum has grown from 16" to 6-9" with newly established dunes being as high as three feet and 20 feet wide. The network of underground roots extend the plant laterally as it continues to grow upwards through accumulating layers of sand.

Planting beach grass not only helps stabilize dunes, it adds to the beauty of our shoreline and helps keep the lowcountry beaches a place all Americans want to visit.

Corps employees Ted Hauser and Tommy Socha explain the importance and mission of the fencing and grassing project to Folly Beach Mayor Carl Beckmann.





FROM THE COMMANDER

As we head into fall – better known as Football Season -- I hope all of you were able to take some time to enjoy the summer with friends and family. Although summer is generally thought of as a more relaxed time, we were certainly busy here in the Charleston District and that pace will continue as we head into year end and the heart of hurricane season.

On that note, I'd like to talk a little bit about Ernesto, the Tropical Storm/Hurricane that recently passed through our area. We were lucky and didn't have any real damage in the Charleston area or in most parts of South Carolina but as with all hurricanes, it could have gone differently.

I think Ernesto gave us a good opportunity to rehearse our plans and see just how prepared we are. Some things went well. Some things need some tweaking. The good news is, we've got time to tweak.

I ask you to think about your team's and your personal readiness and to make whatever changes or adjustments you need to make before we're facing another storm.

This month marks an anniversary for the district. We've been formally working under regionalization for just about a year now and I'd like to share my thoughts on our successes and our challenges.

Some of the changes have been hard and I want you to know I appreciate your efforts to work through this and still keep providing great customer service for the people of South Carolina.

I think we're already seeing how regionalization can help the District. We are working

on studies for projects in Mobile and Jacksonville. We are hiring people in positions that some thought would be moved to Savannah or Wilmington. And we have been praised for our flexibility and teamwork.

As the U.S. and the world become more and more connected through technology, we will see more and more people working from places very far from their company's offices. We are already moving in that direction and our willingness to make it happen shows we are adaptable and forward-thinking.

I realize that we have not figured out all the problems with the "mechanics" of being regional. There are still business practices that need to be defined and other issues that make your life a little more complicated. However, we need to stick with it.

As I have said before, we don't have any huge projects now or in the near future of the Charleston District. We need to keep our skills sharp by working on other projects in the region and the smaller projects that are just as important to the state of South Carolina. Regionalization is interwoven into our everyday activities now. Almost everything we do is affected by or made possible by our peers in the other Districts in the region.

Lastly, We are doing some things around the building to spruce up and show our pride in the work we do and in the people who make it hap-

The Palmetto Castle is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of Defense. Inquiries and comments can be forwarded to editor of the Palmetto Castle by e-mail to :

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Folly Beach

(Continued from front page)

The dunal system shown in the picture on the right was established in less than a year to help prevent storm surge from reaching the secondary dune system that was established in the 1993 renourishment project. These dunes help protect the roads homeowners and tourists on Folly Beach use.



The newly formed dune shown at left was washed away recently during a week of extremely high tides. Once the tides receded the wind-blown sand was once again trapped by fence and grasses (as shown below) to rebuild the dune system. During a storm event there is a cycle these dunes go through with the help of the Corps grassing and fencing project. The extreme high tides from the storm event wash away the dunes and once the tides recede, wind-blown sand is dropped by the fence and the grass and the dunes will once again start to rebuild.



The sea oats at this healthy dune system have grown from 16" to 5.5 feet in six months. The bitter panicum has grown from 16" to 6-9' in six months. This could not have been accomplished without Corps employees keeping up with current technologies and trends in planting and growing procedures.

NSPS IMPLEMENTATION UPDATE FROM LTG STROCK



Corps Team,

Let me provide you with an update on our progress with implementing the National Security Personnel System (NSPS), the new Department of Defense civilian human resources system.

As many of you know, NSPS is designed to deliver new, more flexible and streamlined personnel processes for recruiting, hiring, promotion, and to better prepare our workforce to meet our future missions. Merit system principles, veterans' preference, and rules against prohibited personnel practices remain unchanged. However, under NSPS, pay increases will be linked to performance.

NSPS is being implemented in phases called spirals. In April 2006, approximately 11,000 DoD employees were converted to NSPS in Spiral 1.1. On 12 July 2006, DoD announced Spiral 1.2. Over 66,000 employees will convert between October 2006 and January 2007. This will include approximately 4,400 USACE employees. The following organizations and categories of employees are scheduled to convert in January 2007:

a. All USACE supervisors in General Schedule (GS/GM) positions, except those affected by the IM/IT A-76 study and the Logistics High Performing Organization initiative.

b. All non-bargaining unit and non-supervisory employees assigned to USACE Headquarters, the Humphreys Engineer Center Support Activity, the USACE Finance Center, the Transatlantic Programs Center, the 249th Engineering Battalion/Prime Power School, the Institute for Water Resources, the Huntsville Engineering and Support Center, and the Southwestern Division Headquarters.

Spiral 1.3, scheduled for April 2007, will affect all non-bargaining unit and non-supervisory employees in the Pacific Ocean Division Headquarters, Japan District, Honolulu District, South Atlantic Division Headquarters, Jacksonville District, and Omaha District.

Employees and supervisors in the following organizations are excluded: IM/IT A-76 study, the Logistics High Performing Organization initiative, Gulf Region Division, Afghanistan Engineer District, and the Engineer Research and Development Center.

Transition teams will be formed at the national, regional, and local levels to guide USACE through

NSPS. The transition teams will be led by senior management officials and include representatives from Human Resources, Resource Management, Public Affairs, Office of Counsel, and Equal Employment Opportunity.

The Department of Defense currently proposes conversion of the remainder of the non-bargaining unit workforce in October 2007. An implementation plan and updates will be provided as DoD publishes additional information.

I know that NSPS will be a big change and you may have questions about how NSPS implementation will affect you. Let me reassure you that we understand the importance of frequent communication and formal training.

The transition team will formulate and publish a Project Management Plan and communications strategy for NSPS over the next several weeks. The plan will outline how we will address your questions through town halls, workshops, formal training courses, and frequent communications.

All supervisors, managers, and military personnel who supervise civilians will be required to attend NSPS classroom training on HR Elements and Performance Management. This training will be announced and scheduled in the coming months.

In the meantime, it is mandatory for all those employees converting to NSPS to visit the NSPS website at www.cpms.osd.mil/nsps/nsps101/nsps/index.htm and take the NSPS 101 web based tutorial. The Department of the Army website also provides general information and the information on the Army NSPS training programs and schedules at <http://www.cpol.army.mil/library/general/NSPS/>. I also addressed NSPS with all USACE Senior Leaders at the Summer Leader Conference.

Taking an active role in understanding this system will be essential to successful implementation and I look forward to working together to make NSPS a positive force as we continue our important role in supporting our Nation and our Armed Forces.

Essayons!

LTG CARL A. STROCK

MEET OUR NEW EMPLOYEES...



Amelia Bryant

Amelia recently joined the Contracting Office as a Contracting Officer. Upon graduating from high school she joined the Air Force—first serving as a medical specialist. Amelia then changed career fields in the Air Force to that of contract specialist. While serving in the Air Force she was stationed at a variety of bases including her last assignment at Charleston Air Force Base. Amelia holds a bachelors degree from Hampton University in Virginia. She is married to a Marine currently stationed in Beaufort, South Carolina and they have a nine-month-old son, Jamysson.



Tonya K. Harrington

Tonya worked for the Detroit District (from December 2000-August 2006) before “seeing the low country light” and moving south to join us here in Charleston. She is the Regional Economist for the Wilmington District located in Charleston. Prior to joining the Corps, Tonya taught college economics for over 10 years at Lansing Community College and Northwood University. She has a PhD in economics from Michigan State University and attended Michigan State for her other degrees as well. Tonya is the mother of two children: Rich, who is 23, and Matthew, who is 7. Her ideal free time is spending time with Matt.



Chad Konickson

Chad a returning Corps employee. Chad is the new Senior Project Manager (Biologist) at the Conway Office. He comes to us from Minnesota where he worked as a Hydrologist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for six years. Prior to that Chad worked in the Alaska District for two years, the Jacksonville District for five years, and the St. Paul District for two years. All of these positions were with the Regulatory Division. Chad has a Bachelor's of Science in Forest Resource Management from the University of Minnesota. He is married and has two daughters. He enjoys outdoor sports including hiking, canoeing, and biking.



Paul Leach

Paul is our new Safety, Occupational Health, and Security Manager. He served in the Army and the United States Coast Guard, retiring as a CWO3. Paul's Civil Service career began with the U.S. Navy Military Sealift Command Safety Office in 2003. He has since worked in a variety of positions, providing a wide depth of safety experience. He graduated from Texas A&M in 2004 with an MS in Industrial Technology and Safety Management. His certifications include Hazardous Material Manager and Certified Flight Instructor. Paul has been married to his wife, Carol, for 25 years and has four step-children and five step-grandchildren.



Southern Hospitality—Showing graciousness, kindness and warmth to others.

Take the time to show our new employees some true Southern Hospitality!



Lauri Newkirk-Paggi

Lauri is the District's new Chief of Contracting. Before joining the Corps, Lauri was the head of the Contingency Branch in the Contracting Department at the Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command. Lauri attended Perkinston Junior College and Limestone College. She is continuing to pursue her business degree. Lauri is originally from the Mississippi Gulf Coast but has lived in Charleston for the past 25 years and considers this to be home. Lauri and her husband have two dogs, two cats and currently live on James Island. She enjoys creating things in her pottery studio in her spare time.

CHARLESTON DISTRICT SHRIMP BOIL

The annual Shrimp Boil marks the passing of another year that has passed since the District survived Hurricane Hugo. This year we will also celebrate the induction of Mr. Elmer Schwingen into the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees and we will be welcoming our new Division Commander, BG Joseph Schroedel on his first visit to the Charleston District.

The Shrimp Boil will be held at the Altman Center immediately following the Induction Ceremony on September 28th.



Shrimp tickets are \$8 and include all the shrimp you can eat, coleslaw and a drink. For those of you who don't eat shrimp, tickets are \$5 and you will receive hamburger, one hot dog, coleslaw chips, and a drink. Cake will be served to all attendees regardless of ticket level.

Please purchase your ticket from Lynda Daniel, Cynthia Ruddy, or Lisa Metheny.

Everyone is encouraged to attend and meet BG Schroedel and congratulate Elmer.

Palmetto Proceedings

Congratulations:

To **Keith Ellmers** and **Peggy Garten** for being nominated for the 2006 Federal Employees of the Year for the Federal Executive Association of the Greater Charleston Area. Keith's name was submitted in the Scientific/Professional Field and Peggy's was submitted in the Technician/Assistant Field. The winners will be announced at the awards luncheon in October.

To **Henry Wigfall** for acceptance to the Naval Postgraduate school located in Monterey, California. He will attend via correspondence and via VTC. Henry competed against other Corps employees for this slot and was chosen for this opportunity. Upon completion in the program, Henry will graduate with a Master of Science in the Contract Management Program.

To **Blake Mims, son of James Mims**, a Castle Club Scholarship recipient who started at the Citadel on July 24, 2006. He has now been at the Citadel for nine weeks and is a trainer for the football team. He has received a Naval ROTC Scholarship and is under contract with the Navy. He plans on majoring in Electrical Engineering. So far, the "knob" seems to be holding up "okay."



To **Sarah Tingly**, proud grandmother of her first grandchild. Aidan Douglas Tingley was born on September 16 at 10:46 a.m. and weighed in at 5 lbs, 13 oz.

The 2006 Summer Golf Tournament was held at Coosaw Creek County Club in North Charleston on Thursday, 24 August 2006 even though a heavy downpour occurred that morning at 69A Hagood. The weather at the golf course began to clear around 10:30 a.m. and the golf course was playable so we were able to play under partly cloudy skies and to finish is a drizzling rain on the last two or three holes. The Regulatory team and one of the Wilmington Regional Engineering Center teams tied for first place with a score of 65. The Regulatory team members were Nat Ball, Jay Brown, Bill Tuten and Bill Nixon. The Engineering team members were Wayne Bissette, Don Carmen, Jim Henderson and Jean Wallace. The Lawyer and Logistic team finished third with a score of 68. Team members

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NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE DAY MONTH CELEBRATED SEPTEMBER 15-OCTOBER 15, 2006

In 1968, Congress authorized President Lyndon B. Johnson to proclaim a week in September as National Hispanic Heritage Week. The observance was expanded in 1988 to a month long celebration (Sept. 15-Oct. 15).

During this month, America celebrates the culture and traditions of U.S. residents who trace their roots to Spain, Mexico and the Spanish-speaking nations of Central America, South America and the Caribbean. September 15th was chosen as the starting

point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

In addition, Mexico and Chile celebrate their independence days on September 16, and 18 respectively.

The theme for this year's observance is "Our Rich Culture Contributing to America's Future".



EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



Norm Moebis is our **August 2006** Employee of the Month. Norm is a member of the navigation section of the operations branch. Norm worked extremely hard on the technical specifications for the AIWW Rock Sill Erosion Control contract. He spent many hours working overtime preparing for contract negotiations as well as keeping up with the many disposal area management issues and real estate issues on the intracoastal waterway. Between all of that, he managed to produce yet another set of technical documents for a contract for drainage work at the Naval Weapons Station Disposal Area.

Congratulations Norm!

Palmetto Proceedings (continued from page 6)

were John Kassebaum, Bob Brown, Cindy and Dorsey Biller. The Project Management team, captained by LTC Fleming, a Red Sox fan, and the other Engineering team, captained by Tom Murphy, a Yankee's fan, tied for fourth with a score of 70. The Project Management team members were LTC Fleming, Bill Stein, Joe Wilson and Patrick O'Donnell. The second Engineering team members were Tom Murphy and friends-Rick Miller, Chris, and Dave.

Cindy Biller was closest to the pin (12 inches) on hole #3. Bob Brown was closest to the pin on hole #15. LTC Fleming had the longest drive in the fairway on hole #5. Don Carmen had the longest drive in the fairway on hole #12.

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US Army Corps of Engineers® Charleston District

RECENT REGULATORY TRAINING



On September 19th twenty Corps employees including eighteen from Regulatory and two from Planning attended Endangered Species Training given by USFWS at the Seewee Education Center.



New Regulatory personnel receiving field training with the assistance of Richard Darden.