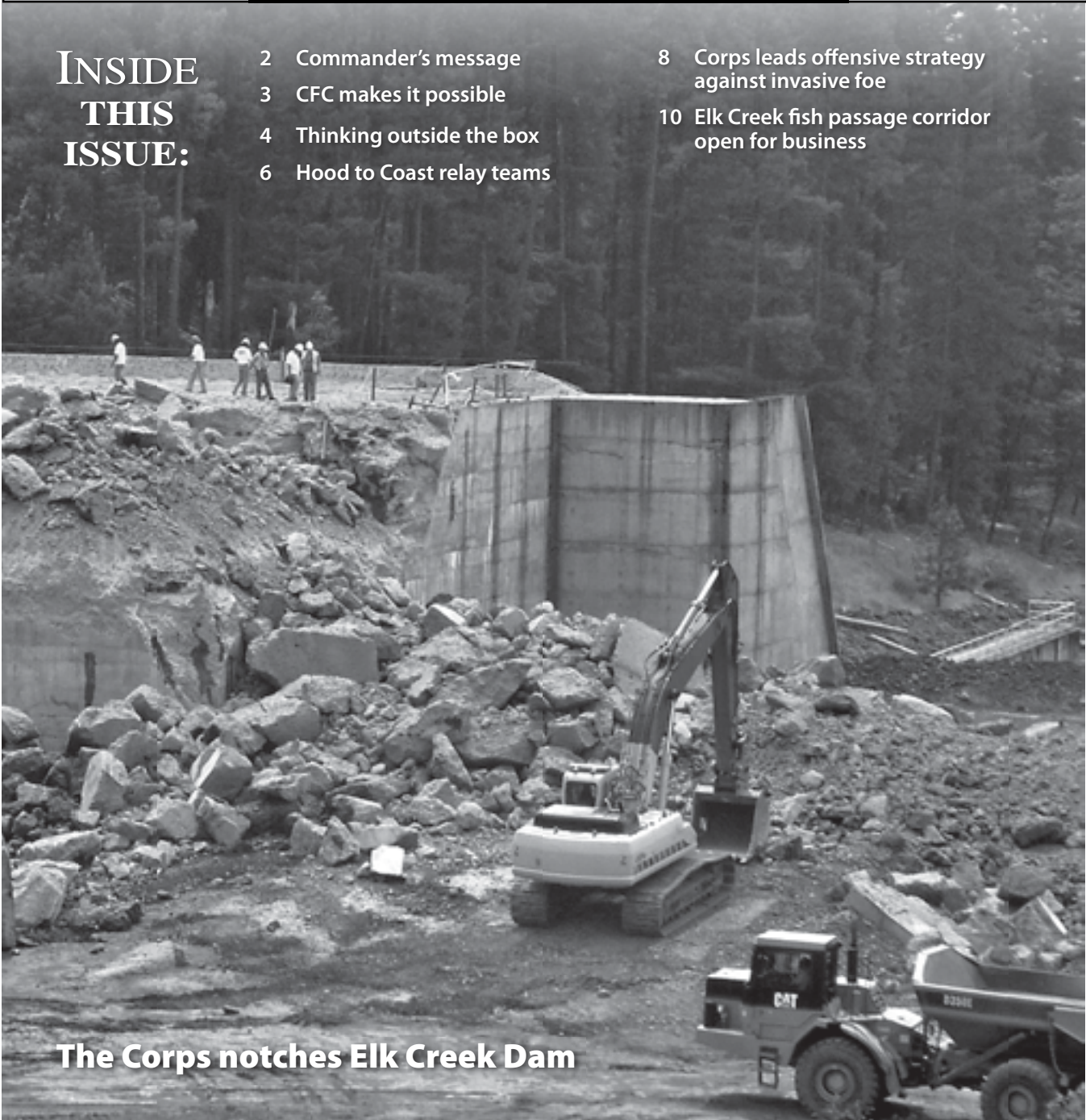




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The Corps notches Elk Creek Dam



Honoring Our Legacy - Building Our Future

During the past several months, our District has witnessed the annual cycle of retirements, when key leaders pass the baton of responsibility to the next generation of professionals. Human resource leaders project an increasing number of retirements over the next 10 years and beyond as the Baby Boomer generation reaches eligibility.

This clearly presents new and complex challenges for continuity of operations, knowledge management and technical competency. On the flip side, it offers exciting opportunities for growth and advancement within the District and across the Corps of Engineers.

I am proud of the legacy these retirees built. I recently attended an informal gathering of retired Corps of Engineers employees, where I was asked to discuss our current operations and future challenges. Many who attended were the engineers who designed and built our dams and powerhouses in the 1940s, 50s and 60s. They faced incredible obstacles in their time, but none like we tackle today and in the near future.

Our aging critical infrastructure, combined with preserving and recovering endangered species in and around our projects, will require innovation, risk and courage. In both cases, time is working against us. We can't let analysis become paralysis! We must lead the way with creative solutions that get the biggest bang for the taxpayer's buck. Like of Chief of Engineers recently said, "We need to swing the bat with all our energy." Our stakeholders and partners are expecting a great performance each and every time from our District.

Delivering superior performance is our professional commitment. I dedicate this issue of the Corps'pondent to all those who devoted their professional career to the Portland District and/or the Northwestern Division: retirees like Mr. Bud Ossey, Mr. Phil Cole, Mr. Miles Bubenick, and Mr. Dick Mittelstadt – a generation of retirees that served in uniform during WWII and then dedicated their professional civilian careers to the Army Corps of Engineers. Their efforts created the foundation of proud service upon which we build. We are forever grateful and will continue the great tradition.

Building STRONG – Essayons!! 



Col. Steven R. Miles, P.E.



Corps of Engineers Photo

Bud Ossey, Col. Miles, Phil Cole and Russ George. If you'd like to join an informal group of retirees, call Bud Ossey at (503) 692-3444 or Dick Mittelstadt at (503) 661-4497. Email Bud Ossey at max.bud@verizon.net or Dick Mittelstadt at rmittel@comcast.net. The next meeting is Nov. 12.

CORPS'PONDENT



US Army Corps of Engineers - Portland District

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CFC makes it possible for all of us, with a minimum of effort, to think about our lives and address those areas where our hearts have been touched the most.



2008 Tri-Agency Combined Federal Campaign

Imagine 2008 *WHAT WE CAN DO together.*

September 29th thru November 7th, 2008 Pacific Northwest
Join the many fun events to support our efforts! Combined Federal Campaign

October 3rd - CFC Opening Ceremony & Yogurt Bar
 9:30 a.m. with opening remarks at 10 a.m.
 RDP 3rd floor conference rooms

October 9th - Walk around the Esplanade
 11 a.m. - 12 noon
 RDP outside lobby

October 14th - Chili Cook Off
 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. (or until the chili is gone)
 RDP 3rd floor conference rooms

October 22nd - Silent Auction/Baskets
 Starts at 9 a.m. with bid sheets being collected at 2 p.m.
 RDP 3rd Floor Conference Rooms

www.yourcfc.org

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If you decide that you'd like to contribute to this year's campaign, you can do so by completing a donation form provided to you by your key worker in early October. If you don't know who they are, contact your CFC coordinator Gail Lovell, (503) 808-4907, or Vandi Leheny, (503) 808-4730.

With your help we can all make a difference in the lives of others!



THINKING OUTSIDE THE BOX

By Erica Gann, Public Affairs Office

Insurance companies like to call them qualifying events: the criteria that they use for making changes to your coverage. But most of us just call them major life-changing events. All of us have experiences in our lives that are good, bad or ugly. It's reality. You might get married, have a baby, get divorced, or you or one of your family members gets ill. Some life changes never make it to the insurance form, but they're still major.

When something significant happens, most of us march forward, with or without direction, into an unknown outcome. Some experiences are familiar because you've been through it before. But other times may catch you completely off guard. Family and friends may help, but what do you do when they can't?

The Combined Federal Campaign can help during those life-changing events. Each year the CFC provides federal employees the opportunity to be one of those friends others call on during times of stress.

A new baby can bring great joy, but having a baby gets complicated when parents aren't ready, or there are high risks with the baby or mother. These families often need others to help with financial assistance, parenting education, or to walk them through unfamiliar medical treatments and terminologies. Social service providers are ready to assist. One CFC non-profit organization, Birth to Three, Inc., in Eugene, Ore., provides counseling and other resources to new families. "When young couples become parents they begin a stressful time of life," said Gerry Gaydos, a Birth to Three participant. "When they attend parenting meetings, they find support and often bond with other parents. These priceless relationships help everyone become better parents who raise great children."

It seems that almost everyone knows at least one person who's had a heart attack, been diagnosed with cancer or has suffered a stroke. In 2007, the National Center for Health Statistics found that heart disease, cancer and strokes are the leading causes of

death across the nation. What do you do when you or someone you know has been diagnosed with an illness? Are you comfortable talking about it? Are you prepared to be a caregiver, should you need to be? Many of us are not.

The American Heart Association, the American Cancer Society and the National Stroke Association are just three of many organizations that educate and provide advice about these illnesses – and all are CFC members.

Hospice organizations can help with end-of-life decisions and education on caring for the terminally ill. "People are often reluctant to talk about dying," says Sharon Mulford, Executive Director with Hospice of the Gorge. "It's not part of our culture to talk about it. What will dying be like? What can I say to a friend who just lost her husband? How can I talk to my children about my wishes?" Hospice provides answers to your questions. Hospice of the Gorge is also a member of CFC.

We'll face many major milestones in our lives; some of them just aren't insurable.

You may suddenly become your parent's caregiver and face new issues. Where do you go for help and advice? Eldercare agencies across Oregon provide programs for seniors, offer education and can even provide respite care to caregivers. An older family member or friend might find that visiting a Loaves and Fishes location offers some company and a chance to share a meal. They can arrange to have meals delivered to their home through the Meals on Wheels program if they have a hard time getting out. You guessed it – both are CFC members.

We are often personally affected by others' crises. You may watch your child, your friend or your co-worker struggle with addiction, depression, financial crisis, domestic violence, child abuse, suicide or some other tragedy. You may be struggling yourself. Most people aren't prepared to handle these issues – but social service agencies are. If you know someone in crisis and you don't know what to do, dial 211 to


find help in your local community. (Always call 911 first if there's the threat of danger or harm to you or others.) Yes – 211 is a CFC member, too.

Qualifying event or life changing event? The name doesn't really matter. What does matter is bringing the right people together when we need help, whether it's your friend and family or help from a community service provider.

All of these organizations are part of CFC, the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign for hundreds of local, national and international charitable organizations working on issues you care about. More than 300 CFC campaigns throughout the country and internationally help raise millions of dollars each year. Pledges made by federal civilian, postal and military donors during the campaign season support eligible non-profit organizations that provide health and human service benefits throughout the world.

The Portland District's 2008 Combined Federal Campaign is a joint effort between the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service, with a theme of "Imagine what we can all do together." The campaign begins Oct. 3 and runs through Nov. 7. Four fundraising events will be held throughout October, beginning with an informative opening ceremony to learn where contributions can go and how they can help.

We, or someone we know, will face many of these issues in the future and may need the help of organizations like these. It's nice to know that the Combined Federal Campaign is there to help.

There's one more way to lend a hand: volunteers are needed to help with fundraising events and help distribute and collect campaign forms. If you would like to get involved, contact this year's CFC coordinators, Gail Lovell, at (503) 808-4970, or Vandí Leheny, (503) 808-4730 to learn more about what you can do. 



DISTRICT CAMPAIGN

Imagine 2008
WHAT WE CAN DO *together.*

The Corps, the Forest Service and BLM host a series of events for this year's CFC Campaign. Mark your calendars for the exciting opportunities below:

CFC Opening Ceremony: Oct. 3, 10 a.m., 3rd floor conference rooms
Join leadership from the Portland District, BLM and the Forest Service as they kick-off the 2008 campaign and meet with local charities to learn about the services they provide.

Walking the Esplanade: Oct. 9: 11 a.m.
Join your coworkers for a competitive walk, or just walk for fun, on the Willamette River Esplanade. Choose either the 1.5- or 3-mile route. Purchase tickets in advance from a CFC coordinator or at the eastside lobby entrance of Robert Duncan Plaza on the day of the event. Tickets are \$5. Maps will be provided.

Chili Cook Off: Oct. 14th: 11 a.m. – 1 p.m., 3rd floor conference rooms
Who makes the best chili in RDP? You be the judge! Employees are encouraged to bring a crockpot of their tastiest creation. Your coworkers will taste and judge. If you want to enter the competition, please sign up with a CFC coordinator. For a \$5 entry fee, you can sample the chili and cast up to five votes for your favorite.

CFC Silent Auction: Oct. 22 – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
A wide variety of interesting items and baskets will be auctioned off, contributed by RDP tenant agencies.



District fields teams around the world for Portland tradition

By Matt Rabe, Public Affairs Office

It's been called the "Mother of all Relays."

The Hood to Coast Relay is a massive event: 197 miles. 12,000 runners. 2,000 support vehicles. Blisters. Ointments. Energy bars.

This year, the Dam Runners, an assemblage of Portland District employees, friends and family, again took to the road to compete against teams from around the world for bragging rights and friendly competition.

Hood to Coast

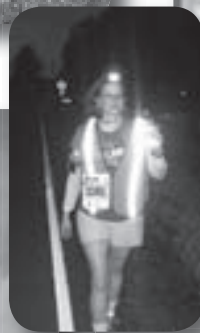
Mindy Simmons, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, served as this year's captain, and brought together the runners, volunteers, drivers and other support.

"The Portland District has participated in the Hood to Coast race for many years," said Simmons. "But, this year was a little different. There was a virtual team running the race from Afghanistan."

Simmons, of course, is referring to an unofficial team, the Kite Runners, that ran the race from multiple locations in Afghanistan under the inspiration of Col. Thomas O'Donovan.



Dam Runners



Portland to Coast Walkers

ast Relay

“Rumor has it he had people running around compounds and on treadmills,” said Simmons.

The Dam Runners completed the race in just under 27 hours – one and one-half hours ahead of their projected finish time.


At the same time the Dam Runners were making their way from Mount Hood to Seaside, the “If This Vans A Walkin’ Don’t Bother Nokin” Portland District walking team was taking part in the 127-mile Portland to Coast Walk Relay, the largest walk relay in the world.

“Half of our team was new to this race and they did a great job. Everyone did better than their

estimates for the legs,” said team co-captain Melissa Rinehart, Operations Division. “We all met people along the way who inspired us to do our best.”

The walkers completed their relay in 28 hours, 45 minutes.

Also participating in this year’s Portland to Coast walk was Louis Landre, Real Estate Office. Landre participated with the “Portland To Chaos” team made up of members of Racewalkers Northwest.

Landre’s team took first place in their division – male mixed masters, and second place overall with a time of just more than 22 hours. 



Kite Runners





Corps leads offensive strategy against invasive foe

Defending the countryside to restore an ecosystem

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

On a recent visit to Fall Creek Dam in the Willamette Valley, I noticed a ring of trees around the reservoir. This ring of forested land starts at the shores of the lake on Corps property and ends several hundred yards back on private land that has been clear cut by timber companies.

The clear cut area looks something like a playing field, with the trees acting as spectators on a game with very high stakes.

“People don’t realize that the cleared land outside the ring provides the ideal setting for millions of seeds from invasive, noxious plants to take root,” said Wes Messinger, a botanist with the Willamette Valley Project. If they get even a small foothold, these players can ruin playing fields everywhere, he added.

Why are invasive plants so reviled? With seeds carried on the wind, how can the Corps’ environmental stewardship efforts make a difference in an ecosystem whose health hinges on the actions of so many landowners?

Invasive plants wreak havoc, acre by acre, on natural ecosystems, Messinger said. Seeds know no boundaries and move between Corps and neighboring properties across the Willamette Valley, along the Columbia River and at other Corps project around the country.

“While people can be beguiled by the seeming benefits of invasive plants – think of the juicy summer fruit of the Himalayan blackberry – weeds actually degrade agriculture and timber production, suffocating the natural habitat for animals and wildlife that the public enjoys watching,” Messinger said.

Soil disturbances from construction at Corps projects, including dams, campgrounds, parking lots and boat ramps left the land vulnerable to invasion by reed canary grass and other species. Add to

that the impact of altered hydrological regimes and millions of visitors to Corps lands every year, and the problem becomes clear.

“Although we didn’t clear-cut trees around our reservoirs in the Willamette Valley, we remain responsible for restoring our property,” Messinger said.

Since the mid-1990s, the Corps has been working to hold a defensive line on the environmental integrity of its property. However, the natural value of Corps’ lands to the overall environment and the ultimate success of its invasive plant eradication program depend largely on the behavior of its neighbors.

Natural resource planners like Messinger are developing an offensive playbook that will make it easier for land-owning neighbors and public agencies to work together to balance the quality of



Photo by Matt Blakely-Smith

Crews apply super-heated foam along a Willamette Valley roadside as an experimental method for controlling false brome.

land management, so everyone scores more points in the game.

The Corps is first-string player in a current offensive play being run in the Fall Creek area of the Middle Fork Willamette River watershed. The opposition's roster includes some bad characters, but one in particular stands out: false brome.

False brome is an aggressive Eurasian grass that is encroaching on native woodlands, meadows and forests near Eugene, Ore. In addition to suffocating native fauna, dense growths of false brome may alter fire regimes and increase the risk and rate of spread posed by wildfires. The species itself appears to be fire tolerant, resprouting within two weeks of a burn. Add the fact that it seems to thrive in areas that have been clear-cut and it's clear that false brome is a pernicious weed that likes its new playing field.

The Corps is a veteran player on the False Brome Working Group, a team of academic institutions, public land management agencies, timber interests and special environmental interest groups. Teamwork during early detection periods helps build momentum for weed control and eradication that covers more territory than any one agency or volunteer group could touch on their own. "With early detection of the highly invasive false brome, we have a chance to play offensively, saving us time and money later," Messinger said.

"The working group sent 2,000 letters to private land owners this year and in response, several dozen will begin treatment soon," said Messinger. "This collaboration means we will hit the ground running with early detection and rapid response." Partners like the Willamette National Forest, Bureau of Land Management and the Middle Fork Willamette Watershed Council are key to gaining this momentum, he added.

Controlling the spread of invasive plant species is like managing a wildfire: you don't go into the center –you surround it, Messinger said. Like their fire-fighting counterparts, control efforts can put out plant "hot spots" along trails, roadsides and parks. "Once an area is clear of an invasive plant, native species must be planted to help reestablish the native ecosystem," he added.

A good defense means keeping the opposition contained. The Corps has boot-cleaning stations at many public facilities, with interpretive signs to educate the public about how to prevent tracking noxious weed seeds outside the area. Information



Corps of Engineers Photo

A Willamette Project employee uses heavy farm equipment to knock down an invasive and suffocating stand of Himalayan blackberry.



Photo by Matt Blakely-Smith

Grass mulch spread over false brome helps control the spread of seeds that can dominate native vegetation.

posted around work sites remind workers and field-going maintenance crews to remain alert. Keeping the Corps' own house clean by pulling weeds in parking lots, distributing weed field guides and replanting cleared areas with native species is an ongoing task for the Portland District's environmental stewardship teams.

"It's a hundred times easier to fight the opponent while we're still in the game than it is to fumble, lose ground or sit on the sidelines," Messinger said. "With strong teams and a better understanding of the impacts of invasive species on our ecosystem, we're rewriting the playbook and stand a good chance at returning our ecosystem to a functioning state." ■





Elk Creek fish passage corridor open for business

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office



FROM THE FIELD

Mark Freeman may be close to writing his last article about Elk Creek Dam.

The veteran Medford Mail Tribune reporter has authored more than 150 stories about the never-completed dam in the Rogue River Basin, but the 20-year saga may finally be coming to an end.

At about 12:50 p.m. on Aug. 17, Superior Blasting, Inc. detonated 40,000 pounds of explosives – the ninth and final demolition event of the Elk Creek Fish Passage Corridor Project. A chain of explosions completed what would become the new Elk Creek channel, reducing 35,000 cubic yards of concrete to rubble in less than three seconds.

The Natt McDougall Co. took about a week to clear away that rubble – the base of what had once been the partially-completed left abutment and spillway of Elk Creek Dam.

The contractor also finished restoring the stream channel to its original alignment and gradient, placed stream bank protection, planted native trees and shrubs for slope stability and erosion control, as well as building a training wall to maintain proper stream flow.

The work also included in-stream features such as rock weirs to maintain suitable water velocities for fish passage and a series of riffles and pools to provide holding, feeding and spawning habitat.

When all was ready, the Corps began diverting Elk Creek into the new channel on Sept. 12, the last step in providing permanent passive fish passage for threatened salmon and other native fishes.

“This is a moment about 10 years in the making,” said demolition project engineer Captain David Nishimura. “It marks the first time in almost 25 years that Elk Creek will run unimpeded into the Rogue River.”

Elk Creek Dam was one of three multi-purpose dams authorized by Congress for the Rogue River Basin in the 1962 Flood Control Act. The dams were meant to operate as a system to control winter floods.

The Corps started construction on Elk Creek Dam, about 30 miles northeast of Medford, in 1986, just as research began suggesting that reservoir-warmed water impacted the survival of salmon downstream.

Environmental groups filed a lawsuit in 1988 that halted construction, required the Corps to provide fish passage past the dam site and called for environmental studies to determine the overall effects of all three dams on salmon survival in the Rogue.

The Corps conducted additional studies, but an appeals court ruled they were not adequate. The Corps told Congress that it would not conduct further studies and would instead manage the project in an incomplete state.

In 1997 the National Marine Fisheries Service listed coho salmon as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, raising the level of concern and obligation for a permanent fish passage solution.

“The Corps and other agencies conducted a number of studies since 1998 and concluded that notching the dam and restoring the original stream channel was the most cost effective and biologically sound solution,” said George Miller, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division.

Constructing a notch in the dam preserves the majority of the structure so it may be incorporated into any future construction that Congress might authorize, Miller said,

The Natt McDougall Co. was contracted to remove about 225 feet of the dam’s spillway and left abutment, totaling about 75,000 cubic yards of concrete. The stream channel work was also included in the contract.

Mobilization and site preparation kicked off in May, when workers installed erosion control measures and stream crossings, built or upgraded haul roads and disposed of or relocated unused construction materials scattered around the site. Crews also installed a bypass pipe and diverted Elk Creek around the construction site. Contractors, Corps employees and members of other state and federal agencies all pitched in to save the fish stranded when the creek was diverted. *Continued on the next page*



Elk Creek Dam blocked fish migration until the Corps notched the project in August 2008.



Fire in the hole! Demolition blast number three spanned the entire width of the left abutment and half its length.



Despite the immense amount of debris generated by the blasting operations, workers took only seven weeks to create the entire notch through Elk Creek Dam.





Corps of Engineers Photo

Going, going, gone! The fish passage corridor through Elk Creek Dam takes shape.

“I was up to my waist in mud in there,” said Nishimura, pointing to the temporary trap and haul facility just downstream of the dam that had helped maintain a fish run above the dam for the past 16 years. “But we pulled a lot of fish out.”

With the preliminaries taken care of, it was time for the fireworks. The blasters’ tentative plan called for 16 demolition events, said Mike Moran, Engineering and Construction Division. The blasters achieved such good results, however, that they completed their task in nine.

Although water and fish can now freely pass the dam site, there’s still more to do, Miller said. “This year was Phase I, but the project delivery team, National Marine Fisheries Service, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Elk Creek Environmental Coordination Task Force need to see how well the channel performs for passage when we get higher flows in the fall and spring,” Miller said. “Next summer we will make adjustments during Phase II.”

And sometime after that, Mark Freeman may enjoy a well-deserved rest from writing about Elk Creek Dam. ■

In Memoriam

Sylvia R. Willoughby died Aug. 6, 2008, at age 95. She was an administrator for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Forest Service. She lived in Alaska, Washington and California before returning to Oregon. She retired in 1953. In 1959, she married George Willoughby. Survivors include her husband.

Loren B. “Mike” Moore died Aug. 28 Sept. 4, 2008. He was 74. Moore served in the U.S. Navy and was an engineering technician for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He lived in the Portland area all his life.

Heber Heine died Aug. 31, 2008, at age 86. Heine was a graduate of Roosevelt High School and Multnomah College. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He was chief of Portland District’s Design Branch. Survivors include his daughter, two sons and eight grandchildren.