

Open Channels

<http://www.mvd.usace.army.mil>

Volume 13, Issue 9

November 2015

America's Watershed Report Card: What's in a Grade?

Stephen Gambrell, an American Watershed Initiative steering committee member and director of the Mississippi River Commission, discusses the American Watershed Report Card.

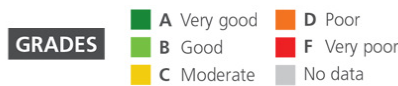
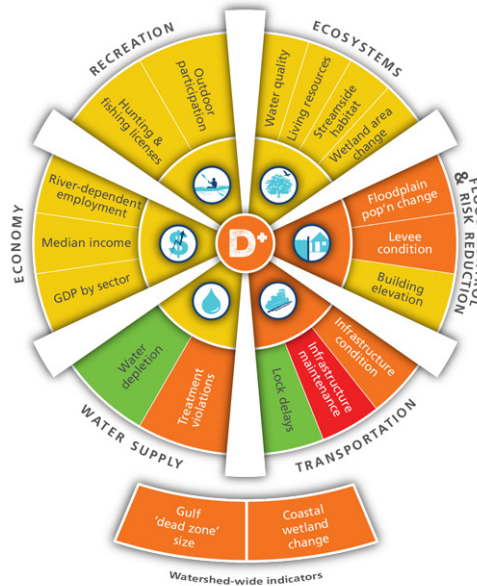
Q: If you could express something up front about “water as infrastructure” and what that means for the U.S., what would you say?

A: Our aging water infrastructure weakens America’s capability to reliably and efficiently move and export food and goods. It directly impacts local people’s ability to live safely and productively in communities along the world’s most productive alluvial valley. Reinvestment in our high-return water infrastructure is our legacy!

The water commerce network, which depends on our heartland rivers, moves millions of tons of goods safely, reliably and efficiently, generating billions in economic value for the United States. The longer we wait to invest in raising the grade of America’s Watershed, the more it will cost our children, our national security and America’s future opportunities.

Q: What does it mean to you that the watershed got a D+ grade overall, and how should the country react?

A: Our nation should focus on raising the grade because it impacts our long-term economic health. It impacts our gross domestic product in ways I think most of us, as local citizens, may not yet fully understand.



Q: How does measuring the critical issues facing the Mississippi River watershed make it easier to address them?

A: I don’t think it necessarily makes it easier, and it may even make it harder, but it does give you insight, and that’s what we need. We want to see the impacts and challenges and be able to address those as a system instead of as an individual element, issue or even as a sub-watershed issue. The individual watersheds will benefit, though. They can see how they fit in, and they will see what the others are doing to be more productive for the economy and the

ecology. Because we are linking them together with a report card system, they can see things that they may not have noticed before and think, “I can help or contribute” or “I can learn from that” and in turn, they can help improve their part of the world.

Q: What stands out as an example of something one watershed has learned from another?

A: The whole idea of capturing water for irrigation and other uses, versus taking water from a viable groundwater source (that could be used for drinking), is a solid lesson we can use throughout the watersheds. It’s been done in many places around the world, including in Arkansas, where there are areas using on-farm storage for excess water from streams for agriculture production so they will not have to tap the vital aquifer used by as many as eight states. Arkansas is the number one rice producer in the United States, and that demands a substantial quantity of water. That they’re finding a way to irrigate in a much more efficient manner than taking vital high-quality ground-

Inside this issue...

Around the Bend.....	2
National American Indian Heritage Month ...	7
Welcome Aboard! snapshot.....	8
Around the Division	9

(“America’s Watershed Report Card...” continued on page 6)



Around the Bend



Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr
Commander,
Mississippi Valley Division

President,
Mississippi River Commission

MVD Team,

The Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission Team are both honored and humbled by the level of talent from throughout USACE.

On Oct. 27-30th, MVD senior leadership gathered in Vicksburg, Mississippi, for our annual “R5” with the task of confirming our FY15 Performance and FY16 plans, with the purpose of synchronizing our Regional FY16 Focus Areas. We’re thankful for the participation of USACE Chief of Planning and Policy Division Theodore (Tab) Brown, USACE Chief of Operations and Regulatory Community of Practice (within the Directorate of Civil Works) Edward Belk and Deputy Chief, MVD Regional Integration Team, Joe Redican. During this annual meeting, we also inducted 13 new emerging leaders. The ELs have proven to be a very impressive group that we plan to continue utilizing and tackling the next regional issues.

We are also truly appreciative of Headquarters USACE, the major subordinate command and all those who supported coordination leading up to the 1st Quarter Executive Governance Meeting (1QEGM) and SAME Small Business Conference (SBC) in New Orleans the week of November 2nd. The 1QEGM reinforced our regional “R5,” while the SAME SBC reinforced our recent small business engagements conducted by the St. Louis and Rock Island Districts. It’s all about the people -- and we’re thankful for the gatherings that enable our public commitment to delivering on our nation’s investments.

On Nov. 11th, the MVD/MRC Team along the nation’s watershed honored our veterans and fallen heroes, attending special events and activities surrounding the sacrifices they made for this country and abroad. We hope everyone had a happy Veterans Day!

The USACE New Orleans District also provided tremendous support for the Nov. 12-14 House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee visit to New Orleans, gaining much appreciation USACE and Army wide. One upcoming and significant engagement for our MVD/MRC Team is also underway. We are hosting a site visit Nov. 20-21 in New Orleans, Louisiana, for the China Minister of Water Resources, Chen Lei. We have a thorough site visit agenda planned and are refining the details with Mr. Steven L. Stockton, director of Civil Works, HQUSACE.

The MVD/MRC Team is also working a visit from World Bank members, including members from Bangladesh and Bhutan, to the Mississippi River and Tributaries footprint (New Madrid, Memphis, Greenville, Vicksburg (MRC/Engineer Research and Development Center) Nov. 18-20. Thanks to the HQUSACE team for continuing to help with the logistics related to international visits.

Furthermore, the Team is happy to announce great news for the navigation industry. We are anticipating that St. Paul District will be able to keep the nation’s locks open through the first week of December before closing river commerce for the winter.

In addition, Vicksburg District Commander Col. John Cross and the Arkabutla Lake Office hosted the annual Outdoor Education Day Nov. 3 with over 1600 participants from the local area. The event included several interactive and educational activities provided by local and state agencies to include the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks, and the Mississippi Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

The Corps’ highly skilled workforce provides significant value to the nation—the economy, security and quality of life. We have the brightest and most capable minds doing extraordinary work—the mission is not possible without our people.

Building Strong,
MG Mike Wehr



Around the Bend (continued from page 2)



MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr presented Shirley Allen with the Commander's Award for Civilian Service Oct. 16 for her service as MVD's temporary internal reviewer for 120 days.

(Fifth from right) MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr and MVD staff presented MVD Program Manager Chris Koeppel (seventh from right) with MRC's building print and MVD coins during a farewell ceremony in his honor, Oct. 23.



(Right) MVD Operations Division Program Manager Cody Eckhardt presented MVD Chief of the Upper DST (St. Louis, Rock Island and St. Paul districts) and Chief of Real Estate Mark Moore with MRC's building print and MVD coins during a retirement/farewell ceremony in his honor, Oct. 30.





Around the Bend *(continued from page 3)*

Nov. 4 - USACE district commanders, major subordinate commanders (including MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr), Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick and HQUSACE deputy commanders at the conclusion of the HQUSACE 1st Quarter Executive Governance Meeting in front of the New Orleans District office building.



Nov. 4 - USACE Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick (left) presented MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr with the FY 2015 Army Corps of Engineers Top Division by Percentage (63.3%) Small Business Award during the SAME Small Business Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Nov. 5 - The MVD booth at the SAME Small Business Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana. Pictured are Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick; MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr; MVD district commanders; MVD district contacting chiefs; MVD small business specialists; Grace Fontana, associate director, HQUSACE Office of Small Business Programs; and Marlan Snodgrass, MVD assistant director, Small Business Programs.





MVD Emerging Leaders attend R5, induct new members



Mississippi Valley Division's Emerging Leaders met at the Mississippi River Commission building in Vicksburg, Mississippi, Oct. 27 as part of the annual regional leadership gathering (or R5) and to induct new ELs to the MVD EL program. The MVD ELP is a two-year program that allows employees to broaden their professional horizons through training, mentoring and shadowing senior leaders, developmental assignments, self evaluation and active participation in the program. The ELP offers participants the opportunity to expand and enhance their regional leadership perspectives to incorporate regional issues and challenges across district boundaries. Speakers included MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr, HQUSACE Chief of Engineering & Construction James Dalton, MVD Regional Business Director Thomas Holden, etc. The 2013-2015 MVD ELP Class, who graduated this year, included: Elizabeth Nelson, St. Paul District; Kathryn McCain and James Wallace, St. Louis District; Terrance Knowlton and Jamie Nabakowski, Memphis District; LeAnn Riggs, Vicksburg District; John Campbell and John Templeton, New Orleans District; and Sabine Faltenbacher and Brian Anderson, MVD. The 2014-2016 MVD ELP Class includes: Lisa J. Lund and George Stringham, St. Paul District; Andrew Goodall, Rock Island District; Rachel Lopez and Josh VerDught, St. Louis District; Nicholas Bidlack, Memphis District; Randal Holder and Marneshia Richard, Vicksburg District; Michael Krehely, Wesley Morgan and Anthony Gallodoro, New Orleans District; and Charles Carson and Pamela Harrion, MVD. The 2015-2017 MVD ELPs, inducted at this year's R5, includes: Corby Lewis and Jerica Richardson, St. Paul District; John Hayes and Scott Perrilles, Rock Island District; Roseana Burick and Bryan Dirks, St. Louis District; Carter Bagley and Jessica Bowers, Memphis District; James Cole Jr., Vicksburg District; Jennifer Vititoe and Mark Woodward, New Orleans District; and Kimberly Dulaney and Cody Eckhardt, MVD. Also pictured are MVD Commander Maj. Gen. Michael Wehr, MVD Regional Business Director Thomas Holden and MVD Business Operations Consultant Terry Smith.



America's Watershed Report Card...*(continued from page 1)*

water is a practice that other people are going to benefit from in the future.

Q: Why has a watershed level report card not been done before?

A: Many people thought it should be done, but when (and if) they come to the table, they can't stay there long enough because of the diverse interests involved. We have the same challenge—allowing people with categorical positions like an industry, versus a non-governmental organization, versus an agency to have a voice and express their position, and then seriously consider it. Many times people are so engrained in their position that they can't tolerate even a change in a word, but in order to produce something like this, you must listen to that diverse interest and consider what they're saying and constructively find a way to incorporate it instead of backing away.

Q: Why use letter grades?

A: Some people say, let's not put grades. That it is too controversial. But you need people to understand these systems are of extreme value to them, and the value to them will be lost if they don't pay attention. Transportation is one that's a D-, and part of the reason is because 60 percent of the structures in the infrastructure portfolio

are beyond their design lives. But at the same time you're moving the second-largest tonnage of cargo in the world. So what's your grade? That's part of the challenge. There's also the aspect of not just what we can do in the future, but what we should do. Sixty percent of the exports moving on the river are related to agriculture. Our country is discussing trade agreements with just one country now that has more than 1 billion people, and what do you think the big need is? Food, water, energy. When you have 1 billion people, you have a high demand for water, not just for drinking but for the agriculture to produce food. And we can transport it to them at a price they favor. But what if we use all our natural resources to produce food for the world and those resources are depleted?

Q: Many major issues the world faces into the next century seem to be somehow covered in this analysis, things like a potential global water shortage.

A: In big and small watersheds all over the globe, we're all struggling with the same base level issues of how to prepare our systems that mean so much for our economy and ecosystems for the future. If you have people who are hungry, and they can't afford a base level of

food and water anymore, it doesn't matter where you are in the world, people become desperate. When they reach this stage, there is the danger of instability, and that impacts national security.

Q: What's next? How do you start addressing some of the critical issues raised?

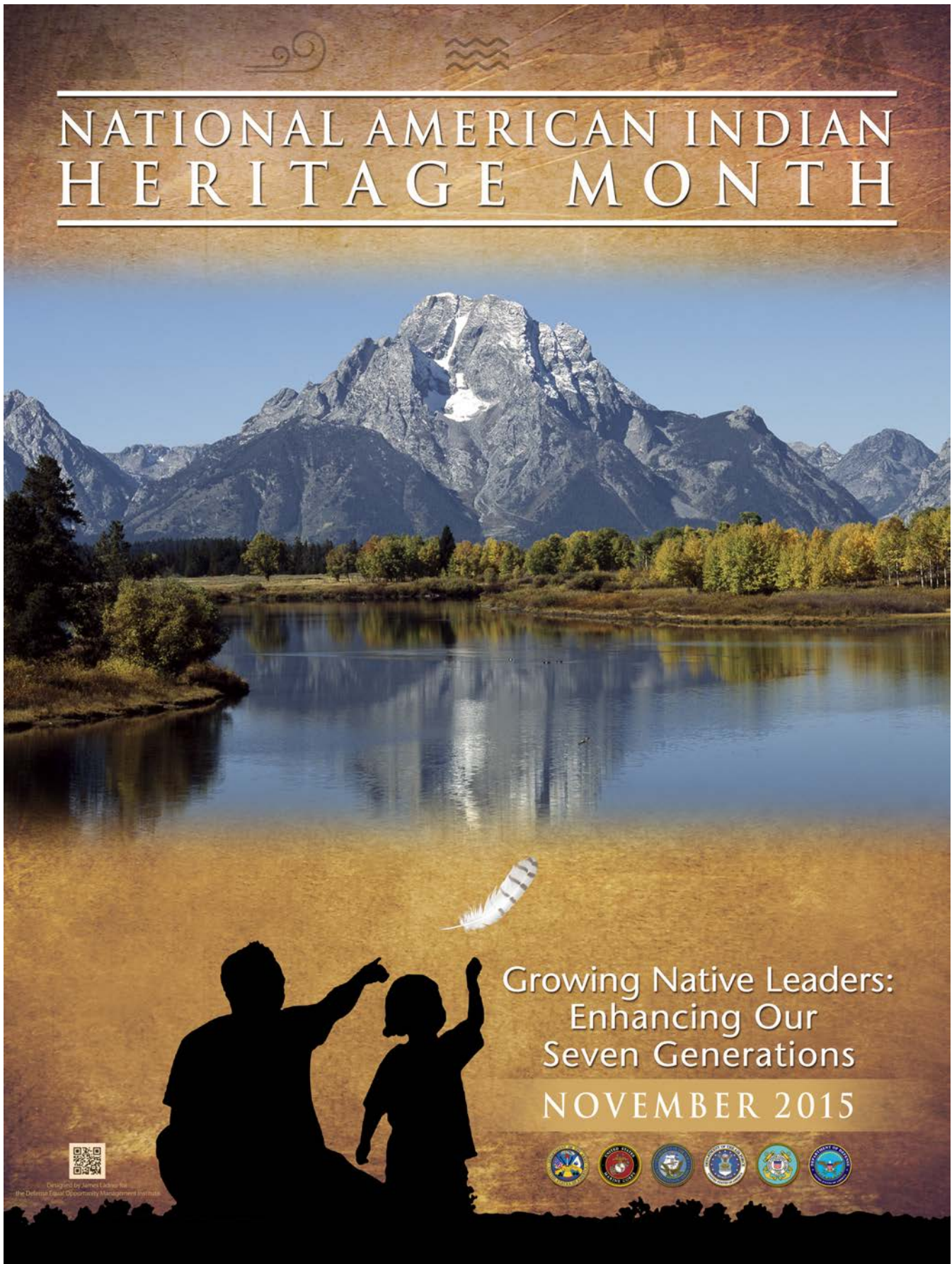
A: We start receiving even more data and information and challenges from people along the rivers. We have a number of "next steps" in every measured category, but those have to be vetted with the people who come back to us with their reaction to the report card. Our request is that a broader audience—people who live along the rivers and receive from the source—come to the table and recognize the value of this God-given footprint of water and land that produces valued products for the nation and the globe. The short answer is, let's raise the grade. Instead of simply disagreeing with our challenging the grades, let's figure out ways to raise them.

The report card is located at www.americaswatershed.org.

A version of this article was published in the "Our Mississippi" Fall 2015 edition.



NATIONAL AMERICAN INDIAN HERITAGE MONTH



Growing Native Leaders:
Enhancing Our
Seven Generations

NOVEMBER 2015



Designed by Arlene Lickner for
the Defenders Equal Opportunity Management Institute





Welcome Aboard! **snapshot**



Lanyard Armstrong
Logistics Management Spec.
USACE Logistics Activity



Alainna Obannon
Senior Program Analyst
Civil Works Integration Div.



Gloria Miller
Program Analyst
Civil Works Integration Div.



Gloria Young
Chief, Internal Review



Greg Miller
Operating Director
National Ecosystem Restoration
Planning Center of Expertise

If you have a new employee in your office, or if you ARE a new employee to the Mississippi Valley Division, please contact the Public Affairs Office at cemvd-pa@usace.army.mil, so that we can introduce you to everyone in Open Channels.



Around the Division



Nov. 2 - (Left) U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District Deputy Commander, Lt. Col. Stephen Rhudy, thanks Navy combat veteran Chris Ring during Ring's stop in Vicksburg. Ring is swimming the entire length of the Mississippi River to honor and raise awareness for fallen service members and their families. Ring began his "Heroes" journey on the Mississippi River in June, supporting nonprofit Legacies Alive's 2015 Legacy Challenge, "Swim For Their Sacrifice"!

Open Channels

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Mississippi Valley Division



Division Engineer

Maj. Gen. Michael C. Wehr

Editor

Pamela Harrion
Public Affairs Specialist

Chief, Public Affairs

Bob Anderson

Open Channels is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1.

It is published monthly and distributed electronically, by the Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Engineer Division, Mississippi Valley.

Views and opinions expressed in the publication are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army.

Send articles to:

Editor,
Public Affairs Office,
U.S. Army Engineer
Division,
Mississippi Valley
P.O. Box 80,
Vicksburg, MS, 39181-0080

pamela.g.harrion@
usace.army.mil

Make sure you return home to your loved ones.



Wear It!

- Falling in frigid waters . . . 2 seconds
- Cold water shock 1 minute
- Swimming failure 10 minutes
- Hypothermia 60 minutes



safeboatingcampaign.com



This message brought to you by the National Safe Boating Council

Wear It! Make sure you return home to your loved ones. (This message is brought to you by the National Safe Boating Council, safeboating-campaign.com.)