

# INTERCOM

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District  
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*Best in USACE 2012*



Taking a peek  
at Little Goose  
Lock & Dam



# From Where I Sit

## When you close a door ... take the lessons with you

When I learned I was hired as a public affairs specialist here at the District in mid-2009, I didn't know anything about Eastern Washington nor a soul in town, but I did know one thing: this is where I was supposed to be.

From that day forward, I learned life-changing and metamorphic lessons through true friendship, community, counsel, proxy families, spiritual renewal, and experimental business blunders.

My time here taught me lessons to reflect on years to come and wisdom to share over a lifetime.

I've been fortunate to get to know many of you after writing countless articles and producing 17 *Intercom* magazines.

I walk away with a deep appreciation and respect for what you do every day. My job allowed me to understand your role in moving America forward ... and in some cases, the world!

Every *Intercom* afforded me the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of exactly how our District lives up to its motto: Serving our community, our Nation, the world.

Your reach is far, wide and effective.

I've seen firsthand how you've made a difference in rural communities through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. I've witnessed your partnerships in action with regional organizations to improve our environment and educate our youth.



I've been amazed by your volunteer-spirit to assist in emergency response efforts and Overseas Contingency Operations. And I'm still in awe at your impeccable ability to keep our multipurpose hydropower facilities running day to day and fueling renewable energy to power our Nation.

Living in Walla Walla taught me so much through the good and the bad.

I bought a house, adopted another dog and grew with many people in the "friendliest town in America." In my personal time, I began part-time graduate school with the Johns Hopkins University online and employed my pay-

checks to discover myself in the unfamiliarity of five countries and 13 U.S. states.

I am thankful for every moment because it helped me grow and prepare for the next chapter.

I will finish out 2013 as a married gal (as of July 27) in Miami working on completing my Master's studies in digital communications.

But my life wouldn't have been this fruitful and I wouldn't feel so prepared for the next step if you wouldn't have been so fundamental to my life.

With thanks, I part with hope that we keep in touch so we continue sharing our stories years on end.

Signing off with my deepest gratitude and respect,

*Terri A. Rorke*

*Public Affairs Specialist & Intercom Editor*

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# Mill Creek team opens new, sustainable building

story by Gina Baltrusch



Rainy weather couldn't stop Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake's grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony April 19 to celebrate the completion of their new office building, the Walla Walla District's first civil works construction project built to achieve Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) sustainable-building standards.

The new visitor area just inside the front entrance was filled with visitors and District staff as Deputy District Commander Maj. Rod Baker and Operations Project Manager Rick Beauchesne officiated a short ceremony to mark the occasion.

Mill Creek staff and project delivery team members provided tours of the new facility to highlight the new office's energy- and water-efficient systems that will reduce operations and maintenance costs while will better accommodating staff and visitors.

"This project's energy-saving features are designed to achieve a 30-percent reduction in energy consumption and significantly reduce office operating costs over the lifetime of the building," said Simeon Francis, the new office building construction project manager.

Construction began in February 2012, and Mill Creek staff moved into the new building early March. The new 3,756-square-foot office

replaces a 900-square-foot configuration of building additions that did not meet staff or visitor needs or meet modern building construction standards.



(From left) District Project Manager Simeon Francis, Maintenance Worker David Parker, Deputy Commander Maj. Rod Baker, and Natural Resources Management Supervisor Rick Beauchesne cut a ceremonial ribbon to celebrate the grand opening of Mill Creek's new sustainable office building near Walla Walla, Wash., April 19.



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**Commander**  
Lt. Col. Andrew Kelly

**PA Chief**  
Joe Saxon

**Editor**  
Terri A. Rorke

**PA Specialist**  
Gina Baltrusch

**PA Specialist**  
Bruce Henrickson

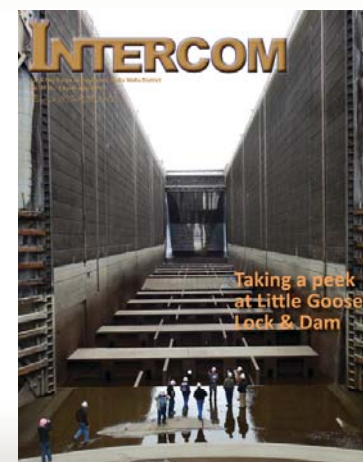
**PA Specialist**  
Stephen Doherty

**Student Aide**  
Sandra Hickethier

**For more information, contact:**  
Public Affairs Office  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
201 N. Third Avenue  
Walla Walla, WA 99362  
Phone: 509-527-7020  
E-mail: [cenww-pa@usace.army.mil](mailto:cenww-pa@usace.army.mil)  
website: [www.nww.usace.army.mil](http://www.nww.usace.army.mil)



## On the cover



**Members of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association tour Little Goose Lock and Dam's navigational and hydropower facilities March 21.**

photo by Gina Baltrusch



# Life jacket loaner stations can save lives if used

story by Park Ranger Marve Griffith  
Lucky Peak Dam and Lake



Public safety is something the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) takes very seriously. From the project level up to headquarters, the Corps is constantly thinking of ways to better provide a friendly and safe experience for our visitors.

The success of these innovative public safety campaigns and strategies can be seen in the reduction in fatalities on Corps projects in the past 40 years but, unfortunately, the number of fatalities has leveled off to an average of 164 per year for the past 14 years.

To reach this remaining demographic, Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, Corps deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations, developed the Public Fatality Reduction Initiative. This goal is to decrease water recreation fatalities by 50 percent by the end of fiscal year 2014.

Since almost 90 percent of all drowning fatalities occur when a person is not wearing a life jacket, one major focus of this initiative is to expand and improve the Corps' Life Jacket Loaner Program. This program allows projects to allocate funding toward construction and maintenance of "life jacket loaner stations" where the public can borrow life jackets, free of charge, to use for the day.

With the help of local partners and a little ingenuity, two District lake and reservoir facilities had life jacket loaner stations installed up to a decade ago.

Pioneered by retired District Park Ranger Jeanne Newton, Ice Harbor Lock and Dam installed its first station in 2003, and Dworshak followed in 2007. By summer 2013, all District projects plan to have their own local loaner programs.

As the ground thaws and the recreation season approaches, the remaining life jacket loaner stations are being placed in their new homes along swim beaches and boat ramps throughout the District. However, these stations alone will not achieve the Corps' goal; a 50 percent reduction in recreation fatalities will take all of us getting the water safety message out.

Urge others to wear a life jacket, watch out for others during water safety patrols, help young people think about water safety during Bobber the Water Safety Dog outreach. In true USACE spirit, "Essayons!"



This life jacket loaner board is located at Fishhook Park day-use swim beach area at Lake Sacajawea near Ice Harbor Lock and Dam, Burbank, Wash. Ice Harbor installed its first station in 2003, and Dworshak followed in 2007. As of this summer, all District projects plan to have their own local loaner programs.

## Spotlight: Ice Harbor

*Before any official District policy existed, Ice Harbor's natural resources managers and rangers took a proactive approach to implement their own life jacket loaner board program.*

*After attending a State Drowning Prevention Summit in March 2002, then-Ice Harbor Lock and Dam Park Ranger Jeanne Newton saw the potential for this program in the Walla Walla District. While partnering with local groups such as the Safe Kids Coalition from Walla Walla and Benton and Franklin counties, they soon had the materials and design elements ready, and had five life jacket loaner stations throughout the project by summer 2003.*

*"I saw right away that this was such an important program that the Corps needed to implement it where the public was using the river for recreation," said Newton. "Having two energetic partners helped to get the program up and running. If we save even one life, it is all worth it!" she added.*



# District citation officers train for self-defense



**story by Mike Swenson**

Walla Walla District Natural Resources Management (NRM) citation officers took a break from the front lines of Corps lakes and recreation areas in March to attend an annual training workshop at Dworshak Dam near Orofino, Idaho.

The workshop provides refresher training to uniformed NRM employees requiring citation authority to enforce Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36 (36, CFR). Because citation officers' work can be dangerous, unarmed self-defense is a critical part of annual training.

Citation officers received four hours of rigorous hands-on unarmed training from three Oregon Department of Corrections officers teaching tactics rooted in Krav Maga, a fighting system using instinctive movements that can be quickly learned and easily remembered.

Uniformed NRM employees receive significant training to obtain or maintain their citation authority. Citation officers sometimes must use force when defending themselves and the public's right to enjoy secure and safe Corps lakes.

Most recreation visitors are peaceful, but tragic news stories like the death of National Park Service Ranger Margaret Anderson, gunned down while on duty at Rainier National Park in 2012, serve as a solemn reminder that NRM work can be dangerous.



Citation officers are available to help the public and, secondarily, enforce 36, CFR. Protecting facilities and enforcing rules are always secondary to the safety of Corps personnel, contract employees and visitors. Corps citation officers are not armed like law enforcement officers, so they depend on their diplomatic abilities to make everyone's visit to the lake a safe one.

"What you're learning could save your life or the life of someone else," said Mike Swenson, District visitor assistance coordinator.

District Natural Resources Management Chief Lonnie Mettler added that the training gives citation officers tools to de-escalate harmful situations. Topics covered in the workshop included

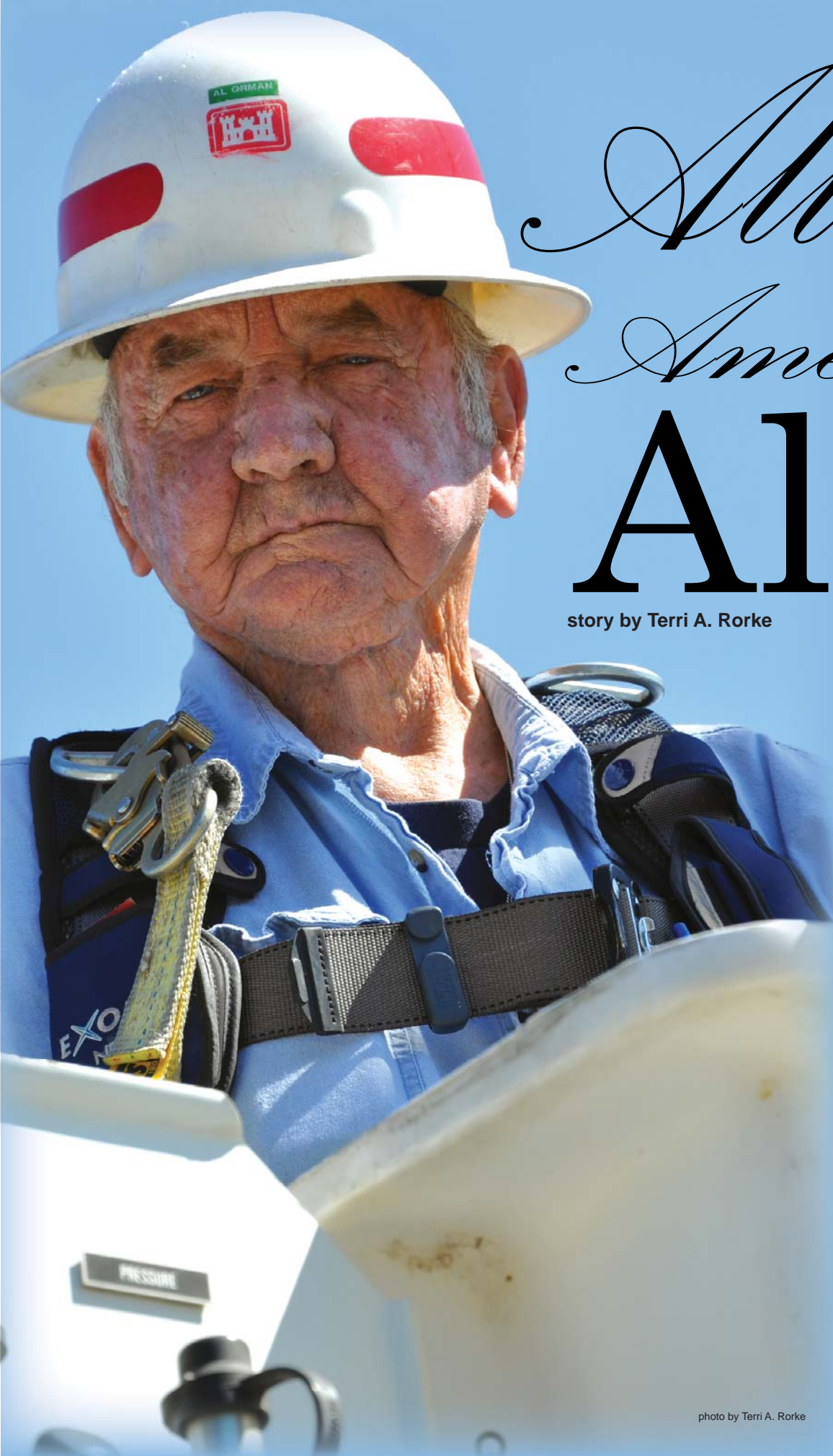
correct wear of the uniform to promote respect and authority, verbal communication skills to issue oral warnings and written citations, and proper use of pepper spray for self-defense. Understanding regulations, policies and developing good relationships with visitors are important methods to prevent the need for physical force, he said. Continuity and quality of the District's Visitor Assistance Program depends on consistent interpretation and application of the policy.

"I think the NRM workshop went very well," Mettler said. "It's great for networking and a great way to get our required training done all at once."

1-Kansas City District Natural Resources Specialist Jonathan Carlisle, left, practices close range, standing elbow strike tactics with Kansas City District Park Manager Lester Tacha. Carlisle is an instructor for the Prospect USACE Visitor Assistance national course.  
 2 - District Natural Resources Specialist Mike Swenson, left, acts as a contact officer holding an 'aggressor' Lower Granite Lock and Dam Geographer John Gordon. Dworshak Dam Natural Resources Manager Paul Pence acts as the cover officer preparing to use pepper spray.  
 3 - Mill Creek Dam Operations Project Manager Rich Beauchesne

oversees instructors demonstrate self-defense. Three Oregon Department of Corrections officers trained District citation officers in March (from left: Gary Longhorn, Josh Patterson, John Taber). They taught District citation officers self-defense tactics rooted in Krav Maga, which is based on using instinctive movements that can be quickly learned and easily remembered.  
 4 - District citation officers practice a defensive vertical front kick.  
 5 - Oregon Department of Corrections officers Gary Longhorn and Josh Patterson demonstrate ground fighting with a defensive front kick.





# All American

# Al

story by Terri A. Rorke

While most people are still sleeping at 3:30 a.m., Alford Orman, 79, is waving goodbye to his wife as he begins a 100-mile work commute to McNary Lock and Dam near Umatilla, Ore.

And just like every day, Orman starts his morning with a positive attitude, which he says has carried him through the past 60 years of his working career.

As Orman approaches his federal service retirement in July, he is doing a lot of reflecting these days.

After all, he has a lot to look back on between his childhood days in Maben, Miss., where he worked on his family's corn, cotton and sugarcane farm, his time in the construction industry, a sugar beet factory, and, of course, his 20 years in the U.S. Marine Corps from 1952 to 1972.

His military days took him around the U.S. to places like Twentynine Palms, Calif., and Marine Corps Base Quantico near Triangle, Va., working as an explosive ordnance technician on a bomb squad training FBI cadets and Secret Service members.

For three years, Orman also served as a Marine drill instructor at Parris Island, S.C. where he had the chance to train Marine Corps Reserve recruit, Roberto Clemente.

Orman said one day the baseball player received a \$5,000 check in the mail so he took the Pittsburgh Pirate to the bank to deposit the check.

Clemente wanted to thank Orman by giving him and his wife box seat tickets to the 1960 World Series baseball championship against the New York Yankees. However, Or-

photo by Terri A. Rorke

*I am sure going to miss this guy. Those boots are going to be hard to fill. I don't think they ever will be.*

-Valerie Nichols, Power Plant Electrician, McNary Lock and Dam

man said he couldn't take off work to attend the game.

The Marine Corps also took Orman around the world to Europe and Asia while serving one tour in Korea and two tours in Vietnam.

As Orman looks back at his life, he says that he hasn't done "everything ... there are still a lot of things I'd like to have done, but I've been on a tight schedule. I'm fixing to change that."

Orman and his wife, Barbara, plan to retrace those many footprints he made in the U.S. with a post-retirement cross-country road trip to visit friends and family, many of whom they haven't seen for two decades.

When he and Barbara were planning the post-retirement trip, he reminded her, "We aren't spring chickens anymore."

But don't let him fool you. This is the same man who danced the twist on his 72nd birthday even though he was fighting lymph node cancer at the time and undergoing chemotherapy.

What drives his persistence? He claims appreciating what you have plays a big role. He's talking about his service as an electrician at McNary.

"You're not going to find a deal like this elsewhere."

As Orman's retirement nears he doesn't plan for his life to slow down any.

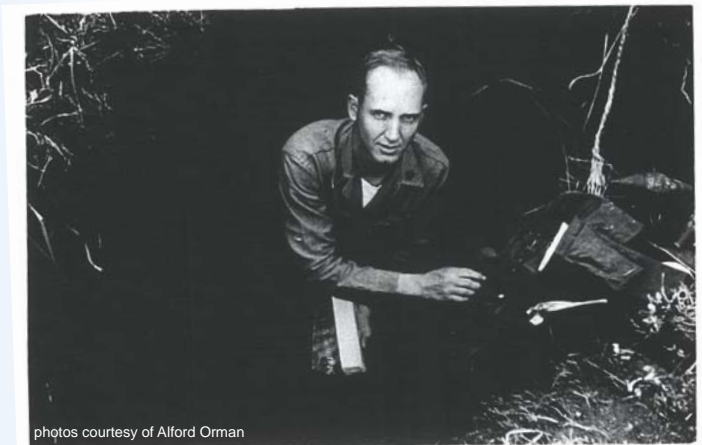
"I see people walk out of here when they retire and come back later in wheelchairs. I ask them, 'What did you do when you retired? Go home, prop your feet up and watch TV?'" he remarked.

Orman's service as an electrician will leave more than 13 years of footprints, but some say he will also leave boots hard to fill at McNary.

"Working with Al for the last 11 years and 10 months taught me that persistence goes a long way," said Valerie Nichols, who Orman mentored when she was an electrician apprentice from 2002 to 2006.

"I can see him working alongside a much younger person, and Al will not show signs of being tired or getting frustrated. He just keeps on ticking like a Timex. Everyone knows that being a journeyman or apprentice assigned to Al means you have to move quick. Even though he is 79, he still moves like a teenager on a mission. One minute he is beside you, the next he is gone with a tool or a part in his hand, headed back to the job site. To this day I still have to really keep on my toes to keep him in my sights, but it is easier since I know his routines now," she said.

**Left page: Al Orman served as an electrician for 13 years at McNary Lock and Dam, near Umatilla, Ore. Right page: A few photographs from Al Orman's past. (top) Orman's school portrait at age 9 growing up in Maben, Miss.; (center) Orman takes a break during an Explosive Ordnance Disposal exercise at Twentynine Palms, Calif., 1970; (bottom) a portrait during his U.S. Marine Corps drill instructor days at Parris Island, S.C. in the late 1950s.**



photos courtesy of Alford Orman







photo by Gina Baltrusch

# Sustainability

## Hydroelectric power is clean, reliable, efficient, flexible and renewable

2nd in a four-part series

story by Bruce Henrickson

In the Pacific Northwest, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) produces significant hydroelectric power for the nation at its dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers.

Hydroelectric power is clean, reliable, efficient, flexible, renewable and sustainable. The Corps is the Nation's largest producer of hydro-power, and one of the largest in the world.

The Corps operates 75 hydropower facilities, producing one-fourth of the Nation's hydropower. That's a 100 billion kilowatt-hours annually, enough to power more than 10 million homes.

Hydropower is a sustainable power source. It's part of the Corps' and Nation's "Going Green" effort. It can be used now, and in the future, in an environmentally friendly way. Hydropower is people and nature co-existing in productive harmony.

Water flowing through one generator creates more power at downriver dams, again and again. Once that water gets to the ocean, it evaporates and recycles itself as clouds, then rain or snow falling in watersheds, where it generates even more power.

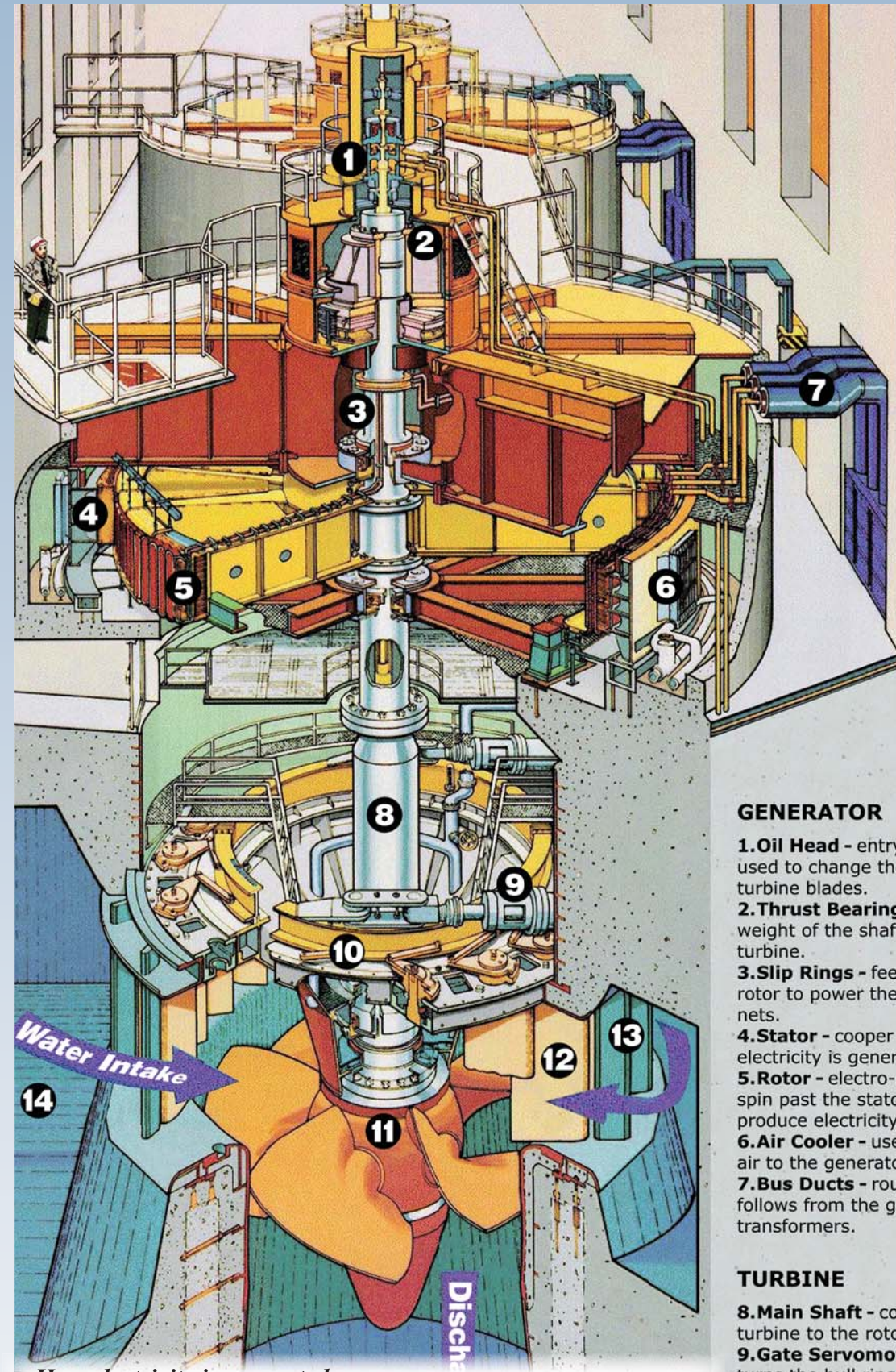
As it produces sustainable hydroelectric energy, the Corps is also a good environmental steward, helping increase and recover popula-

tions of migrating endangered or threatened fish species by reducing risks of powerhouses to migrating fish. Initially, Corps dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers were constructed with fish ladders to help adult salmon and steelhead swim upstream.

More recent cutting-edge Corps fish research led to innovative fish bypass systems at the dams to help juvenile fish survive as they migrate downstream. They include spillway weirs, surface bypass channels, turbine screens, modified spill operations, and barge transportation of migrating juvenile fish. Annual fish returns to their spawning grounds have increased significantly in recent years. Corps fish recovery efforts are working.

Every Earth Day, remember hydropower is essential to our nation's success, and to its sustainable future.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers strives to protect, sustain, and improve the natural and human-made environment of our nation, and is committed to compliance with applicable environmental and energy statutes, regulations, and Executive Orders. Sustainability is not only part of the Corps' decision processes, but is also part of its culture.



# HYDROPOWER

### GENERATOR

- 1. Oil Head** - entry point for oil used to change the angle of the turbine blades.
- 2. Thrust Bearings** - supports the weight of the shaft, rotor and turbine.
- 3. Slip Rings** - feeds current to the rotor to power the electro-magnets.
- 4. Stator** - cooper wire where the electricity is generated.
- 5. Rotor** - electro-magnets which spin past the stator in order to produce electricity.
- 6. Air Cooler** - used to provide cool air to the generator.
- 7. Bus Ducts** - route the electricity follows from the generator to the transformers.

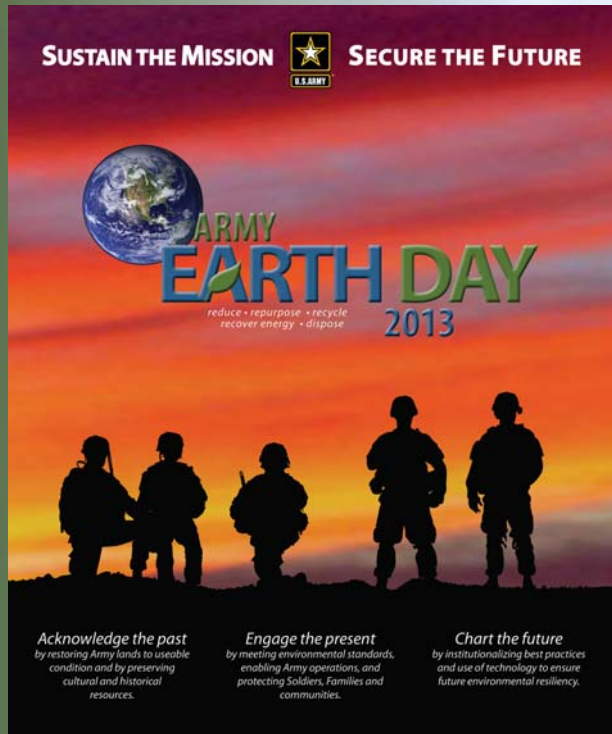
### TURBINE

- 8. Main Shaft** - connects the turbine to the rotor.
- 9. Gate Servomotor** - motor that turns the bull ring.
- 10. Bull Ring Mechanism** - opens and closes the wicket gates.
- 11. Kaplan Turbine** - converts energy of falling water into a spinning motion.
- 12. Wicket Gates** - used to control water flow to the turbine blades.
- 13. Stay Vane Ring** - guides water into the wicket gates.
- 14. Scroll Case** - guides water to the wicket gates.

### How electricity is generated

Water flowing downstream at dams produces electricity. As the water passes through the dam's powerhouse, it falls from the upstream level behind the dam to a lower downstream level. The water is moving with tremendous force and is guided down to the turbine. As it strikes the turbine blades, the water turns the turbine like a propeller. The turning turbine spins coils of wires inside a large generator mounted above it, converting the mechanical energy of falling water into electrical energy. Transmission lines then carry the electricity to homes and businesses.





## Walla Walla District celebrates

# Earth Day

Earth Day celebrations abounded at the Mill Creek Dam and Bennington Lake, McNary and Lucky Peak Dam facilities April 22.

About 20 Walla Walla-area volunteers, representing three colleges performed trail work on the Whitetail Trail at Mill Creek (*below and left, above*). About 400 participants including all students from Highland Hills Elementary K-6 grade plus teachers and parents visited booths in the wild life areas at McNary (*left below*). Meanwhile, a California-based AmeriCorps crew volunteered for spring clean-up at Lucky Peak Dam (*bottom, left*).

photo by Jeremy Nguyen







# *Little Goose Lock and Dam*

Taking a peek at...



## story and photos by Joe Saxon

No matter how you pour it, 82 million gallons is a lot of water.

That is what the Little Goose Lock and Dam's navigation lock holds when full—the equivalent of 126 standard size Olympic swimming pools.

James Simonsen, Chief of Maintenance at Little Goose Lock and Dam, recently strolled into the navigation lock for a closer look from down below.

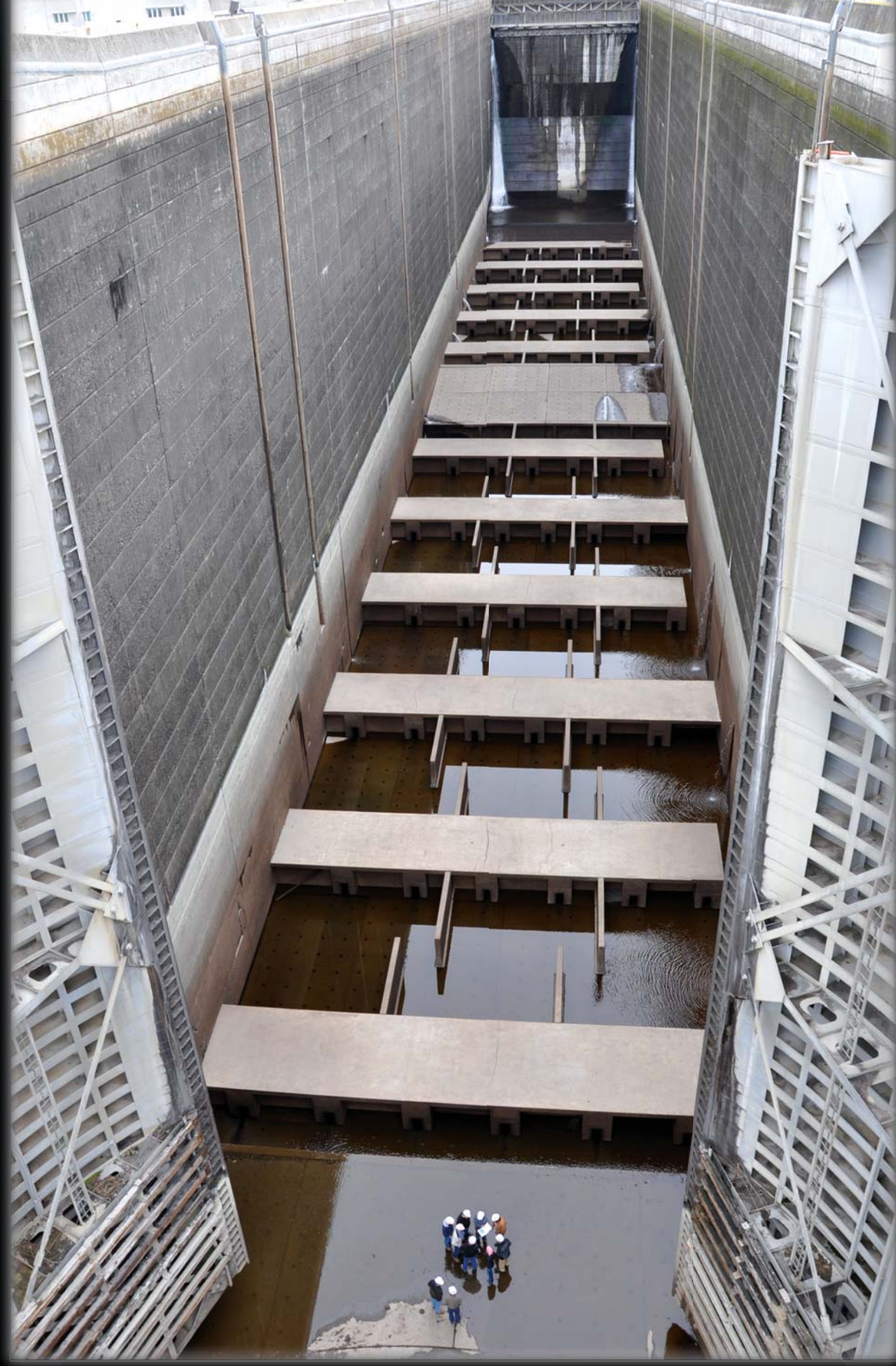
“We dewater the navigation lock to do a complete and thorough inspection of things that normally are underwater. We do this every year, but normally it’s done on a five-year rotation,” he said.

“We found some increased concrete spalling and some leakage. There is a group within the Northwestern Division who sets priorities on what issues are addressed first, so they will help us schedule fixes,” he said.

1989 was the first time he’d seen a dewatered navigation lock, two years after he joined the District.

“It’s a huge mass of concrete and it’s impressive anytime you see a structure that large from the ground floor and you consider the amount of traffic and water that passes through it,” he said.

View from above the de-watered Little Goose Navigation Lock. Left page, top photo: James Simonsen, chief of maintenance at Little Goose Lock and Dam surveys the navigation lock. (middle) juvenile fish facilities; (bottom, left) powerhouse; (right) fish ladder.





# General Engineering:

## Diverse, yet integrated

2nd in a three-part series

story by Joe Saxon

So what do Survey, Specifications, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Architectural Engineering (AE) contracting functions have in common? Well, maybe more than you think.

These divergent specialties are part of General Engineering Section. Mark Hanson recently led this diverse group before transitioning to Engineering and Construction's Workload Manager. He says "it sounds like a crazy mix, but it actually works quite well."

For example, "Survey and GIS could be treated separately, but long term we want to integrate Survey into GIS because they are graphical information," he said. In addition, "AE Contracts is a good fit with Survey because a lot of that survey work needs to be contracted out."

"And the Specifications unit has an overall high-level outlook on each project," Hanson said, "and when you do an AE contract you have a similar outlook that is done early on and you have an overall high-level view."



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photos

General Engineering, Mechanical, Electrical, Geotech and Structures form the Walla Walla District's Design Branch, which is a part of Engineering and Construction.

"Surveyors provide all survey needs for the District including project surveys, like topographic (contours and elevations) and digital trade model (taking that topographic data and putting it into a digital design that others can use) surveys," he said.

They also oversee hydrologic actions that include "underwater and navigation surveys." In addition, the Survey group conducts control surveys focused on "vertical and horizontal surveys at the projects that monitor the dams for periodic movements such as thermal movement from heat expansion" he said.

Geographic Information Specialist Sean Redar's three-member GIS Group "does project-related GIS work and administers and manages the District's enterprise GIS program," Redar said.

"The GIS Group uses a database to track data spatially," Hanson said. "It has a specific location in space where you are placing that data. You can generate a map, for example, and use it for cultural resource sites, and herbicide and pesticide applications."

"With cultural resources they can do a risk assessment analysis based upon use of that property and postulate the risk of natural events disturbing the site," he said. "We might ask 'What's the risk of a

cultural site that we're unaware of being present?' It could give us risk-based assessments, of the high or low probability, of us disturbing a site," he added.

They are also using the GIS database for asset management, which includes keeping track of physical items and their conditions like levees, culverts and roadways, and they are active in updating and maintaining the National Levee Database.

According to Hanson, Specifications is the primary link between Design Branch and Contracting with the goal that Contracting packages are complete and sufficient for advertisement. They also coordinate the Design reviews to complete BCOES (Buildable, Constructible, Operable, Environmental and Sustainability review and certification).

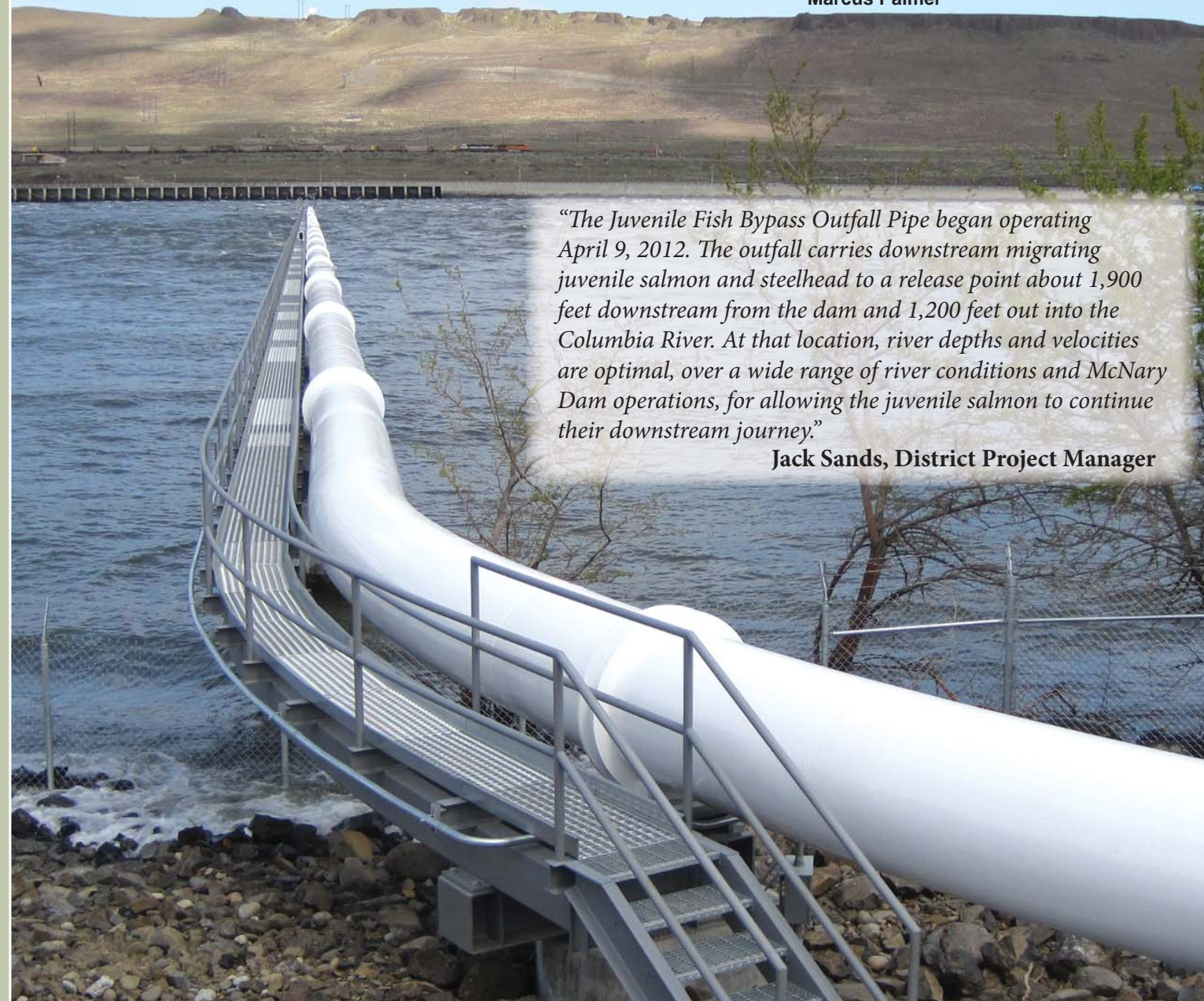
Furthermore, they write Division 1 specifications (also known as general front-end specifications) that go into the Construction contract bid package. Technical Specifications is part of the Contracting bid package as well. They have the paint experts in specifying and inspecting paint systems, and they include all the details like concrete, welding, steel in the bid packages.

"Architectural Engineering Contracting hires AE firms to complete work when the Design Branch doesn't have the capability to do the design or survey work," he said.

General Engineering works with project delivery teams to develop a scope of work for the AE contract, and they assist Contracting with negotiating the contract and oversee execution of the contract.

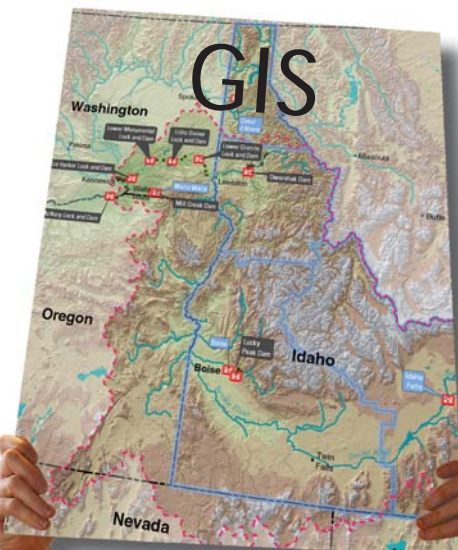
### General Engineering Staff

David Alexander	Lynn Parsons
Julie Davin	Cynthia Philbrook
Robert Herres	Sean Redar
Steven Hardcastle	Richard Robinson
Mark Jones	Brian Schnick
Robert Meyer	Bob Williams
Marcus Palmer	



*"The Juvenile Fish Bypass Outfall Pipe began operating April 9, 2012. The outfall carries downstream migrating juvenile salmon and steelhead to a release point about 1,900 feet downstream from the dam and 1,200 feet out into the Columbia River. At that location, river depths and velocities are optimal, over a wide range of river conditions and McNary Dam operations, for allowing the juvenile salmon to continue their downstream journey."*

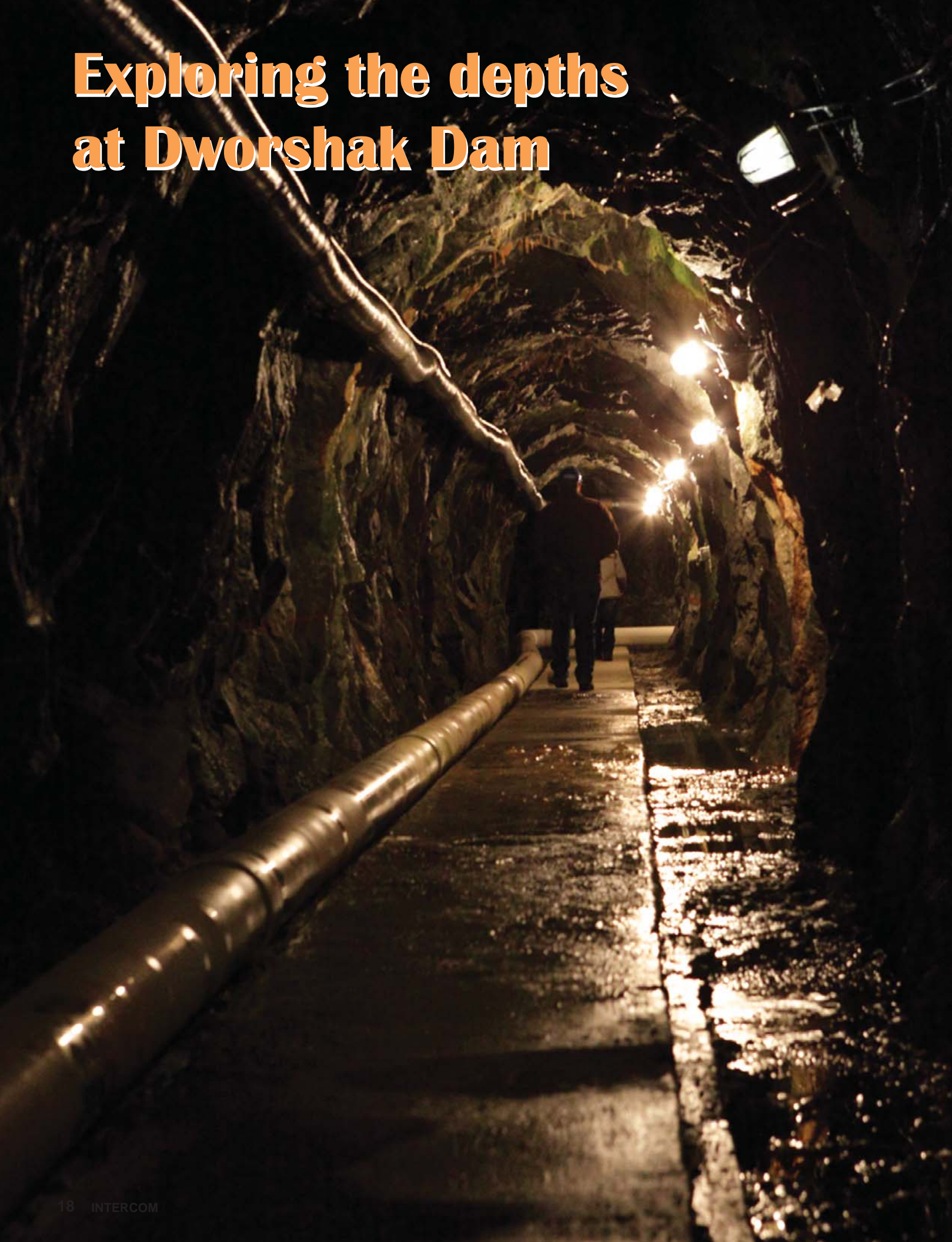
**Jack Sands, District Project Manager**



Left page, main photo: Survey work at Lower Granite Lock and Dam. Bottom left; Sean Redar displays GIS data. Right page, above and below: Juvenile bypass system at McNary Lock and Dam. The various components of General Engineering interfaced with the juvenile bypass system on several fronts including surveys, general and technical specifications, design review coordination and Contracting Division coordination.



# Exploring the depths at Dworshak Dam



## Exploring Dworshak and its 700-foot vertical personality

story and photos by Keith Hyde

It never ceases to amaze me how uniquely different each Corps water resources project is.

Since 1997, I've worked at a Corps lake project at five different dams and toured many other water projects throughout the country. From one hydropower project downriver to the next, from the Heartland's miles-long earthen dams to the West's several hundred-foot-tall concrete monoliths, each and every dam is a unique personality and engineering marvel. Partaking in so-called "bowel tours" of these structures is always a treat, never to be missed.

Recently, I had the chance to tour Dworshak Dam and Reservoir near Orofino, Idaho—one of the largest concrete dams in the Corps inventory. From spelunking the bedrock exploration tunnels where moss clings to life around light bulbs like islands in a sea of darkness, to seeing Gepetto's

rowboat in the Clearwater River bypass tunnel, to feeling the elevator car bounce at the end of its cables from the bottom of the tallest straight-run elevator shaft West of the Mississippi, Dworshak did not fail to stir my curiosity and engineering intrigue. Dams are rich storytellers. They captured the state of the art engineering from decades past, and today reflect to us the power of human ingenuity, sometimes our foibles, and often times, our genius.

Later I stood on the Clearwater bridge, just downstream from the dam, casting my eyes upon the fisherman and his catch, the hatcheries to river left and right, stacks of salmon holding in pockets behind the boulders laden in the stream, and the 700-foot vertical personality I just met looking on from the distance. I was grabbed between the shoulder blades to the "30,000-foot" perspective as I looked around this small

community—quaint homes, fenced yards, and swingsets—built along the river's edge in Dworshak's shadow. Corps dams mean much more than just a day on the water, a park ranger's friendly wave, a family picnic, a campout, or a hike through the woods. Love dams or leave 'em, these structures are economic engines; they're critically integral to the regions they serve, and they're a profound responsibility. So while no dam's story is like any other's, they're all united in a great purpose, as are we. Thank you, Dworshak Dam, for this always-refreshing reminder.



# Workers pluck buoy from river bottom

story and photo by Russ Heaton



with just a cell phone screen as a guide," Heaton said.

With a solid target to go for, on April 30, Ice Harbor Mechanical Crew Foreman Jerry Ross dispatched a crew consisting of Lyle Calhoon, Lower Monumental mechanic in charge, Randy Reynolds, Ice Harbor crane operator, Jeff Ethridge, Ice Harbor utility man and the Gates brothers, Mitch and Scott, both mechanics at Ice Harbor.

Using the Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM) and a 20-ton link-belt mobile crane similar to an angler with a giant fishing pole, the crew fished the buoy off the bottom and recovered the buoy in about an hour and a half.

"I thought the perfectly synchronized teamwork of the crew made it look easy, but I know first-hand how difficult it is to maneuver in higher river flows, hover and maintain position," Heaton said. "We could have never pulled this off without those guys."

Resource Management Group Contractor Joe Carol agreed, saying, "That was incredible...I didn't think it could be done."

The end result was the District saved money. And the District was able to return the Ice Harbor data collection station back in service within a few weeks. Also, with additional welding support from Ice Harbor Mechanics Brett Moon and Troy Heaton, a spare pontoon was deployed by this same crew May 1.

While they made this difficult job look easy, it is by no means a fluke. Every day, skilled mechanics, crane operators, watercraft pilots, and utility workers keep things repaired and working. They often work with aging equipment and under unusual circumstances. Through improvisation and sheer guile they complete repairs behind the scenes under challenging conditions.

This short vignette allows us to peer into the world of these often unsung specialists, and to glimpse at "what's just another day at the office" for them—another example of superbly skilled trades and crafts people the Walla Walla District is fortunate to have.

Today we tip our hardhats to you...nicely executed!

It takes a tremendous amount of skill and expertise to operate large multi-purpose locks and dams in the Walla Walla District.

Through the years, the *Intercom* has showcased the highly qualified group of professional engineers, operators, designers, fish biologists, and project managers that support the District's Operations Division in this endeavor.

This is not one of those stories.

Instead, it focuses on a special group of men and women who used skill, experience, and sometimes a large dose of muscle to literally pluck success from the depths of defeat.

On May 1, a team of mechanics and utility workers from Ice Harbor and Lower Monumental Dams did just that to recover a specialized buoy from the bottom of the Columbia River.

At Ice Harbor Dam, a severe wind-storm during the April 13-14 weekend capsized the water temperature buoy in the forebay. Each of the four Snake River projects and the McNary project have a robot buoy that collects water temperatures from top to bottom in the dam forebay.

The buoys, managed by the District's Water Quality Team Lead Dr. Steve Juul as part of his dissolved gas monitoring program, are

critical to operating and complying with temperature measures specified in the biological opinion issued by federal and state fisheries agencies. With river temperatures beginning to rise, data collected is becoming more important, said Juul.

Once he learned of the buoy's status, Juul coordinated with an electrical engineer at Ice Harbor, Trevor McLaen, who said, "The mechanics and crane operators at the project are capable of some pretty precise work," and suggested using the work barge to pull it up.

On April 15, Ice Harbor Crane Operator Randy Reynolds and Mechanic Mitch Gates went in search of the sunken buoy along with Juul and Russ Heaton, the District's limnologist.

"We had the GPS coordinates and a pretty good image of it on Google Earth," Heaton said. "However, the GPS on the boat was not working, so I gave my iPhone to Randy Reynolds who used it to navigate to the precise location."

With Gates grappling off the bow, within an hour they were able to hook onto a submerged solid piece of "something."

"I was amazed at the ease in which Randy could maneuver this large work barge in rapid river flow while hovering over a point

# District kids hunt around...

If you walked by the Walla Walla District headquarters building March 30, you may have noticed 88 children running around with baskets. They were hunting for 1,075 Easter eggs. District Association of Corps Employees (ACE) volunteers stuffed and hid all the eggs. Since the early 1990s, the District has held the annual Easter Egg Hunt.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo



## 2013 Easter Egg Hunt Winners

Age 1-3

Grady Peterson - Jon Peterson  
Perrin Worman - Erin Hudson

Age 4-6

Cameron Morgan - Hillary Morgan  
Emily Alexander - David Alexander

Age 7-10

Morgan Christensen - Scott Shelly  
Jessica Hunt - Jared Frank



# Around the District

## henrickson earns Corps Public Affairs awards

District Public Affairs Specialist Bruce Henrickson earned two national-level awards for superior performance in Corps public affairs programs during 2012.

In an April 30 e-mail sent to all Corps organizations, Deputy Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Todd T. Semonite announced the winners of the annual Locke L. Mouton competition honoring Corps of Engineers professional communicators in four categories: Media Relations and Public Information, Community Relations, Command Information and Emergency/Disaster Response.

Henrickson earned a first-place Mouton Award in the Community Relation category for his role in supporting the Ice Harbor Lock and Dam's 50th Anniversary Celebration. His efforts on this "golden anniversary" event began almost a year before the June 16 event at the dam. Working with Corps leadership, Ice Harbor staff, retirees and other stakeholders, the event not only honored the facilities' years of service to the nation, but also served as an opportunity to educate the public about all the benefits the lock and dam provide to the region's economy and lifestyle.

Judges also selected Henrickson for a second-place award in the Media Relations category for his handling of the "Illia Dunes Trash Incident," a public communications effort in response to more than 3,000 visitors using the dunes August 25-26, 2012.

The dunes are a popular recreation site located at Snake River Mile 102 on the south shoreline about three miles downstream of Lower Granite Lock and Dam. During that one weekend, enormous amounts

of trash were scattered on the beach, broken bottles and beer cans left in the water, refuse strewn about the parking lots and litter discarded along the roadway, creating potential health and safety hazards for future visitors.

Henrickson led the public affairs effort to facilitate media coverage of the incident and follow-on cleanup efforts. Media interest was the heaviest the District had seen in at least seven years, both regionally and nationally, with Henrickson personally providing 26 news interviews, as well as coordinating on-site media visits and interviews with other Corps staff.

"These were Corps team efforts to openly communicate with the public we serve and reporters covering stories of interest," Henrickson noted. "My Corps colleagues deserve a lot of credit, too."



photo by Sandra Hickethier

Bruce Henrickson

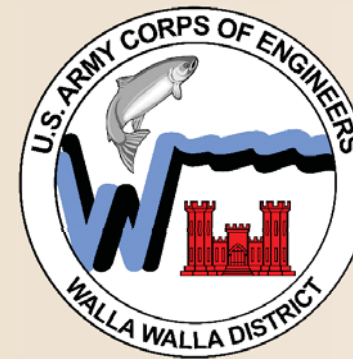
## touring McNary and Little Goose

Members of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association toured Little Goose Lock and Dam's navigational and hydropower facilities March 21.



photo by David McDermott

McNary Lock and Dam Operations Manager Dave Coleman (second on left) talks to members of the Northwest Power and Conservation Council as they walk across the dam near Umatilla, Ore., May 8. The council's mission is "to ensure, with public participation, an affordable and reliable energy system while enhancing fish and wildlife in the Columbia River Basin."



## Division names Herres 'Real Estate Professional' of the year



Nancy Herres

The Northwestern Division selected Nancy Herres, Walla Walla District, as the recipient of the 2012 USACE Real Estate Professional of the Year Award.

## making a splash at Mill Creek

Mill Creek park rangers had a chance to educate local area 5th graders at the Walla Walla Community College Water & Environmental Center's Make-A-Splash! event in April.

Make A Splash! is an annual environmental education field trip for 5th grade students in the Walla Walla and Pendleton regions. With their classroom, students rotate through a series of stations focused on environmental literacy, whose activities are facilitated by local environmental educators.

The WWCC Water & Environmental Center focuses on collaboration and education for environmental and economic sustainability.



## employees of the quarter



Jeannette Wilson



David Geil

Jeannette Wilson  
facilities and equipment manager,  
District Headquarters

David Geil  
power plant mechanic,  
Lower Monumental Lock and Dam, Kahlotus, Wash.



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## Lonnie Mettler

### Position:

Chief of Natural Resources Management, Operations Division

### Describe your job.

I oversee the operational footprint of District programs such as recreation, fish passage, wildlife mitigation, land and water stewardship, and environmental protection. I work closely with the Operations project managers, natural resources managers, and their staffs at the field level. Within the District, I spend most of my time collaborating with Real Estate, Planning, Office of Counsel and Public Affairs. It's my goal to integrate the management of a diverse pool of natural resources components while supporting other Corps missions and demands for public recreation opportunities.

### What are some of the biggest challenges you've faced in your current position?

Time management. Some of that comes with the territory of being a section chief and supervisor. However, as I look across the District Natural Resources Management team, I see such a diversity of responsibilities and the need to coordinate and communicate at so many levels, that there is little time to focus quality time on specific areas of responsibilities. Knowing this, I try hard to keep detractors far out of the same vein, the myriad of data calls from higher headquarters and the increased efforts to create more process at all levels only take away from the field folks' ability to perform their duties. In an environment where budgets have been declining significantly, the field is constantly trying to retool their programs and yet provide a quality experience to our visitors. I try to stay vigilant to these detractors and work to find ways to not increase the field's work load.

### Please highlight a notable milestone or memory in your position.

I've been very fortunate in my time with the Corps. In 1980, I started working at the District as an active duty project officer. When that tour ended, I chose not to stay on active duty and was granted an internship which not only earned me my master's degree but also a full-time permanent position with the Corps. These early years were nurtured in Operations and served as the springboard for job opportunities in the field, in Planning, and at Northwestern Division. In 2006, I returned to the same office that first introduced me to the Corps, Natural Resources Management. This homecoming was not planned nor expected, but has been a great chance for me to give back for all that I have learned over the years and I am doing it focused on the area where I got my start.

### What is the most rewarding part of your job?

Working with the Great American Outdoors initiative, which provides the public opportunities to get outside and experience the beauty of our environment while exercising their mind, body, and perhaps their spirit all at the same time. Throughout my career the Corps gave me opportunities to work amongst many of the nature's wonders and every time I come away not only in awe, but also feeling invigorated and refreshed. I have the ability to conserve some of nature's beauty and offer the public the chance to embrace that beauty. I work with a passionate group of professionals who constantly go out of their way to provide the public with a safe, healthy experience with what nature has to offer on Corps-managed waters and lands. If you have not done it, hop in a vehicle and head out to the parks and wildlands managed by the District and you will see what I mean.

