



JAXSTRONG®

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JAXSTRONG

jacksonville

OUR WORK • OUR PEOPLE • OUR DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2014 | Volume 6 Issue 2



COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

ALL EYES ON PUERTO RICO

This week, all eyes are on La Isla del Encanto, or the Enchanted Island, as Puerto Rico is sometimes called. Our work is fast paced and requires long, arduous hours. It's rewarding when we are able to celebrate the fruits of our labor and that is exactly what we are doing Feb. 5 in Ponce, Puerto Rico.

Jacksonville District will join with the people of Puerto Rico in celebrating the completion of the Portugués Dam. Portugués Dam is a 220-foot high, roller-compacted concrete (RCC) dam northwest of Ponce. It is the final piece of the Portugués and Bucana flood risk management project, which was authorized to reduce impact of flooding in Ponce from the Portugués and Bucana Rivers. Construction began in 2008 and was substantially completed in 2013. The dam is the first single-centered, RCC thick-arch dam constructed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The total cost of the project was \$386 million, but that doesn't tell the whole story. The economic impact to small business, 96 percent of which were Puerto Rican, through sub-contracting totaled \$90.1 million. Of that, Small Disadvantaged Businesses received \$2 million; Women-Owned small businesses received \$6.5 million; HUBZone received \$860,133; Veteran-Owned small businesses received \$4.3 million; and Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned businesses received \$1.8 million.

More important than concrete and dollars are people. Portugués Dam helps reduce impacts from flooding from heavy rain events in and around the municipality of Ponce. Runoff from the mountainous terrain to the north of Ponce can transform quiet streams into raging rivers in a matter of hours. The dam provides a location to collect the water so it can be released in a controlled fashion when drier conditions develop. Completion of the dam helps reduce the impacts to 40,000 people who had to deal with regular floods where the water depth exceeded five feet. The flood risk area included police stations, fire stations, hospitals and schools. This structure saves between \$200 and \$500 million in damages from typical floods.

Of course, great feats, such as the completion of construction of this dam are not done in isolation. Jacksonville District will perform operations and maintenance on the dam for the next year. After that, Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, the local sponsor, will assume full control. The Municipality of Ponce has also helped pave the way for this impressive dam.

Though too numerous to mention in this column by name, more than 80 Jacksonville District employees from both Jacksonville and Puerto Rico, representing mechanical, electrical, structural and hydraulic engineers, cartographers, construction, geologists, land surveyors, cost estimators, design professionals, lawyers, communicators, real estate experts, resource management and contracting – some still working and some now retired – pulled together to make this project happen.

This teamwork truly represents the Army Values of Duty and Selfless Service. During the next seven months in JaxStrong, we will highlight some of your teammates who live and work by the seven Army Values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity and Personal Courage. Take a minute to read the article on page 5 about Brian Blake of the coastal navigation team and how he epitomizes the value of Loyalty.

Hats (construction hard hats) off to the entire Jacksonville team for putting this one in the finished column!

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alan Dodd
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

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JaxStrong is a monthly electronic publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District providing information about the people, activities and projects of the district. *JaxStrong* is distributed in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1. Questions about, or submissions to, *JaxStrong* should be directed to the Corporate Communications Office. The editor can be contacted by telephone at 904-232-1667 or by email to JaxStrongEditor@usace.army.mil. Content in this publication does not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Army or the Department of Defense.

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ON THE COVER

Emergency management specialist Aaron Stormant explains to JEB Stuart middle school students the district's role in natural disaster preparation and recovery. The program was offered as a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiative. (Photo by Nikki Nobles)



District welcomes middle school's First Lego® League

BY NAKEIR NOBLES



Programs and Project Management Division's Tim Brown (right) welcomes students from JEB Stuart Middle School's First Lego® League program and introduces them to Aaron Stormant (second from right), emergency management specialist. (Photo by Nikki Nobles)

Jacksonville District continues to make strides in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) education, as employees hosted students from JEB Stuart Middle School's First Lego® League (FLL) at the district's headquarters office. The event provided a view of the STEM disciplines as they are used in Corps career fields.

Volunteers from Programs and Project Management Division and from Operations Division's Emergency Operations, Invasive Species and Water Management Branches provided the students a bird's eye view of how these sections of the district function.

Stuart's First Lego® League (FLL) is a robotics program designed for students ages nine to 16. Students in the program use Legos® and a robot to construct an obstacle course for a given situation. They complete a project focusing on research and how the newfound information applies to their daily lives.

The school's FLL coordinator, teacher Desirae Royal, has a vested interest in STEM education and felt it was important for the children to interact with Corps staff.

"Kids are competitive. I wanted to bring them here for a real-world experience of how STEM is incorporated in the real world," Royal said.

The first stop in the Corps experience was the district's emergency operations office. Met by emergency management specialists Aaron Stormant and Logan Wilkinson, the group was given a presentation of emergency management's role in disaster preparation and recovery.

Emergency preparedness and response is primarily a state and local responsibility. However, in instances when the nature of the disaster exceeds the capabilities of local and state interests, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may provide help to save human lives, prevent immediate human suffering or mitigate property damage.

The students are currently designing a robot that will assist with post natural disaster debris removal.

After their presentation, Stormant and Wilkinson were bombarded with answers to the natural disaster questions they posed to the group.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 4)



LEGO® LEAGUE (continued from PAGE 3)



Students from JEB Stuart Middle School get a close-up look at an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). (Photo by Nikki Nobles)

"When was the last time Jacksonville was hit by a hurricane," Stormant asked the group. Answers varied from 1800 to present-day. The correct answer is 1964.

Seventh grader Kristina Lindt, a member of the school's FLL program said, "We use all branches of STEM [in the program]. We use science to do the program, technology to program the robot, engineering to test the programs [used to build robot] and math for different rotations of the project."

Lindt, who wants to be a teacher, says she will pursue a degree in math. "I love math and technology."

Following the emergency management presentation, engineering division's Tom Spencer talked about and displayed an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV). "Now you guys want to work for the Corps, right? It's really a cool program to work with here."

"That is cool," echoed one of the students.

The district's UAV program provides high resolution aerial imagery, which is a much higher resolution than traditional

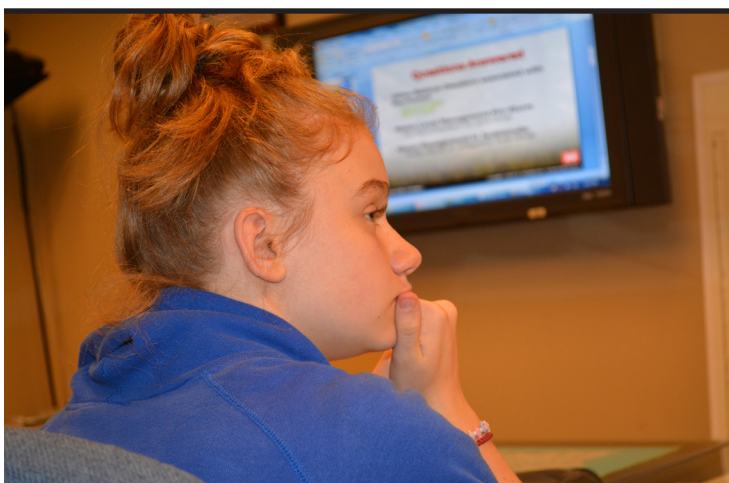


Emergency management specialist Aaron Stormant (left) watches as Tom Spencer, Invasive Species Management Branch, demonstrates how the unmanned aerial vehicle's autopilot communicates with the ground station computer. The system's "Heads Up Display" (HUD) window provides the on-ground operator vital information to safely operate the aircraft. (Photo by Nikki Nobles)

aerial photography. This technology has been used to detect infrastructure problems along levees and dikes. With the ability to hand-launch the UAV, the team can perform flights in very remote areas.

Royal says the interaction between the students and the district is an important step in their project completion. And working on the project together encompasses what the Corps does. That's teamwork.

"They are learning to program a robot to accomplish different missions of a natural disaster. Teamwork allows them to identify a problem and a solution along with preventive measures," said Royal. ♦



JEB Stuart seventh grader Kristina Lindt listens intently during the water management presentation. Lindt, who likes math and technology, wants to be a teacher. (Photo by Nikki Nobles)



Blake exemplifies loyalty, mentors team members BY JEAN PAVLOV



Members of the district dredge estimating team (left to right) are Rick Stallings, Jennifer Tyler, Tony Ledford and Brian Blake. They are pictured here while on a site visit to observe the latest dredge dewatering technology being used on a project at Holmes Beach near Bradenton, Fla. (Photo courtesy of Rick Stallings)

We see them on cards that are handed out in our orientation packet from Human Resources. We see posters listing them on the walls in conference rooms or along the hallways. They are the seven U.S. Army values, which Soldiers and Civilians are asked to know and live by. But what do they really mean? And how do we apply them in our lives and in our work? This seven-part series will take a look at each of the values and showcase team members who embody them.

Brian Blake, senior lead of the coastal navigation team in Cost Engineering, has been with Jacksonville District since October 1982.

"Brian has long been a member of the Cost Engineering Community of Practice and has served in the cost section as an engineering technician, preparing construction cost estimates for dredging for many years," said Lauren Borocharner, chief of the Engineering Division. "In the past few years, Brian has held the role of team lead for the dredge estimating team, and in this capacity has demonstrated his loyalty to the Corps by working as a mentor to junior staff, even when he could have retired. Brian's contributions to cost engineering and to his fellow employees demonstrate the highest regard for others and the greatest loyalty to the cost section, Jacksonville District and the Corps of Engineers."

"Brian is dedicated to Jacksonville District's coastal/navigation mission, exemplifying the Army value 'loyalty' in his daily work in cost section, estimating dredging projects through his dependability, reliability and trustworthiness," said Tracy Leeser, chief of the cost engineering section and Blake's immediate supervisor. "Brian

can be counted on to turn out a top-quality estimate, to provide thorough and consistent mentoring to junior staff, and to get the job done on time," she added.

Two technical teams determine the cost of Jacksonville District projects; one is Blake's team of six members that estimate the cost of coastal navigation projects, and the other team estimates the cost of heavy construction non-dredging projects. "We have the biggest dredging team in the entire Corps," said Blake.

A Jacksonville native, Blake came to the district from the private sector after his tour in the U.S. Marine Corps (1974-1978). He started as a hydrographic surveyor, working for the Survey Branch on the original survey boat *Florida*, before moving to the operations navigation section, providing technical management of dredging projects.

"One of the more involved and interesting projects I've worked on," said Blake, "was when we raised the sunken dredge *Crest* in the Kings Bay entrance channel in Fernandina Harbor. All the subs had to go around the sunken dredge. The channel conditions were very restricted, it was a serious obstruction to navigation."

Blake then moved to Cost Engineering Branch in 1994, where he has worked since. The coastal navigation estimating team's job is to provide cost estimates that support project development from beginning to end. Some of the projects they have worked on are Miami Harbor, Jacksonville Harbor and San Juan Harbor, to name a few.

Since 1998, Blake has also been a member of the Corps' east coast dredging team, in which he does dredge cost consulting for other Corps

ARMY VALUES

L *Loyalty*

D *Duty*

R *Respect*

S *Selfless Service*

H *Honor*

I *Integrity*

P *Personal Courage*

LOYALTY (continued from PAGE 5)



Brian Blake, senior lead of the coastal navigation team, Cost Engineering, was cited by Laureen Borochaner, chief, Engineering Division, for his loyalty to the Corps and specifically to the discipline of cost engineering. Blake stands in front of a photo of the survey boat Florida, on which he worked as a member of the Survey Branch upon his arrival at Jacksonville District in 1982. (Photo by David Kimery)

districts, divisions and headquarters as well as other government agencies in areas such as Boston, Mass.; Wilmington, N.C.; Savannah, Ga.; Washington, D.C.; Seattle, Wash., and Yuma, Ariz.

In one example of a success story in assisting other agencies, Blake and Al Fletcher (district dredging expert and Blake's mentor) were dispatched to Yuma, Ariz. in 1998 to work with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) on a dredging project on the Colorado River.

"The BLM was proposing to dredge a sediment basin at the end of the river and pump the dredged material 10 miles south into Mexico, into an abandoned canal as an alternative to the existing nearby upland disposal site. There was an ongoing cultural resource issue involving a Native American burial ground," said Blake. "The dredging would have required the use of a portable pipeline dredge pumping through five booster pumps cross-country, through rough terrain to the proposed disposal site."

Using the Corps' Dredge Estimating Program (CEDEP), the team demonstrated that the estimated cost for the 10-mile pumping alternative would be excessive, prompting the BLM to reconsider negotiating with the local Tribe the use of the existing site that was much closer to the sediment basin, and less costly.

"Brian is probably one of the best dredge estimators, if not the best dredge estimator in the Corps of Engineers," said Fletcher. "His advice is respected Corps-wide. I feel it a privilege to have worked with Brian over the years."

Blake said his many years with the district revolves around his experience working on dredging projects. "My personal sacrifice to not retire is nothing compared to the joy I get in the things I cherish most – the physical, mental and emotional feeling I get from helping others and achieving our goals here in engineering. I'd probably leave today if I didn't feel that way."

◆

ARMY CIVILIAN CORPS CREED

I am an Army civilian – a member of the Army team.

I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and civilians.

I will always support the mission.

I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.

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

I live the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.

I am an Army civilian.



ARMY VALUES
WWW.ARMY.MIL/VALUES

Corps discusses restoration progress and Lake Okeechobee management at annual Everglades Coalition Conference

BY JENN MILLER



"Since I've been in my position, I'm honored to say that the Obama administration has been committed to Everglades restoration," said Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy at the Everglades Coalition Conference in Naples, Fla., Jan. 10. (Photo by Jenn Miller)

Collaboration, innovation and long-term solutions were key discussion points at the 29th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference, where federal and state officials, environmental organizations and members of the public and academia came together to celebrate what's been accomplished so far, and discuss what needs to be done to continue making progress in Everglades restoration.

Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, U.S. Rep. Patrick Murphy, U.S. Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy, state Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd were among the 300 people in attendance at the conference held Jan. 9-11 in Naples, Fla.

"Since I've been in my position, I'm honored to say that the Obama administration has been committed to Everglades restoration," said Darcy, who also praised the efforts of the Everglades Coalition. "I want to congratulate the coalition for recognizing that the future is the only thing we should be looking to."

The theme of this year's conference was "Everglades Restoration: Protecting Coastal Communities," and topics of discussion included climate change, nutrient pollution, restoration progress, sea level rise and water quality.

Dodd participated in a panel discussion entitled, "Where is all the Water Coming From? A Coastal Perspective on Solutions for Water Management in the Northern Everglades and Lake Okeechobee." He provided an overview of the water management decisions the Corps made this past wet season

and the importance of considering public safety in the decision-making process.

"We can't get lake water out as quickly as it comes in—it comes in six times faster than we can get it out," said Dodd. "When we make a decision today, we base it on where we think the lake will be 30-60 days out."

During the panel discussion, Dodd was asked for his position on the Senate Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin's recommendation to give the state of Florida authority over Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases when the risk of dike failure is less than 10 percent and to temporarily release authority to the federal government when the risk of failure exceeds this threshold.



Howard Gonzales, Jr., chief of the Ecosystem Branch, discussed restoration progress at the Jan. 11 breakout session entitled, "From Restoration Visions to Ribbon-Cutting." (Photo by Jenn Miller)

"When we talk about getting up to 10 percent risk, water levels are getting higher than we can manage," said Dodd. "Responsibilities should not be handed over during a crisis."

Dodd was also asked about the committee's recommendation for congressional assistance in legislation or rulemaking to revise the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule, also known as LORS.

"It's the best system we have right now to balance all the various needs," said Dodd, who also noted that additional rehabilitation work on Herbert Hoover Dike needs to be completed prior to considering any revisions to LORS. He also said the Corps is in the process of completing an assessment, known as the Dam Safety Modification Study, which is scheduled to be completed in 2015. The results of that study will be used to guide future dike rehabilitation efforts.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 8)

EVERGLADES COALITION (continued from PAGE 7)



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd (second from right) participated in the panel discussion, "Where is all the Water Coming From? A Coastal Perspective on Solutions for Water Management in the Northern Everglades and Lake Okeechobee" Jan. 11 at the Everglades Coalition Conference in Naples, Fla. Also serving on the panel were (from left) Mark Perry of the Florida Oceanographic Society, South Florida Water Management District Governing Board Member Mitch Hutchcraft, Drew Bartlett of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and state Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto. Eric Draper (far right), Audubon of Florida, moderated the panel. (Photo by Jenn Miller)

Other members of the Jacksonville District team also attended the conference. Jacksonville District has the largest environmental restoration program in the Corps, and manages the Corps' Everglades restoration program.

At the "Caloosahatchee River: Getting the Water Right" panel discussion Jan. 11, Planning and Policy Division Chief Eric Bush discussed LORS and the public process involved in developing the regulation schedule.

"This is your Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule, not the Corps," said Bush. "You adopted it."

Bush also stressed the importance of planning for climate change in the restoration efforts. "If we don't consider climate extremes and climate vulnerabilities, by the time we complete these projects, we are going to have the same problems."

Howard Gonzales, Jr., chief of the Ecosystem Branch, participated in the breakout session entitled, "From Restoration Visions to Ribbon-Cutting."



Panel moderator Eric Draper (right), Audubon of Florida, listens as Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd (left) emphasizes a point about the Corps' water management decisions and the importance of considering public safety in the decision-making process. Dodd participated in a panel discussion entitled, "Where is all the Water Coming From? A Coastal Perspective on Solutions for Water Management in the Northern Everglades and Lake Okeechobee" at the Everglades Coalition Conference Jan. 11 in Naples, Fla. (Photo by Jenn Miller)



At the "Caloosahatchee River: Getting the Water Right" panel discussion Jan. 11, Eric Bush, chief of the Planning and Policy Division, discussed the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule and the public process involved in developing the regulation schedule. (Photo by Jenn Miller)

"As we're looking at the big picture across the nation, other projects propose restoration success. What we have (with the Everglades restoration program) is realized success," said Gonzales, who also walked conference attendees through the Corps' planning process and the importance of public participation.

"When you hear that a document is available for public review, that is your opportunity to get involved. There are no comments that go unanswered. We take this process very seriously."

The Everglades Coalition Conference showcased the connection all coastal communities have with the Everglades and how Everglades restoration is central to Florida's future. A steady theme throughout the conference was the need for everyone to do their part to help restore this irreplaceable ecosystem and that not one single agency or individual can accomplish this feat alone. ♦



Florida wetlands among those receiving international attention

Annual World Wetlands Day is February 2 BY NANCY J. STICHT



Everglades National Park in south Florida, one of the state's four Wetlands of International Importance. The park is also designated as a Biosphere Reserve and a World Heritage Site. (Photo courtesy of National Park Service)

In the early 1970s, wetlands became the only specific ecosystem to be the subject of a global treaty that provides "a framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources," according to the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands website.

The treaty was negotiated by countries and non-governmental organizations from every region of the planet that were concerned about the loss and degradation of wetland habitat. It was adopted in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. Its mission is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world."

The United States of America is one of 168 contracting parties in the Ramsar Convention, and has 35 sites that are classified as Wetlands of International Importance. Four are located in Florida:

- Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples, Fla.;
- Everglades National Park in south Florida;
- Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, in north Florida and south Georgia; and
- Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Indian River County, Fla.

What makes a wetland, a wetland?

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) define wetlands as areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands include swamps, marshes, bogs and similar areas. Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1972, the Corps regulates the placement of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States, including wetlands, through the issuance of Department of the Army permits.

The Corps classifies an area as a wetland based on three factors: vegetation, soil and hydrology.

Although there are nearly 5,000 plant types that may occur in wetlands, a few are most common: bulrushes, sawgrass, sphagnum moss, bald cypress, willows and mangroves. Hydric soils occur when soil oxygen is limited by periods of saturation and is composed predominantly of decomposed plant material such as peat and muck. Hydrology refers to the presence of water at or above the soil surface, significantly influencing the types of plants and soils in the area, although the presence of water may be intermittent. Wetlands are not always wet!

Why are wetlands important?

Wetlands provide a number of beneficial services for people, fish and wildlife. Wetland functions include water quality improvement, floodwater storage (an acre can store up to one and a half million gallons), water purification and shoreline stabilization.



Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge in Indian River County, the nation's first national wildlife refuge and one of four Wetlands of International Importance in Florida. (Photo courtesy of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

Wetlands provide important fish and wildlife habitat as well. According to a USEPA fact sheet, "wetlands are some of the most biologically productive natural ecosystems in the world, comparable to tropical rain forests and coral reefs in their productivity and the diversity of species they support." Further, "up to one half of North American bird species nest or feed in wetlands" and although wetlands "keep only about five percent of the land surface in the conterminous United States, they are home to 31 percent of our plant species."

International attention

The Ramsar Convention quantified its commitment to wetland conservation by adopting the following three "pillars of action."

- Work towards the wise use of wetlands through a wide range of actions and processes contributing to human well-being through sustainable wetlands. Parties will ensure public participation in wetland management and promote communication, education and public awareness;

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 10)

WETLANDS (continued from PAGE 9)

- Devote attention to the further identification, designation and management of a coherent and comprehensive suite of sites for the List of Wetlands of International Importance as a contribution to the establishment of a global ecological network, and to ensure the effective monitoring and management of listed sites; and
- Cooperate internationally in wetland conservation and wise use. ♦



A butterfly orchid, pictured here at Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary near Naples, Fla., one of the state's four Wetlands of International Importance. The orchid is native to and a protected species in Florida, where it grows from central Florida south to the Everglades. (Photo by Dick Brewer, Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary)



A green tree frog finds a home at the Okefenokee Swamp National Wildlife Refuge, one of four Wetlands of International Importance in Florida. (Photo by Blaine Eckberg, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service)

FOOD, WATER AND WETLANDS

www.ramsar.org

HEY! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SORRY GUYS, BUT OUR TOWN IS GROWING, AND WE NEED MORE FIELDS AND WATER FOR CROPS.

SO WE'LL DRAIN THIS WETLAND IF YOU DON'T MIND.

WE DO MIND! THIS WETLAND IS THE ONLY HOME WE HAVE!

HMMM... THIS WETLAND ALSO GIVES ME IRRIGATION WATER FOR THE DRY SEASON AND PASTURE FOR MY CATTLE.

AND IT'S A GOOD FLOOD REGULATOR AND HELPS PURIFY OUR WATER.

THINK OF THE WATER THAT IS USED IN THE TOWN. YOU COULD RESTORE THE URBAN WETLAND YOU DRAINED LAST YEAR AND RECYCLE THE TOWN'S WASTE WATER!

UM... BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD THAT!

OF COURSE YOU CAN! THE WETLAND WILL HELP YOU TO PURIFY YOUR WASTE WATER.

PEOPLE FROM THE TOWN COULD USE THE WATER TO GROW MORE VEGETABLES AND EVEN FLOWERS!

SOUNDS INTERESTING! LET ME CALCULATE...

YEP, LOOKS REASONABLE. EVERYONE BENEFITS - WE'LL HAVE MORE FOOD AND WATER AND WILDLIFE!

YOU COULD ALSO GET MORE FISH!

THERE WOULD BE MORE WATER FOR YOU TO USE, AND MORE HABITAT FOR WILDLIFE.

LONG LIVE THE WETLANDS!

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And how was YOUR day at work?

BY ERICA SKOLTE



Ruben Ramirez, founder of Florida Python Hunters and winner of two prizes in the 2013 Python Challenge, shows off his latest catch to Donna Zoeller, who had just completed a site visit nearby. (Photo by Donna Zoeller)

During a recent site visit, the words "situational awareness" took on a whole new meaning for Donna Zoeller, engineering technician in Operations Division, Multi-Projects Branch.

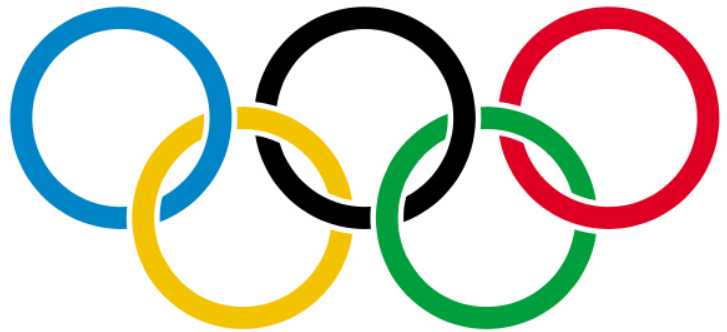
While conducting a routine site visit at the S-356 pump station on Tamiami Trail, Zoeller met an 11-foot long Burmese python face-to-face. Fortunately for her, Ruben Ramirez, founder of Florida Python Hunters, had just captured the invasive reptile nearby. Since it takes two hands to handle such a large, muscular, powerful snake, taking a "selfie" was out of the question. So Ramirez enlisted Zoeller's help. Zoeller, who was on site as part of her normal operations, maintenance, repair, replacement and rehabilitation duties, was happy that she had not run into the large reptile on her own.

Ramirez, an experienced animal hunter who holds permits to collect and handle many exotic invasive species, knows what he's doing. He won two prizes in the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's 2013 Python Challenge: first place for the most snakes captured (18) and second place for the largest python, which was close to 11 feet long. The longest Burmese python caught in Florida, captured in 2012, measured 17.7 feet.

If you come across an exotic species while at work or at play, you can report the sighting by calling 888-IVE-GOT-1, through the free IveGot1 app, or online at www.ivegot1.org. ♦

Countdown to the XXII Winter Olympic Games!

Sochi, Russia – February 7-23, 2014



(Image from Wikimedia Commons website, public domain)

- The five rings of the Olympic logo represent the five continents. They are interlaced to show universality. On the Olympic flag, the rings appear on a white background. Combined in this way, the six colors of the flag (blue, yellow, black, green, red and white) represent all nations.
- The Olympic games were established in 1896 in Athens, Greece; however the 1912 Games in Stockholm, Sweden marked the first time the participants came from all five continents. The Olympic flag bearing its five rings was flown in the Olympic stadium for the first time in 1920 in Antwerp, Belgium.
- The Olympic motto is: *Citius – Altius – Fortius*, meaning *Faster – Higher – Stronger*.
- The Olympic creed is:

The most important thing in life is not the triumph, but the fight; the essential thing is not to have won, but to have fought well.
- A new torch is created for each Olympic games. The flame is lit in Olympia, Greece months before the games and is carried by relay to the host city, passed from runner to runner without being extinguished. This was done for the first time for the 1936 games in Berlin, Germany. The relay to Sochi has covered 40,000 miles and 14,000 legs, visited locations as remote as the North Pole and the International Space Station, and included its first ever underwater leg (at Lake Baikal in Siberia, the world's largest and deepest freshwater lake). ♦

Source: Olympic.org website

February is American Heart Month

Take care of your heart and prevent heart disease by making healthy choices and managing any existing medical conditions:



♥ **Eat a healthy diet.** Strive to eat at least five daily servings of fruits and vegetables. Build your diet around foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber to help prevent high cholesterol. Limit salt to help lower your blood pressure. For more information on healthy diet and nutrition, visit [CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Web site](#) and [ChooseMyPlate.gov](#). (Photo courtesy of National Cancer Institute)

♥ **Maintain a healthy weight.** To determine whether your weight is in a healthy range, doctors often calculate a number called the [body mass index](#) (BMI). If you know your weight and height, you can calculate your BMI at [CDC's Assessing Your Weight Web site](#).



♥ **Exercise regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure. The Surgeon General recommends that adults engage in moderately intense exercise for at least 30 minutes as many days of the week as possible. For more information, see [CDC's Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Web site](#). (USACE file photo)

♥ **Monitor your blood pressure.** High blood pressure often has no symptoms, so be sure to check it on a regular basis at home, at a pharmacy or at a doctor's office. Find more information at [CDC's High Blood Pressure Web site](#).

♥ **Quit smoking.** Your doctor can suggest ways to help you quit. For more information about tobacco use and quitting, see [CDC's Smoking & Tobacco Use Web site](#) and [Smokefree.gov](#).

♥ **Limit alcohol use.** Men should limit alcohol to no more than two drinks per day, and women to no more than one. For more information, visit [CDC's Alcohol and Public Health Web site](#).

♥ **Have your cholesterol checked.** Talk with your doctor about this simple blood test. You can find out more from [CDC's High Cholesterol Web site](#).

♥ **Manage your diabetes.** If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your doctor about treatment options. Visit [CDC's Diabetes Public Health Resource](#) for more information.

♥ **Take your medicine.** If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, follow your doctor's instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something.

Source: Center for Disease Control website: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/heartmonth/>.

National Wear Red Day – February 7

The 10th annual National Wear Red Day, spotlighting women's heart health, is Feb. 7. Heart disease is the number one killer of women in the United States, claiming more lives than all forms of cancer combined, and is largely preventable!

The Safety Office invites all team members to wear red Feb. 7 to show support for the heart health message. ♦



Jacksonville District team members, pictured here on the 2013 National Wear Red Day. (Photo by David Kimery)

2014 promises to be busy year for dike rehabilitation

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

The lights at the movie theatre dim...the screen lights up with a preview of coming attractions...the deep, booming voice of an announcer fills the air...

“Coming soon, the biggest, most comprehensive report on the risks associated with Herbert Hoover Dike. Don’t miss it when it hits the streets in the spring of 2014.”

Okay, it’s unlikely that announcement will make the big screen, but Jacksonville District is putting the finishing touches on a risk assessment report for the 143-mile dike that surrounds Lake Okeechobee. The report is expected to be the source of much conversation in light of huge water releases last summer from the lake due, in part, to the poor condition of the dike.

“This is the most comprehensive analysis that’s ever been done on the risk associated with Herbert Hoover Dike,” said Tim Willadsen, project manager for rehabilitation at the dike. “This report identifies the challenge, which helps drive discussions on the remaining solutions needed to reduce the risk at the dike.”

2014 is shaping up to be a very busy year for rehabilitation at the dike. Jacksonville District continues to press on with construction projects, and will move closer toward completing a study that will provide options on the remaining measures needed to reduce the risk of dike failure.

The completed risk assessment will be used to develop and formulate solutions through a process known as a Dam Safety Modification Study (DSMS). The goal of the DSMS is to identify and prioritize the remaining measures necessary to finish rehabilitation. It is anticipated that the final Dam Safety Modification Report (DSMR) will be ready in 2015.

Rehabilitation work has been ongoing since 2007. However, previous risk analyses weren’t as comprehensive as the current effort.

“When we started work, the intent was to fix Reach 1, and then move on to Reaches 2 and 3 on the south side of the lake,” said Willadsen. “Now, we want to make investments in dike repairs that will lower the risk across the entire system, not just one portion of the system.”

Jacksonville District is replacing or removing 32 water control structures, or “culverts” that date back to the 1930s when they were installed at various locations around Herbert Hoover Dike. Culvert 11, near Port Mayaca, is the furthest along in its replacement. (USACE file photo)



Removal of Culvert 11 in July 2012. (USACE file photo)



The replacement structure begins to take shape in April 2013. (USACE file photo)



Culvert 11 nearing completion in December 2013. (USACE file photo)



Culvert 11 before removal in March 2012. (USACE file photo)

HHD UPDATE (continued from PAGE 13)


With traffic from U.S. 27 in the foreground, crews work on installing a temporary cofferdam at the Culvert 4A site near South Bay in December. The cofferdam, which must be robust enough to hold back Lake Okeechobee should it start rising, must be in place before the old culvert can be removed. (USACE photo)

One measure that's already known is addressing the 32 federally owned water control structures, commonly known as "culverts." These structures currently pose the greatest risk of dike failure.

"The culverts were identified as the greatest risk to failure due to loss of material into and around them," said Willadsen. "Replacing these structures is the current priority."



Tim Willadsen (left), Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation project manager, talks with a member of the public during a 2013 meeting in Clewiston. More public meetings are planned for 2014, as Jacksonville District continues to develop measures necessary to reduce the risk of dike failure. (Photo by John Campbell)

Culvert replacement construction began in 2012. By the end of 2013, contracts had been awarded to replace 16 of the 32 culverts needing attention. Culvert 11, located south of Port Mayaca on the east side of the dike, is furthest along in its replacement.

"These structures aren't like driveway culverts," said Willadsen. "To replace a culvert, we have to install a cofferdam to hold back the lake while crews do their work, remove the old culvert, and pour the concrete to install the new culvert. It sounds simple, but it's a very complex and time-consuming process."

Jacksonville District anticipates awarding additional contracts to replace culverts later this year. Those opportunities will be

advertised on the FedBizOpps website (www.fbo.gov) when solicitation packages are ready.

While culvert construction presses ahead, Jacksonville District continues to work through the DSMS process. Staff from nearly every district organization as well as other Corps offices across the nation have been developing and reviewing options for the next phase of dike rehabilitation.

"We started off with a lot of ideas," said Willadsen. "Now we're narrowing the large number of ideas into a suite of alternatives that we believe are worthy of further investigation."

Willadsen says the district would like to present a tentatively selected plan this summer, so environmental reviews can begin. Public participation will be a key part of the process.

"For various reasons, there's a lot of interest in what is going on with the dike and the rehabilitation," said Willadsen. "Our goal is to ensure we are reducing the risk of dike failure by making appropriate investments on behalf of the nation's taxpayers. Rehabilitation of the dike is necessary to protect lives and property in the adjacent communities." ♦

2014 Black History Month Brain Brawl

Can Contracting Division hold on to the trophy for another year? Find out February 11 at 11:30 a.m., Room 4105 in the Prudential Building in Jacksonville, Fla.

Be there to cheer on your team! ♦



In 2013, Carlos Clarke (left) and Robert Meekie (right), Contracting Division, celebrated their victory in the Black History Month Brain Brawl. (Photo by Christina Swanson)



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Civil Rights in America

Congress of the United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION

in the City of Washington on Tuesday, the seventh day of January,
thousand nine hundred and sixty-four

An Act

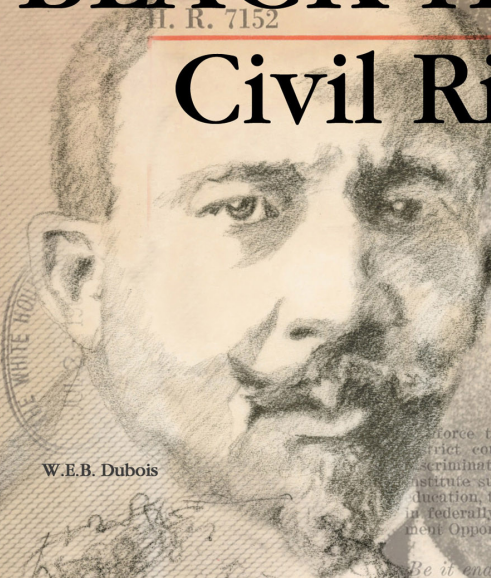
To enforce the constitutional right to vote, to confer jurisdiction upon the district courts of the United States to provide injunctive relief against discrimination in public accommodations, to authorize the Attorney General to institute suits to protect constitutional rights in public facilities, public education, to extend the Commission on Civil Rights, to prevent discrimination in federally assisted programs, to establish a Commission on Equal Employment Opportunity, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the "Civil Rights Act of 1964".

TITLE I - VOTING RIGHTS

Sec. 101. Section 2001 of the Revised Statutes (52 Stat. 1179), as amended by section 131 of the Civil Rights Act of 1957 (71 Stat. 133) and its amendments by sections 201 and 202 of the Civil Rights Act of 1960 (74 Stat. 299), is amended to read as follows:

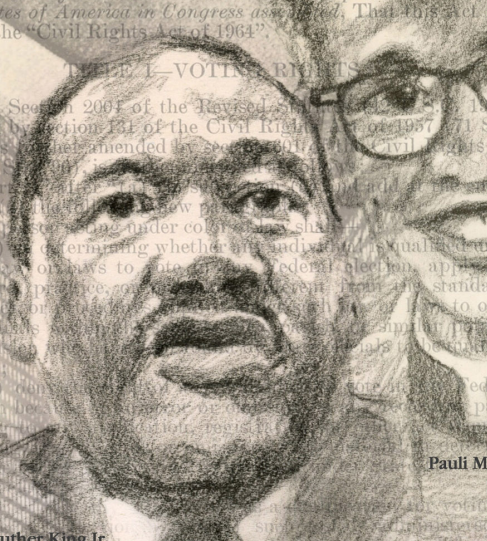
(a) In every State and Territory in which the administration of the election laws of the State or Territory is under the control of any person or persons who are known to be engaged in the discrimination on the basis of race, color, or religion in the sale or rental of property, or in the denial of equal housing opportunities to any individual because of race, color, or religion, the State or Territory shall be deemed to be a State or Territory in which the administration of the election laws is under the control of persons who are known to be engaged in the discrimination on the basis of race, color, or religion.



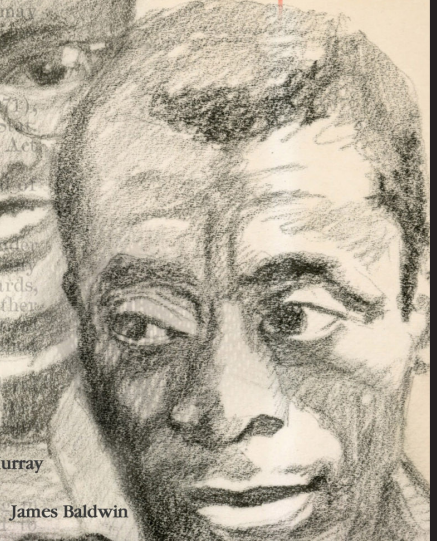
W.E.B. Dubois



Bayard Rustin



Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



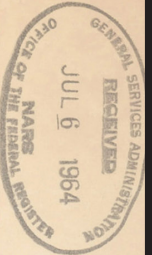
Pauli Murray

James Baldwin



Ella Baker

Fanny Lou Hamer





Jax Facts: How well do you know Jacksonville District?

BY NANCY J. STICHT



Congratulations to **Aubree Hershoin**, Planning Division, the first district team member to submit the correct answers to all ten of the following questions, based on stories that appeared in the January issue of JaxStrong. (Photo by Nikki Nobles)

1. **What is the name of the state-of-the-art survey boat acquired by the Operations Division in 2013?**
A: The *Florida II* (Operations Division overcomes challenges, pg. 8)
2. **What is the significance of the depth to be achieved by the Miami Harbor Deepening Project?**
A: The project will prepare the Port of Miami to receive larger shipping vessels following the completion of the Panama Canal expansion in 2015.
3. **What does Jacksonville District do to promote contract awards to small businesses?**
A: Jacksonville District sets aside work for small business firms whenever possible and effectively uses outreach events, pre-proposal conferences and personal counseling to educate small businesses on how to work with the Corps and the federal government. (COL Dodd's column, pg. 2)
4. **What are the 3Rs of explosives safety?**
A: Recognize – Retreat – Report. (Military, Interagency and International Services Branch has far-reaching mission, pg. 27)
5. **What are mitigation banks, and how many mitigation banks does Florida have?**
A: Mitigation banks are wetland areas that have been restored, established, enhanced or preserved and set aside to compensate for future conversions of wetlands for development activities. There are 61 mitigation banks in Florida. (Regulatory Division is meeting environmental, economic needs; pg. 4)
6. **What two projects were the subjects of favorable decisions rendered by the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals for Jacksonville District?**
A: Portugués Dam and Rose Bay. (Multiple wins, zero losses for Office of Counsel, pg. 30)
7. **How is Engineering Division contributing to earthquake recovery in Haiti?**
A: Engineering Division has developed three proposals for the U.S. Agency for International Development for work in Haiti, the largest of which is a port project. (Engineering Division: Hard work results in significant achievements, pg. 22)
8. **What fully completed Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project was delivered in 2013, and how was federal funding provided for the project?**
A: The Melaleuca Eradication and Other Exotic Plants Research Annex was completed, with federal funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. (Another banner year for district's ecosystem restoration program, pg. 10)
9. **In what capacity does Jacksonville District's Invasive Species Management Branch serve on a national level?**
A: The ISM Branch serves as the Aquatic Plant Control Operations Support Center for the nation. (The battle against invasive species rages on, pg. 24)
10. **What notable accomplishment was achieved by Construction Division and the Safety Office in 2013, relative to work site safety?**
A: The two offices worked together to realize a 70 percent reduction in contractor accident rates. (Construction Division accomplishes big things in 2013; prepares for bigger 2014, pg. 3) ♦



Work progresses at Antilles Elementary School BY AMANDA ELLISON



Jacksonville District, DoDEA and Gilbane Building Company are working together to deliver a high-quality platform for new teaching methodologies, to best serve DoDEA students. (Photo courtesy of Frank Grant)

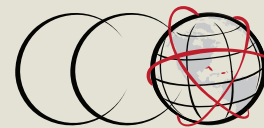
Construction of the first Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) facility at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico is under way, as the building foundation is poured. The milestone sets the stage for the school to be erected in time to receive students for the 2015-2016 school year.

The project involves construction of a new elementary school. The school will include general purpose classrooms, art and music classrooms, computer labs, offices and a gymnasium. ♦

Teaming up to win!



Ingrid Bon (right), forward project manager for Herbert Hoover Dike and her teammate, Margaret E. Kennedy, received the third place medal in the Half Distance Triathlon Relay in Naples, Fla. Jan. 11. Ingrid swam 1.2 miles in the Gulf of Mexico and rode her bike for 56 miles, then Margaret brought it home by completing a half marathon (13.1 miles). (Photo by Vincent Lanz)



Corporate Communications Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

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