



JAXSTRONG

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NOVEMBER 2013 | Volume 5 Issue 11



COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

HOLIDAY SEASON IS UPON US

"Thanksgiving dinners take 18 hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes. Halftimes take twelve minutes. This is not coincidence."
— Erma Bombeck

It's true. The year is flying by and we are once again in the middle of the holiday season, with Halloween in our rear view mirrors and Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Christmas and the New Year coming at us fast. It has been a productive, yet stressful year and the stress does not show signs of relenting. For most of us, holidays are a joyous time. For some, they are very stressful and just add more items to the ever-growing "to do" list.

There are ways to minimize some of that stress and rather than reinvent the wheel, I'm sharing two websites that have some excellent stress management tips:

- "Tips to Prevent Holiday Stress and Depression" from the Mayo Clinic at: <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/MH00030>
- "25 Ways to Fight Holiday Stress" from Health Magazine at: http://www.health.com/health/gallery/0,,20306655_Last,00.html

The holidays are also a time we need to stay vigilant about safety. While you are enjoying that holiday dinner that took 18 hours to prepare and watching the onslaught of football games with your family, be sure to follow a few safety precautions that can pay especially big dividends at this time of year.

If you happen to be one of those who enjoy a deep-fried turkey, you might want to watch the YouTube video prepared by the Big Bear City Fire Department on correct preparation, and what happens when you do it the wrong way (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=70HVkMhQOMg>). Without appropriate safety precautions, your turkey and whatever happens to be around it could literally go up in smoke.

Finally, I encourage you to download and review the holiday safety tips issued by the National Safety Council: <http://www.nsc.org/Documents/Holiday%20Safety%20Tips.pdf>.

This covers everything from decorating safely, in a way that protects your children and pets, to safely using a ladder to decorate, to safely preparing and storing food from parties and family dinners.

I encourage you all to enjoy this time with your families and use it to recharge your batteries. Keep safety at the forefront and plan ahead for any road trips by making sure your vehicle is ready and keeping increased traffic congestion and diminished weather conditions in mind. The work you do is so very important to this nation, and we need the full team to continue that work.

Happy holidays!

Amy Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alan M. 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

Homes like this one at Shell Park in Brevard County benefit from Jacksonville District's shoreline protection program, which grew from one to 22 projects as a result of Hurricane Sandy and Tropical Storm Debby. Col. Dodd and Jackie Keiser were recently honored for their roles in protecting Florida's beaches. (Photo by Kevin Hodgson)



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NOVEMBER 2013 • VOLUME 8 NUMBER 11

Protecting lives and infrastructure from the next storm Florida association recognizes two district members for outstanding service

BY SUSAN JACKSON

The Florida Shore and Beach Preservation Association (FSBPA) presented awards in recognition of Hurricane Sandy and Tropical Storm Debby recovery efforts to two Jacksonville District team members during its 57th Annual Conference at Delray Beach Sept. 25-27.



Col. Alan Dodd (left), district commander, received the 2013 Richard Bonner Award from Don Donaldson, sponsor for Palm Beach County and Debbie Flack, FSBPA president, during the FSBPA's 57th Annual Conference at Delray Beach Sept. 25-27. (Photo courtesy of FSBPA)

Jackie Keiser, chief of the coastal navigation section, received the Stan Tait Award, the association's highest honor, for "truly outstanding contributions" to Florida's beaches. Col. Alan Dodd, district commander, received the Richard Bonner Award for 2013 for outstanding service by an individual representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Tropical Storm Debby formed and made landfall in late June 2012, which impacted the entire Florida Gulf Coast region, causing ten deaths and \$250 million in damage. Four months later, Hurricane Sandy formed in the Caribbean and made landfall in New Jersey. Sandy was the tenth hurricane and second major storm of the season, and impacted the entire East Coast. It brought tropical storm-force winds, rain and large swells to south Florida, causing 268 deaths and \$68 billion in damage.

The hurricane and the tropical storm also brought an unprecedented amount of emergency work to Jacksonville District, resulting in 22 emergency projects that needed to be designed, advertised, permitted and awarded in just a few months. Originally, only one small federal beach project and a navigation project with beach placement had been planned for 2013.

"This team and our partners overcame unrelenting challenges to execute 22 additional projects and proved that with hard work, dedication and teamwork – anything is possible," Keiser said.

The coastal projects included 14 beach projects and ten supplemental navigation projects with beach placement. Contracts included 8 million cubic yards of sand placement on 38.5 miles of Florida's beaches and provided for emergency navigation maintenance at nine ports or channels, totaling \$145 million. Jacksonville District delivered the projects in less than 30 days, which was earlier than required, and \$20 million under budget. All contracts were awarded as of Sept. 27.

Keiser's nomination was sponsored by Palm Beach County and endorsed by representatives of Manatee and Pinellas counties. "FSBPA member governments have long recognized that Jackie's experience and expertise, coupled with her friendly demeanor, tenacity and dedication make her an invaluable and vital partner in the challenging and ongoing task of protecting and restoring Florida's beaches," said Debbie Flack, FSBPA president.

"Jackie was the driving force behind this effort. She volunteered to lead the district's Emergency Storm Response Program (Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies (FCCE)/ Supplemental Operations & Maintenance), which necessitated extensive analysis of efficiencies to maintain the superior level of the program while also maintaining service to the branch/ program," said Jerry Scarborough, chief of Water Resources Branch, Programs and Project Management Division.

Scarborough said the first priority was given to execution and involved significant strategy and unprecedented coordination. "Jackie's efforts exceeded customer expectations through delivery of quality products in unprecedented time and under budget," he said.

The new strategies developed as a part of the FCCE program proved extremely successful, Scarborough said, and ultimately will provide for more efficient delivery of products in the district. "These strategies also have potential nationwide application through regionalization and combining projects and extensive use of regional sediment management (integrated dredging program) that optimizes use of funding and sediment resources on both coastal and navigation projects. Jackie receiving the Stan Tait award is a huge testament to her relentless efforts and tremendous dedication to the mission."

And Dodd was also a huge frontline asset during the emergency efforts, Scarborough said. "He was our lead negotiator in dealings with higher authorities and a tremendous help in elevating policy decisions. He was also a calming force with our project sponsors in helping to relieve their uncertainty as to the effort being put forth for their projects."

The FSBPA recognized Dodd's leadership and administrative efforts in overseeing an effective and capable team, and expediently addressing the needs of Florida's storm damaged federal projects.

FSBPA AWARDS (continued from PAGE 3)



Jacqueline Keiser (left), chief of the coastal navigation section, received the Stan Tait Award from Leanne Welch, sponsor for Palm Beach County and Debbie Flack, FSBPA president, during the FSBPA's 57th Annual Conference at Delray Beach Sept. 25-27. (Photo courtesy of FSBPA)

"The Jacksonville District, under Col. Dodd's direction, put forth extraordinary efforts to help Florida's beaches recover from the damages caused by Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Sandy," said Flack. ♦



A day in the life of... Jacksonville District's tribal liaison

BY ERICA SKOLTE

In her personal life and in her life's work, Natalie Garrett, tribal liaison, lives between two worlds. Her father is of both English and Indian heritage, and her mother is a Creek Tribal member. Garrett is Muscogee Creek, Alligator Clan and belongs to Okfuskee Tribal Town in Oklahoma. She is the embodiment of the theme of this year's National American Indian Heritage Month: "Guiding Our Destiny with Heritage and Traditions."



As an archeologist, Natalie Garrett examined cultural resource sites on the bed of Lake Okeechobee, when the lake's elevation dropped to record lows of about 8.82 feet in June 2007. (Photo by Yvonne Haberer)

"Being half white and half Indian, I am able to see both sides. My view is broader because of it," she said. Her dreams have always been guided by her Indian heritage. "I always wanted to work with native people," she said. "I've achieved a lifelong goal."

Garrett received a master's degree in anthropology and archaeology from the University of Tulsa. She worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs for nine years with the Osage Agency in Oklahoma, prior to joining Jacksonville District as an archaeologist in 2006. "I was excited when I took the position in Jacksonville, because I knew I'd be working with the Seminole and Miccosukee Tribes, which are related to my tribe, the Muscogee Creek."

The tribal liaison position was created after the Tamiami Trail bridging project brought tribal concerns into sharp focus. As an archaeologist, Garrett worked on several projects in south Florida which had a direct impact on tribal populations. Her heritage, background, knowledge and experience put her in a unique position, where she could not only see the broader perspective, but she could also see it from both sides. She recognized that it was important to understand, acknowledge and address emerging issues and tribal concerns, knowing that in the end, it would also help to move Corps projects forward.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 5)

TRIBAL LIASON (continued from PAGE 4)



Everglades Program Manager Steve Kopecky (left), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters, speaks with Miccosukee Chairman Colley Billie (center) and tribal member Wayne Billie (right) about high water conditions and water quality in Water Conservation Area 3A. While visiting a tree island with a traditional chickee, tribal members talked about growing up in the Everglades and their concerns about how the area has changed. (Photo by Natalie Garrett)

“Creation of the position was the result of the recognition that we must bridge the disconnect between Corps goals and actions and tribal goals and actions, to create a path forward that would help both reach their goals,” said Garrett. “It is important for the tribes to feel that we are the part of the federal family, that we are the actors, not just the ‘acted upon,’” she said. Garrett became one of three full-time Corps tribal liaisons in the nation. Every district has a tribal liaison, but most perform other duties as well.

Garrett works out of the South Florida Restoration Office in West Palm Beach. “It’s a good thing to be in south Florida, to be close to the tribes and to have a daily relationship with them,” she said. “I am a direct, constant point of contact with the Corps for any issues that arise. The commander changes every three years and project managers change, but I am here to make the introductions and connect people. I’m the constant advocate for the tribes’ interests and I try to anticipate their concerns. Fortunately, I am empowered to bring attention to issues, and can connect the right people to solve problems.”

The Corps relationship with a tribe is a government-to-government relationship. All federally recognized tribes are considered sovereign nations, but members of the tribes are also U.S. citizens. Though they are part of the United States, the tribes have their own governments, courts and law enforcement, and can also collect taxes.

“Federal treaties, executive orders and federal laws and regulations create a ‘trust responsibility’ for us to protect and preserve their natural and cultural resources to the fullest extent possible,” said Garrett. “That’s the heart of what my job is all about.”

As part of her duties, Garrett may spend a lot of time on the phone, sending e-mails and preparing presentations to update the tribes or to brief Corps leadership. She may coordinate tours of the Everglades and tribal lands by car, helicopter or airboat, to help educate Corps leadership or other visitors interested in the perspective of the tribes, which are stakeholders and partners involved in many Corps missions.

The Miccosukee Tribe recently extended an invitation to Corps headquarters representatives to observe firsthand conditions in Water Conservation Area 3A, and Garrett helped to coordinate the tour with Miccosukee staff. The Miccosukee Chairman, Colley Billie, and other tribal members and representatives took Everglades Program Manager Steve Kopecky to the Everglades to see their areas of concern. They toured tribal lands via helicopter and airboat and visited traditional chickees, or houses, on a tree island that has been used since prehistoric times.

The Miccosukee share the same concerns as the Corps in south Florida: water quality, quantity, timing and distribution. Of

TRIBAL LIAISON (continued from PAGE 5)



The Miccosukee Tribe provided Corps personnel a firsthand look at conditions in Water Conservation Area 3A in the Everglades during recent high water conditions. Marta Reczko operates one of the Miccosukee Tribe airboats, with passengers including tribal representative Gordon Kenny, tribal elder Michael Frank and a tribal employee. (Photo by Natalie Garrett)

course, since they live in the Everglades, their lives and lands are much more directly affected by high water levels or poor water quality. The Miccosukee want water levels to be lower in Water Conservation Area 3A to minimize damage to tree islands, while the Seminoles want more water to rehydrate historic wetlands on their land.

In the past, the tribes were not actively involved in the project planning process. Coordination with the tribes began after years of planning were already complete and a Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) had already been chosen. The tribes were consulted with regard to cultural resources only. As part of a suite of expedited pilot projects nationwide, the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) represented a major culture shift. It provided an opportunity for leadership and stakeholders, including the tribes, to be engaged throughout the planning process in a meaningful way, beginning with the early scoping phase. Miccosukee water resources manager and tribal representative James Erskine has been an active member of the CEPP Project Delivery Team (PDT) and the numerous stakeholder meetings. Though the initial plans for CEPP may not resolve all of their concerns, there is hope that there may be additional ways to address those concerns in the future.

Garrett is currently working with the Seminole tribe to create a cultural immersion training course for Corps employees nationwide in March of 2014 at the Seminole Big Cypress Reservation. The goal is to teach Corps employees about issues of importance to the tribes, such as living in the natural environment, cultural and natural resources and how Corps projects impact them. Tribal members have also started participating in some Corps planning training, so that they can better understand Corps processes.

As Regulatory Division's tribal liaison, Jeffrey Collins of the Cocoa Permitting Section helps to maintain the Corps' relationships with the tribes. Like Garrett, he promotes open communication and assists with problem-solving if needed. He coordinates the tribe's permitting activities and notifies them regarding proposed federal actions on their ancestral lands. The tribes and other stakeholders are notified whenever a

public notice is issued to solicit public comments on standard permit applications for proposed projects impacting more than a half acre of work in the waters of the United States, including wetlands.

In West Palm Beach, archaeologist David Pugh, also of Regulatory Division, works with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and answers questions regarding cultural resources assessment surveys.

As a result of the improved relationships, both tribes have recently expressed an interest in the possibility of partnering in ecosystem restoration on their lands.

"I want to help people to understand that the Corps' goals and the tribes' goals are not mutually exclusive," said Garrett. "We both have a common vision for ecosystem restoration; we just have different ideas of how to achieve that. My challenge is to find ways for us to work together to achieve those goals that are important to both of us." ♦



Tribal members access a traditional camp on Bullseye/Tom Shirley tree island in Water Conservation Area 3A by airboat to repair a chickee roof. The site in the Everglades has been in continuous use by the Miccosukee and earlier occupants since prehistoric times. (Photo by Natalie Garrett)



National American Indian Heritage Month



“Guiding Our Destiny with Heritage and Traditions”

Jacksonville District savors the flavors with Hispanic Heritage Month Cook-Off

BY ERICA SKOLTE

PHOTOS BY DAVID KIMERY



Hispanic Heritage Month Coordinator José Bilbao (third from right) created and organized the cook-off event. He is joined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office staff (left to right): student intern Melanie Daniels, Equal Employment Opportunity Manager Collen Shanklin, and Equal Employment Opportunity Specialists Lucy Soto and Adam Morrison.

In José Bilbao's family, like many Hispanic families, food brings people together. "For most Hispanics, food is such an important part of our culture, history and way of life," he said. "Families often come together, spend the day together and cook all day long."

Bilbao, an engineering technical lead in the waterways section of Design Branch, represented the Corps during the last Viva Technology event at a local high school. Viva Technology is a national science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) awareness education program that engages underserved K-12 students, teachers and parents through culturally relevant, hands-on activities intended to stimulate interest in STEM careers. He also volunteered for the College Bowl at the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference. Those experiences led Bilbao to take on additional duties as Hispanic Heritage Month coordinator.

He generated several ideas to celebrate and recognize the contribution of Hispanics to our culture and their service to our nation.

For Bilbao, the Hispanic Heritage Month Cook-Off was a natural way to get people together, have fun and enjoy great food, while showcasing the diversity within the Hispanic culture. Bilbao was born in Miami to a mother of Mexican and Cuban heritage and a father who came to the U.S. from Cuba when he was only nine months old. Bilbao has visited both Mexico and Cuba, and observed tremendous differences in the cultures.

"There have been many important historic influences on Hispanic culture," he said. "In addition to Spanish influence, the slave trade from Africa was a huge influence in the Caribbean, especially in the Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Afro-Cuban music. In Mexico, in addition to the Spanish influence there is a lot that comes from the indigenous cultures, including

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 9)

HISPANIC HERITAGE COOK-OFF (continued from PAGE 8)

the Maya and Aztecs. Cubans use many African and middle eastern spices in their food. Many of these recipes are hundreds of years old."

Each region that Hispanics hail from has its own specialties and comfort food:

- Molé from Mexico (meat is cooked for hours so the sauce made from chili peppers, spices, and chocolate absorbs into the meat);
- Ajiaco from Cuba and Columbia (a hearty stew made from beef, pork, chicken, vegetables like corn and squash and a variety of starchy roots like yucca, malanga and potato);
- Mofongo from Puerto Rico (fried green plantains mashed together in a broth with garlic, olive oil and pork cracklings or bits of bacon); or
- Paella from Spain's Valencia region (saffron rice with meat and vegetables).

Every country and region uniquely prepares their meals and they are entrenched with the region's history.

During the cook-off, participants and spectators tasted and judged dishes from many countries and traditions. Appetizers included "Papa a la Huanciana" (Peruvian potato salad), "Empanadas de Carne" (baked beef patties Panamanian style), "Ceviche" and "Empanadas" (both popular dishes in Panama). Classic main dishes included "Picadillo Cubano" (a popular Cuban dish), "Arroz con Gandules y Carne de Cerdo" (rice with pigeon peas accompanied by pork meat prepared with seasonings used in Hispanic culture). The sweet ending included desserts such as "Tembleque de Coco" (coconut pudding made with coconut milk and spices), "Bizcocho" (a flavorful Caribbean-style cake), "Pastissets" (sugar cookies from Spain), "Galletas de Chocolate y Ancho Chili" and "Polvorones de Canela" (two types of Mexican-style cookies) "Arroz con Dulce" (rice pudding made with rice, coconut milk, and spices).

Becky Maholland won "Best Appetizer" with her "Chicken Chile Verde." She is not of Hispanic descent, but lived in California.

"There is a significant influence from Mexican history and culture on the food out west," she said. "Chili verde, a dish native to northern Mexico, is made of meat simmered in a "green" broth and a mixture of other ingredients. Like many ethnic dishes, chili verde is prepared in a variety of ways in its native country, but the base of this stew is slow-cooked meat, tomatillos and green chiles." Maholland added, "It was great to share a little bit of everything – similar to the tradition of eating tapas or small appetizers in Spanish cuisine. I always like to participate in Hispanic Heritage Month events every year, and loved tasting other people's dishes!"

Michael Rivera is from Puerto Rico, where his family made the prize-winning Pastelón de Platano Maduro (Ripe Plantain Pie). He joined the Corps when he came to the United States as a college student in 2008, working first as a student co-op, and then as an intern before he began working as a hydraulic engineer. He described his entry as a local, traditional, Puerto Rican main dish.



A Caribbean twist made Enid Gerena's "Flan de Coco" the favorite in the "Best Dessert" category.

"I chose this dish because I wanted to surprise people with something different. It's something you would not normally have at a restaurant. It's more of a home-cooked meal." The dish has layers of sweet plantains, seasoned ground meat, shredded cheese and beaten egg to hold it together so it doesn't crumble. Plantains look like large bananas, but are usually cooked rather than eaten raw. They are often served as a Latin American side dish, as tostones (green plantains that have been sliced and fried, pounded flat and fried again until crisp and golden brown) or as plátanos maduros (ripe sweet plantains sliced and fried in oil).

Enid Gerena combined several different recipes to create her own "Flan de Coco," which won "Best Dessert."

"There are so many types of flan – vanilla and cheese flan are both very popular, and there is even chocolate flan. Since I am from Puerto Rico, I decided to make a flan that reflects both Hispanic and Caribbean ingredients and flavors." While flan is traditionally made with sugar, milk and eggs, Gerena's

HISPANIC HERITAGE COOK-OFF (continued from PAGE 9)



There was a great turnout for the first ever Hispanic Heritage Month Cook Off. Organizers hope to repeat the successful event next year.

prize-winning baked coconut custard was made with coconut milk.

Bilbao was very pleased with the turnout for the first-time event. "All the participants brought some wonderful dishes and the turnout was amazing! There was a lot of enthusiasm and we got a lot of positive feedback. I hope we can do it again next year, and have even more people participate," he said.

"In America, you have the opportunity to chase your dreams – that's why so many Hispanics come here," said Bilbao. "But we remain very proud of our cultural heritage. Hispanics take pride in the way they prepare their meals, the tradition of each dish, and how each recipe was passed down from "abuela" to "mama" to "hija" (grandmother to mother to daughter)." ♦

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HISPANIC HERITAGE COOK-OFF (continued from **PAGE 10**)

Here are two of the winning recipes from the contest. Perhaps they will be handed down in your family too! Enjoy!



Becky Maholland's "Chicken Chile Verde" took the honors for "Best Appetizer."

Becky Maholland's Chicken Chile Verde

2 pounds tomatillos, husked, washed and dried, and cut in half
10 medium Anaheim peppers, cut in half, seeds removed (Poblano or other large, mild peppers may be substituted)
1-3 jalapeño peppers
1 cup diced yellow onion
4 garlic cloves
2 cups roughly chopped cilantro
1-2 tablespoons cumin
1 teaspoon paprika
Juice and zest of 1 lime
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon black pepper
2 cups chicken broth
2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breast

1. Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Place tomatillos and Anaheim peppers on large greased baking sheets. Roast until tomatillos are golden brown (about 10 minutes), and until peppers are charred. Let peppers cool and then peel.
2. In a blender, combine 6 peppers (12 pepper halves), tomatillos, jalapeños, onion, garlic, cilantro, cumin, paprika, lime zest and juice, sugar, and salt and pepper to taste. Blend until just smooth to make salsa verde.
3. Chop chicken breasts into bite size pieces. Heat large frying pan on medium-high with a small amount of canola oil (1-2 teaspoons). Add chicken and quickly sear outside for a minute until partially brown and put in bowl. You may need to cook chicken in smaller amounts so that it gets seared (too much in the pan may release too much liquid and prevent searing).
4. Dice the remaining Anaheim peppers. Pour salsa verde, chicken broth, diced Anaheim peppers and chicken into a slow cooker.
5. Cook in slow cooker on low for 6-8 hours. Season with cumin, salt and pepper to taste.

Michael Rivera's Pastelón de Platano Maduro (Ripe Plantain Pie)

Ripe plantains (skin should be dark yellow with some black spots - the darker the sweeter)

1 pound of ground meat (beef or turkey)
Shredded cheese of your choice
2 eggs, beaten
Seasonings of your choice, such as Adobo, Sazón, garlic and tomato sauce

1. Peel and slice ripe plantains into thin slices.
2. Sprinkle seasoning (Michael uses Adobo Goya) on the layer of plantains.
3. Cook ground meat and season to taste (Michael uses Adobo Goya, Sazón Total, two cloves of pressed garlic and a 4 ounce can of Goya tomato sauce)
4. Set a layer of plantains in a baking pan (Michael uses olive oil to grease pan)
5. Pour a layer of ground meat over layer of plantains (repeat this and the previous step until all of meat mixture is used, making sure to finish with a layer of plantain on top).
6. Pour the beaten eggs over the pie.
7. Bake at 250 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes.
8. Spread shredded cheese over pie.
9. Bake for another 3 to 5 minutes until melted.



Michael Rivera shows off his Pastelón de Platano Maduro (Ripe Plantain Pie), a traditional home-cooked meal that won "Best Main Dish."

A Community of Practice is born BY ANNIE CHAMBERS



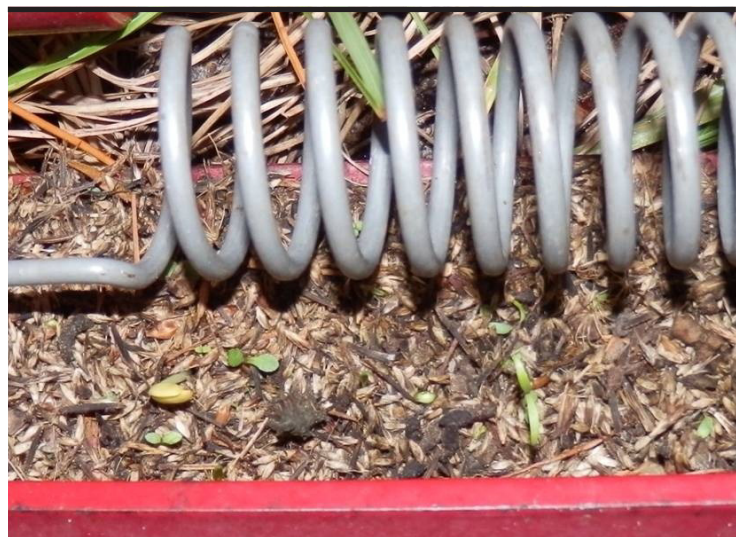
Water lettuce and hyacinth blocking the Okeechobee Waterway. (Photo by Dave Lattuca)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for the environmental stewardship of 456 water resources development projects located in 43 states and occupying 5.5 million surface acres, 237 navigation locks, 926 harbors, 75 hydropower projects, and 25,000 miles of inland and coastal waterways.

Invasive species occur at most of these projects and include terrestrial and aquatic plants, animals and insects. Invasive species pose a serious threat, impacting wildlife and fisheries habitat as well as human health and resulting in enormous cost for eradication and management efforts.

The Invasive Species Leadership Team was established to provide direction to the ongoing research program, represent the Corps on regional invasive species councils and assist Corps headquarters in the development of national invasive species policy and program management.

The Invasive Species Leadership Team (ISLT) is an 18-member team that consists of one representative from each division office and a representative from one of the district offices within each division. Headquarters proponents include representatives from within the natural resource management and navigation



Seeds and plants germinating on mowing equipment on a Dredged Material Management Area (DMMA). The mowing equipment moves from DMMA to DMMA, potentially spreading invasives if not removed. (Photo by Jessica Spencer)

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (continued from PAGE 12)



Evaluating Hydrilla on Lake Seminole. With origins in Florida, Hydrilla is also now established in Canada and much of the United States; control and management cost millions of dollars annually. (USACE file photo)

programs, along with a technical proponent from the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC).

Jon Lane, chief of the Invasive Species Management Branch, represents Jacksonville District and South Atlantic Division as a standing member of the ISLT.

“We [the team] create invasive species policy for the Corps, develop program management plans and are now in the process of implementing those plans,” said Lane.

The new Invasive Species Community of Practice (CoP) website serves as a central repository of information and expertise on invasive species issues, from contract specifications and equipment decontamination to the latest in outreach education, policy and guidance.

The Corps adapts its management plan and policy from the National Invasive Species Council, which creates the National Invasive Species Management Plan.

“It is important that policy is implemented consistently throughout the Corps,” said Lane. ♦

Keys to Invasive Species Management

- Control
- Prevention
- Coordination
- Early Detection
- Rapid Response
- Public Outreach

The public can play a key role in invasive species management by documenting sightings of invasive species. Please visit: <http://www.eddmaps.org> for more information.



Lygodium microphyllum, or Old world climbing fern, pictured here in Loxahatchee, Fla. Native to Africa, Asia, Australia and the Pacific Islands, the plant invades open forest and wetland areas in Florida and Alabama. (USACE file photo)

Corps volunteers prepare for annual return of Purple Martins

BY ERICA SKOLTE



W.P. Franklin Lock and Dam Recreation Area volunteers Don Chapman (left) and George Schisler clean and repair one of the many Purple Martin "palaces" that they have built over the years, in preparation for the return of Purple Martin colonies in January. (Photo courtesy of Philip Hart)

Along the Okeechobee Waterway, the return of the Purple Martins is one of the much-anticipated annual rites of spring. Corps volunteers have worked hard over the years to attract these delightful birds to Corps recreation areas for the enjoyment of all.

All year round, Corps volunteers along the Okeechobee Waterway contribute their talents, creativity, resourcefulness and handyman skills in a variety of projects. They have constructed bird feeders, duck houses, bird houses, and other projects to provide wildlife habitat. During the annual "Take Pride Day" events along the Okeechobee Waterway, the Corps and volunteers often partner with local businesses, which donated materials and labor. Volunteers and park rangers taught "Take Pride Day" participants to build the projects, and some had the opportunity to take them home to benefit the wildlife in the area.

Creative volunteers constructed several Purple Martin "palaces," using mostly recycled lumber, bottles, bolts and other found materials. The palaces are like miniature Purple Martin "condos," each with 12 bedrooms. They were placed high atop poles at Corps facilities along the Okeechobee Waterway, including W.P. Franklin Recreation Area in Alva, Ortona Recreation Area in Moore Haven and St. Lucie Recreation Area in Stuart. This time of year, volunteers are cleaning and refurbishing the Purple Martin houses, readying them for the return of the beloved birds.

The Purple Martins that come to Florida make a long and arduous trek from Brazil, traveling the Florida Keys flyway and up the east coast. Scouts begin to come into the area in mid- to late January to choose nesting sites, and larger colonies choose nesting sites and settle in by mid- to late February. Incubation of three to eight white eggs occurs in about 16 days, and 26 to 31 days after hatching, the young fledge and leave the nest. By the time summer's heat arrives in June, the colonies head back to Brazil.

Why are these birdhouses so important? Purple Martins make their nests in cavities, either natural or artificial. Historically, they nested in old snags or pine trees, but available habitat has been drastically reduced and they must compete with aggressive European-introduced starlings and house sparrows for nesting spots. They are colonial nesters in the eastern United States, where they are almost entirely dependent on man-made birdhouses. In addition to the Purple Martin houses, some people put up real or artificial hollow gourds as houses. Some use special baffles to keep snakes, hawks, owls and other predators away from nests containing eggs or young.

Like the other members of the swallow family, Purple Martins are aerial insectivores. They eat only insects, and contrary to popular belief, they do not help control the mosquito population. They do eat a few mosquitoes, but their favorite treat is dragonflies, as they get more nutrition from the larger insects relative to the amount of energy expended to hunt them. Martins will not eat from a bird feeder, nor will they land and drink from a birdbath. They eat, drink and bathe on the wing. If you see a large group of birds swooping down into a canal or other fresh water, it may be a colony of Purple Martins. The fresh open waters of the Okeechobee Waterway make Corps recreation areas attractive places for Martins to nest and raise their young.

How can you identify a Purple Martin? The showy adult male has a unique, glossy purple sheen to its feathers, with black wings and tail. As is true of most bird species, the adult female is not as colorful and has pale under parts.

Campers, the general public and bird watchers enjoy viewing birds and other wildlife at the recreation areas, and the Purple Martins are a special treat for all. Thanks to the Corps volunteers who help make it possible for this species to reproduce and survive, and for us to enjoy them! ♦



A juvenile Purple Martin captures a Four-spotted Chaser. Martins feed exclusively on flying insects, capturing them on the wing. They do eat mosquitoes, but larger prey such as dragonflies are their favorite food. (Photo from www.commonswikimedia.org)



NOVEMBER 11, 2013
 HONORING ALL WHO SERVED





Holiday Mail for Heroes

Every year, tens of thousands of Americans provide a welcome “touch of home” for our troops during the holiday season. If you wish to do so, please follow these simple instructions, provided by a major national relief organization:

- Cards must be received at the below address by Friday, Dec. 6. Holiday cards received after this date cannot be guaranteed delivery.
- Ensure cards are signed.
- Use generic greetings such as “Dear Service Member.” Cards addressed to specific individuals cannot be delivered through this program.
- Only cards are being accepted. Do not send or include letters or inserts of any kind.
- Do not include email or home addresses on the cards.
- Refrain from choosing cards with glitter as it can aggravate health issues of ill and injured warriors.
- If you are mailing a large quantity of cards, please bundle them and place them in large mailing envelopes or flat rate postal shipping boxes.
- Each card does not need its own envelope, as envelopes will be removed from all cards before distribution.



Holiday Mail for Heroes
P.O. Box 5456
Capitol Heights, MD 20791-5456

Jax Facts: How well do you know Jacksonville District?

BY NANCY J. STICHT



Congratulations to **Lisa Lovvorn**, Regulatory 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 October issue of JaxStrong. (Photo courtesy of Lisa Lovvorn)

1. What was the first project to break ground under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, and what year did that take place?

A: Picayune Strand Restoration Project, 2010 (Corps awards final pump station contract for Picayune Strand restoration, pg. 6)

2. What is the plan that prescribes water management actions at Lake Okeechobee, and when was it developed?

A: Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule; 2008. (South Florida Operations Office multi-tasks all summer, pg. 3)

3. What is the goal of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP)?

A: The goal of CEPP is to capture water lost to tide and redirect the water flow south to restore the central and southern Everglades ecosystem and Florida Bay. (Public input received during series of public meetings for CEPP, pg. 11)

4. What are the three impacts feral hogs have on levees?

A: Feral hogs dig around levees, allowing other invasive plants to get established, disturbing the grasses that have been planted there, and increasing invasive species treatment costs. (Go hog wild, pg. 12)

5. The IIS Branch's Formerly Used Defense Sites program contracted actions on how many projects in FY 2013?

A: 50 projects (COL Dodd's column, pg. 2)

6. How frequently are inspections done on Herbert Hoover Dike?

A: Weekly inspections are done when the lake rises above 15.5; if the lake level exceeds 16.5 feet, daily inspections are done. (South Florida Operations Office multi-tasks all summer, pg. 3)

7. How was Mullet Key used by the military during World War II?

A: Mullet Key was used as a bombing and gunnery training range during World War II, where pilots and air crews practiced aerial attacks using machine guns, practice bombs and live bombs. (Work begins at Mullet Key FUDS, pg. 5)

8. Why have water management actions been so controversial this year?

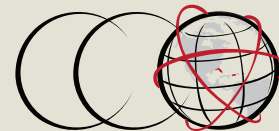
A: The water management actions have been controversial because of impacts caused by large freshwater discharges into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries, upsetting the normal freshwater/saltwater mix in those bodies of water. (South Florida Operations Office multi-tasks all summer, pg. 3)

9. What Jacksonville District project was called "one of the largest and more challenging engineering and construction endeavors in this century?"

A: Português Dam (Pablo Vazquez-Ruiz assumes leadership role with vision of promoting STEM education, pg. 7)

10. How many emergency projects resulted in Jacksonville District from Hurricane Sandy and Tropical Storm Debby?

A: 22 (COL Dodd's column, pg. 2)



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