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JAXSTRONG

OUR WORK • OUR PEOPLE • OUR DISTRICT *jacksonville*

APRIL 2012 | Volume 4 Issue 2



COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. AL PANTANO

WHAT A RIDE!

Among the many and varied articles in this quarter's issue of JaxStrong is one about some of your colleagues who seek adventure on two wheels when not behind their desks. Though I don't ride motorcycles, I think I can relate to the "what a ride" feeling as my time as your commander draws to a close and as I look to my next assignment serving our great nation while in Afghanistan.

You have a lot to be proud of and together we have accomplished some astounding things in the past three years, from ecosystem restoration to flood risk management, and from emergency permitting response following the Deepwater Horizon oil spill to ensuring safe, navigable waterways and harbors. We have dedicated our work and the district to strengthening security, energizing the economy and reducing risks from disasters throughout Florida and the Caribbean.

In fiscal year 2010, Jacksonville District awarded an amazing 1,587 contract and modification actions for a total of nearly \$521.6 million – about \$141 million was obligated to small businesses. Additionally, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, 90 contract modification actions were awarded for a total of almost \$193 million.

We've been breaking ground at a rapid pace. The Corps' largest ecosystem restoration program jumped forward with ground breakings on the \$81 million Tamiami Trail project in Miami-Dade County, the \$53 million Picayune Strand Restoration Project along the Merritt Canal, the \$79 million Faka Union Canal pump station, the Site 1 Impoundment project (phase one) and the Melaleuca Mass Rearing Annex to help combat invasive plants in the Everglades. FY 12 began with breaking ground on the Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area – the first major component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to come up for authorization since the approval of the Water and Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000.

We've begun construction of the final phase of the 20-year cleanup of the Rose Bay watershed in Port Orange. For the Kissimmee River Restoration (KRR) project, we awarded two contracts in 2009 totaling \$4.6 million and four contracts in 2010 and 2011 totaling \$25.4 million and \$20.1 million, respectively. We are planning to award two KRR contracts in 2012 that will exceed \$25 million.

The Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation Project is reducing flood risk in south Florida. One of the key components of this project is construction of a 21.4-mile cutoff wall between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade. All 21.4 miles have been completed or are under contract. Contracts for removing one and replacing four 80-year-old culverts were also awarded in 2011.

Two flood risk reduction projects broke ground in Puerto Rico in 2010 – Rio de La Plata in Dorado and Rio Puerto Nuevo (Margarita Channel) in San Juan. Progress continues on the Portugues Dam in Ponce, the Corps' first single-centered thick-arch roller-compacted concrete dam and the final component of the Portugues and Bucana flood risk reduction project.

We've provided a steady flow of team members to support the Overseas Contingency Operation and for emergency response efforts following severe weather events. Teams assisted with debris removal, temporary power and housing, infrastructure assessment and critical public facilities such as hospitals, schools and police and fire stations.

Stellar jobs have been done in our navigation and coastal protection programs, our regulatory program (the nation's largest), and our interagency and international support (IIS) work. In 2010, \$81.5 million brought completion of 13 dredging projects and seven beaches restored with the dredged material; completion of the final phase of the St. Johns River harbor deepening project and maintenance dredging of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway in Palm Valley and at Canaveral, Palm Beach and Fernandina Harbors. We are continuing to resolve complex permitting issues such as Compartment C, phosphate mining and structures along the Intracoastal Waterway.

In both FY 10 and FY 11, the IIS Branch executed more than twice its initially scheduled work, including supporting the Corps' work in Bahrain. The Formerly Used Defense Sites project in Culebra, Puerto Rico, continues to garner high level interest by HQ USACE, the Department of the Army and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Suffice it to say, we've been busy, productive and efficient. You are a great team of dedicated professionals and it has been my honor and privilege to lead you these past three years.

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alfred A. Pantano, Jr.
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

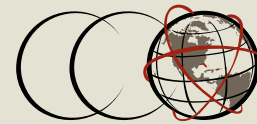
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ON THE COVER

THE WOODSTORK, PICTURED HERE WITH A CHICK, IS JUST ONE OF THE ENDANGERED SPECIES THAT WILL ULTIMATELY BENEFIT FROM JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT'S ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION PROJECTS. (USACE PHOTO)



UNLESS.... BY NANCY J. STICHT

"I SPEAK FOR THE TREES, FOR THE TREES HAVE NO TONGUES... I AM THE LORAX, AND I'LL YELL AND I'LL SHOUT FOR THE FINE THINGS ON EARTH THAT ARE ON THEIR WAY OUT! UNLESS SOMEONE LIKE YOU CARES A WHOLE AWFUL LOT, NOTHING IS GOING TO GET BETTER. IT'S NOT." – DR. SEUSS, THE LORAX, 1971

In 1971, the title character in Dr. Seuss' *The Lorax* first spoke for the trees and other aspects of nature that were threatened by careless consumerism, entreating that unless someone cared "a whole awful lot" the state of the environment would only get worse. The *Lorax* was published just one year after the first Earth Day was first observed, helping to spread the environmental message in an educational way. And Earth Day founder, the late U.S. Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.), likely appreciated that.

Inspired by the anti-Vietnam War demonstrations of the era, then called "teach-ins," Nelson was determined to organize a similar grassroots demonstration focused on the state of the environment, forcing the issue onto political agendas and creating an educational and activist movement that has endured for 42 years and counting.

"The response was electric," Nelson wrote about the capstone event years later. "It took off like gangbusters. Telegrams, letters, and telephone inquiries poured in from all across the country. The American people finally had a forum to express concern about what was happening to the land, rivers, lakes and air - and they did so with spectacular exuberance."

Today, according to the website www.EarthDay2012.net, Earth Day is now observed in a variety of ways in more than 100 countries around the globe.

For the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Earth Day is observed 24/7/365! Here are just a few examples of work being done by a team that "cares a whole awful lot."



The statue of the Lorax in the Dr. Seuss National Memorial Sculpture Garden in Springfield, Mass.

ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION

The first federally funded projects to break ground under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) – the Corps' largest single ecosystem restoration project – are progressing at Picayune Strand Merritt and Faka Union Pump Stations, Site 1 Impoundment, Melaleuca Eradication, Indian River Lagoon-South C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area.

Now the focus turns to the next generation of Everglades restoration projects, with the fast-tracked pilot Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), currently under way to analyze alternatives that will reduce discharge of water that damages the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries and provide more natural flow and depths of clean new water through the Central Everglades and Everglades National Park.

Together with the Foundation Projects (Kissimmee River Restoration and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park, including bridge construction at Tamiami Trail), CERP and CEPP projects will help realize the goal of restoring America's Everglades.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Jacksonville District administers the largest regulatory permitting program in the Corps, providing protection for waters of the United States, including federally delineated wetlands and navigable waters. A national goal is to achieve, through fair, balanced and flexible permit decisions, no net loss of wetland functions and services, which include food chain production, habitat, shoreline protection and water filtration, purification, storage and recharge.

Regulatory project managers consult with federal and state agencies and ensure that proposed projects comply with applicable

environmental laws, such as the Clean Water Act and the Endangered Species Act. When reviewing and making a decision on a permit application, project managers consider many different factors, including but not limited to conservation, fish and wildlife values, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs and the cumulative impacts of more than one project over time on the environment.

Renewable resources are playing an increasingly important role in meeting the world's energy needs. In particular, harnessing the sun, wind and water is needed to replace finite resources like natural gas and petroleum in power production. **SEE PAGE 4 FOR MORE ON NATIONAL ENGINEERS WEEK'S THEME "SUSTAINING THE FUTURE."**

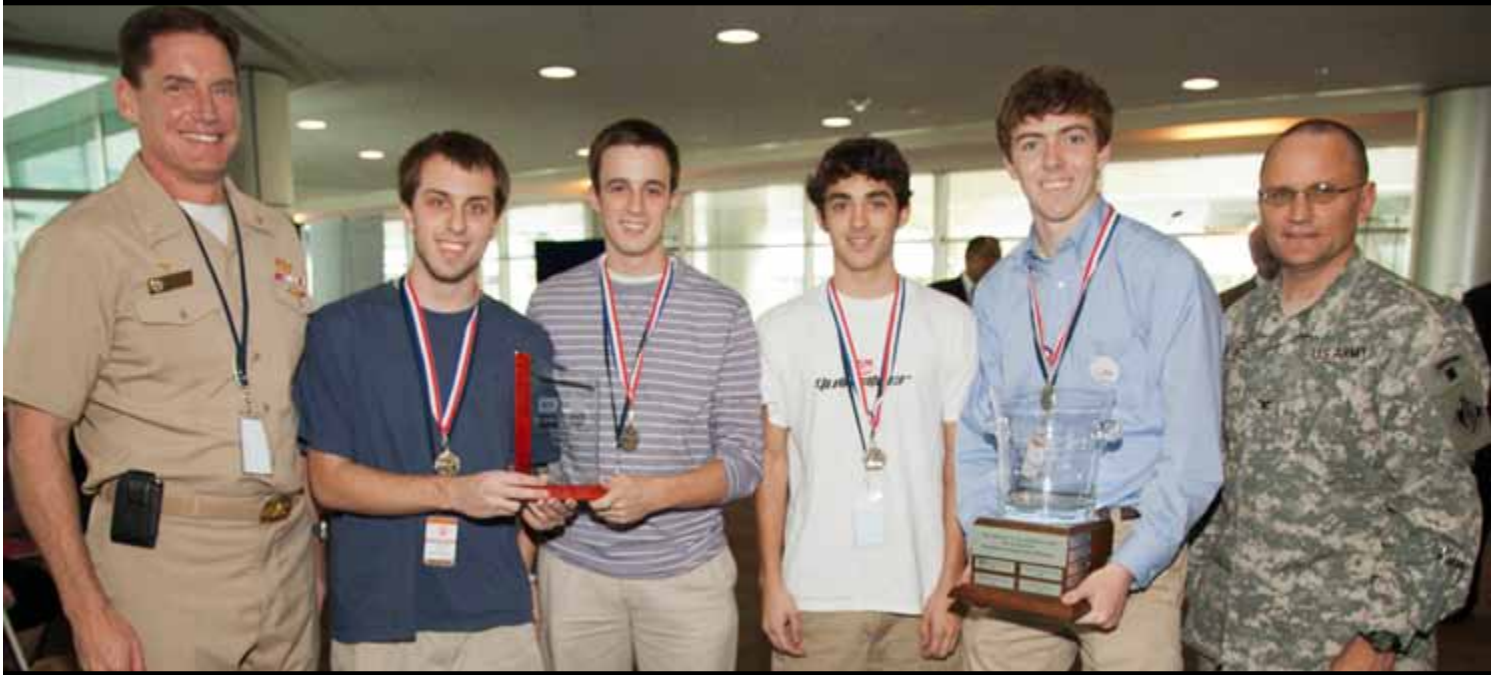
HABITAT AND ENDANGERED SPECIES PROTECTION

The Kissimmee River Restoration Project, when completed in 2014, will restore more than 40 square miles of river-floodplain ecosystem, including almost 20,000 acres of wetlands and 44 miles of historic river channel. But even now, wetland plants are thriving and native plants are returning. Dissolved oxygen, so critical for the long term survival of fish and other organisms, has increased. Fish populations are growing, and long-legged wading bird, shorebird and waterfowl species are also returning and breeding. **SEE PAGE 12 FOR AN UPDATE ON THE MOST CURRENT MILESTONE ACHIEVED AT KISSIMMEE RIVER.**

The Picayune Strand Restoration Project, with two of three major components already under construction, is critical to the survival of the endangered Florida panther. There are an estimated 100 to 160 adult panthers remaining in the wild, with the only breeding population living in southwest Florida. The project will restore valuable panther habitat and allow an uninterrupted wilderness corridor essential to their survival. **SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE ON THE FLORIDA PANTHER.**

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 9**)

Fernandina Beach High School students win Engineering Career Day competition BY JEAN PAVLOV



Team 21 from Fernandina Beach High School, the overall winning team – from left to right, Capt. John Heinzel, Nathan Cutajar, Bradley Bean, Ryan Muir, Trey Burch - with Col. Al Pantano. Team 21 won the James L. Garland Award for Engineering Excellence. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

Approximately 130 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores from northeast Florida participated in the 10th Annual Engineering Career Day (ECD), hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME). The event, "Sustaining the Future," took place during Engineers Week Feb. 24.

Founded in 1951 by the National Society of Professional Engineers (SAME), Engineers Week is celebrated by thousands of engineers, engineering students, teachers and leaders in government and business. The National Engineers Week consortium expanded its scope in 1988, and it now includes more than 100 engineering, scientific and educational societies and major corporations dedicated to enhancing public understanding of the engineering profession and promoting pre-college interest in math, science and engineering as a career option.

Steve Duba, event coordinator and senior engineer from South Atlantic Division, opened the event by welcoming the 11 participating schools.

"The intent of Engineering Career Day," said Duba, "is to learn something. My goal, along with [that of] my extremely dedicated team, is to expose you to all types of engineering, expose you to all types of university programs, resources for job opportunities, and to allow you to discuss ideas with engineers. So, go and learn something and most importantly, have fun!"

The students faced three challenges: a take-home project, to build a windmill that would produce enough air to generate energy; a surprise problem, to build a bridge that would withstand the heaviest weight; and a trivia challenge. Students had an opportunity to interact with engineers, exhibitors, universities and teams from other schools.

Luncheon speaker Capt. John Heinzel, president of the Jacksonville Post, Society of Military Engineers, spoke to the students about its engineering camp scholarships.

Keynote speaker Lt. Cmdr. Dan Stoddard, P.E., CEC, USN, energy team leader at Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southeast, talked about the job of overseeing a \$235 million program of more than 100 renewable energy, retro-commissioning, heating, ventilation and air conditioning system replacement and energy audit projects at fifteen Navy installations

from South Carolina to Texas, as well as in Cuba. Stoddard also spoke about related projects such as his part in the largest wind farms in Texas, which stand on 350-foot towers with bases 17 feet deep.

On Stoddard's energy team was Leigh Adams, who graduated from Georgia Institute of Technology in 2010 with a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and engineering physics. She spoke about "energy vampires," everyday household items that steal energy. These include laptops, game systems and light bulbs that are turned off, but still plugged in. Adams said if they aren't unplugged, these "vampires" will suck a home dry of energy.

This year's take-home project was coordinated by Victor Wilhelm, Jr., civil engineer in Design Branch, geomatics section. The students were instructed to build a wind turbine that could generate enough energy to pick up items of various weights.

"It was obvious the day of the event which teams took the project seriously enough to think out what they were doing and to do testing prior to the event," said Wilhelm. "This was a difficult assignment and everyone who participated deserves some credit for attempting it."

Eaglewood Academy's Team 16 had a good start. After a successful wind test, a judge said to the students, "Maybe we should offer you all jobs now!" They were the early leaders.

Team 10 from Christ's Church Academy fused together plumber's plastic pipe into the shape of a house for the structure of their wind turbine. For added effect, Christmas lights around the entire house lit up while the test was taking place. Their team consisted of Michael Pons, Will Grogam, Ian Vargas and Erik Blomgren.

The overall winner, Team 21 from Fernandina Beach High School, which consisted of seniors Bradley Bean, Nathan Cutajar, Rayan Muir and Trey Burch, came in with the largest student structure. In fact, their structure was too large. They found out too late that their project was too tall and they had to cut it down to size. This, however, was not a problem for the team. They came in within time and size limits.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 7)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers promotes water safety during Daytona race

BY ERICA ROBBINS



Lt. Col Michael Kinard and race drivers Ricky Moxley and Johnny Chapman join Bobber the Water Safety Dog in Daytona to promote the water safety message "Wear Your Gear" in Daytona during race week. (PHOTO BY ERICA ROBBINS)

Some things just go together - like peanut butter and jelly, and a movie with a large buttered popcorn and large drink. It's the same with hunting, fishing and NASCAR.

When a NASCAR fan gives up his remote and ventures out of his man-cave, he may satisfy his "need for speed" in the stands or -- if he's lucky-- in the pits at a NASCAR race. The next most likely place to find him would be in the woods or on the water, fully equipped and lying in wait for that tasty Green-winged Teal or a big bass.

In 2011, NASCAR fan and Louisville District park manager Diane Stratton was searching for a way to reach the "bullet-proof" young males ages 18 to 35 with a Corps water safety message. The group represents the largest percentage of water-based fatalities, but were tough to reach using conventional methods. Many of these young men, feeling invincible, think, "Nothing bad will happen to me."

Armed with the knowledge that water-based recreation such as hunting and fishing and NASCAR just go together, she followed up on her belief that NASCAR might be a natural fit to reach the target audience. Stratton did the research, and found that the average attendance at a NASCAR Camping World Truck event is 50,000 and another 800,000 view the races on television. Of those in attendance and watching the race at home, 63% are males between the ages of 18-44. In addition, 36% have children under the age of 18, so the message could reach more than one generation.

Stratton developed and executed a creative campaign to track down and target the elusive young male of the species, delivering water safety messages to his native habitat. The successful national effort resulted in 21,750 direct and more than 426,000 indirect water safety contacts and 23 public service announcements.

The program continued into 2012, as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) National Water Safety Team and its mascot, Bobber the Water

Safety Dog, teamed up with race drivers to promote water safety in Daytona Beach, Fla., Feb. 24.

"Water safety is an extremely important mission for us," said Lt. Col. Michael Kinard, deputy commander for south Florida. "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the nation's leading provider of outdoor recreation with more than 420 lake and river projects in 43 states and nearly 370 million visitors per year."

The water safety team provided information to more than 1,500 racing enthusiasts during the event. Kinard and Bobber the Water Safety Dog took the stage with NASCAR RV Camping World Truck Series drivers Ricky Moxley and Johnny Chapman to present the autographed hood of the Number 07 Wear Your Gear Bobber.info truck at the event's charity auction. The message on the shiny black hood was clear: "Wear Your Gear." The hood decal features Bobber the Water Safety Dog wearing a safety orange life jacket and includes his website, www.Bobber.info.

"We have been running the "Wear Your Gear" water safety logo on the hood of the truck for the last year, and have been getting a lot of positive responses," said Moxley. "We're honored to be part of a program to raise awareness about water safety."

"As driver of the 07 Craftsman truck, I wear my safety gear when I am racing," said Chapman. "Bobber the Water Safety Dog would like you to wear your safety gear when you are around water — that's your life jacket."

"We want to remind boaters to always wear their gear," said Adam Tarplee, natural resource program manager. "Most people who drown never had any intention of being in the water, so we encourage boaters to expect the unexpected and always wear a lifejacket. One-third of all freshwater fishing in the U.S. occurs on Corps' rivers and lakes, and we want everyone to be safe while they are having fun on the water." ♦

The circle of life continues in Picayune Strand BY ERICA ROBBINS



The kitten spits and hisses in protest when placed back in the den. (PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC CRIFFIELD, FWC)

In spite of the bulldozers, the circle of life continues. The Picayune Strand Restoration Project is under way near Naples in southwest Florida. The project was long considered the “missing piece of the puzzle” to provide continuous habitat for many far-ranging species. Prior to the restoration, the area was a 55,000-acre development called Southern Golden Gate Estates, known to locals as the “south blocks.” Logging tram roads crisscrossed the area, and a large road grid and four large canals overdrained the area, drastically changing the hydrology and the ecosystem. The site is right in the middle of public lands, including the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge, Fakahatchee Strand State Preserve State Park, Collier-Seminole State Park, Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park, Ten Thousand Islands National Wildlife Refuge and Rookery Bay.

Southwest Florida is the home to the only breeding population of endangered Florida panthers. There are an estimated 100-160 adult Florida panthers left in the wild. Mortality numbers are grim: roughly 24 adult panthers die every year due to vehicles, intra-specific aggression and other causes. The good news is that the panthers seem to be having kittens, and recently, a new kitten was born in Picayune Strand.

Winter or dry season, is panther capture season in Florida. Specially trained hounds are used to tree the cats and scientists are careful to bring the rare animals down safely. This season, three panthers were captured and fitted with radio collars in Picayune Strand, including FP195, or Florida panther 195.

Shortly after she was captured, scientists tracking Florida panther 195 noticed that she had stopped moving, indicating that she might have denned and was about to have kittens. They were able to find a den in the northeast corner of Picayune Strand, close to the construction at the Merritt Canal Pump Station. Once the scientists were able to determine that the mother had left the den to hunt, the panther team moved in quickly. One kitten, about twelve days old, was located. He was microchipped, dewormed and given shots, as part of the standard veterinary workup.

The birth of another kitten in Picayune Strand provides affirmation that the restoration of this habitat is an important step in Everglades restoration. The Florida panther is an umbrella species – when panther habitat is improved, there are many other species that also benefit, including the Florida black bear.

When Lt. Col. Michael Kinard, deputy commander for south Florida, first received a photo of a Florida panther in an e-mail, he was inspired to forward it to the team with the note, “This is why we do what we do.” ♦



“A cat track in a Cat track,” this Florida panther print (left front paw over a hind print) was found near the Caterpillar bulldozer near the Merritt Canal Pump Station. (PHOTO COURTESY OF MARC CRIFFIELD, FWC)

FERNANDINA BEACH (continued from PAGE 4)


Yulee High School's Team 35, Chonnelle Brown, McKenzie Landrum, Savannah Shelton and Rebecca Wright, testing their bridge project by attaching increasingly heavier weights. The team came in second overall. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

"I shaped the fan blades," said Burch. All the team members freely admitted that Cutajar was the "brains" of the idea behind the winning wind turbine.

A group with a large plastic pipe structure with what appeared to be a fan blade from a car engine looked impressive until the wind test, when the blade refused to turn. Three tries later, a frustrated team member said, "but it worked really well in the wind outside!"

Providence High School's Team 30, all juniors, worked with everyday objects to make their wind turbine from straws, plastic cups, bottle caps and toothpicks. Despite appearances, the final piece did well in the wind tunnel test, impressing the judges.

"The Engineering Day take-home problem conveys real life lessons about preparedness and who prevails in the marketplace," said Wilhelm. "Success takes initiative and hard work, not making excuses or pointing the blame for poor performance after the fact because one misunderstood the expectations."

Awards were presented by Col. Al Pantano, commander of Jacksonville District and Cpt. Heinzel.

In the end, the students walked away with what was left of their dismantled wind turbine assignments, materials from the booths, college applications and information and, hopefully, a new view on the types of places that engineering can take them.

"I am continually amazed at the aptitude, creativity and enthusiasm of the students that participate in this competition and the dedication of the teachers that sponsor them," said Duba. "It's encouraging to know that we've got such bright young people considering engineering as a professional career." ♦

THE 2012 ENGINEERING CAREER DAY WINNERS WERE:
FIRST PLACE: FERNANDINA BEACH HIGH SCHOOL, TEAM NO. 21

Bradley Bean, Nathan Cutajar, Ryan Muir and Trey Burch.
FACULTY ADVISORS: Dana Kahlbaum and Marcia Cline.

SECOND PLACE: YULEE HIGH SCHOOL, TEAM NO. 35

Chonnelle Brown, McKenzie Landrum, Savannah Shelton and Rebecca Wright.
FACULTY ADVISORS: April Brooks and Melissa Meyer.

THIRD PLACE: BISHOP KENNY HIGH SCHOOL, TEAM NO. 1

Peter House, Zach McNulty, Michael Barr, and Diab Abdunour.
FACULTY ADVISORS: Vicki Schmitt and Paulette Gonzalez.

Corps to roll out levee classification system

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is rolling out a new tool designed to help communicate risk associated with levee systems, in a similar manner that it's communicated for dams.

Officials say the Levee Safety Action Classification (LSAC) will help prioritize action items for levees in the USACE inventory, similar to what the Dam Safety Action Classification (DSAC) has done for dams.

"The LSAC is an assignment of relative risk of USACE levee systems," said Randy Rabb, Jacksonville District levee safety program manager. "All USACE levees are in the process of being assigned to groups to separate the levees with the highest risk from those with the lowest risk."

The LSAC assignment considers more than just the performance of the levee. It also considers the consequences of levee failure in determining assignments. Thus, a levee located near a highly populated area could be deemed to have greater risk than a levee located in a rural area, a factor which is considered in determining the LSAC assignment. This is a key difference between the LSAC system and the existing levee inspection system.

"A levee inspection rating represents the operational and maintenance condition of a levee system," said Rabb. "An LSAC assignment is an assessment of the relative risk, based on the condition of the levee, along with potential life, economic or environmental consequences that would be associated with a breach."

The intent is to help the Corps determine which levees are in highest need of solutions when it comes to reducing the risks to people, property and the environment as a result of a potential failure. Management of risk may include non-structural solutions such as evacuation planning.

"The risk assessment process and LSAC assignments will provide better understanding of performance and consequences associated with levee systems," said Rabb, "the objectives are to raise awareness and help prioritize solutions to effectively address the risks."

The LSAC system will consist of five classes. Class I represents levee systems that demand urgent and compelling action, while Class V represents systems that are considered adequately safe. ♦



Inspectors check conditions of a channel near the Portugues North Tieback Levee System near Ponce, Puerto Rico in May 2010. This levee system and others in the Jacksonville District will soon receive assignments under the LSAC system, which is similar to the DSAC system for dams.

(PHOTO BY JEFF BERGEN)

Big Fishweir Creek project seeks to restore a hidden treasure

BY AMANDA ELLISON



A view of Big Fishweir Creek. The removal of 32,000 cubic yards of sediment will improve the habitat and flows in the creek. (USACE PHOTO)

Once upon a time, in a quiet neighborhood on the west side of Jacksonville, a tiny paradise existed in the midst of an urban landscape. In this place manatees played, wading birds foraged for food, and grass marshes rose up from creeks lazily winding their way into the St. Johns River.

Today, this hidden gem is deteriorating. The manatees that once swam in the creek and the birds that nested there have left the area. The once-plentiful marshes have shrunk, and the creek barely moves, held captive by silt and sediments that prevent its once natural and easy flow.

Even though things look bleak, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is working fast and furiously behind the scenes, with a goal of restoring Big Fishweir Creek to its former grandeur, so that future generations can enjoy its many treasures.

The Corps recently held a community meeting to introduce residents to the recommended plan for restoring the creek. The overall goal

of the project is to restore healthy aquatic habitat in the creek by providing ecological benefits. The most notable benefit of the plan is the restoration of suitable habitat for the federally endangered West Indian manatee. The plan will significantly improve Essential Fish Habitat, wetland functions and water clarity.

The plan will accomplish these goals through sediment and exotic vegetation removal, marsh island creation, submerged and emergent aquatic vegetation restoration, and wetland reconnection.

The Big Fishweir Creek Aquatic Restoration Project is a part of the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) and is cost shared with the city of Jacksonville. Funding for the project is still pending. However, the feasibility phase of the project has been completed. The next phase of the project will include the development of a detailed design, and construction would follow. ♦

Decomp Physical Model receives final permit

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) received the final permit for the construction and interim operations of the Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA-3) Decompartmentalization (Decomp) and Sheetflow Enhancement Physical Model (DPM) January 9 from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

"The Decomp Physical Model is a field test that will be conducted along a 3,000-foot stretch of the L-67A and L-67C levees and canals in WCA-3A and 3B," said USACE project manager Stephen Baisden. "This test will determine how best to design and formulate plans for future decompartmentalization of WCA-3, as visualized in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan."

The DPM is designed to address scientific, water flow and water management uncertainties that require clarification prior to future planning and construction of Everglades restoration projects, authorized in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000.

A contract award is anticipated in April 2012, with work tentatively scheduled to occur from May through October 2012. Access through the L-67A Canal will remain open during and after installation. However, access through the northern portion of the L-67C Canal will be blocked until test completion in 2014. ♦



The DPM is a field test that will be conducted along the L-67A and L-67C levees and canals in Water Conservation Area-3A and 3B. (USACE ILLUSTRATION)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT: www.bit.ly/DecompPhysicalModel

UNLESS (continued from PAGE 3)

The Indian River Lagoon and St. Lucie Estuary in Martin County, Fla. are two of the country's most productive and most threatened estuaries. Home to more than 4,300 species of plants and animals, the lagoon will benefit when the C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area, on which construction began in October 2011, is completed.

In south Florida, fresh water releases are made from Lake Okeechobee to benefit the east and west coast estuaries by balancing their salinity levels. Estuaries are dynamic systems requiring a balanced, alternating flow of fresh and salt water. According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, "more than 70 percent of Florida's recreationally and commercially important fishes, crustaceans and shellfish spend part of their lives in estuaries...The shallow water, salt marshes, seagrasses and mangrove roots provide excellent hiding places from larger, open-water predators." **SEE PAGE 15 FOR MORE ON WATER MANAGEMENT AT LAKE OKEECHOBEE.**

Manatee protection systems have been installed at most Jacksonville District lock structures, and the next installation of Manatee Pass Gates is scheduled for June at Moore Haven Lock on the Okeechobee Waterway. Lock gates outfitted with the protection system help to prevent gates from closing and harming manatees as they congregate around and move through the locks. **SEE SIDEBAR STORY ON THE RIGHT.**

The Big Fishweir Creek Aquatic Restoration Project seeks to restore manatee habitat and significantly improve Essential Fish Habitat, wetland functions, and water clarity. **SEE PAGE 8 FOR MORE ON THIS PROJECT.**

The Miami Harbor Deepening Project, located in Biscayne Bay, is home to many protected, threatened and endangered species, including the Florida manatee, sea turtles, and bottlenose dolphins. It is also surrounded by seagrass beds, hardbottom and reef communities. To offset impacts to the environment, the project will include seagrass bed restoration, coral relocations, and the creation of artificial reefs. Fourteen acres of seagrass beds will be created and 1,300 corals will be relocated and placed along adjacent reef tracts. An estimated 10 acres of artificial reef will be created south of the channel. ♦



An Integrated Project Implementation Report/Environmental Impact Statement was released for public review and comment in January 2012. The goal of this project is to improve the ecological health of Biscayne Bay, including freshwater wetlands, tidal creeks and near-shore habitat, by adjusting the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of fresh water entering Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park. (USACE PHOTO)

Temporary closure of Moore Haven Lock postponed to June 11

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH



Installation of the Manatee Protection System (MPS) is part of the Manatee Pass Gates project, with the primary goal of safeguarding Florida's endangered manatees from serious injury or death at water control structures and navigation locks by modifying these structures with the MPS. (USACE PHOTO)

After taking into consideration concerns expressed by local business owners, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has postponed the closure date of the Moore Haven Lock. The lock will now be closed June 11 to install a Manatee Protection System (MPS) on the gates.

The date adjustment came after local business owners expressed additional concerns about the lock being closed during the height of boating season on the Okeechobee Waterway and the resulting economic impacts. The work on the lock is expected to continue for approximately eight weeks.

"Finding the optimal time to close down the lock requires a balancing act between risks and impacts," said Jacksonville District Commander Col. Al Pantano, Jr. "While there is no way to find a time that will be preferred by all, we do believe that we have found the time that will allow the lock to remain open during boating season, while also allowing work to be completed prior to the height of hurricane season."

Installation of the MPS is part of the Manatee Pass Gates project. The primary goal of the project is to safeguard Florida's endangered manatees at water control structures and navigation locks by modifying these structures with a MPS. Using a set of acoustic transmitters and receivers, the MPS detects the presence of the West Indian manatee and prevents the gates from closing and harming the animal.

Above-ground fixtures have already been installed at Moore Haven Lock. The remaining work includes dewatering the lock, installing the MPS to the lock gates, testing the system and re-watering the lock. ♦

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE MANATEE PASS GATES

PROJECT IS AVAILABLE AT:

http://bit.ly/MPG_USACE

Wind, sun on your face, freedom in your soul

BY TERRY HINES SMITH



Cynthia Irvin, environmental engineer in Planning Division, on her 2005 Suzuki SV650 (converted to a race bike), at the Jennings GP race track in Jennings, Fla., in January 2007. (PHOTO BY SHAWN SAXON)

Fluorescent lights, recirculated air, ringing telephones and computers constantly chiming to indicate the arrival of yet another new e-mail; eating in and working late and no windows with a view to distract. Weekdays at the office take their toll. But then the weekend rolls in, and for about 50 or more Jacksonville District team members, the waiting reward is the wind and sun on their face and freedom in their soul -- accomplished on two wheels.

Eduardo Garcia of the Safety Office is one of the district's riders. Garcia, now 52, has been a licensed motorcycle rider since he was 15. He learned to ride at age 8 in his native Panama on a friend's borrowed



A young Lt. Col. Clint Barker sits in front of his father on his dad's BSA. Mike Barker taught his son the love of motorcycles at an early age. The photograph was taken in 1971 in Norman, Okla. (PHOTO COURTESY LT. COL. CLINT BARKER)

bike. Garcia hasn't stopped riding since and says not a weekend goes by that he isn't either on his cruiser or racing off-road with his sons.

He's in good company. Of approximately 900 Jacksonville District employees, 45 indicated they have motorcycle endorsements on their Florida driver's license, including Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Clint Barker. Of those 45, eight are women. To obtain the motorcycle endorsement, most have completed the Basic Rider Course sponsored by the Motorcycle Safety Foundation (<http://online2.msf-usa.org/msf/Default.aspx>), offered free to active duty military, Department of Defense Civilians and retired personnel at Naval Air Station (NAS) Jacksonville. Some have completed advanced safety courses as well.

The thrill and freedom that comes with riding a motorcycle seems to be the overriding motivation for Jacksonville riders.

"I like to be in the wind, the open air," said Barker.

Barker said he grew up around motorcycles and was into the Yamaha Enduro and BSA from an early age. He inherited his dad's Honda 125 XL in 1983, when his dad was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Ga.

Today, he and his wife Christine ride together and like to do events like poker runs. He rides a Harley Heritage Soft Tail and said people have a misconception about Harley riders that stereotypes them like Hollywood did in old outlaw movies. Christine started out as a passenger but recently took the Basic Rider Course, obtained a motorcycle endorsement on her Florida driver's license and recently bought her own Harley -- an 883 Sportster loaded with chrome.

"You go to these poker runs and other events, and you find out most riders have college degrees," he said. "You end up talking to a guy with a vest and beard and then find out he is a neurosurgeon. It's interesting," Barker added.

Though a thrilling experience, riding motorcycles, as with other adventure sports like sky diving, scuba diving, surfing and rock climbing, comes with risk. Seven riders died during Daytona Bike Week 2012

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 11)



WIND, SUN (continued from PAGE 10)



Lt. Col. Clint Barker, Jacksonville District deputy commander and his wife Christine at Daytona's Bike Week 2012, with his Harley Heritage Soft Tail. Christine has since learned to ride and recently bought a Harley 883 Sportster. (PHOTO BY CONNIE BARKER-WEEKLY)

according to the Daytona Beach News-Journal. Most involved inattentive automobile drivers. The consensus of Jacksonville District riders on what they like least about riding is inattentive drivers.

"People [in cars] are on their cell phones, texting or whatever and just pull out without looking," said Cynthia Irvin, an environmental engineer in the Planning Division who has been riding for 42 years.

"It makes a very dangerous situation for us," she said.

The Army is intent on training Soldiers, Family members and Civilians how to reduce the risk inherent with riding. Sadly, the Army Family suffered 45 motorcycle fatalities between Oct. 1, 2010 and Sept. 30, 2011, up 15 percent from fiscal year 2010.

Though distracted drivers are a motorcyclist's biggest concern, statistics show that speed and alcohol can be lethal. According to the Basic Rider Course handbook, "riding a motorcycle requires a great amount of mental alertness and physical skill and the introduction of substances that impair a rider, such as alcohol and drugs, reduces a rider's ability to search for hazards, to evaluate factors that lead to crashes and to execute coordinated physical movement."

Almost 50 percent of all riders killed had been drinking. One-third of these riders had a blood-alcohol concentration above the legal limit. The remaining two-thirds had only a couple of drinks in their system, not enough to be legally intoxicated but more than enough to impair their mental and physical skills.

The Basic Rider Course stresses that when someone is impaired, it is the responsibility of others to keep that person from taking too many risks. They suggest providing the impaired rider with an alternative way home, delaying departure, providing them with non-alcoholic drinks and food and even hiding keys if necessary.

The Department of Defense has stringent rules for riding motorcycles on installations. Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required at all times, including a Department of Transportation approved helmet, long-sleeved shirt or jacket, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, full finger gloves and eye protection.

Army Regulation 385-10, The Army Safety Program, and Department of Defense Instruction 6055.4, DoD Traffic Safety Program, provides in-depth information on requirements, PPE and safety suggestions.

With proper safety precautions and training, motorcycle risks can be reduced, making the sport an enjoyable one. Many of Jacksonville District's riders grew up with motorcycling in their blood from an early age.

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 13)

C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project milestone reached

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH



The C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project focuses on the restoration of flows to Florida Bay via Taylor Slough in Everglades National Park as well as the restoration of the Southern Glades and Model Lands and other associated wetlands and estuarine systems. (USACE PHOTO)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District received a signed Chief of Engineers Report (Chief's Report) for the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project in Miami-Dade County, Fla. Jan. 30, 2012.

The Chief's Report, signed by Acting Chief of Engineers Maj. Gen. Meredith W.B. Temple, has been submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for review. Following review by the Office of Management and Budget, it will then be submitted to Congress for authorization.

"I believe in the Corps of Engineers. We are a world class organization that executes work that makes a difference," said project manager Timothy Brown. "I chose to work for the Corps of Engineers because I wanted to make a difference. Reaching the signed Chief's Report on the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project is a significant milestone and sends a strong message that the Corps of Engineers is committed to restoring the Everglades."

The C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project focuses on the restoration of flows to Florida Bay via Taylor Slough in Everglades National Park as well as the restoration of the Southern Glades and Model Lands and other associated wetlands and estuarine systems. It plays an integral role in meeting the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) system-wide ecosystem restoration goals and objectives.

Jacksonville District, in cooperation with its co-sponsor, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), completed a Final Project Implementation Report (PIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project in January 2011. This final report describes the project purpose and need, location, evaluation of the alternatives and the recommended plan.

The signed Chief's Report, final PIR/EIS and additional information on the C-111 Spreader Canal Western project is available online at: www.evergladesplan.org/pm/projects/proj_29_c111.aspx. ♦

Kissimmee River plug removed, connecting oxbow to canal

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH



Excavated oxbow, prior to plug being removed along Reach 3. (Photo by Jenn Domashevich); (Right) Water flowing into the oxbow after the earthen plug was removed March 13, 2012. (PHOTOS BY RICHARD HEARNE)

The southern earthen plug located along Reach 3 of the Kissimmee River Restoration project has been removed, connecting a portion of the excavated oxbow to the C-38 Canal. The work to remove the plug began March 12 and was completed March 13. During this time, more than 80 percent of the volume of water flowed into the oxbow.

"Approximately 7,400 linear feet of material was excavated from this historic oxbow in an effort to duplicate the original meandering pattern, gradient and cross-sectional area," said Tiphannie Jinks, project manager. "The excavated material was temporarily placed on an

existing spoil mound adjacent to the Kissimmee River for placement into the channelized Kissimmee River beginning late 2012."

The Kissimmee River Restoration project is a congressionally authorized undertaking sponsored by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and the South Florida Water Management District, the non-federal sponsor. The project encompasses the removal of two water control structures, filling approximately 22 miles of canal, and restoring over 40 square miles of the river channel and floodplain ecosystem, including approximately 27,000 acres of wetlands. ♦

Regulatory's Rodriguez awarded Steel de Fleury

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Regulatory Division's Miami field office was the district's most active in the past year, issuing nearly 200 Standard Permits and Letters of Permission, with 97 percent of them exceeding the national standard of issuance within 60 days of application. More than 500 General and Nationwide Permits were also issued, 91 percent of them exceeding the national standard of issuance within 120 days. Just nine project managers racked up these impressive numbers, but they likely couldn't have done it without the support of Rosalinda Rodriguez, their program assistant. Her laudatory efforts were recently acknowledged with a Steel Order of the de Fleury Medal.

Rodriguez was recognized for her "stellar performance" and for providing "superb customer service" while handling more permit actions than any other team member in Miami, with 95 percent of her permit documents issued within 60 days of arrival. Retired chief of the Miami regulatory office Paul Kruger wrote that "she substantially contributed to the overall success of the section's productivity and accomplishment of project management plan goals." He went on to say, "the most compelling aspect of Ms. Rodriguez's contribution...is her positive effect on team efforts...her performance and support allows others to excel."

Over and above her regular job duties, Rodriguez supports other Regulatory Division offices by providing time and attendance and travel support and by training new team members. She also assists non-English speaking customers in interpreting regulatory policies and procedures, resulting in their increased understanding and cooperation. "Rosa is the focal point of all incoming visitors to our office, and she greets everyone with a warm smile to make them feel comfortable," said Megan Clouser, project manager. "The office is greatly enhanced by her presence and she is an integral part of the team." ♦



Rosalinda Rodriguez, program assistant in the Miami regulatory office, was awarded the Steel Order of the deFleury Medal for her performance and contributions to the team. (PHOTO BY PAUL KRUGER)

WIND, SUN (continued from PAGE 11)


Skip Doxzon (right), chief, Internal Review, on his Honda VTX 1300C; his wife, Mindy (center), on her Honda 750 VT Shadow and their son Drew (left), on his custom Honda 1400CC Fury chopper have made motorcycle riding a family affair and frequently ride together. (PHOTO BY MEGAN M. DOXZON MORTIMER)

Irvin said her dad got her started on motorcycles when she was 15.

"He got tired of taking me from northwest to southwest Fort Lauderdale to ride horses every weekend, so he got me a motorcycle because you could ride them by yourself with a permit at age 15 at that time and he didn't have to drive me anymore," she said.

Now she rides her motorcycle to work every day, but her favorite thing is to get out in the woods and ride on the dirt, which she particularly likes to do in North Carolina and Tennessee. She said she will find as many gravel roads and dirt as she can.

"I like to find a rabbit trail and head down it and see where it goes," she said. "I'll go up in the mountains and do a 200-mile day of mostly dirt. It's also kind of fun to ride around Osceola National Forest but you can't do that all the time," she added.

Irvin is a big believer in training and in ATGATT, meaning, "all the gear, all the time." She said she has had many close calls and feels the best defense is a good offense. Even with her precautions, she has broken her collar bone and had some concussions.

"It's best to watch everyone and see what they are doing," she said. "Are they paying attention? You can kind of tell what they may do by watching them and then you move yourself into a position with an escape route. Always keep an escape route," she emphasized.

She said her most interesting recent riding experience was in October 2011 in Moab, Utah where she and a friend rode a dualsport motorcycle through Canyonlands and Arches National Parks and La Sal Manti National Forest. She already has dualsport motorcycle vacations planned for 2012 and 2013. This year she is riding the Trans Labrador Highway in Labrador, Canada, which is 1,000 miles of gravel road – 260 miles with no services, fuel, food or lodging. It will soon be paved and Irvin wants to catch the wilderness before all of the adventure is taken out of it. She and a friend will trailer the bikes to New York, go to Quebec City and then north to Labrador. The total trip is 6,000 miles, with 4,000 of it on a motorcycle. Next year, she plans to take the off road, mountain biking trails of the Continental Divide from Alberta, Canada to Mexico.

Skip Doxzon purchased his first motorcycle in 1966 directly from the plant in Youcuska, Japan. He spent nine months in the Gulf of Tonkin and before he left for home, bought a Honda Scrambler 305. He and his new Honda hitched a ride back to the United States on the U.S.S. Ticonderoga.

Today he, his wife Mindy and his son Drew have made recreational motorcycle riding a family affair. Doxzon, chief of Internal Review, now rides a Honda VTX 1300C. Mindy, a registered nurse, rides a new Honda 750 VT Shadow and Drew, a graduate of Florida Community College currently attending the University of North Florida, rides a Custom Honda

1400CC Fury chopper. Doxzon says his son uses his bike as a gas saver for going to school and work.

Doxzon developed an interest in motorcycles at age 16, when he built his own from parts with the help of his dad in Baltimore, Md. He and his family have completed the required motorcycle safety courses but he said when he learned in the 1950s and 1960s, there were no such requirements.

"Back then, they essentially said jump on, keep your balance and go forward young man," he said.

Like Barker, Doxzon enjoys riding with family and the interesting people he meets along the way, especially his Vietnam-era associates that also ride.

"There are plenty of characters out there who ride motorcycles," he added.

His most memorable bike ride was last year's Daytona Bike Week.

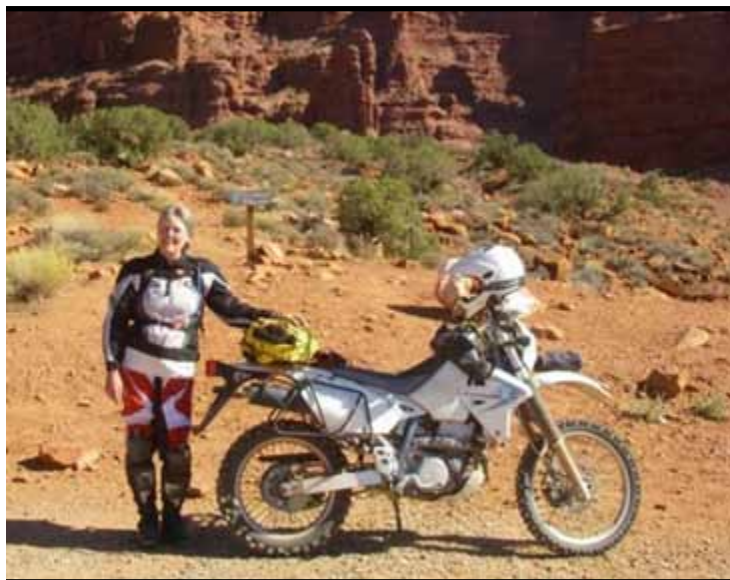
"There were 10 of us riding, including my son," he said. "We went down A1A all the way into Daytona and came in through the park. We went through the main strip, took in the events and spent about five hours there. We went over to Ironhorse on [S.R.] 17, a biker bar that has exploded into a nationally known biker stop. There were two bands playing and all kinds of bikes."

If interested in learning to ride a motorcycle and obtaining a Florida driver's license motorcycle endorsement, call Cindy Picklesimer at 904-542-2584 or e-mail her at cpicklesimer@capefox-ps.com. The Basic Rider Course is taught almost every week at NAS Jacksonville on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Wednesday is spent in the classroom, with a written test at the end of the day and Thursday and Friday are spent in the field on loaned Hyosung motorcycles. Helmets and gloves are also available, and long pants and long-sleeved shirts must be worn. The course requires supervisory approval, but is free and open on a space available basis.

After completing the Basic Rider Course, NAS Jacksonville will welcome riders back for the Experienced Rider or Sport Bike Rider courses, depending on the specific type of motorcycle they own. Each course is free and offered twice a month, also requiring supervisory approval.

Though definitely a thrilling sport, riding motorcycles requires constant vigilance, skill and attentiveness. Unfortunately, fate is not always in our own hands. Precautions, defensive driving and training are paramount but some risk always remains.

"Just watch out for the other guy!" said Doxzon. ♦



Cynthia Irvin poses with her dualsport motorcycle while on vacation through Canyonlands and Arches National Parks and La Sal Manti National Forest in October 2011. (PHOTO BY TOM GRISCOM)

Herbert Hoover Dike rehab to be featured on TV this Spring

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL



"Off Limits" program host Don Wildman of The Travel Channel assists with cleaning of the hydromill, used to install cutoff wall at Herbert Hoover Dike. Coaching him is Juan Sanchez-Bulted (right), civil engineer, Construction Division.

Quick, what do the Vehicle Assembly Building at Cape Canaveral, a sugar cane field and the Herbert Hoover Dike have in common—besides being located in Florida?

The answer is that they're all about to be featured on upcoming episodes of the show "Off Limits" when it starts airing again this spring on The Travel Channel.

In late January, an eight-person crew made its way to Lake Okeechobee to shoot footage so viewers could learn more about the Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD) rehabilitation project. Program host Don Wildman was among the crew members. He described the project as "fascinating."

"There are so many people in this country, like me, who are in the dark about the amazing and important work being done by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," Wildman said, "I'm frequently humbled by my own lack of awareness of big civil engineering projects around the country."



With cameras rolling, Don Wildman (left), host of The Travel Channel program "Off Limits" interviews Juan Sanchez-Bulted, civil engineer in Construction Division, at the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation project near Pahokee. Wildman and his crew visited the dike in late January to shoot footage that will feature the rehabilitation project in an episode that is expected to air this spring.

Wildman and his crew spent a full day with Corps employees, who are busily overseeing the installation of a cutoff wall in the dike between Port Mayaca and Pahokee. Cutoff wall installation between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade has been going on since 2007.

"I found it fascinating to see three different contractors using three different techniques to accomplish similar tasks to shore up the dike," said Wildman. "[It was] a brief but intense lesson in the possibilities of large-scale engineering."

The show, which begins its second season in April, features Wildman going to various places around the country, getting insider's access to places that would normally be "off limits" to the general public. During the show's first season, Wildman visited Corps projects in Pittsburgh and St. Paul.

"This show will give everyone a glimpse into the complexities and challenges that USACE and our nation face as we continue to rebuild and restore our critical infrastructure," said Scott Burch, chief of the Geotech Branch in Jacksonville District's Engineering Division. "Millions of people depend upon HHD every day and don't even realize it. The more people know about our work and our projects, the more successful we will be."

While in Florida, Wildman and his crew also visited the Vehicle Assembly Building at Cape Canaveral, they lit up a field of sugar cane, joined the Florida forest service for a controlled burn, toured the Miami access tunnel under construction near the harbor...and even wrestled alligators.

One of the Lake Okeechobee gators stopped by to say hi to Wildman while he was trying to shoot footage to explain the project.

"I found it all fascinating," said Wildman, "I suppose I didn't like being standing near the alligator to deliver a stand-up for the camera. But the gator didn't budge and life went on for us all."

Wildman had a lot of praise for the work done by Jacksonville District and other Corps employees across the country.

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HERBERT HOOVER (continued from **PAGE 14**)


Don Wildman, host of The Travel Channel program "Off Limits," explains the workings of a "clamshell" while his cameraman rolls tape during shooting of rehabilitation activities at Herbert Hoover Dike in late January.

"The U.S. Army Corps has a mammoth task in this nation," said Wildman. "It involves navigating the difficult, sometimes treacherous waters of public and private concerns. In Florida, this is particularly true with the Everglades. What I find amazing is that a huge government organization can move ahead, just getting huge jobs done, while those of us in the public motor along, comfortably oblivious."

By the end of 2012, HHD rehabilitation work is expected to be complete at four separate sites, near Pahokee and Canal Point. Work is just getting under way near Torry Island and Port Mayaca, the final two worksites in the 22-mile stretch of dike.

"We're very excited this project will be showcased on the national level," said Tim Willadsen, project manager. "The Corps and our contractors are doing some amazing, state-of-the-practice work at HHD. This project and the great people who work on it deserve the attention."

New episodes of "Off Limits" are scheduled to start airing on The Travel Channel beginning April 17. The HHD episode is tentatively scheduled to air May 8 at 10 pm EST. ♦

Water from Lake Okeechobee helps Caloosahatchee River

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL



Rae Ann Wessel of the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation points to a map as she talks about the historical flow of the Caloosahatchee River during a tour for Corps staffers of the area between the W.P. Franklin Lock and Olga on March 14. Listening are, from left to right, Aaron Stormant, chief, Emergency Management Branch; Steve Dunham, chief, South Florida Operations Office (SFOO); and Jack Pasch, facility supervisor for SFOO. Wessel praised the Corps as a "fundamental partner" for its work to help keep water flowing to the Caloosahatchee Estuary. (PHOTO BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL)

Caloosahatchee River-watchers have strong praise for Jacksonville District's water management team, as they carefully try to find ways to balance the need of multiple stakeholders asking for water from Lake Okeechobee.

Rae Ann Wessel, natural resource policy director for the Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation near Fort Myers, praised the Corps as a "fundamental" partner in helping feed freshwater from the lake to the Caloosahatchee River.

"Water releases during drought and dry season are the lifeblood of the Caloosahatchee," said Wessel.

Wessel is among a large group of stakeholders representing the public, as well as federal, state and local officials, as they convene weekly by phone to discuss the latest conditions in the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries, and how water from Lake Okeechobee can help offset rising levels of salt water, which can lead to adverse environmental conditions.

"What we most appreciate from the Corps," said Wessel, "is the ability to have weekly scientist calls, so we can exchange information on what we're seeing."

The Corps, in consultation with the South Florida Water Management District, has been releasing water from Lake Okeechobee since mid-December. In a series of pulse releases, a significant quantity of water is released for three to four days from the W.P. Franklin Lock & Dam east of Fort Myers, followed by days of no releases.

"Supplemental freshwater flows in the dry season attempt to keep salinity levels within ranges conducive for the productivity and survival of estuarine biota," said Brad Tarr, biologist in the Planning Division. "Even low-level flows maintain a salinity gradient that can deter water stagnation and minimize algal blooms."

Wessel says the Caloosahatchee has certainly benefited from the releases.

 (CONTINUES ON **PAGE 22**)


District team learns about “Empowerment through Communication”

BY ERICA ROBBINS

The first impression of Women's History Month speaker Dr. Priscilla Berry can be summed up in two words: professional woman. Petite and trim in a navy blue power suit, she works the room, introducing herself with a smile, making direct eye contact and using a firm handshake, connecting with every member of the audience.

Even before she has said a word, the unspoken meta-messages come across: I'm a professional. I'm confident and comfortable interacting with people. I take great care with my appearance and pay attention to detail. I walk my talk. When I enter a room, people notice. I have presence.

Then she begins to speak, further commanding our attention.

Berry is currently an adjunct lecturer for the Hough Graduate School at the Warrington College of Business at the University of Florida and a regular columnist for the Jacksonville Business Journal. With more than 25 years experience working in government, private and public corporate cultures, Berry has a wide range of experience in corporate communications, public relations, advertising and marketing, and through her private consulting firm she helps organizations to solve internal and external communication challenges.

According to Berry, a secret of successful communicators is making other people feel important in their presence. She said that listening is the most important skill involved in accomplishing this goal. The point she wants her audience to remember from her presentation is that “people want to be understood and validated; that's the most basic of human needs.”

While leaders used to rely on the power inherent in their position, times have changed, Berry explained. Information is power, and social skills have become increasingly important in building trust through information sharing.



Women's History Month speaker Dr. Priscilla Berry explained that when District Commander Col. Al Pantano reached to shake her hand, his open hand with fingers spread sent the unspoken message, “I will tell you the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.” (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

“A vacuum is always going to be filled. A leader's first job is to fill the pipeline,” she said.

Berry explained that body language and non-verbal communication convey messages as much as, or sometimes more than, words do. Style, presence and confidence empower and speak volumes before a word is ever uttered. She said that Shakespeare summed it up best in a line from Hamlet: “This above all, to thine own self be true.” If we are true to who we really are, Berry said, our body language, non-verbal and verbal communication will line up and send a consistent message.

Explaining that she once worked for 18 months with a former Jacksonville District commander, Berry added in closing, “I have a real special place in my heart for the Corps and the work you do.” ♦

Women's History Month speaker highlights Everglades activist

BY ERICA ROBBINS

“I probably wouldn't be standing here today, if it wasn't for Marjory Stoneman Douglas and her book, “The Everglades: River of Grass,” said Kim Brooks-Hall, chief of staff, at the Women's History Month closing ceremony.

Brooks-Hall introduced guest speaker Dr. Jack E. Davis, history professor at the University of Florida, who presented “Marjory Stoneman Douglas: An Activist's Life.” Davis is the author of the award winning biography, “An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas” and “The Environmental Century.” The story shows parallels between Douglas' life and several activist and environmental movements.

Davis explores the forces that shape a person's life and guide what they do. His own interest in race relations, women's history, social justice and the environment were sparked by the place, the times and the environment that he grew up in. His parents taught their children to be open-minded, and as a child in Birmingham, Ala. in 1963, he saw the place where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was imprisoned at the height of the demonstrations for racial equality. The family later moved to Florida, when the Gulf of Mexico was so polluted that there were hardly any



Dr. Jack E. Davis, a history professor at the University of Florida, presented “Marjory Stoneman Douglas: An Activist's Life” during Women's History Month. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

wading birds and the seagrass was dying. Both of these experiences had a profound impact on him.

Davis first read “The Everglades: River of Grass” while lying on his back in a tent, during a canoeing, camping and hiking trip in the Everglades. The biographer never had the chance to meet his subject before she died at age 108, and admits that he would probably have felt intimidated by her if he had. “She was someone who didn't tolerate fools gladly,” said Davis. “She was very opinionated and I almost felt as if she was always looking over my shoulder while I was writing the book. I was constantly wondering what she would have thought about

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 18)

Jacksonville District hosts Army's first African-American two-star general

BY NAKEIR NOBLES



Members of the Montford Point Marines, Maj. Gen. Anderson and members of Jacksonville District gather for a group photo. The Montford Point Marines were the nation's first African-American Marines who trained at Montford Point, N.C. (PHOTO BY TY ERICKSON)

Maj. Gen. Marcia Anderson, the Army's first female African-American two-star general was the keynote speaker for Jacksonville District's Black History Month closing ceremony. The 2012 theme was Black Women in American Culture and History.

Humbled that she is proclaimed a history maker, Anderson told the audience, "When I speak, I want to leave people with something they didn't know when they came into the room."

Anderson acknowledged that before her, there were innovations and accomplishments of African-American women. "We haven't always been able to sing in perfect harmony in our nation's history. As a girl, I asked why did so many step up when denied the basic privileges."

Before the American Revolutionary War, Anderson said, contributions were made by African-American women – women like Phyllis Wheatley and Mary McLeod Bethune. Wheatley, who was raised by a white family, was taught to read and write and eventually published a book of poems. And Bethune, the fifteenth of 17 children, excelled and founded Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, Fla.

There were also women with the Buffalo Soldiers, Anderson told the audience. Sonia Baker, who gained her freedom in 1862 at 14 years old, did laundry, taught the soldiers how to read and write, tended the sick and learned to load and shoot a musket.

Cathay Williams worked for the Union Army as a paid servant for two years. Williams is documented as the only female Buffalo Soldier and as the only documented African-American woman who served in the U.S. Army prior to the 1948 law that officially allowed women to join the Army. "Women demonstrated selfless service. Their courage and creativity extended beyond the military," Anderson said.

"Innovation and creativity will help America," Anderson said. Turning to a local high school chorus group who sang at the ceremony, she said, "Learn your history, you have more technological advances than I had as a kid. People recognize when you are curious and motivated. Study about the Montford Point Marines," who were also distinguished guests at the ceremony, Anderson said.

Other Equal Employment Office Black History Month activities included the opening ceremony with speaker Santheia Brown, wife of Alvin Brown, Jacksonville's first African-American mayor; the highly anticipated Brain Brawl and a viewing of the Academy Award-nominated movie *The Help*, adapted from Kathryn Stockett's book by the same title. ♦

Blood drive saves lives

BY ERICA ROBBINS



Executive assistant Matt Gapinski has donated more than 4¼ gallons of blood since he came to Jacksonville in 2000. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

It's easy, it's safe and it makes a difference. "It's great to see so many people from the Corps coming out to donate blood," said Sandra Ziegler, occupational health nurse manager, during a recent blood drive. "All of these people are heroes. Every person who gives blood helps to save three lives. If you've been thinking about donating, we encourage you to make an appointment online for the next blood drive on May 16."

Did you know:

- 4.5 million Americans would die each year without lifesaving blood transfusions.
- Every 2½ seconds someone in our country needs blood.
- There is no substitute for human blood. Since blood must be provided by human donors and has a life span of only 42 days, it is a very precious resource needing constant replenishment.
- Blood is used daily for all types of surgical operations, accidents, acute burn victims, and those with catastrophic diseases such as leukemia and hemophilia.

What can you expect when you donate blood? If you are donating at the Bloodmobile, you must sign up for an appointment online. When you arrive, you will fill out a form regarding your medical history. Next, you proceed to a sound-proof booth where Bloodmobile staff will take your blood pressure and temperature, do a quick blood test for anemia and go through your questionnaire to make sure that you are a good candidate for blood donation. If you are, the experienced staff will get you hooked up and will offer you water or juice to keep you hydrated. Within a few minutes, you will have donated a pint of blood, done your good deed and will be on your way back to work.

There are many good reasons to donate blood. Melissa Flores donated during the blood drive in March. "I know someone who needed a transfusion a while back, so I know it's important," she said.

Nelson Colon, a project manager in the water resources branch, said that it took him less than 4½ minutes for the actual blood donation. "I have kids, and one day, it might be one of my kids that need blood. It's so easy to do," said Colon. "Giving blood was the most relaxing thing I've done all day."

Matt Gapinski also makes time to donate blood despite his busy schedule as executive assistant and congressional liaison. "When I was in the military and traveling through foreign countries, I was not always able to donate. Now, I always try to donate. It's a good thing to do, and I think everybody who can donate should do it." Gapinski donates about six times a year and has donated more than 4¼ gallons of blood to the Blood Alliance since he came to Jacksonville.

The Bloodmobile will be back at the Prudential building on May 16. To donate, sign up online at www.thebloodalliance.com. As an added incentive, everyone who registers to donate blood through June 30, 2012 will be entered into a drawing to win a new 2012 Honda Civic. Do good and good luck! ♦

WOMEN'S (continued from PAGE 16)

my approach and what I was writing. I always felt somewhat haunted."

Davis pointed out that "The Everglades: River of Grass" was part of The Rivers of America series of books that was published between 1930 and 1974. Perhaps if the book had not been part of that series, the name "River of Grass," might never have been used to describe the Everglades.

Authors of the series were instructed to open the books with the natural setting, and most quickly launched into the human history. Douglas was different – she devoted 54 pages of her book to the natural history. Her understanding of the system and her descriptions of its natural beauty helped her to successfully translate the science into good reading for the public, and shifted public opinion about the Everglades – a pestilent swamp needing to be drained was transformed to a unique treasure worth preserving, protecting and restoring.

Davis described the forces that shaped Douglas' life and made her a great champion and voice for the river. Her aunt and grandmother encouraged her independence; more than a suffragist, she was a true feminist. As a social activist, she learned about agitation. As a regionalist, she came to understand the value of the natural places. As a writer, she developed a passion for the natural world. All of these things led her to become a personality that drove change, a champion for the Everglades.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas did not become a full-time activist until 1969. She was one of 20 million Americans who participated in the first Earth Day in 1970.

Davis sees the research that Douglas did for "The River of Grass" as an absolute key to shaping her views and activities. The experience was as important and formative in educating herself as it was to educating the public. ♦

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

In recognition of Women's History month, the Equal Employment Opportunity Office sponsored a "Who am I?" event, featuring district team members dressed as famous or notorious women from history. Participants included (left to right) Laverne Cooper as Maya Angelou, Pat Wolf as Marjory Stoneman Douglas, Laura Mahoney as Mother Theresa, Carrie Bond as Anne Frank, Marian Hannah as Mary McLeod Bethune and April Patterson as Marie Curie. Not pictured: Christina Swanson, who dressed as Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Greg Terry, Regulatory Division, won a \$25 gift certificate by guessing all seven characters correctly. (PHOTO BY STACY CAGLE)

Shy girl achieves major general status BY NAKEIR NOBLES

Maj. Gen. Marcia Anderson, the Army's first female African-American two-star general. (PHOTO BY TY ERICKSON)

Historical status was placed on the shoulders of Marcia Anderson in September 2011 when she received her current promotion. Anderson became the Army's first female African-American two-star general.

The once shy little black girl from Illinois didn't know what her future held, but she soon realized that when the bar for achievement is set low, one should raise it and then overachieve. That's exactly what she did when she was promoted to the military rank of major general.

Temporarily overwhelmed by the distinction, Anderson realized she was in a position to reach out and motivate others.

"After initially being overwhelmed, I soon embraced it as an opportunity to reach out to people, young people and those who are mid-career, both civilian and military. There are opportunities for people to recognize that you have the motivation to do well. When the bar was set low, I overachieved," Anderson said.

Anderson said that throughout her career she has encountered a variety of leaders and leadership styles. She used both their negative and positive traits to help shape the way she leads her staff. The great leaders she has encountered, Anderson said, truly cared about the people with whom they work; it's not phony.

"Good leaders gather people around them who excel," said Anderson. "Great leaders gather those who excel and encourage them to go even higher and not hold them back."

As a leader, Anderson encourages her staff to hone their skills, and she takes responsibility if a member of her staff fails at a task.

"I encourage my people, I delegate freely and I give them the tools to be successful. If I give my staff a job to do and they fail, I have to look at myself and think that maybe I didn't give them everything they needed to be successful."

The shy personality that was once used to describe Anderson is nowhere to be found. Anderson credits the military with helping her overcome her bashfulness.

"I'm not shy anymore, I am outgoing. The military compelled me to do that. It gives one responsibility early on, trains you and gives you tools to do good," she said.

As she gets used to the recognition that comes with her distinguished title, Anderson says she wants to be recognized as a citizen-Soldier who is proud to serve in her capacity as a federal servant and Soldier.

"I hope to motivate people by my service," said Anderson. "I am part of the first steps, fortunate to stand on the shoulders of those before me and dispel the notions that certain people can only serve at certain limited levels. I am just another story in the process. I want kids to know their history and read and study about the Montford Point Marines. I want them to know about women like Harriet Tubman, who couldn't read but excelled; Sojourner Truth, Fannie Lou Hammer."

Anderson said she would like her legacy to be, "to know that I tried and treated people the way that I wanted to be treated; that I held myself to a high standard and was ultimately fortunate to be successful with my federal career and with our military. I want it to be known that I provided the opportunity for young people to be motivated to excel." ♦

Regulatory's volunteers: worth their weight in gold

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Team members in Jacksonville District's Regulatory Division have created and embraced a volunteer program that uniquely serves the needs of the volunteers that contribute their time and talent as well as the organization and the communities that benefit from their service.

Paul Kruger, former Miami regulatory office chief, saw how the Corps uses volunteers to assist rangers across the nation and throughout the world to support its missions, and he thought it seemed like a good way to supplement the district's outreach to the communities it serves.

Volunteers may come to the Corps in response to newspaper advertisements or at the suggestion of academic advisors from local universities. With varying backgrounds and experience, they come from all walks of life. Kruger said that retired lawyers, business executives and military officers, college students and college graduates have all served as Corps regulatory volunteers. Putting in from 10 to 30 hours a week, volunteers assist with administrative duties, field work and outreach events. Some have used their volunteer experience to augment their classroom experience, fulfill assignments and even develop their master's degree theses.

Gletys Guardia-Montoya was the volunteer coordinator in Miami from August 2010 until early 2012. She coordinated the schedules of four volunteers and worked with project managers to appropriately and effectively delegate work to volunteers. If a volunteer expressed interest in a specific type of work, or a project manager needed extra help on a large project, Guardia-Montoya arranged a volunteer-project manager mentorship opportunity.

"It was a great, rewarding task that allowed me to learn a great deal of the leadership aspects of the job," said Guardia-Montoya. Because she considered feedback a key factor in keeping the program alive, she encouraged project managers to provide feedback to volunteers that would help them to continuously develop and improve their skills. "Making our volunteers feel welcome and expressing our gratitude as an organization was a responsibility I took very seriously," she said.

Jessica Hammers and Maria Bezanilla now share coordinator responsibilities in Miami.

"The volunteer program is a terrific way for students to immerse themselves in the real world application of what they are learning in their classes, and to help them prepare for a career in a related field," said Hammers. "I started out with the Corps as a student aide and volunteer in the Miami office in 2008 and the benefits I received from that experience are immeasurable."

The Fort Myers regulatory office followed suit with its own volunteer program in 2005, under the leadership of Cynthia Ovdenk. She was later joined by Muriel Blaisdell, who serves as an additional volunteer coordinator for that office.

"My goal as a volunteer supervisor is to offer the volunteers a chance to learn the Corps' regulatory program while achieving experience to further their careers, serve their communities and protect the environment," said Ovdenk.

Blaisdell viewed serving as a volunteer program coordinator as a way to give back. She started her career as a biologist by volunteering for a local government agency in Miami-Dade County more than 13 years ago, and wanted to be in a position to provide the same opportunity to others.

Angela Ryan, project manager in the Tampa regulatory office, conducted an outreach event at a local college and was approached by two professors who asked if the Corps had volunteer opportunities available for students. That simple inquiry led to the creation of the volunteer program in Tampa in May 2011.



Paul Kruger, retired chief of the Miami regulatory office (left), presents Julio Jimenez with a plaque, naming Jimenez Jacksonville District's Volunteer of the Year. Jimenez volunteered for more than a year before leaving to begin working for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Coral Reef Program. (PHOTO BY JESSICA HAMMERS)

"I wanted to provide opportunities for students to gain real world experience while providing the office with clerical and project management assistance," Ryan said. The program isn't just for students, however. "It has now grown to provide other qualified individuals, such as military members, retirees and recent college graduates with the opportunity to volunteer in the office and learn about the Corps' regulatory program."

Volunteers in each of the three offices have backgrounds as diverse as their reasons for serving. The wide range of tasks that they perform in the office and in the field supports the nation's largest Corps regulatory program.

MIAMI

Graduate student Julio Jimenez was working towards his master's degree in marine affairs and policy at the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences when he began volunteering for the Corps, upon the advice of his academic advisor. He said the job was an incredible learning experience and he found the diversity of projects in which he was involved its most fulfilling aspect.

"The amount of collaboration that has to occur between different stakeholders was a unique experience for me," said Jimenez. "I'm glad I was able to experience the benefits of having a positive working environment...the symbiotic relationship between project managers and the volunteers benefitted us both tremendously."

Before leaving to start a career with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection Coral Reef Program, Jimenez was named Jacksonville District's Volunteer of the Year. "His extraordinary performance drafting permit documents, assisting project managers with site visits and his knowledge of the marine environment greatly enhanced our productivity," said Hammers.

Seeking practical, hands-on experience while working on his undergraduate degree was a goal for Jackson Dingeman, a senior at the University of Miami. Because his experience at the Corps and his academic studies have complemented each other so well, he believes his goal has been met.

"The Corps really works hard to fulfill everyone's needs," Dingeman noted. "I better understand the determinations we make on projects, and how our first concern is for preservation of the environment. I am always excited to come to work and see what type of permits I will get to work on, as proposed projects always vary to some extent with mitigation and [other] requirements."

Dingeman is writing a paper for an independent senior study that examines the cost/benefit analysis of major coastal development

REGULATORY'S (continued from PAGE 19)



Left - Laura Decker began working with the Miami regulatory office as a volunteer and now serves as a student aide. Right - Jackson Dingeman examines shoreline resources at a property in the footprint of a proposed dock, as part of his volunteer duties with the Miami regulatory office.

(PHOTOS BY JESSICA HAMMERS)

projects, such as the Port of Miami expansion project, and finds his talks with Corps project managers to be beneficial in building his thesis. After graduation, he plans to get involved in environmental permitting in the private sector, and says that the perspective he has gained through his volunteer work has been beneficial.

University of Miami senior Laura Decker began as a volunteer in March 2011 and this year was hired as a student aide. She is carrying a double major, studying both marine affairs and policy and economics. "I enjoy learning about these two conflicting interests, and have recognized the importance of finding a balance between our environmental and economic needs," she said.

"Just as I had hoped, I now understand how my school knowledge is applied in real world situations," said Decker. "Working here has expanded my knowledge of the laws and regulations governing the waters of the United States, and has taught me how these laws and regulations are dealt with and enforced. I have seen firsthand how agencies with overlapping jurisdiction coordinate and consult with one another. I have also become more aware of the difficulty of regulating coastal activities and the continuous struggle to minimize the impacts of coastal and wetland development."

FORT MYERS

A retiree who was looking for ways to productively spend his time while contributing the skills he developed as a dean of counseling and student development at a community college in Michigan, Jim Leonard enjoys analyzing files, logging outstanding documentation and following up to close files.

"I have learned about the complexity and environmental responsibility of construction in southwest Florida wetlands, and the enormous amount of follow-up and monitoring required by the Corps," he explained.

Jeanne Arruda retired in July 2011 from her job as an air traffic controller at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago and relocated to Cape Coral, Fla. soon afterwards.

"Being newly retired, I wanted to stay busy and learn something new. I have always been concerned about the environment, and saw the Army Corps' volunteer opportunity on www.volunteermatch.com," she explained. She likes to organize, and took on the job of updating and reorganizing the office files, so that information would be readily available and complete.

"I've learned a lot about the process of permitting as well as the mitigation and monitoring requirements that are necessary for building in this area," said Arruda.

TAMPA

In August 2011, U.S. Army Reservist Spc. Maimane M'Boya came to the Tampa regulatory office as a volunteer through the Operation War Fighter program, a Department of Defense internship program for wounded, ill and injured service members while they recuperate. A student at Strayer University, M'Boya is working towards his bachelor's degree in information systems with an emphasis on homeland security.

After being stationed at Ft. Stewart in Georgia for several months, the U.S. Army placed M'Boya in the Community Based Warrior Transition Unit, allowing him to join his family in Tampa. He volunteers while also undergoing therapy during his recuperation.

"The best type of work that I get to do is field work because I can... learn all sorts of research like global information systems (GIS), taking pictures of the wetlands [of concern under a given permit application] and learning about the cycle of life," said M'Boya.

"The type of work the regulatory office performs is very unique on a biological level. The frequency of submittals to the project managers is vast and can be overwhelming...I am learning all types of information and research patterns," M'Boya explained. "My tasks are as simple as filing paperwork jackets for microfiche or as complicated as plotting navigational points that can be processed through GIS on a two-dimensional or three-dimensional map."

PALM BEACH GARDENS

Fate may have played a role in Vince Amy's volunteer career in the Palm Beach Gardens regulatory office. A retired consulting geologist who specialized in hydrogeology, Amy had been the project manager for an investigation into the effects of mining on water quality in south Florida and for the preparation of a draft Environmental Impact Statement on the effects of limestone mining in south Florida. A former consultant to the Advisory Committee on Nuclear Facility Safety, he worked at a number of Department of Energy facilities and served as a technical expert in groundwater and geology, assisting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and testifying in a number of court cases.

When he interviewed for a volunteer position with the Corps, Leah Oberlin, chief of the Palm Beach Gardens regulatory office, asked if he knew anything about Lake Belt. "The rest of the story," says Amy, "is history." Deep into preparing the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for Lake Belt mining, Oberlin asked Amy if he would like to help and he immediately agreed. He has since helped with beach erosion projects and with the current Area-wide Environmental Impact Statement for phosphate mining in the Central Florida Phosphate District.

"My volunteer work is a more than satisfying and challenging work experience," said Amy. "Most of us realize the importance of the environment and the role it plays in our lives...we cannot indiscriminately use it without paying dearly. The Corps plays an essential and necessary role and will...continue to do so in the future."

Whatever the motivation – from a retiree sharing the skills gained through a successful career, to a student exchanging academic knowledge for practical application, to a Corps team member "paying it forward" – the end result is the same. The selfless service of Jacksonville District regulatory team members, combined with that of a stellar volunteer force, contributes to the greater good of protecting the environment and serving the nation. ♦



South Florida Operations Office salutes the contributions of volunteers

BY PHILLIP HART AND ERICA ROBBINS

April is Volunteer Month, and a great opportunity to highlight the outstanding volunteer program at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District's South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. Volunteers provide valuable service in a variety of ways, including manatee watch/photo identification, water safety, maintenance, park host, and Visitor Center assistance. Volunteers provide important services at the W.P. Franklin Visitor Center, Ortona campground, and St. Lucie Visitor Centers. Last year alone, volunteers donated more than 14,000 hours of service, saving the Corps more than \$250,000 in labor alone.

Volunteers perform routine maintenance on the grounds of all the recreation areas and campgrounds, including dragging the beach and volleyball court areas to smooth the sand, fixing broken water lines, replacing grills in the picnic areas, installing metal and routing wooden signs, repairing fences, constructing new kiosks, replacing and repairing old kiosks and making purple martin birdhouses.

In addition to routine maintenance, volunteers use their skills on special projects. During 2011, maintenance volunteers Donald Chapman, George Schisler and Alan Paling completed various projects that saved money and resources. The volunteers rehabilitated two fishing piers and one courtesy dock by resurfacing the decking, sanding the handrails and resealing the rails. These projects occurred at the W.P. Franklin Recreation Area and Ortona South Campground. Both projects totaled 5,700 sq. ft. of decking for the fishing piers and docks.

At W.P. Franklin Recreation Area, they replaced the seats and tabletops on 31 picnic tables and planed the worn boards to be used



Volunteers (left to right) Alan Paling, Don Chapman, and George Schisler refurbished the Ortona fishing pier. (PHOTOS BY PHIL HART)

in future picnic table replacements. They also flipped the decking boards over on the walking bridge at the Ortona South Campground. Recycling the boards provided a double benefit – saving money and helping to save the environment.

Some of their future projects include building a viewing area, improving shoreline stabilization, replacing damaged pilings at the boat slips, and removing invasive vines from the shoreline at the W. P. Franklin Campground.

All of the volunteers are dedicated individuals who exemplify what it means to be a great volunteer. The South Florida Operations Office and the Corps are grateful to all of the wonderful volunteers who work with the Corps. "At the Corps, every month is Volunteer Month," said park ranger and volunteer coordinator Phil Hart. "We are lucky to have many talented volunteers working with us all year round. We salute them and thank them for the many important services they provide." ♦

DREDGING UP HISTORY



Fifty years ago, in March of 1962, construction was well under way for various pieces of infrastructure to support the fledgling space program at Cape Canaveral. In this photo, preliminary work is being done on what will eventually become the S-IC static test stand, a concrete and steel structure built to withstand the forces of the powerful Saturn rockets during its testing. Jacksonville District provided oversight for much of the early construction. In 1963, the work pace was so intense the new Canaveral District was formed to provide additional support for the effort. The Canaveral District was deactivated in 1971, and construction oversight was forwarded to the Florida Area Office of the Mobile District, where it resides today. (PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA)

MEMORIAL DAY 2012



Our readers have spoken BY NANCY J. STICHT

The biennial newsletter readership survey, conducted online in February, provided valuable insight that will help the Corporate Communications Office make improvements in future issues.

The non-scientific survey was announced in an e-mail, with two e-mail reminders sent to the district team. A 20 percent return rate is considered average for online surveys. The JaxStrong readership survey yielded a 14 percent return rate. Feedback is taken seriously and has already led to responsive actions. Following is a summary of responses received (numbers rounded to closest whole number):

SURVEY RESULTS

READERSHIP 60% – “always” read JaxStrong
42% – Read most of the stories
39% – Read select stories

CONTENT

Categories Coverage – “about right”

Stories - 91% – “excellent” overall

51% – “somewhat agreed” reliable source of district news

36% – helps them do their job more effectively or helps them communicate with others about district programs/projects.

Overall Appearance - 96% – “Excellent”

Features - 59% – new feature “Ask the experts” readers submit a question to be answered by district leaders/subject matter experts.

– Reinstatement of “In the Next Cube”

OTHER – Most respondents indicated that they do not forward the link to JaxStrong to others, nor do they print and share JaxStrong with others. This question may have been misleading, as the intent was to gauge if district team members share JaxStrong with others outside Jacksonville District; many comments received indicated that they don't share the link or printed copies because all district employees already receive the link.

Some comments indicated a desire for more news from our field offices, and we have already started contacting field offices to identify points of contact to provide input on a regular basis. A suggestion was received to create an index of all issues so current and former stories on specific projects may be more easily found, and we will look into the possibility of creating and providing a searchable index.

One common request was for more personal information about district team members' (weddings, babies, condolences, etc.), extracurricular activities, Sandcastle Club events, etc. in JaxStrong. In previous iterations of the district newsletter, we did in fact include such information and we still do, to a much more limited extent. Since the newsletter is now distributed via the website and is intended to inform both internal (employee) and external (public) audiences, we limit the amount of personal information that we publish, for privacy and security reasons.

The Department of the Army regulation under which JaxStrong is published, AR 360-1, states that publications such as JaxStrong are just one part of the commander's total information program, and that they should act as tools for two-way communication.

To that end, some readers said that they want to see stories with “broader appeal” and stories that “promote Jacksonville District to outside readership.” We do too! Please don't wait for the next readership survey - every issue of JaxStrong includes an e-mail address (JaxStrongEditor@usace.army.mil) where readers may submit a comment or a story idea at any time.

The Corporate Communications Office appreciates the feedback received and welcomes input that will help us continually improve your newsletter, so that it achieves the internal (command) information objective of enhancing job effectiveness and enabling team members to communicate about the history, work and accomplishments of the U.S. Army, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Jacksonville District. As one respondent stated, “I think JaxStrong is a great publication that really connects employees to the big picture of the district, reminding us that we are part of something bigger.” ♦

WATER (continued from PAGE 15)

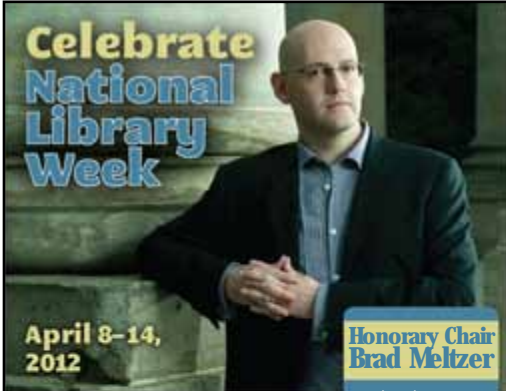
“Without the releases that have been authorized this year, we would be seeing salinity of 20-25 (psu), perhaps even higher without rain, here at the lock,” said Wessel. “That's a level more appropriate at the Cape Coral bridge, which is some 20 miles downstream.”

The water releases to the Caloosahatchee, by themselves, have very little impact on the overall lake level, lowering it at a rate of less than ¼ inch per week.

“Pulse releases attempt to mimic the natural system by simulating actual rainfall events,” said Tarr. “LORS (Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule) and adaptive protocols outline specific guidelines for environmental releases predicated on Lake Okeechobee water level elevations.”

While the lake still remains within the Corps' preferred range of 12½-15½ feet, a prolonged period of dry weather, which began in 2010, has resulted in continued challenges for water managers. January was another month of record dry weather in the region, although the lake remains higher now than it was at this point in 2011, largely because of record rainfall in October.

“The Corps has been a fundamental part of helping create and keep some of the balance,” said Wessel, “when they have provided support for pulse releases into the Caloosahatchee.” ♦



**Celebrate
National
Library
Week**

**April 8-14,
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**Honorary Chair
Brad Meltzer**

Brad Meltzer, National Library Week Honorary Chair, is the author of “The Book of Fate,” “The Inner Circle,” and “Heroes For My Son.” He is also the host of Brad Meltzer's “Decoded” on the History Channel. www.bradmeltzer.com

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USACE Libraries and the National Technical Competencies Team

COMMENTARY BY ORIANA ARMSTRONG

Did you know that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sponsors a unique, high-energy team of engineers, called the National Technical Competencies Team (NTCT), chaired by James C. Dalton, chief of headquarters' Engineering and Construction? Until recent years, I was like any other average person, unaware of such a group, but then I was introduced to the function of the NTCT, and what I sensed professionally was a burst of renewed purpose, almost as if technical competencies and technical libraries were of the same mind.

To the professional engineer, the discipline of learning and the acquisition of knowledge must be highly valued commodities. With that in mind, think of the importance of knowledge intra-sharing by our Communities of Practice (CoPs). Now line up the NTCT and the COPs with a third component, the USACE Library. The Corps is one of the top public engineering enterprises in the new world economy, and it would be highly appropriate for us to broaden that vast foundation of expertise to a global standard. NTCT supports the mission of attaining technical knowledge, and looks to libraries as its counterpart to support the stewardship of valuable resources.

Libraries can be key to the longevity of the Corps if we make a concerted effort to remove the number one barrier to agency teaming and subject excellence -- the inadvertent blocking of cross-functional sharing. Cross-functional sharing is blocked when we limit access to information. The fluidity of learning is lost by burying authentic documents, agency studies, and years of trusted intellectual property, deep within our separate divisional enclaves.

To ease some of the "knowledge blocking," USACE libraries are gaining ground in the cross-functional sharing of digital content by implementing the enterprise-wide USACE electronic library system. Headquarters funding now allows for a Corps-wide package of electronic library resources. Libraries are one of our biggest unknown assets, but when viewed as an enterprise-wide benefit, USACE libraries could feasibly be viewed as centers of expertise, rather than isolated functions. Isolation taught us that profit and efficiency cannot be realized with tools taken from composites of scattered, disconnected local assets.

Libraries leverage our tenacity as technical professionals, promote knowledge sharing, and enhance the Corps' appreciation for an interdisciplinary approach to problem solving. As NTCT continues with strategies to promote technical competency, professional team building and cross-functional optimization of human capital, there remains one missing cog in this wheel of excellence -- a direct link to a professionally managed USACE electronic library.

The idea of virtual libraries and cloud technology is not really a new idea, but we also know that it is not going away. It should be the job of every professional engineer to come to terms with the cost of electronic content, not the software, but the knowledge content that is embedded within the software. When we face the fact that licensed content bears a large price tag, we can then determine the disciplined actions required to incorporate knowledge as part of the cost of doing business. ♦

read about
**America's
EVERGLADES**

**Everglades
Reading List**
www.evergladesplan.org/read

**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
Jacksonville District

This Earth Day, why not read about the world's one and only Everglade—to get started, check out:
www.evergladesplan.org/read
for a list of non-fiction and fiction books for all ages.



BOOKNOOK

BLUE COVENANT: THE GLOBAL WATER CRISIS AND THE COMING BATTLE FOR THE RIGHT TO WATER BY MAUDE BARLOW. © 2008.

Activist Barlow has written a follow-up to her previous work, "Blue Gold" a book that exposed how a handful of corporations are gaining ownership and control of the earth's dwindling water supply, depriving millions of people around the world of access to this most basic of resources and accelerating the onset of a global water crisis. In this sequel she addresses the state of the global water crisis in stark and nearly devastating prose. Her grip on the subject is astonishing and equaled only by an ability to efficiently and effectively pass enormous amounts of information to readers in the most accessible manner. The major focus here is on water privatization and how it has affected countries in Asia, Africa, and beyond. Barlow discusses water forums, community resistance, and deals between governments and corporations, explaining that much of the world is without water or facing extravagant water taxes. Barlow holds the reader's attention by citing such startling facts as 12 million people in Mexico have no potable water and 25 million more have workable taps for only a few hours weekly. The ongoing drought crisis in the southeastern U.S. makes her arguments that much more prescient and broadens the book's appeal. Blue Covenant is an intelligent resource for anyone interested in environmental concerns. ♦

FAMILY READINESS NETWORK

WELCOME HOME

MARK BENNETT
JOSE PENA
GORDON GRIMES
ANDY VAN OHLEN

FAREWELL TO

IVAN FANNIN
CLAURICE DINGLE
RONALD WILSON
WILLIAM MAY
ROBERT MEDLOCK
CARLOS ESTRELLA
RAFAEL FELIX
MILAN MORA
STEPHEN SULLIVAN

Month of the MILITARY CHILD

Operation Military Kids encourages everyone across the nation to celebrate our military children and "Purple Up" by wearing purple on Friday, April 13 as a visible way to show support and thank military children for their strength and sacrifices.

National VOLUNTEER MONTH

When we open our minds and our hearts to what we can do for others, it's easy to make great things happen. A special thank you to all of our Family Readiness Network volunteers. – MARIA EGGERS

ALL ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND FAMILY READINESS NETWORK MEETINGS, HELD EVERY THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
MARIA EGGERS, FAMILY READINESS SPECIALIST
904-232-2159

JAXHAPPENINS'

APRIL – NATIONAL VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION MONTH; MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

- APR 16—Family Readiness Week
- APR 22—Earth Day
- APR 25—Administrative Professionals Day
- APR 25—National Walk at Work Day
- APR 26—Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day

MAY – ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH; NATIONAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONTH

- MAY 9-11—Safety Pays Conference
- MAY 13-18—Governor's Hurricane Conference
- MAY 16—Blood Drive
- MAY 22—Hurricane exercise
- MAY 28—Memorial Day

JUNE – NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

- JUN 3-8—International Association for Ecology's (INTECOL) 9th Annual Wetlands Conference and Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (GEER) Conference
- JUN 14—U.S. Army and USACE 237th birthday
- JUN 21—Health Fair
- JUN 22—Corps Day
- JUN 28—Jacksonville District Change of Command Ceremony

WATCH E-MAIL FOR DETAILS!

Calling all SHUTTERBUGS

The Photo Showcase is a new program sponsored by the Corporate Communications Office and open to all district team members, for the purpose of collecting high quality photographs that represent the district, its activities, sites and projects. These photos will be used in a variety of media, including but not limited to brochures, presentations, fact sheets and websites.

Periodically, a photo will be selected by the CCO staff and displayed on the district's external (Internet) and internal (Intranet) homepages with photo credit. A selection of photos will later be used to create a 2013 district calendar.

To enter a photo for the Photo Showcase, please visit Jacksonville District's Intranet page (<https://intranet.saj.usace.army.mil>) and click on the Photo Showcase link for complete instructions and entry forms.

GUIDELINES:

- Only photos of Jacksonville District activities, sites and projects are eligible.
- Photos may be submitted in the following categories:
 - Civil
 - Military
 - Environment
 - Recreation
 - Navigation
- Photos must be digital, at least 300 dpi and include caption information.
- All participants will sign a release form giving permission for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District to use photos with no monetary expectations.
- If photo includes people, a signed release from each person pictured in the photo (or parent/guardian in the case of a minor child) must be submitted with photo(s).

HELPFUL HINTS FOR BETTER PHOTOS:

- Keep backgrounds as simple as possible
- Experiment with flash – try using outdoors and not using indoors to achieve best effects
- Try many different angles but keep in mind that horizontal shots offer more flexibility
- Try moving the subject off-center
- Action shots are preferred over "grip-and-grin" photos
- Move in close; consider using macro setting for close-ups of detailed objects
- Make sure there is a foreground, middle ground and background
- Last but not least – **HAVE FUN!!**



Welcome to JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT



CRYSTAL BARRETO
Office of Counsel



LILLY CHAVIS
Civilian Personnel Advisory Center

PARTINGSHOTS 2012 EARTH DAY - IT'S A SMALL WORLD



1. It's a small world after all – Earth as seen from space. (PHOTO COURTESY NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION WEBSITE) 2. Dozens of Tamarix seedlings grow in the mud at Dames Point in Jacksonville. Jacksonville District and its contractors work many long hours in an attempt to keep the plant from spreading, as part of the Invasive Species Management Program. (PHOTO BY JESSICA SPENCER) 3. Jacksonville District Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction projects are planned to avoid disturbing turtle nesting season. (USACE PHOTO) 4. A Feb 18, 2011 view of the Faka Union Canal. Work started last year to plug the canal, build a pump station, and remove road from an area of Collier County. When complete, the project will restore natural water flows over 85 square miles and improve the area's hydrology, allowing for the return of more balanced plant communities. (PHOTO BY STACY CAGLE) 5. A Great Egret sits in an oxbow of the Caloosahatchee River near Olga. Jacksonville District and Lee County are conducting a feasibility study on the oxbows as they look for possible options to restore the ecosystem that existed before the construction of the C-43 canal (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL) 6. Geodesist Damon Wolfe gets ready to launch the NOVA Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) as Victor Wilhelm and Brandon Evers look on. Jacksonville District uses the NOVA to take pictures from above Lake Okeechobee that will help Corps biologists track various plant species. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL) 7. A deer gallops through the swamp. Jacksonville District consistently seeks a good balance between human, economic and natural systems. (USACE PHOTO) 8. Regulatory Division consults with other agencies before issuing permits for activities in waters of the United States that may impact the endangered smalltooth sawfish or its habitat. (USACE PHOTO) 9. Sampling of Everglades marsh fish species and vegetation is done under the Adaptive Assessment and Monitoring program, to monitor the relationship between fish, hydrology and vegetation. Professor Jennifer Rehage uses an electrofishing boat in Everglades National Park to better understand predator fish movements in relation to hydrology and prey species, and how they may be affected by Everglades restoration. (USACE PHOTO)