



JAXSTRONG[®]

IN THIS ISSUE

- BROWN AND BOGINA RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION
- REGULATORY DIVISION KEEPS ST. THOMAS RUNNING
- THE HUNT FOR BURMESE PYTHONS IS ON

...AND MORE



JAXSTRONG

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OUR WORK • OUR PEOPLE • OUR DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2013 | Volume 5 Issue 2



COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

"Duty is the most sublime word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more. You should never wish to do less." - ROBERT E. LEE

Our country was built on the principal of service to others. As federal employees, we are public servants who respond to the needs of our fellow citizens. But how do we define service to the nation and how do we measure our success?

Some would say our service is defined by how well we execute the president's policies and priorities through our chain of command. Others say we answer to Congress; its laws, authorizations and appropriations identify our projects and missions. Both are right, but there is something more fundamental about service to the nation.

A Soldier's purpose is pretty clear, to fight and win the nation's wars. One of the best descriptions I have heard came from one of your fellow employees, when she said she answers to her grandmother and every American who expects we will protect and preserve the nation. Our responsibility is to build the nation so that it continues to prosper and remain strong economically, environmentally, socially and militarily.

Elected officials represent their constituents and direct government agencies to meet common security, education and health needs. Following World War II, one would have been hard pressed to find any Americans who did not serve the nation, either in uniform or as a civilian. People got involved, not for personal gain, but because it was the right thing to do. Sadly, times have changed and most Americans are not personally involved in service or in fighting for a cause. And most Americans do not realize how important service is, or how much satisfaction they will get, by doing something for others.

Some of the most important milestones that define us as a nation – the 13th Amendment, the right for women to vote, the Clean Water Act – only resulted because people cared and wanted to make this country better.

With all the rules, regulations, policies and political pressures associated with projects and missions, I sometimes think we focus too much on the business aspect of our work and forget our underlying purpose – to serve, benefit and improve the nation for all. As public servants, I hope you realize the importance of your service and that without people like you, the nation could not succeed. Beyond the projects, permits, contracts and planning studies, we have a collective responsibility to challenge those things that don't make sense and fix processes to make them better.

I ask you to help make USACE and the government better servants for America and more responsive to the needs of our country. Take some time to talk with high school students about the importance of studying science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). Listen to the Audubon Society and other non-government organizations to hear their perspectives on what we do. And help each other, both professionally and personally, to make every day count as we move forward in our mission.

Every day is an opportunity to make a difference in some way, to further a project, to brighten someone else's day or just get involved. Make it count, by deciding how your service to the nation contributes to our collective prosperity, and if there is something more to be done. Keep on doing the tremendous work you do; it is important and the country depends upon us. Thank you for your service, your dedication and your commitment to USACE and to the nation.

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

Alan M. Dodd
Colonel, U.S. Army
District Commander

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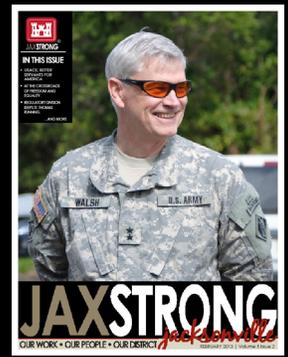
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Commander's Corner	page 2
Deputy commanding general visits	page 3
Black History Month	page 4
Tim Brown honored	page 5
New Faces of Engineering	page 5
We Need YOU!	page 7
Where in the world	page 8
Central Everglades Planning Project	page 9
Spencer discusses invasive plants	page 9
Engineering Career Day	page 10
Burmese Pythons threaten	page 11
Federal, state partners celebrate	page 12
Regulatory Division's quick response	page 13
Jacksonville District's Kassner Winners	page 14

ON THE COVER

Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations, visited Jacksonville District project sites in south Florida Jan. 23 and 24, including the Tamiami Trail Modifications project and the Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation project.
STORY ON PAGE 3. (PHOTO BY JENN MILLER)



Deputy commanding general visits south Florida project sites

BY JENN MILLER



After visiting the Tamiami Trail bridge site, Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations took an airboat ride through the Everglades alongside Dan Kimball (left), superintendent of Everglades National Park, Col. Alan Dodd, Jacksonville District commander (right), and Howie Gonzales, chief of the Ecosystem Branch Jan. 23, 2013. (Photo by Tim Brown)

Maj. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deputy commanding general for civil and emergency operations, visited Jacksonville District project sites in south Florida Jan. 23 and 24, including the Tamiami Trail Modifications project and the Herbert Hoover Dike Rehabilitation project.

"Jacksonville District has the second largest civil works program in the Corps and is responsible for some of our most significant civil works projects," said Walsh. "By visiting Herbert Hoover Dike and ongoing Everglades restoration efforts, I saw the great progress that has been made to date. Equally as important, I was impressed by this district's dedication to delivering the best possible engineering solutions and services that contribute to the nation's economy, environment, safety and quality of life."

One of Walsh's first stops during his visit was to the Tamiami Trail Modifications project in Miami-Dade County, Fla., where he was able to walk along the completed bridge deck and receive an update on the current construction status. Once completed, the Tamiami Trail Modifications project will allow for increased water flow into Everglades National Park. The project is scheduled to be completed in December 2013, with the bridge itself being scheduled for completion next month.

"Three months ago, we brought Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Bostick to this site and concrete was still being poured on this bridge deck. Now we are able to walk completely across it," said Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd. "The level of commitment this team has to delivering a quality project on schedule is extremely commendable."

After visiting the bridge site, Walsh took an airboat ride through the Everglades alongside Dan Kimball, superintendent of Everglades National Park, and Dave Sikkema, the park's project manager, to experience the Everglades first-hand and see where the resulting increased water flows from the Tamiami Trail project will have a direct benefit.

He then flew to the district's Picayune Strand Restoration Project in Collier County, Fla., where 55,000 acres of native Florida wetlands and uplands are being restored by plugging 48 miles of canals, removing 260 miles of crumbling road, and building and operating pump stations to direct fresh water to the drained wetlands. Besides restoring fresh water wetlands, the project will improve estuarine water quality by increasing groundwater recharge and reducing large and unnatural freshwater

inflows. Construction of the Merritt Canal Pump Station at the Picayune Strand Restoration project is scheduled to be complete this year, and the Corps awarded the construction contract for the Faka Union Pump Station in 2010.

After witnessing these construction projects near the southern end of the Everglades ecosystem, Walsh then visited the district's ongoing construction project that surrounds the liquid heart of the Everglades ecosystem – Lake Okeechobee and Herbert Hoover Dike in Palm Beach County, Fla.

Herbert Hoover Dike is a 143-mile embankment system surrounding Lake Okeechobee. Jacksonville District is working to reduce the risk of embankment failure by installing a cutoff wall and removing and replacing water control structures (culverts) around the lake. A comprehensive, system-wide study is also ongoing to identify and prioritize additional risk reduction features to help ensure the continued safety of south Florida residents.

"Public safety is our top priority," said Dodd. "We recently completed the installation of 21 miles of cutoff wall between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade and expect to complete the replacement or removal of 32 water control structures by 2018. We are constantly looking for the most structurally sound and cost effective means to strengthen the dike, as each improvement reduces risk for the communities that depend upon it."

In addition to visiting the Jacksonville District projects that are currently under construction, Walsh also paid a visit to the Central Everglades Planning Project team during its Project Delivery Team meeting in West Palm Beach, Fla.

The Central Everglades Planning Project is one of two national pilot projects being conducted by Jacksonville District. The goal of this project is to deliver, within two years, finalized plans for a suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades for congressional authorization – providing the first step in restoring conditions within, and natural flows to, the central Everglades.

"Many people are looking at what you're able to accomplish," said Walsh. "Not just for the Corps' pilot project, but also for the President's 'We Can't Wait' Initiative. The lessons learned in this project will not only change the planning process for south Florida, but for the nation." ♦



African American/Black History Month

BY ERICA ROBBINS



Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts (right) administers the oath of office to President Barack Obama during the inaugural swearing-in ceremony at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C., Jan. 21, 2013. First Lady Michelle Obama holds a Bible that belonged to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and the Lincoln Bible, which was used at President Obama's 2009 inaugural ceremony. Daughters Malia and Sasha stand with their parents. (Official White House photo by Sonya N. Hebert, used with permission)

In observance of African American/Black History Month, which takes place Feb. 1-28, 2013, Jacksonville District's Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Office has planned several events with the theme, "At the Crossroads of Freedom and Equality: The Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington." Mayor Alvin Brown of the city of Jacksonville is the keynote speaker for a program scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 27 from 10 to 11 a.m.

Regulatory Division will defend its Black History Month Brain Brawl championship title when it all goes down on Friday, Feb. 15 beginning at 11 a.m. Gerald DeLoach, an electrical engineer in the mechanical and electrical section has been a Brain Brawl participant and team captain in past years. This year, he repeats his role as executive producer and host.

"It's a spirited, competitive way to enrich everyone's understanding of African American/Black History Month," said DeLoach. "We invite everyone to participate in some way, whether as a captain, a team member or in the audience supporting the teams. You are sure to learn something you didn't know before, and will have fun doing it!"

To practice for the Brain Brawl and test your knowledge of the Emancipation Proclamation and the March on Washington, "Like" the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District Facebook page, where African American/Black History Month questions will be posted between Feb. 1 and Feb. 15.

The enduring symbolic importance of the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 and the March on Washington in 1963 was highlighted during President Obama's second inaugural ceremony, held Jan. 21. Obama selected President Abraham Lincoln's Bible and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s traveling Bible when he took the oath of office Jan. 21, the holiday observed in remembrance of King. ♦

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

At the
CROSSROADS
of

FREEDOM

and

EQUALITY LN

The Emancipation Proclamation 1863

and the MARCH ON WASHINGTON 1963

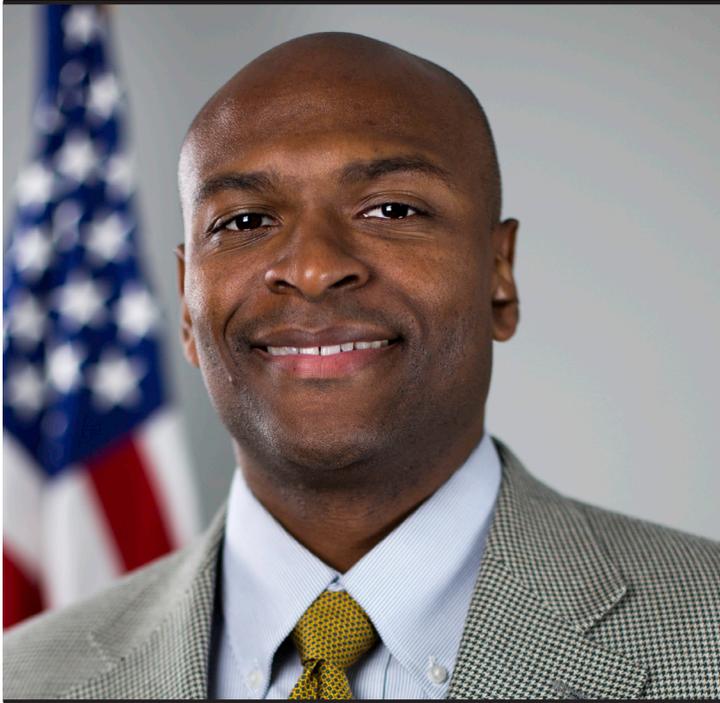
WASHINGTON

Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the

sunlit path of racial justice.

Jacksonville engineer Tim Brown honored at national conference

BY JEAN PAVLOV



Timothy R. Brown, senior project manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has been honored as the 27th Black Engineer of the Year. He will receive the award at the Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Global Competitiveness Conference in Washington, D.C. Feb. 7, 2013. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

Timothy R. Brown, a senior project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, is the recipient of the 27th Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA), to be conferred at the annual Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Global Competitiveness Conference in Washington, D.C. Feb. 7, 2013. Brown is responsible for leading interdisciplinary project delivery teams in the execution of large scale civil works projects.

The Black Engineer of the Year Award is one of the most prestigious and competitive honors in science, engineering and technology management. The STEM Conference is a talent-rich environment for recruitment, networking and professional development. College representatives and thousands of elite professionals and students from across the country representing the upper echelon of the science, technology, engineering and mathematics disciplines and careers attend the event.

Thousands of America's most creative and innovative engineering professionals have been nominated for this nationally recognized honor, yet in its 27-year history, fewer than 700 have achieved the distinction of being a Black Engineer of the Year honoree.

Statistics show that science, technology, engineering, and mathematics enrollments are declining in our country, at precisely the moment when the global economy is driving up the demand for STEM professionals.

"A STEM scholarship helped me through college," said Brown. "If it wasn't for me accidentally finding out about the scholarship, I probably wouldn't be here today."

(Continues on **PAGE 6**)

New Faces of Engineering: Viktoria Bogina

BY JEAN PAVLOV

Viktoria Bogina, E.I.T., a civil engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District, was one of the USACE nominees for this year's New Faces of Engineering program. "I'm really excited for this recognition, and I couldn't be more thrilled!" said Bogina.

Each year, the National Engineers Week Foundation – a coalition of engineering societies, major corporations and government agencies – asks its members to nominate colleagues 30 years old and younger who have shown outstanding abilities and leadership. The program promotes the accomplishments of young engineers, highlights the impact of their engineering contributions on society and inspires students to consider engineering careers.

Bogina joined Jacksonville District in 2008, as an engineering co-op and then as an intern in the Engineering Division, Design Branch, geomatics section. In March 2012, she was hired as a civil engineer. Her nomination for the New Faces of Engineering program was based on her contributions to the success of the district modeling, mapping, and consequences (MMC) team, which supports national efforts in developing maps for emergency action plans, hydraulic models for Corps dams, consequence data, and standards for these activities.

"Viktoria is one of the most diligent civil engineers I have met," said Robert Swilley, acting chief of the geomatics section. "Her attention to detail and the speed at which she learns is simply amazing."

Bogina's involvement is unique in that she is able to perform both the mapping and the development of consequence data for the program, while also considering public safety as a key component in identifying areas of concern in certain high water events. "Due to her great work ethic and comprehension of hydraulic models, she has progressed through the ranks of the MMC program to be personally recommended as a national coordinator," said Swilley.



Viktoria Bogina, civil engineer with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, was a nominee for the National Engineers Week Foundation's New Faces of Engineering program. (PHOTO COURTESY OF VIKTORIA BOGINA)

(Continues on **PAGE 6**)



TIM BROWN (continued from PAGE 5)

Brown said that he almost had to drop out of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University in 1998 because of a lack of funds. Luckily, he overheard a fellow student in the hallway talking about losing his scholarship due to bad grades.

"Since I had good grades, but no money, I ran over to the admissions office and asked about the scholarship the other guy lost, and I applied for it and received it! It saved me," Brown said.

The STEM scholarship was called the Florida-Georgia Alliance for Minority Participation Project (FGAMP). The FGAMP project is the product of a group of universities committed to increasing the production of minority graduates in science, engineering and mathematics.

When the Black Engineer of the Year Award was launched by Dr. Tyrone Taborn, there were few role models for students of color in STEM. Taborn, chief executive officer of Career Communications Group, which publishes U.S. Black Engineer & IT magazine, joined with the engineering deans of Morgan State, in Baltimore, Md., and Howard University in Washington, D.C., to change that.

"That is why this award is sentimental to me," said Brown. "If not for them, I might not be here today. I might not be an engineer. I might not have been able to finish my degree. Tyrone Taborn is one of the good guys. He's one of the people who really gives back to the community and the things he does make a difference in people's lives."

Brown will receive his Special Recognition Award at the Dean's Breakfast.

Like his mentor, Brown now gives back to the community by serving his community as a mentor and tutor, and by providing lawn care service for the elderly. He received the Jacksonville District Community Service Award in recognition of his selfless service. He volunteers at local elementary schools, serves as head coach for youth sports teams, is a merit badge leader for Boy Scout troops and co-chairs the father's auxiliary of the Jacksonville Chapter of Jack and Jill, Inc., a non-profit youth leadership organization.

Brown also received the BEYA STEM Modern Day Technology Leader award, NATO International Security Assistance Force Service Medal, two Commander's Awards for Civilian Service, and a Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

"I know how STEM impacted my life," said Brown. "Getting an award like this from this group means a lot to me on a deep personal level and I hope to continue to keep giving back and investing in people." ♦

VIKTORIA BOGINA (continued from PAGE 5)

In October 2012 the national MMC team asked Bogina to be the national lead mapping quality assurance coordinator and reviewer for MMC maps. "As chief of her section, I couldn't be happier with her performance and can only hope that future civil engineers be mentored by someone like Viktoria," said Swilley.

Bogina has also been an integral part of Jacksonville District's deep and shallow water draft projects. Her work in performing quality assurance on dredging activities and volume computations for measurement purposes is vital to ensure proper depths are met so vessels can safely navigate the many harbors and waterways in the area.

Bogina holds a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of North Florida.

She is involved with the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME) Jacksonville Post, currently serving on both the Young Members and the Leadership and Mentoring committees. She was also named as 2012 Young Engineer of the Year.

A member of the planning team for the 2012 and 2013 Engineering Career Days, an annual event co-sponsored by SAME and Jacksonville District to encourage high school students to pursue engineering degrees, Bogina said she encourages high school students to take college preparatory courses, such as Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate Program, as she did at Paxon School for Advanced Studies.

"Not only do these more advanced classes get you ahead in college, they also teach you time management skills and prepare you for a tough curriculum in the engineering college program," she explained.

Bogina said that she was inspired to pursue engineering by her parents, and that they served as her mentors, encouraging her and providing her with what she needed to succeed. "I love what I do!" said Bogina. "I'm so fortunate that I get to work with many engineering programs because I really enjoy technical work, especially a wide variety of it. I'm also thankful to have great leadership and co-workers that promote learning and continue to support my development as an engineer."

Information about the National Engineers Week Foundation and the New Faces of Engineering nominees can be found at www.eweek.org. ♦

Pay attention to drowning prevention!

Adam Tarplee (left), natural resource program manager, wears a manual-inflating personal flotation device while working the Drowning Prevention Coalition of Palm Beach County booth with coalition volunteer Tanya Meese at the South Florida Fair in West Palm Beach, Fla. They challenged attendees to answer water safety riddles to raise awareness about water safety. ♦

(PHOTO COURTESY OF DIANE HENNESSEY, DROWNING PREVENTION COALITION OF PALM BEACH COUNTY)





We need YOU! STORY AND PHOTO BY CLAY CHURCH, FORT WORTH DISTRICT



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers safety specialists Clifford Pollard, Engineering and Research Development Center's Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory, and Eduardo Garcia, Jacksonville District, look on as nurse Mary Haynes, Mobile District, discusses potential wildlife and insect hazards with the Fire Island National Park Service Station Commander Jan. 9, 2013. (PHOTO BY CLAY CHURCH, FORT WORTH DISTRICT)

The iconic WWII recruiting poster of Uncle Sam pointing comes to mind when asking people to volunteer for possible deployment following a disaster. Recent events with tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and even tsunamis demonstrate a continuing need to recruit talented individuals for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Planning and Response Teams (PRTs). These teams provide assistance in time of disaster to help people recover and set a path to return to normalcy.

The team members for these PRTs come from every USACE district, division, center and organization. People with almost any skill set, background, training or specialty may be used. The main underlying factor is an individual with the proper skill sets for the particular team along with an attitude of flexibility tempered with patience and the ability to work with a team on a common mission.

These missions come primarily from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through Emergency Support Function (ESF) #3, "Public Works and Engineering," one of 15 ESFs under the National Response Framework. Skill sets most desired for the teams and particular questions may be directed to your emergency management office or supervisor.

Typical ESF#3 assistance provided by USACE includes assessing damage and needs, including damage to infrastructure; providing emergency power to public facilities; providing potable water and ice; clearing and disposing of debris from public property; restoring critical public facilities; stabilizing or demolishing damaged structures and facilities; providing technical assistance, including inspections of private

residential and commercial structures; and support to other ESFs, such as provision of temporary housing and/or temporary roofing.

Now that you have some basic knowledge of a USACE PRT why would you want to consider being a member? One of the best ways to answer is to provide some comments overheard at recent Hurricane Sandy New York Recovery Field Office (RFO) Hail and Farewells:

"I've had so many mentors, worked harder in one hour than ever before but then turned around and worked the next hour even harder."

"Awesome experience, awesome people. Able to network is probably best aspect."

"For those in the Recovery Field Office, find a way to get out into the field—fired and cold; get out there and see what they are going through."

"Love going out in the field and meeting everyone."

"Amazing effort by people moving forward—lots of areas of the Corps in one setting."

"Saw the RFO team come together and blessed to be able to see it come together for the people of New York."

Hurricane Sandy RFO Commander, Lt. Col. John Knight ended the farewell portion by saying, "Thank all you guys leaving— you have done a really great job for this team and helping out the people of New York. Be safe, teach other people in your districts. Provide after action reports so that we can improve for the next disaster."

With your supervisor's approval, contact your emergency management office for the procedures to apply to be a member of a USACE PRT. ♦



Erika Mark, New England District, conducts a property assessment on Fire Island, N.Y., Jan. 12, 2013.

ARMY CIVILIAN CORPS CREED

- ★ I am an Army civilian – a member of the Army team.
- ★ I am dedicated to our Army, our Soldiers and civilians.
- ★ I will always support the mission.
- ★ I provide stability and continuity during war and peace.
- ★ I support and defend the Constitution of the United States and consider it an honor to serve our nation and our Army.
- ★ I live the Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage.
- ★ I am an Army civilian.



Where in the world are the Antilles and Puerto Rico?

First in a series of four stories about the history of the Antilles Office BY ERICA ROBBINS



The Antilles is an archipelago or chain of islands, including several islands that are part of Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. (BASE MAP COURTESY OF KMUSSE, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

Jacksonville District's area of responsibility includes the Antilles and Puerto Rico, but some have only a vague idea of the location of the Antilles, its relationship with the United States, and what the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does there. This first installment in a series provides a bird's eye view of the Antilles.

The Antilles is an archipelago, or chain of islands, stretching more than 1,500 miles between in North and South America, bordered by the Gulf of Mexico and the Atlantic Ocean to the north and the Caribbean Sea to the south. The Antilles are divided into two sections, the Greater Antilles and the Lesser Antilles. The Greater Antilles, made up of continental rock, is geologically distinct from the Lesser Antilles, which is mostly young volcanic or coral islands. Geographically, the Antilles are considered to be part of North America or Central America. Culturally, many of the countries are included in Latin America.

The Greater Antilles, made up of the larger islands to the north and west, include Cuba, the Cayman Islands, Jamaica, Hispaniola (Haiti on the west and the Dominican Republic on the east) and Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico, the smallest of the four main islands, is a U.S. Commonwealth.

Puerto Rico is not just one island, but rather an archipelago within the Antilles archipelago. The main island of Puerto Rico, known as La Isla Grande, is about 100 miles long and 35 miles wide.

Vieques, a 52-square-mile municipality, is located eight miles east of Puerto Rico. The island's highest peak, Monte Pirata, stands 1,000 feet high and although the island has no rivers, it has lagoons and fertile soil. One of its most unique areas is Mosquito Bay, one of only five areas in the world populated by bioluminescent organisms that glow as they move in the water.

The island municipality of Culebra is located 17 miles east of the main island of Puerto Rico. About ten square miles in size, it has arid soil that is used for pasture land and fruit farming. The island's beaches are

reputedly among the most beautiful in the world, and the sea provides excellent fishing, snorkeling and diving opportunities.

The Lesser Antilles includes the northerly Leeward Islands, the southeasterly Windward Islands, and the Leeward Antilles, just north of Venezuela. The U.S. Virgin Islands, a United States territory, are located in the Leeward Islands, and include the islands of St. Croix, St. Thomas, St. John and Water Island. In 1917, the U.S. purchased the islands from Denmark as a defensive strategy to maintain control in the Caribbean and Panama Canal during World War I. ♦

Coming in next month's issue: What is the relationship between the United States, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands?



Castillo San Felipe del Morro, a World Heritage Site on the northernmost point of Puerto Rico, was built in the 1500s to defend the port of San Juan and control access to the harbor. (USACE FILE PHOTO)

Series of public meetings held for Central Everglades Planning Project

BY JENN MILLER



Matt Morrison (left), South Florida Water Management District project manager for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and Gretchen Ehlinger (second from right), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers environmental lead for CEPP, explain the proposed final array of alternatives for CEPP at the Dec. 13 public meeting in Stuart, Fla. The event was one of five meetings conducted throughout south Florida between Dec. 10 and Dec. 18, 2012. (Photo by Ty Erickson)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District hosted a series of public meetings to present the proposed final array of alternatives for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), and to give all interested individuals, groups and agencies an opportunity to comment and ask questions.

Meetings were held in south Florida between Dec. 10 and Dec. 18, 2012 in Fort Myers, Homestead, Clewiston, Stuart and Coconut Creek. Each meeting began with an open house, followed by formal presentations and public comments.

"Public participation has been, and will continue to be, an invaluable part of the Central Everglades Planning Project," said Kim Taplin, project supervisor. "These meetings will further ensure that the Corps and our partner, the South Florida Water Management District, receive the public input needed to develop an understandable and broadly supported path forward."

The goal of the Central Everglades Planning Project is to deliver within two years a finalized plan, known as a Project Implementation Report, for a suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades to prepare for congressional authorization as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

USACE is jointly conducting the CEPP effort with the South Florida Water Management District.

Public comments are being accepted throughout the duration of the planning process. Comments may be submitted electronically to: CEPPComments@usace.army.mil, or mailed to: Dr. Gretchen Ehlinger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, P.O. Box 4970, Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019.

Additional information is available online at:

http://www.bit.ly/CentralEverglades_CEPP and on the project fact sheet. ♦

Spencer discusses invasive plants at local science symposium

STORY AND PHOTO BY ANNIE CHAMBERS

In an effort to educate land managers and the public about two plants that are just beginning to invade the Jacksonville area, biologist Jessica Spencer gave a presentation at the 2013 Timucuan Science and History Symposium Jan. 25 in Jacksonville, Fla.

The unwelcome vegetation described by Spencer was Old World climbing fern and Saltcedar.

Saltcedar has recently been found inhabiting several new sites, including a retention pond, the JaxPort Cruise Terminal and Big Talbot Island State Park. Jacksonville District is continuing the early detection/rapid response effort to control saltcedar.

"If we are able to get people to rapidly identify and treat these infestations before they spread, then we can avoid major impacts in the future," said Spencer.

Old World climbing fern, an invasive vine known as the Kudzu of south Florida, made a dramatic jump to north Florida where it was detected in two populations in Jacksonville. The Invasive Species Management (ISM) Branch is working closely with First Coast Invasive Working Group and the Florida Inland Navigation District to implement an aggressive early detection/rapid response to this species.

"I enjoy educating the public on invasive species issues. Most people have an interest in the topic and I usually get lots of follow-up questions and comments. Today, I even got a couple of volunteers," said Spencer. ♦



"I enjoy educating the public on invasive species issues," said Jessica Spencer, biologist in the Invasive Species Management Branch, following her talk at the 2013 Timucuan Science and History Symposium Jan. 25.



Motivating, recruiting students was driving force behind Engineering Career Day

Career Day

BY JEAN PAVLOV

A desire to motivate students to pursue engineering degrees and jobs ten years ago by a handful of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District engineers and other young professionals resulted in what has become an annual high school competition on Engineering Career Day.

These enterprising engineers from several different disciplines within the Corps came up with a plan to make students aware of a possible future in the fields of science, engineering, math and technology via a take home construction competition.

The first event, in 2003, included a day of hands-on competitions, one-on-one interaction with engineers, a luncheon and a keynote speaker. The Jacksonville Post of the Society of American Military Engineers co-sponsored the event and Jacksonville District volunteers helped to make it happen.

"As we progressed, we realized that using a hands-on approach to learning about engineering excited the students and motivated them to explore these possible career paths," said Tim Gysan, one of the early organizers of the event. Gysan, Mike Presley, Steve Duba, Stacey Roth and Melissa Reynolds were all on the original planning team.

By bringing so many facets of engineering together at one time, students were able to talk to engineers about their jobs, to universities about degree programs and to company representatives about future jobs. Gysan said he was amazed at how quickly the students gained interest in engineering as a viable career choice.

The planning team decided to assign participating high school teams a detailed take home project they could work on prior to the event. Each high school's project was then judged and the best one awarded the James L. Garland Award for Engineering Excellence, a trophy named for a former Jacksonville District Engineering Division chief. The trophy, which is the top prize, is passed on each year to the winning school.

One project called for demonstrating the behavior of a bridge subjected to catastrophic loads and show the life cycle cost of the project. Each team designed and built a model wood bridge that was placed in a wave tank and subjected to simulated loads and storms of progressively larger impact. The bridges were evaluated based on the load requirements, material costs, labor costs and replacement costs.

This year's event has grown to include Bishop Kenny High School, Christ's Church Academy, Eagles View High School, Englewood High School, Fernandina Beach High School, First Coast High School, Frank H. Peterson Academies of Technology, Robert E. Lee High School, Yulee High School, Fletcher High School, Providence High School, Orange Park High School, Clay High School and Trinity Christian Academy. More than 50 teams have signed up, with many schools represented by multiple teams.

This year's take home project is to design a bridge using computer-aided West Point Bridge Designer 2012 software and constructing a model for support testing.

While take home projects are being judged, teams complete a spontaneous, time-sensitive project.



Which school will receive the James L. Garland Award for Engineering Excellence this year? Find out at the 2013 Engineering Career Day, to be held at Jacksonville District headquarters Feb. 22. (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

"I think early exposure to these science-based occupations is imperative," said Gysan, who added that the first couple of years only seniors were invited to participate, until they learned of interest from younger students.

"Career day allows students an opportunity to meet with various professionals in the community at an earlier point in their lives and really explore higher education opportunities and potential career paths," said Steve Duba, chief of Construction Division.

Duba said the employees who first volunteered for this event are still doing so, an indicator of the program's success and popularity.

"[The volunteers] get satisfaction out of seeing these kids really get into science and engineering and about wanting to learn. It's rewarding to see year after year and it really gives you hope for mankind," Duba said.

The 2013 Engineering Career Day takes place Feb. 22 beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the Jacksonville District headquarters, 701 San Marco Blvd. Keynote speaker will be Eric Bush, chief of the Planning and Policy Division. This year's theme is "Future Connections." Students will focus on projects that incorporate several different engineering disciplines. ♦

Burmese pythons threaten native species and restoration efforts

BY ANNIE CHAMBERS



Burmese pythons have been known to consume a wide variety of wildlife, including alligators, wood storks and Key Largo woodrats. (PHOTO COURTESY FLORIDA FISH AND WILDLIFE CONSERVATION COMMISSION WEBSITE)

A hunt for Burmese pythons in south Florida is not a hoax; this non-native invasive species is threatening Everglades ecosystem restoration efforts and native wildlife. The one-month 'Python Challenge' organized by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission allows anyone older than 18 to hunt the snakes on state land.

The intent of the event is to raise public awareness about Burmese pythons and how this invasive species threatens the Everglades ecosystem. Nearly 800 people registered from 30 different states to harvest the pythons.

Due to their large size, Burmese pythons have few predators; alligators and humans are the rare exceptions. Burmese pythons feed on mammals and birds and are known to prey on native species, such as the endangered Key Largo woodrat and American alligator. They may also compete with threatened native species, such as the indigo snake, according to United States Department of Agriculture's National Invasive Species Information Center website. Even deer have been consumed whole by these snakes.

Known for their docility, Burmese pythons were sold as exotic pets. The release of unwanted pets led to an introduction of the exotic species in south Florida, mostly in Everglades National Park. In the last 12 years, more than 1,950 pythons were removed from Everglades National Park and adjacent lands, according to the National Park Service website.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's website lists Burmese pythons as one of the largest snake species in the world. The largest Burmese python captured in Florida measured more than 17 ft. long and weighed 152 pounds.

"I fear that the impacts from Burmese pythons in the Everglades could wipe out all the good things we've accomplished and are trying to accomplish, such as setting conditions to restore the habitat for native plants and animals," said Jon Lane, chief, Invasive Species Management (ISM) Branch.

Burmese pythons are exceptionally difficult to locate, due to their camouflaging capabilities. The ISM branch has initiated efforts to detect the pythons by using dogs and thermal energy remote sensing by an Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV).

The Corps is one of five signatories for the Everglades Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (ECISMA). Everglades restoration poses new challenges for invasive species management and has created a need for a more defined commitment to cooperation among agencies and organizations at higher levels of policy and management.

ECISMA published a 'Field Identification of Select Native and Non-native Reptiles in Florida' to help prevent the spread of non-native species by following three steps: be prepared, make detailed observations and report what you see. The iPhone/iPad application, I'veGot1, facilitates identification and reporting of invasive animals and plants in Florida. There is also an I'veGot1 hotline and website to report sightings.

Corps employees received python safety training to help them identify and handle pythons, if necessary. The snakes appear to be traveling north from the Everglades towards Corps operations at Lake Okeechobee, with one Burmese python already impacting operations at a Corps water control structure.

"If we don't manage Burmese pythons, Everglades restoration will not be fully successful," said Lane. ♦



Burmese pythons compete directly with the top predators in the Everglades ecosystem, such as this American alligator. (PHOTO COURTESY EVERGLADES NATIONAL PARK WEBSITE)



Federal, state partners celebrate completion of key component in Everglades restoration

BY JENN MILLER



Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd spoke alongside federal and state partners at a dedication ceremony for the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project in Homestead, Fla. The event was hosted by the South Florida Water Management District Jan. 11, 2013. (PHOTO BY JENN MILLER)

Federal and state partners celebrated the completion of a key component in improving freshwater deliveries to the southern end of the Everglades ecosystem Jan. 11 in Homestead, Fla., at the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project Dedication Ceremony.

"The completion of the C-111 spreader canal is yet another example of the Department working with its partners to get the water right," said Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr. "Providing abundant and cleaner water is one step, among many designed to restore America's Everglades."

The C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), a joint effort performed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and local sponsor, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

"We applaud our partner, the South Florida Water Management District, in the completion of this phase of the project," said Terrence "Rock" Salt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. "With the continued support of the administration and the state of Florida, progress will continue to be made in our restoration efforts."

Through the SFWMD's expedited construction process, the project broke ground in January 2010, and in turn expedited the restoration of essential flows to Florida Bay and preservation of water that is essential to the vitality of Everglades National Park.

"Today we celebrate the completion of a crucial component in rehydrating the southern end of the Everglades ecosystem," said Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alan Dodd. "I look forward to the progress we will continue to make alongside our partners in restoring this national treasure."

With its series of pump stations and canals, the project raises groundwater levels directly outside the eastern boundary of Everglades National Park, creating a hydraulic barrier between the park and urban areas of Miami-Dade County that retains fresh water in the park.

"This project will keep the water that is in the park, in the park," said Dan Kimball, superintendent of Everglades and Dry Tortugas National Park. "It is the first project in CERP to provide direct benefits to Everglades National Park." ♦



Go Red for Women!

Jacksonville District team members showed their support for women's heart health by participating in the American Red Cross "Go Red for Women" campaign. Please go to the campaign website at <http://wearredday.goredforwomen.org/>, select the Government/Military group and "Like" our photo! (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY) ♦



Quick response by Regulatory Division keeps St. Thomas running

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Early in December 2012, Regulatory Division's Antilles Office staff received word that the island of St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands was on the brink of losing electrical power, absent a permit to make necessary modifications to a dock at Krum Bay which would facilitate the delivery of fuel.

The fuel supplier for the Virgin Islands Water and Power Authority (WAPA), HOVENSA, a refinery on the island of St. Croix, had notified WAPA early last year that it was ceasing production. WAPA awarded a new fuel supply contract to Trafigura; however, Trafigura's 400-foot long delivery vessel far exceeds the 100-foot vessel size accommodated by the dock. An anchor buoy system was needed in time for a mid-December delivery.

Regulatory Division received word of the needed permit Dec. 3, which was quickly followed by a work specification package Dec. 6. WAPA requested authorization to install additional fenders and two mooring buoys at the dock, as well as a shore anchor system to secure the vessel.

Under the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers authorizes activities for the protection and maintenance of the nation's navigable waterways. With the issuance of two Nationwide Permits Dec. 7, Regulatory Division's responsiveness prevented an energy crisis on the island just before the holidays.

"The standard time for issuing a permit is 30 to 45 days; however, without the permits to accomplish the necessary dock modifications as quickly as possible, the island would have been without electricity as of December 18," said Edgar Garcia, project manager.

Nationwide Permits (NWP) are intended to streamline the evaluation and approval process for certain types of activities that have only minimal impacts to the environment. There are 52 types of NWPs, to meet a variety of needs such as minor dredging, bank stabilization and aquatic habitat restoration. In this case, NWP 3 authorized the maintenance and rehabilitation of WAPA's dock at Krum Bay and NWP 10 authorized the mooring buoys. Special conditions included sea turtle construction conditions and vessel strike avoidance measures.

"Close coordination with federal resource agencies and the territory of the Virgin Islands to obtain Coastal Zone Management permit and a waiver of Water Quality Certification helped to streamline this effort," Garcia explained.

During a Dec. 13 meeting with Osvaldo Collazo, Regulatory Division's North Branch chief, Capt. J.C. Cordon, deputy district engineer for the Antilles, and Sindulfo Castillo, Edgar Garcia and Jose Cedeno of the Antilles Regulatory section, U.S. Virgin Islands Governor John P. de Jongh, Jr. and senior staff members commended the Corps and the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources for expeditiously authorizing the work that allowed St. Thomas to receive the new barge that allowed electrical power to continue without interruption. ♦

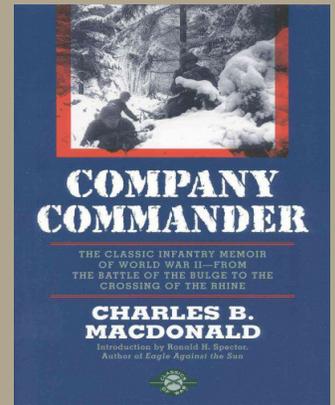
BOOKNOOK

COMPANY COMMANDER: THE CLASSIC INFANTRY MEMOIR BY CHARLES B. MACDONALD. © 1999.

A MONTHLY BOOK RECOMMENDATION BY DISTRICT LIBRARIAN ORIANA BROWN ARMSTRONG, MLS.

What are some key traits leaders might display to encourage members within their organizations? Would honesty or transparency be among them? Consider Capt.

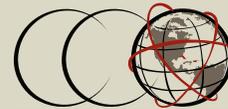
Charles Brown MacDonald, a newly commissioned officer placed in charge of a veteran Army regiment during World War II. The captain's first combat command was the Battle of the Bulge. This well-written, down-to-earth memoir describes this historic World War II experience in plain-spoken yet eloquent narrative, catapulting the reader directly onto the scene in the frigid snows of war-torn Europe. From page one, the reader is completely transfixed, never leaving MacDonald's side, sharing in the misery, terror and intimate drama of war. This classic is one of the great, true and unforgettable works on war of all time. The title remains in print even now in its sixth decade of publication, and some military scholars believe that due to its instructional value, it may never go out of print. Gen. Raymond Odierno lists this title as required reading for his senior staff -- a means of broadening their leadership capabilities. Portions of review taken from Burford Books Publishing. ♦



OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

WELCOME HOME

LINDA SOUZA-BARNEY
IVAN FANNIN
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Corporate Communications Office
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District

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Corporate Communications Office racks up impressive list of journalism awards

The Corporate Communications Office team had a strong showing in this year's Herbert A. Kassner Public Affairs Competition, with six awards overall and one moving forward to compete at Department of the Army level.

Judging for the competition was held at the Corps' headquarters in Washington, D.C. Monday, Feb. 7. A total of 319 entries in print, broadcast and community relations categories were judged by a panel of 16 judges from outside of USACE. First, second and third place winners were chosen in each category, with the first place winners forwarded to the Department of the Army Office of the Chief of Public Affairs to compete in the annual Major General Keith L. Ware Public Affairs Competition.

Jacksonville District's winners are:

***Outstanding Initiative in New Media
2nd Place – Annie Chambers, Twitter***

News Story

***1st Place – John Campbell
NOVA UAV program soars - January 2012***

***3rd Place – Amanda Ellison
Corps balances port deepening projects and
fragile ecosystem with innovative solutions - January 2012***

Human Interest Feature

***3rd Place – Terry S. Hines
Wind, sun on your face, freedom in your soul - April 2012***

Commentaries

***2nd Place – Erica Robbins
My Story - October 2012***

Civilian Journalist of the Year

2nd Place – John Campbell

Herbert A. Kassner was the Public Affairs Officer for the former Lower Mississippi River Division for many years. He was highly respected in the public affairs field, and the USACE competition was named for him in the late 1980s after he lost a long battle with cancer.