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IN THIS ISSUE

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OCTOBER 2013 | Volume 5 Issue 10

COMMANDER'S CORNER
MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

SAYING GOODBYE TO FISCAL YEAR 2013 - WHAT A YEAR!

Tumultuous. Productive. Two words that have opposite meanings, but both accurately describe fiscal year 2013. Mother Nature was (and continues to be) a little testy and kept us on our toes, from an emergency management perspective. Yet we still completed a banner year with total obligations of $650 million plus! I'm highlighting a few of those accomplishments here – all are so important to this nation.

Hurricane Sandy and Tropical Storm Debby resulted in 22 emergency projects that were designed, advertised, permitted and awarded in a few short months. A total of eight million cubic yards of sand was placed on Florida's beaches totaling $145 million. This precedent-setting program included the award of 13 hurricane and shore protection projects and nine navigation projects, in addition to Dade County, which was already scheduled and funded in fiscal year 2013.

Florida's ports are also high on the nation's priority list. The president's "We Can't Wait Initiative" ensured that studies for the ports of Jacksonville and Miami were put on a fast track to completion. The president's initiative shaved 14 months from the study schedule. The team worked hard to ensure a finalized report and we will have a Chief of Engineers' report by April 2014. A contract for Phase 3 work was awarded for Miami Harbor, to deepen its channel to 50 feet. We anticipate work beginning this fall. The Lake Worth Inlet Feasibility study is on track for a Civil Works Review Board later this year and work continues on finalizing the Port Everglades study.

Then there is Lake Okeechobee. We continue to make excellent progress rehabilitating Herbert Hoover Dike. In the past few weeks, we awarded three contracts to replace six additional water control structures for a total of $104 million. We have awarded contracts to address half of the 32 structures around the dike that are seen as the greatest points of potential failure. Concurrently, we are progressing on the most comprehensive study ever undertaken on the dike to identify solutions to complete rehabilitation. Since 2001, our investment in the dike has been more than $750 million, and we anticipate spending much more to reduce the risk for the people living and working around the lake.

Progress continues in our Everglades restoration efforts as well. In September, we awarded the construction contract for the Miller Pump Station, the third and final pump station for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project. This was the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project to break ground in January 2010 and total Corps expenditure on the project since then is $221.4 million.

The Interagency & International Services Branch, which often falls under the radar, accomplished tremendous things for the nation this year in its Formerly Used Defense Sites program. This team obligated more than $14 million on 112 active projects and phases with current and prior year funding. They processed contract actions on 50 projects via multi-district teams and almost doubled the performance-based contracting obligation metric. They achieved regulatory closure of two chemical warfare sites and one petroleum site and achieved phase completion on more than 15 sites. All six scheduled five-year reviews were also completed.

Hats off to all of you who worked in these areas, and so many others not specifically mentioned but equally important, for rolling up your sleeves and making things happen, despite the furloughs and budget cuts that we faced this year. You are the embodiment of selfless service.

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

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

DISTRICT COMMANDER
COL. ALAN DODD

CHIEF, CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE
TERRY S. HINES, APR

MANAGING EDITOR
NANCY J. STICHT

DESIGN AND LAYOUT ARTIST
JENNIFER G. KNUDSEN, MFA

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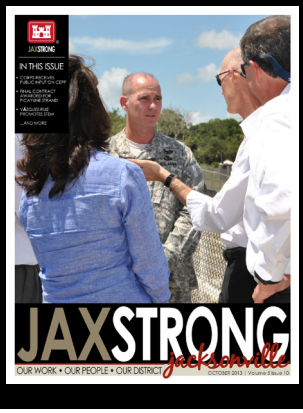
Col. Alan Dodd, district commander, listens to the concerns of Florida Gov. Rick Scott (right) and other elected officials during a visit to St. Lucie Lock August 20. Also pictured are (left) State Sen. Lizbeth Benacquisto, Fort Myers and Herschel Vinyard, secretary of the Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection (center). (Photo by Jenn Miller)



All in a day's work: South Florida Operations Office multi-tasks all summer

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

Crowds line the fence during a demonstration held at the St. Lucie Lock & Dam August 3 to protest the discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee River Estuaries. An estimated 5,000 people attended the event. (Photo courtesy of John Kolloster)

Demonstrations, inspections, diversions, operations…the staff at Jacksonville District's South Florida Operations Office (SFOO) has dealt with it all this summer.

During normal operations, the staff is responsible for the Okeechobee Waterway, the recreation areas around the locks, maintenance on Herbert Hoover Dike, and numerous other tasks. However, as the water rose on Lake Okeechobee this summer, SFOO staff had to adjust duties to accommodate other priorities, such as weekly inspections of the 80-year-old dike.

"It's mission essential to do inspections," said Steve Dunham, chief of the SFOO. "We do weekly inspections when the lake rises above 15.5, which means we've done it for nine weeks in a row. If the lake level exceeds 16.5 feet, we'd have to do them daily."

Dunham estimates it takes about 16-20 people to conduct the inspections. Dunham says other SFOO staffers have additional duties as part of the emergency response team if a significant problem is identified at the dike.

"We have three teams to deal with issues," said Dunham. "The ground reaction team would move rock and equipment on the ground if a problem developed. A water response team has been trained to deploy a huge, inflatable plug to place in a breach location. An aerial support team would work with members of the Florida National Guard to use helicopters to deploy rock and other materials from the air if needed."

The lake has been higher than normal for much of the year. The early arrival of the wet season prompted Jacksonville District water managers in May to begin releasing water from the lake in accordance with their water management plan, the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). With rainfall between April and July the heaviest since 1932, the district had to open the gates on the lake to maximize flows in order to stem the rise.

The water management actions have been very controversial, due to impacts caused by releasing large amounts of freshwater into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries, which has upset the normal freshwater/saltwater mix in those

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OPERATIONS OFFICE (continued from **PAGE 3)**

A barge pushes a crane underneath a bridge on the Caloosahatchee River at Moore Haven. The river is part of the 152-mile-long Okeechobee Waterway that allows boaters to travel by water from the Atlantic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. (Photo by John Campbell)

bodies of water. As a result, several demonstrations and protests have been organized at various locations around south Florida, including the St. Lucie Lock near Stuart.

"The crowds behaved themselves," said Art Ruebenson, park ranger, following a demonstration at the lock on August 3. "They assembled at a nearby park, then came en masse to the picnic area for about an hour before dispersing."

The water releases also drew the attention of multiple elected officials, including Florida Governor Rick Scott, who visited St. Lucie Lock August 20.

Despite all the activity surrounding Lake Okeechobee and the dike, SFOO staff continues to maintain focus on their core missions, including operation of the 152-mile Okeechobee Waterway that connects the Atlantic Ocean with the Gulf of Mexico. The five locks in the waterway have been operational all year, although some restrictions were put in place at Ortona Lock near LaBelle to accommodate some urgent repairs.

"A collar that engages the motor had to be repaired," said Rob Schnell, former SFOO assistant chief. "The repair took a few weeks because we had to machine the part ourselves."

Depending on weather, there's no shortage of work to be done in the SFOO area of responsibility.

"We've got some trees to remove from the dike," said Dunham. "Additionally, we need to place additional armoring (large rocks) around certain sections of the shore which have eroded over time." ♦

Calvin Grinslade, civil engineering technician with the South Florida Operations Office, takes a close look at the toe ditch near Herbert Hoover Dike as part of the weekly inspections conducted this summer on the earthen structure surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The intent of the inspections is to identify minor issues and address them before they turn into major problems. (Photo by John Campbell)

Work begins at Mullet Key Formerly Used Defense Site

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Investigations have begun on the Mullet Key Bombing and Gunnery Range Formerly Used Defense Site, now known as Fort DeSoto County Park on Tampa Bay. Soon after the Labor Day holiday, contractors for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began surveying the site to mark the areas for investigation, which will then be cleared of brush and swept with digital metal detectors to identify buried metallic objects that may potentially be munitions remaining from past military activities.

Because of its strategic location, the site was originally reserved for military use in 1849, to ensure its availability for coastal defense. Although fortifications were constructed during the Spanish-American War, the site never saw combat. Mullet Key became a bombing and gunnery training range during World War II, where pilots and air crews practiced aerial attacks using machine guns, practice bombs and live bombs. Following the war, the military no longer needed the land and after it was cleaned up to then-applicable standards, it was sold to Pinellas County in 1948. Fort DeSoto County Park was dedicated in 1963.

Frank Araico (left), project manager for the Mullet Key Bombing and Gunnery Range Formerly Used Defense Site, shows a local news reporter maps that detail where military activities took place on the site during World War II. A Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study is currently under way. (Photo by Nancy J. Sticht)

The nearly 1,000-acre park includes five interconnected islands, or keys that are home to mangroves, wetlands, hardwoods and many native plants as well as endangered loggerhead sea turtles and more than 300 species of birds. The beach has appeared on several lists of top beaches in the country. The 12-inch mortar battery, the only such battery remaining in the western hemisphere, located at the historic fort for which the park was named, was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Visitors also enjoy the Quartermaster Storehouse Museum, which houses artifacts from the site's military history.

Corps and contractor representatives were available on site all day Tuesday, Sept. 10, to provide information and respond to questions about the current Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study of the former Mullet Key Bombing and Gunnery Range.

The Quartermaster Storehouse Museum at Fort DeSoto County Park features artifacts of the site's World War II history, when it was known as the Mullet Key Bombing and Gunnery Range, including this 100-lb. practice bomb. (Photo by Frank Araico)

"We are working in conjunction with the park staff and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to ensure our work has as little impact on the community, visitors and the environment as possible," said Frank Araico, project manager. "Fieldwork is being conducted during the off-peak tourist season and has been planned to avoid turtle nesting areas."

Once the investigation results are analyzed, a Proposed Plan with recommendations for addressing potential munitions, if any, will be developed and shared with stakeholders and the public next year. ♦

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

WELCOMEHOME

SUSAN JACKSON

KENNETH POINDEXTER

Corps awards final pump station contract for Picayune Strand restoration

BY JENN MILLER

The Faka Union Pump Station is scheduled to be completed in fall 2014. (Photo by Jenn Miller)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District has awarded the construction contract for the third and final pump station for the Picayune Strand Restoration Project in Collier County, Fla.

The $75.7 million contract was awarded Sept. 5 to Archer Western Construction, LLC of Tampa, Fla., to construct the Miller Pump Station, which includes a 1,250 cubic feet per second (cfs) pump station, a tie-back levee system, a spreader basin and road removal and canal plugging that will rehydrate a portion of the 55,000-acre restoration project.

"By awarding this contract, we are one step closer in our restoration goals," said Lacy Shaw, project manager. "When we first broke ground on this project in 2010, we hit the ground running and we look forward to maintaining this momentum alongside our partner, the South Florida Water Management District, to bring this restoration project to completion."

The Picayune Strand Restoration Project was the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project to break ground in January 2010. Once completed, the project will restore water flow across the landscape, rehydrate drained wetlands, provide aquifer recharge, improve estuarine waters and return habitat to threatened wildlife communities.

The full project features include constructing three pump stations, three spreader basins, levees to provide flood risk reduction to private lands west of the project, a mitigation project south of the site to maintain an existing manatee refugium, plugging 48 miles of canals and removing and degrading 260 miles of crumbling roads. Both the Faka Union and Merritt pump stations are currently under construction. The Merritt Pump Station is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2013, the Faka Union Pump Station is scheduled to be completed in fall 2014, and the Miller Pump Station in 2018.

For additional information on the Picayune Strand Restoration Project, visit http://bit.ly/PicayuneStrand. ♦

Pablo Vázquez-Ruiz assumes leadership role with vision of promoting STEM education

BY JEAN PAVLOV

Pablo Vázquez-Ruiz (center) leads a tour of the Portugués Dam project for a group of engineering students from the American Concrete Institute, Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. As president of the Association of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico, Vázquez-Ruiz places a high priority on continuing education and on encouraging students to pursue degrees and careers in science, technology, engineering and math. (Photo courtesy of the South Puerto Rico Resident Office.)

Pablo Vázquez-Ruiz, south Puerto Rico resident engineer, has been elected as president of the Ponce Chapter of the College of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico (CIAPR in Spanish acronym) as well as treasurer of the College of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico. Vázquez-Ruiz has been resident engineer for the Ponce Resident Office since April 2001.

Born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, Vázquez-Ruiz graduated from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez campus with a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering, with honors, and a master's degree, Magna cum Laude, in business administration from the Pontifical Catholic University of Puerto Rico. He joined the Corps of Engineers in 1979.

The Ponce CIAPR promotes the development and defense of the engineering and land surveying professions for the welfare of the people of Puerto Rico, encouraging the study of the profession as a vocation and competent practice based on its professional code of ethics.

Concerning his vision for the Ponce CIAPR for this year, Vázquez-Ruiz said his main focus is innovation of the service rendered and the fiscal processes of the institution as a whole. He plans to enhance the chapter's web portal and to add Flickr and YouTube pages. For the past two years, Vázquez-Ruiz worked with the Board of Directors of the Ponce CIAPR as chapter secretary and created and maintained the website, currently visited by about 2,500 people a month.

"Within that agenda of work, our highest priority is continuing education," said Vázquez-Ruiz. "Without a doubt, better trained professionals render better service to our community."

As resident engineer who oversees the Portugués Dam project for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and as president of the CIAPR, Vázquez-Ruiz has the unique opportunity to advance CIAPR mission goals as well as the Corps' Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) pathway goals. The Corps supports STEM education, to help keep the United States

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PABLO VÁZQUEZ-RUIZ (continued from **PAGE 7)**

competitive as economic and technological leaders in the global marketplace, and support the Department of Defense and U.S. Army in national security. The Corps is committed to teaming with others to strengthen STEM-related programs that inspire current and future generations of students to pursue careers in STEM fields.

"The South Puerto Rico Resident Office is dedicated almost exclusively to the construction of this $215 million project," said Vázquez-Ruiz of Portugués Dam. Throughout the construction, the South Puerto Rico Resident Office has sponsored many field trips for engineering students, professional engineering organizations and civic groups. "The project has undoubtedly created great interest on the island since its start, because it is one of the largest and more challenging engineering and construction endeavors in this century," he explained. "It has been a great source of education and stimulus for engineering students and for professional engineers as approved continued learning points by the CIAPR."

Pablo Vázquez-Ruiz is the newly elected president of the Association of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico, Ponce Chapter and his wife, Lily, is the newly elected president of the Spouses Club, a component of the local chapter of CIAPR. (Photo courtesy of CIAPR)

The gavel is passed as the 2013-2014 Board of Directors for the Ponce Chapter of the Association of Engineers and Surveyors of Puerto Rico is sworn in. New president Pablo Vázquez-Ruiz (left) was sworn in by the outgoing president of the CIAPR. (Photo courtesy of CIAPR)

"I have provided six professional seminars and field trips for professional engineers," said Vázquez-Ruiz. "In the case of engineering students, I have received more than 12 groups from the three engineering schools on the island; the most recent was the engineering student chapter of the American Concrete Institute (ACI) at the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico. This kind of activity will increase as we approach project completion by the end of this year." ♦

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Breast cancer is the fifth leading cause of death among women, after heart disease, stroke, lung cancer and lung diseases.

Breast cancer may be difficult to detect in its early stages, but it can cause changes in how the breast looks or feels. Symptoms may include:

- New lump in the breast or underarm (armpit).
- Thickening or swelling of part of the breast.
- Irritation or dimpling of breast skin.
- Redness or flaky skin in the nipple area of the breast.
- Pulling in of the nipple or pain in the nipple area.
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood.
- Any change in the size or the shape of the breast.
- Pain in any area of the breast.

Having regular checkups, including a mammogram – an X-ray of the breast – is the best test doctors have to find breast cancer early, sometimes up to three years before it can be felt. Women 50 to 74 years of age are advised to have a screening mammogram every two years. Between the ages of 40 and 49 years, women should follow their doctor's recommendation.

When breast cancer is found early, many women go on to live long and healthy lives.

Worried about the cost of a mammogram? The National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program offers free or low-cost mammograms for those who qualify.

To lower the risk of breast cancer:

- Control your weight and exercise.
- Know your family history of breast cancer. If you have a mother, sister or daughter with breast cancer, ask your doctor about your breast cancer risk and how you can lower it.
- Find out the risks and benefits of hormone replacement therapy.
- Limit the amount of alcohol you drink.

Men can also get breast cancer, although it is uncommon. For every 100 cases of breast cancer, less than 1 case occurs in men.

This information courtesy of the Center for Disease Control's website. For more information and resources please visit: http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/resources/features/BreastCancerAwareness/.

Life after breast cancer: Rocking pink roses instead of pink ribbons this year

COMMENTARY BY ERICA SKOLTE

The author and her family celebrate a happy future together. (Photo by Brent Anderson)

If you had been diagnosed with cancer, undergone five major surgeries in seven months, and driven an extra hour before work every day for six weeks for radiation treatments, would you consider yourself lucky?

I do.

Last year was tough. After I was diagnosed with breast cancer in April 2012, I underwent back-to-back surgeries to remove the cancer as well as reconstructive surgery and six weeks of daily radiation treatments. Concerns over potential infection and healing meant that swimming, snorkeling and biking were out of the question. I wanted my life back.

Still, I considered myself lucky. I have a steady income, sick leave, good insurance and the option to use donated leave if necessary – important benefits for anyone dealing with serious health issues. Despite yearly exams, the cancer was extensive when found. My surgeon urged immediate action, and thankfully, we caught the cancer before it spread to the lymph nodes, sparing me a year of chemo and its side effects.

I was also lucky that my longtime sweetheart took good care of me and made me feel attractive and loved despite the fact that I was definitely not looking good by any common standard of physical beauty. Though difficult, the experience deepened his commitment to me and our relationship.

"I finally realized why God put me on earth," he said. "I was put here to love her and take care of her. It suddenly became really clear to me why I was here."

After initial treatments were completed, I underwent follow-up testing to see whether the treatment had worked. Glucose (a sugar) was tagged with a radioactive tracer and injected into my blood stream. Cancer tissues greedily suck up the glucose to meet their energy demands to fuel out-of-control growth, so they light up like a Christmas tree on the scan.

I felt worried and scared. Would they find more cancer in other parts of my body? Would I have to go through more surgery, more pain, more recovery, more time out of work, more lost days? It was a challenge to stay positive. There is a fine line between needing to think about the steps you need to take to get and stay healthy, while trying not to dwell on it.

Waiting on test results was difficult. The results showed only a small area "lit up" near my kidney and the surgeon did not

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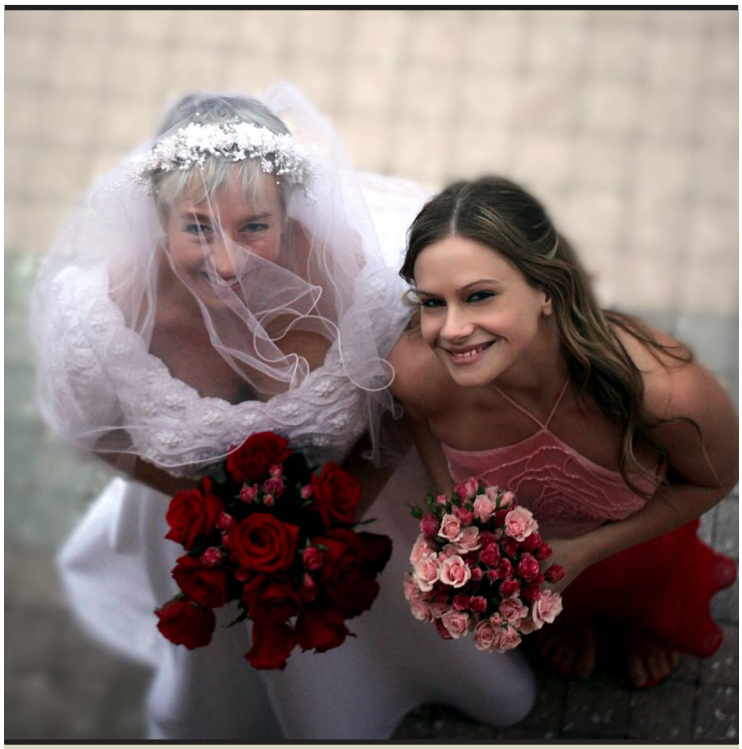
BREAST CANCER (continued from **PAGE 9)**



The author and her daughter, the maid of honor, smile as the focus shifts from pink ribbons to pink roses. (Photo by Christine Kilger)

seem too worried, but she mentioned that I had a mass on my ovary that she thought should be removed. I felt like shaking my fist at the sky. "REALLY? Three surgeries weren't enough?"

When I read the lab report and, learned the mass was the size of a softball, I traveled to Mayo Clinic in Jacksonville for a mammogram, MRI and a second opinion, and fortunately I was able to get an appointment with their top expert. I was referred to the surgeon, who prepared me for the worst-case scenario, indicating an incision that went the full length of my trunk. Instinct told me it wasn't cancer, since it hadn't lit up in the scan, but I hoped I wasn't just kidding myself. I kept seeing the visual of the surgeon running his finger up and down his torso to show me the potential incision.

Working in the Jacksonville District Office while I waited for my surgery, I was shaken to the core when I learned via e-mail that a friend and Corps colleague (only a few days older than me and diagnosed shortly after I was) had lost her battle, despite aggressive treatment. Tears streamed down my face while I sat in my cubicle trying to work, grieving the loss of this wonderful woman. My heart broke as I thought of how devastated her husband, family, friends and colleagues must feel, knowing full well that it just as easily could have been me.

After a cancer diagnosis, or the loss of close family or friends to the disease, the fact that nothing is guaranteed is put into sharp focus. My longtime sweetheart and I decided to get married, and to do it sooner rather than later. I shopped for rings, veils and gowns with my mom while I waited.

Finally, it was the day of my surgery. Though the situation was more complicated than expected, requiring robotic assistance, more waiting and another surgery, the good news was that the mass was not cancerous. The other good news was that I no longer had to worry about getting ovarian, uterine or cervical cancer. I learned that ovarian cancer is often difficult to detect in its early stages, so that was one less thing to worry about.

Since I am the third generation in my family to battle breast cancer, I underwent genetic testing for the BRCA gene mutation. Women with harmful mutations in either BRCA1 or BRCA2 have about five times the normal risk of breast cancer, and about 10 to 30 times the risk of ovarian cancer. Thankfully, I did not have the mutation, meaning less worry about myself and my children. I was surprised to have even more good news - the doctor told me that I would not have to come back for more testing for a year. I had expected to have follow-ups every three to six months, and oddly enough, part of me had wanted that close monitoring…just in case.

It was not part of my plan to fall in love with a fabulous flamingo-pink paisley tie for the men in our wedding party, but in retrospect, it does seem a fitting tribute to the events that had transpired and brought us to that moment. Our wedding was at sunrise, the dawning of a new day, symbolic of a fresh start, wiping away the difficulty of the last year and putting it behind us. We hope to have a long, happy, healthy life together.

A year and a half after my diagnosis, the pain of my battle scars remains as a reminder of everything that I have been through, but I feel like I am finally getting my life back. I'll have my annual MRI in April, but gradually, the fear and worry has started to fade.

Many good things have come out of the bad. Dealing with cancer has helped to put everything into perspective. I'm glad that this year, I was able to trade in the "pink ribbons" of breast cancer awareness on some delicate pink roses in my bridal bouquet. Being well aware of the fragility of life makes me even more thankful for my many blessings and grateful to be alive. ♦

A sunrise wedding ceremony symbolized a fresh start, moving past the difficulties of last year and forward into happier times. (Photo by Brent Anderson)

Public input received during series of public meetings for Central Everglades Planning Project

BY JENN MILLER

(From right) Lt. Col. Thomas Greco, deputy commander for south Florida, Tom Teets, SFWMD federal policy chief and Kim Taplin, CEPP branch chief, respond to questions during the Sept. 19 public meeting in Stuart, Fla. (Photo by Ty Erickson)

All interested individuals, groups and agencies were given the opportunity to provide their input on the draft report for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP), which is currently out for public review until October 15.

Five public meetings were held throughout south Florida Sept. 16-19 and Sept. 25 to discuss the draft report. Meeting attendants ranged from environmental, agricultural and recreational interest groups to high school students and local residents.

Many spoke in support of the project, which will set the foundation to move additional water south from Lake Okeechobee, while others expressed concern about the construction timeline and the need to send larger quantities of water to the Everglades.

"This is the first increment in a larger project," said Eric Bush, chief of the Planning and Policy Division. "CEPP will provide the ability to move, on average, 210,000 acre-feet of water south from Lake Okeechobee to the Everglades. However, CEPP provides only an increment of system modifications, and the ability to move even larger quantities south is dependent on future restoration projects."

The goal of the Central Everglades Planning Project is to capture water lost to tide and redirect the water flow south to restore the central and southern Everglades ecosystem and Florida Bay. The Corps is jointly conducting this planning effort with the South Florida Water Management District.

Construction of CEPP features is dependent on the completion of other projects, such as the Indian River Lagoon-South C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area, C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir, and Broward County Water Preserve Areas. Additionally, construction of CEPP features is dependent on the completion of the state's Restoration Strategies program, which is scheduled to be completed in approximately 2029.

Once fully constructed, CEPP will result in an average annual reduction in Lake Okeechobee releases of 24 percent to the St. Lucie Estuary and 23 percent reduction to the Caloosahatchee Estuary, when combined with benefits from the implementation of the C-43 Reservoir and the Indian River Lagoon-South system of reservoirs that reduce local basin runoff to the estuaries.

"Additional storage capacity within the system is key to sending larger quantities of water south," said Bush. "The new features proposed under CEPP will allow the STAs to function more effectively and treat more water than can currently be treated with the existing infrastructure."

The draft report, also known as the Draft Integrated Project Implementation Report (PIR) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) became available for public review Aug. 28. Comments on the draft report will be accepted through Oct. 15, 2013. ♦

Murika Davis (right), CEPP engineering lead, and Gretchen Ehlinger (left), CEPP environmental lead, discuss the project's Tentatively Selected Plan with meeting attendants during the open house portion of the Sept. 17 meeting in Fort Myers, Fla. (Photo by Ty Erickson)

The draft report is available online at: http://bit.ly/CEPP_DPIR. 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 on CEPP is available at: www.bit.ly/CentralEverglades_CEPP.

Going hog wild

BY ANNIE CHAMBERS

This family of wild hogs, the most destructive exotic animal species found throughout Florida, was seen in North Palm Beach, Fla. With a growing population, wild boars pose a threat to human and animal health. (Photo by Bob Peterson, from common.wikimedia.org website)

With their growing population, feral hogs are threatening human, animal and native species health throughout Florida. Their rooting behavior destroys habitat, kills plants and creates disturbed areas where invasive plants can easily grow. They carry diseases that can infect livestock or humans.

Feral hogs are the most destructive exotic animal species found throughout Florida conservation lands, according to the Florida Invasives website.

Wild hogs can grow to five to six feet long and reach weights of more than 150 pounds. They are not native to Florida and may have been introduced by Spanish explorer Hernando DeSoto as early as 1539. They occur in all of Florida's 67 counties within a wide variety of habitats, but prefer oak-cabbage palm hammocks, freshwater marshes and sloughs and pine flatwoods, according to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) website.

Trying to prevent wild hogs from coming onto your property is usually futile, but adequate fencing can keep them out of small yards and gardens. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is having problems of its own with the swine.

"Feral pigs cause problems at levees because they dig around them," said Jon Lane, chief, Invasive Species Management Branch. "While the rooting doesn't cause problems, it does allow other invasive plants to get established and disturbs the grasses we have planted there. The digging increased costs by forcing us to treat additional invasives on the levee that normally wouldn't be there."

There are high population densities of feral hogs due to high reproductive rates, lack of significant natural predators and their ability to adapt to a wide variety of habitats. These swine pose a threat of disease transmission to humans, livestock and native wildlife. They are known to carry brucellosis and pseudorabies.

Pseudorabies is a highly contagious herpes viral disease which occurs in swine. Once swine are infected with this virus they will remain infected for the rest of their lives. Swine infected with pseudorabies are capable of transmitting the disease to other species including cattle, sheep, goats, horses, dogs and cats. Pseudorabies infections in these secondary species are usually fatal.

What can be done to rid Florida of these disease-carrying hogs?

Wild hogs are legally defined as wildlife and are the second-most popular, large animal hunted in Florida (second only to the white-tailed deer), according to the FWC website. The FWC outlines several hunting precautions for safe meat preparation. Although not a risk to people, the virus can be deadly to dogs that are exposed to it.

For more information on swine brucellosis and pseudorabies, go to http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/health-disease/pseudorabies.

For more information about brucellosis and other animal diseases that can cause illness in people, please call your county health department or visit the Florida Department of Health's website at: http://myfloridaeh.com/medicine/arboviral/Zoonoses/Zoonotic-index.html. ♦

Postcard from Afghanistan

Come rain or sleet or hail or snow – or dust – the work in Afghanistan goes on!

This was the first dust storm I saw since I've been here. It was crazy! It came fast, but thankfully it went away pretty fast.

From:
Simone Tate, South Florida Area Operations Office

Things are going well here. I'm working lots of hours, but it helps the time go by fast. On average, I'm working 76 hours a week. I've met some nice people and am gaining new experiences.

I had an R&R in Germany and the Netherlands in June; up until then, I had not had a day off since the middle of March.

We have dust storms late at night so I've learned to keep my door closed so I can minimize the amount of sand coming in.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Jacksonville District
701 San Marco Blvd.
Jacksonville, FL 32207


NATIONAL DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS MONTH
BECAUSE WE ARE
EQUAL
TO THE TASK
Designed by Peter Hemmer for the Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute

Holiday Care Package Donations

For Deployed Employees

Donations will be taken from Oct. 1 - Nov. 1

Suggested Donations

Entertainment
DVD movies
Books
Magazines
Dominoes
Poker Games
Dice
Board Games

Food
Jelly beans
Starburst
Cookies
Chewing Gum
Mints
Snack mixes
Hard Candy
Pringles
Nuts
Popcorn
Cookies & Muffins
Coffee & Tea Bags
Gatorade

Miscellaneous
Koozies
Ziploc bags
Toothbrushes
Toothpaste
Lotion
Body wash
Germ-X
Tums
Razors
USPS Gift Card

Box Locations

Division common areas or Annie Chambers, ext. 2011

Not Allowed

• No religious items • No precious gems • No Alcohol • No pornography •
• Nothing that melts • Nothing that would offend Muslim country • No pressurized items •

Jax Facts: How well do you know Jacksonville District?

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Congratulations to **Krista Sabin**, Regulatory Division, the first district team member to submit the correct answers to all ten of the following questions, based on stories that appeared in the September issue of JaxStrong: (Photo courtesy of Krista Sabin)

1. **What distinction did the publication "River of Interests" recently achieve?**

   A. It was the first U.S. Army Corps of Engineers publication to be placed on the American Library Association's Notable Documents List. ("River of Interests" is first Corps publication honored by American Library Association, pg. 9)

2. **What direction does water flow in a natural system?**

   A. Water in a natural system flows from a higher elevation to a lower elevation. (Lake Okeechobee: Following the flow, pg. 3)

3. **What current work is taking place on Tamiami Trail?**

   A. Old roadway is being removed and 9.7 miles of roadway is being modified. (Progress continues on Tamiami Trail, pg. 7)

4. **How much sediment is needed to support planned beach nourishment projects in southeast Florida through 2062?**

   A. 1.7 million cubic yards (Search for sand under way for Miami-Dade beaches, pg. 8)

5. **Where are the headwaters for Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades?**

   A. Kissimmee Basin, near Orlando (Lake Okeechobee: Following the flow, pg. 3)

6. **What are the three requirements that must be met prior to placing structures along federal navigation waterways?**

   A. Obtain a Department of the Army permit, meet the setback criteria and obtain consent to easement if the structure is to be placed within the federal right-of-way. (Regulatory rolls out revised setback guidance, pg. 14)

7. **What is CEPP and why is it nationally significant?**

   A. Central Everglades Project Planning; part of the Corps' National Pilot Program for Feasibility Studies (Draft report for Central Everglades Planning Project available online, pg. 20)

8. **When did Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation begin, and what are two of its major projects?**

   A. Began in 2007; major projects are installing 21.4 miles of concrete cutoff wall and removing and replacing 32 culverts. (COL Dodd's column, pg. 2)

9. **Which government agency sponsors the Operation Warfighter program?**

   A. Department of Defense (Operation Warfighter program benefits local Soldier, Jacksonville District, pg. 13)

10. **One foot of rainfall in the Kissimmee Basin can cause Lake Okeechobee to rise how many feet?**

    A. About 4 (Lake Okeechobee: Following the flow, pg. 5)

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

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