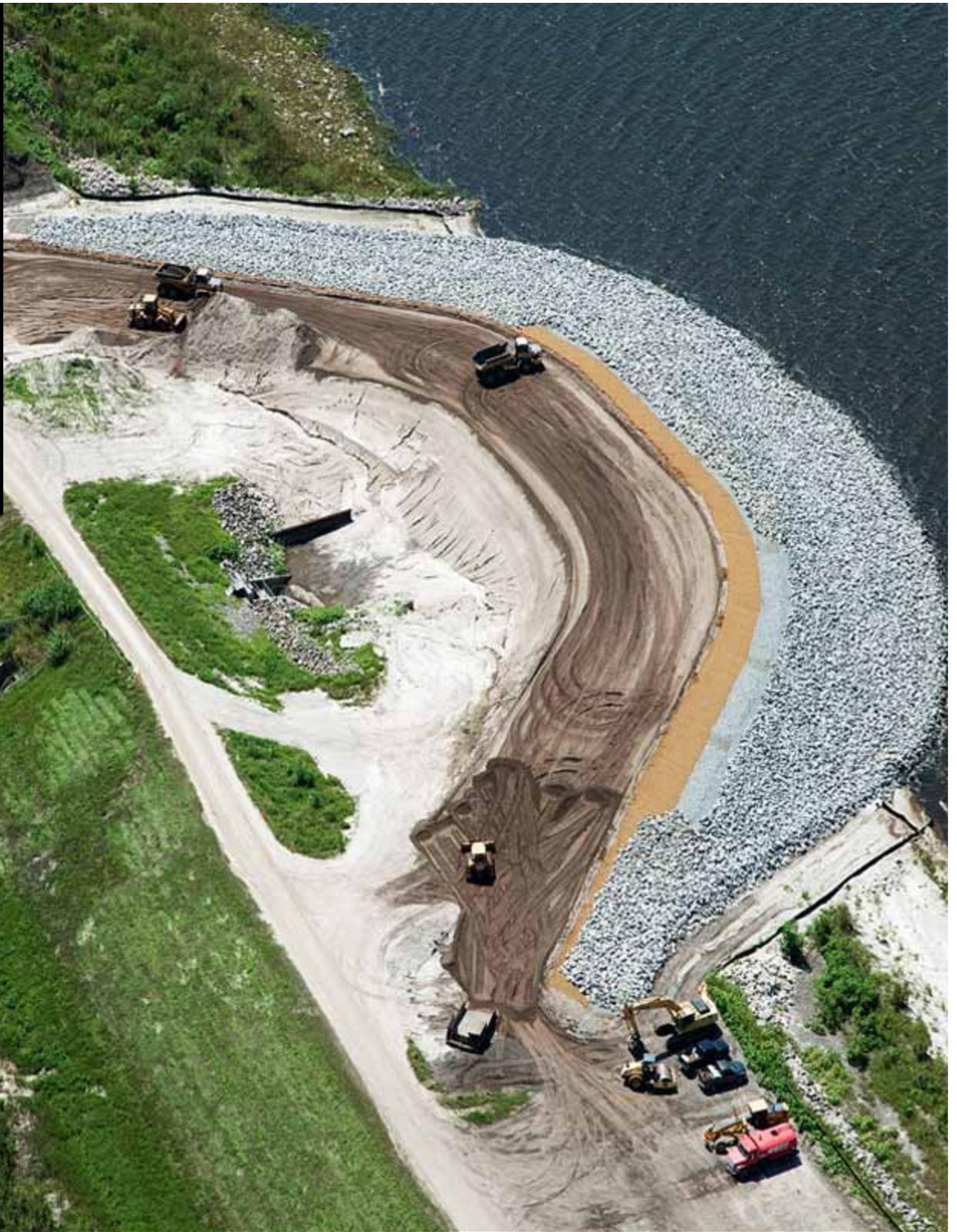




IN THIS ISSUE

- INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS PROTECT CORAL REEFS
- UAV PROGRAM SOARS
- EVCO HIGHLIGHTS BENEFITS OF RESTORATION

...AND MORE



JAXSTRONG

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FEBRUARY 2012 | Volume 4 Issue 1



COMMANDER'S CORNER

MESSAGE FROM COL. AL PANTANO

2012 – IN LIKE A LION!

There is nothing quiet or timid about 2012 in Jacksonville District. The year has come roaring in and the pace promises to be fast and furious. "Moving forward" seems to be the theme for the year and it seems to be happening in just about every business line within the district.

The Central Everglades Planning Project is under way and the scoping phase will be complete by the end of this month. With this project we have an opportunity to transform our planning process. We have been selected to be part of a pilot program for this study that will consider planning in a different way -- a way that focuses on early decision making and a way that will shave years off of our planning process. This effort is being led by the Corps and in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District.

Partnership was a big theme at this year's Everglades Coalition Conference, at which I had the honor of speaking, along with Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy and Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Terrence "Rock" Salt and Stu Appelbaum, Howie Gonzales and Tori White from our district. Much discussion was centered not only around the economic and environmental benefits of restoration, but also on our new Central Everglades Planning Project and the importance of not only continuing our commitment to both Everglades restoration and to our partnerships.

We are also beginning another round of rehabilitation projects on Hebert Hoover Dike at Lake Okeechobee. The bulk of our work the past few years has been between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade, on the southeast side of the lake. This year, we are starting work on the southwest side of the lake with the replacement of two culverts near Moore Haven. The southeast side remains busy, however, with work starting on two culvert replacements and cutoff wall construction continuing. This will continue to cause interruptions in the usage of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail, but the rehabilitation of the dike will greatly improve its ability to withstand a major heavy rain event. Public safety will always be paramount in our projects.

Ports are the center of attention throughout the nation, and are of significant interest to the state of Florida. Recently, the Jacksonville Port Authority received welcome news when the Mile Point project received unanimous approval by the Civil Works Review Board. The \$40 million construction project to correct a navigational hazard and restriction in the St. Johns River now goes to various state and federal agencies for review and comment. A final Chief of Engineers' report will follow, and then it goes before Congress for authorization and funding.

The federally authorized Miami Harbor Navigation project, which will deepen existing Federal navigation channels (primarily from 42 to 50 feet deep) and widen the channels in certain places, is also anticipated to begin in 2012. The project team has been hard at work to ensure that impacts to south Florida's sensitive and unique ecosystem are minimal during the course of construction.

Though 2012 is upon us in a very big way I have every confidence in the Jacksonville team to meet the necessary deadlines and push projects across either the start or the finish line. As your commander, I'm continually amazed each year by your level of professionalism and dedication.

Keep up the good work!

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

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

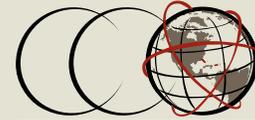
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JaxStrong is a quarterly electronic publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District providing information about the people, activities and projects of the district. *JaxStrong* is distributed in accordance with Army Regulation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



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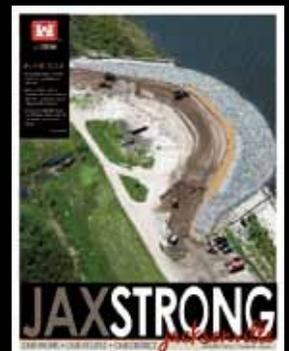
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ON THE COVER

A HUGE TEMPORARY DAM WAS BUILT AT LAKE OKEECHOBEE OVER THE SUMMER, TO HOLD BACK WATER AS CREWS PREPARED TO REMOVE CULVERT # 14 NEAR PORT MAYACA AS PART OF REHABILITATION EFFORTS AT HEBERT HOOVER DIKE. THE C-14 PROJECT WAS THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF MAJOR UNDERTAKINGS THAT CALL FOR MORE THAN 30 CULVERTS TO BE REMOVED OR REPLACED.

(PHOTO COURTESY OPTIMUM SERVICES, INC.)



2011 Year in review BY NANCY J. STICHT



EVERGLADES RESTORATION, DAM AND LEVEE SAFETY, HARBORS AND A RECORD DRY SEASON TOOK CENTER STAGE IN JACKSONVILLE DISTRICT IN 2011, PROVIDING ANOTHER BUSY AND PRODUCTIVE YEAR FILLED WITH HIGHLIGHTS.

RESTORING AMERICA'S EVERGLADES

Restoration of America's Everglades took several more steps forward this year, with groundbreakings for the Picayune Strand/Faka Union Canal Pump Station project Feb. 18, the Melaleuca Eradication Facility May 10, and the Indian River Lagoon-South C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area project Oct. 28, as well as the start of the Central Everglades Planning Project in November.

The \$79 million Picayune Strand/Faka Union project was the second of three federal projects at Picayune Strand, following the Merritt Canal Pump Station project, which broke ground in 2010, and preceding the future Miller Canal Pump Station project. Components include constructing the pump station, continuing to fill in the canal, and removing 100 miles of roadway. Work began in February and will last about three years. When complete, the Picayune Strand Restoration Project will restore natural water flows over an 85-square-mile area, improve the area's hydrology, allow for the return of more balanced plant communities, increase aquifer recharge, and send fresh water in a more natural manner to the coastal estuaries.

The Picayune Strand Restoration Project will transform a failed housing development into pristine habitat for the endangered Florida panther,

restoring habitat and providing an essential, uninterrupted wilderness corridor for the panther.

"This project marks a major milestone in Everglades restoration," said Pantano. "The Picayune Strand Restoration Project is the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan project under construction."

The U.S. Department of Agriculture and South Florida Water Management District joined Jacksonville District in celebrating the start of construction of the Melaleuca Eradication science facility in Davie, Fla. The \$16.7 million project began construction in July, with federal funding provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009.

It is estimated that 25,000 non-native species have found a home in the south Florida region and account for more than one third of all plants in Florida. Insects will be raised at the new facility and used as a bio-control measure, to manage invasive plants such as melaleuca, Lygodium and Brazilian pepper.

"The construction of this facility is critical to the restoration of the Everglades," said Pantano. "You truly cannot have restoration without control of invasive species."

Jacksonville District, its partners and stakeholders celebrated another milestone with the groundbreaking of the Indian River Lagoon-South (IRL-S) C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area Oct. 28. It was the first major component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) to come up for authorization since the approval of the Water and Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000.

The Indian River Lagoon and St. Lucie Estuary are two of the country's most productive and most threatened estuaries. Home to more than 4,300 species of plants and animals, the lagoon and estuary have suffered from altered water flow patterns and degraded water quality. The IRL-S project will restore the delicate balance of fresh and salt water in the lagoon and estuary, treat polluted water and revitalize degraded habitats.

"The greater Everglades is an American treasure, an extraordinary ecosystem unlike any other in the world," said Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works. "The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the state of Florida and Martin County are proud to stand together to



Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy (fifth from left) joined federal, state and local officials at an Oct. 28 groundbreaking for the Indian River Lagoon-South C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

Corps balances port deepening projects and fragile ecosystem with innovative solutions

BY AMANDA ELLISON



Staghorn coral. To mitigate for unavoidable impacts to the coral, the Corps is collecting and relocating genetic samples of the coral to a similar habitat outside of the Miami Harbor project footprint. (PHOTO COURTESY NOAA)

As a society we lead very busy lives, and balance is often a topic of discussion. People talk about the need for balance, and many times we try to achieve it in our own personal lives. But balance can go far beyond our individual goals. Balance for a gymnast on a beam could be the difference between a gold and silver medal. Balance for a trapeze artist on a tightrope can be the difference between a mesmerizing performance and serious injury.

Balance for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can also sometimes result in a very precarious position. It becomes an art to implement missions driven by the needs of the nation, and at the same time ensuring protection of an environment that is completely dependent on our actions. As an organization we are mindful of this scale, balancing the needs and concerns of both sides, and coming as close to the middle as possible.

Jacksonville District faces the challenge of balance with the need to deepen ports that will bring more business to our shores, while also protecting delicate and fragile coral environments.

On one side of the scale are the ports. Our nation's ports and harbors serve as an entry point for everything we consume, from gas in our vehicles to food on our tables. More than 95% of overseas trade moves in and out of the United States by ship. Virtually all of our jobs are impacted in some capacity by the free flow of goods through ports and harbors. As the world builds bigger ships, our ports must grow to accommodate larger vessels. However, with expansion may also come unavoidable impacts to the environment.

On the other side of the scale is Florida's rare and unique ecosystem. This state is on the fringe of a unique coral habitat that can only be found in certain parts of the world. Hawaii and Florida are the only two states that have coral reefs close to shore; and in fact, the Florida Keys are the number one dive destination in the world. Healthy coral reefs support commercial and subsistence fisheries, as well as jobs and businesses that support tourism and recreation. They are also natural barriers that protect nearby shorelines from erosion.

The Corps recognizes the potential impacts of deepening ports on coral habitat, and is doing everything possible to minimize those impacts.

The federally authorized Port of Miami Harbor project will widen the Miami Harbor entrance by 300 feet to maintain navigational safety requirements, which will impact adjacent reef habitat. It is estimated that approximately 7.07 acres of habitat will be directly impacted. However, prior to this construction, up to 1300 corals that can be successfully relocated will be placed along adjacent reef tracts or artificial reef sites.

"Avoidance and minimization starts at the beginning of a project," said Terri Jordan-Sellers, biologist. "Best science and techniques are used to ensure we protect this delicate and important ecosystem."

Coral reefs cover less than 1% of the Earth's surface, and they must fight for survival in ever-changing conditions. "There is layer upon layer of threat, and little things add up," said Jordan-Sellers. "Anything that we can do to reduce impacts and minimize our footprint in a stressed environment, we try and do it."

And the Corps is doing just that by collecting corals, as well as collecting genetic samples of corals listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act. As part of the Biological Opinion for the Miami Harbor project, Jacksonville District will relocate threatened staghorn corals that are within a project footprint to a similar habitat outside of the project footprint. During the relocation, genetic samples will be taken from the species and sent to nurseries run by NOVA Southeast University and the University of Miami, where they will be grown out to larger colonies and transplanted back into the ocean environment.

The staghorn and elkhorn (a cousin to the staghorn) coral nursery program spans from Miami and Fort Lauderdale to the Keys and the Virgin Islands. It is comprised of a network of local organizations and university groups that carry out the largest coral restoration project in the world.

In 1998, President Clinton issued an Executive Order on Coral Reef Protection, "to preserve and protect the biodiversity, health, heritage and social and economic value of U.S. coral reef ecosystems and the marine environment."

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 5)



CORPS BALANCES (continued from PAGE 4)

The Executive Order directs all federal agencies to protect coral reef ecosystems to the extent feasible, and instructs particular agencies to develop coordinated, science-based plans to restore damaged reefs as well as mitigate current and future impacts on reefs, both in the United States and around the globe.

The nursery program is an example of the Corps' efforts to implement the intent of the Executive Order, and also meet the goals of deepening projects that serve our nation.

The challenges faced by the Corps are complex, and common ground must be sought among opposing sides. The Corps is often placed in the middle, to help organizations with different missions and goals see the bigger picture, and understand the issues from all angles.

"It's a tightrope we walk. It's a multidisciplinary team," said Jordan-Sellers. "The Corps is in a unique position to bring both parties to the table, and educate both sides. Success of these projects must include partnering, coming to the table, and recognizing the limitations we have. We often deal with a lot of passion and emotion. The challenge is getting people to see the bigger picture." ♦



Elkhorn coral, a cousin to the staghorn coral. Both are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and are part of the coral nursery program, the largest coral restoration project in the world. (PHOTO COURTESY NOAA)



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF CORAL REEFS AT:

www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/urgentissues/coralreefs/coral-reef-quiz.xml

FIND OUT TEN EASY STEPS YOU CAN TAKE TO HELP PROTECT CORAL REEFS AT:

www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/urgentissues/coralreefs/ways-to-help-coral-reefs/index.htm

Jacksonville District and Great Minds in STEM partner to bring career program to local high school

BY JEAN PAVLOV

The science, technology, engineering and math careers (STEM) program was presented to eager students at the Englewood High School Dec. 16, sponsored by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District and Englewood High School. One of the 17 high schools in Duval County Public School System, Englewood is said to have a population of about 2,000 students, including more than 500 students from more than

Branch, spoke about his college studies, his life and career with the Corps and answered questions from the students. Students wanted to know who inspired Bilbao to become an engineer, and they asked about the kind of work he does, if his job is dangerous or exciting, if he has continued his education, and how much money he makes!

Great Minds in STEM was established in 1989 in Los Angeles, Calif., to identify and honor the contributions of outstanding Hispanic Americans in science, engineering, technology and math. Viva Technology is its national education program, which since 2001 has expanded programming to minority populations in underserved communities. STEM-Up uses technology to integrate STEM career pathways into schools and local communities. Jacksonville District is the only Corps district in the Southeast that participates in this program, and the first sponsor agency in the state of Florida. Now in the third year of a five-year partnership, Jacksonville District teams up with Great Minds in STEM annually, to promote and support local high school students in higher education.

"I was incredibly honored to be a keynote speaker for this year's STEM program," said Bilbao, "I really felt that I could relate to the students and being a first generation college graduate in my family. I know what it's like to have to find your niche with respect to your career. The STEM/VIVA Technologies program definitely allows the opportunity for students to be exposed to fields that they may not necessarily have had knowledge in. It is really rewarding to be a part of this program."

Students experienced a day filled with educational and competitive hands-on exercises featuring math, science and engineering concepts. College students from Florida State University and University of North Florida, together with Jacksonville District team members, led the students in projects to empower, educate and excite them about many career opportunities. One college student said that the program made a positive impact on the students. "In my opinion, there was definitely a lot of attention being paid to the program, so I feel that a fire may have been sparked in quite a few students," he said.

"The STEM/VIVA Technologies puts on a superb program for young students," Bilbao added. "It is so rewarding for students to be exposed to such important professional fields and hopefully a good percentage of them will strike an interest and move on to be engineers and scientists." ♦

Jacksonville District's deputy district commander Lt. Col. Ballard "Clint" Barker described engineering work and the mission of the Corps. Keynote speaker Jose Bilbao, operations manager in the Navigation



GREAT
Minds
in STEM

FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT: www.greatmindsinstem.org.

NOVA UAV program soars BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL



With a mighty heave geodesist Damon Wolfe launches the NOVA Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) on a flight over Lake Okeechobee. The Corps used photos from the UAV to track various plant species at the lake. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

"All right guys, going into take-off mode. You are hot!"

Everyone aboard the airboat grows quiet. It's the moment they've been anticipating after hours of preparation that started shortly after dawn on this late November day. Biologist Jon Morton has been leading the team through pre-operational checks.

"Three...two...one...launch!"

The pilot flips a switch on a remote control. Suddenly, the sound of a high-speed propeller fills the air around Eagle Bay at Lake Okeechobee. A small airplane that looks like a toy is thrown skyward. Only this airplane is no toy; it's an important piece of equipment that helps Morton and other biologists track the effectiveness of their efforts on invasive plants.

The NOVA Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) offers the Corps a low-cost method of obtaining pictures from the air for a wide variety of applications.

"The NOVA has been developed to provide a technological edge for us," said Larry Taylor, NOVA UAV program manager. "Its specialty is detecting and monitoring change over time. We have used it for levee monitoring; we have detected anomalies in the levees that weren't detected by ground observation."

In addition to the levee monitoring the NOVA has also been used for wildlife surveys, regulatory permit reconnaissance, invasive species contract assessments and invasive species acreage estimation.

On this day, the NOVA is flying over hundreds of acres at Eagle Bay, gathering information for the invasive species management program.

"We do a lot of invasive aquatic plant work," said Morton, "Eagle Bay is one of the areas we have to manage more intensely and work with other agencies because this area is a high priority for the endangered Everglades Snail Kite. We wanted to get a snapshot view of what it looked like at this time of year."

The pilot smoothly guides the UAV upward. Morton checks a computer.

"Altitude 18, air speed 11, battery 18-6," he says, pleased that the aircraft is picking up speed and altitude.

Morton likes the detailed photography the UAV provides.

"We're trying to get 2 ½-centimeter resolution, which will allow us to map out and tell exactly what species of plants are growing in the area," Morton said. "Before the NOVA was available, we just had to take imagery that was obtained through U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Geological Survey, or hire a private contractor. We didn't get nearly the resolution that we can with the NOVA. We're able to fly more rapidly; we're able to fly cheaper. We can deploy it from an airboat; we've used it from a swamp buggy; we can launch it from the back of a truck."

The NOVA makes a pass in the sky overhead. However, it quickly becomes a small speck as it flies toward its next turning point, more than a mile away from the controllers on the ground.

"Turning to the north," Morton says, "increasing the air speed to 16 meters per second."

The NOVA weighs 11 pounds, which includes its payload of a high-resolution camera, its on-board computer, and a global positioning system. The pilot uses a remote control to guide the plane during takeoff and landing. When in the air, the plane flies a route according to the instructions that were programmed on the ground station computer prior to takeoff.

"We're taking steps to use some of the technology that's available to us today, that people are only familiar with in military terms," said Morton. "This is an actual civilian application for unmanned systems."

"It's not a tactical tool," said Taylor, "it's not designed for the fighting soldier to loft it and see if there are bad guys over the hill. The payload we carry is high-resolution, versus low-resolution, with on-board data storage because the mass of data that we gather cannot easily be

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 7**)

NOVA UAV (continued from PAGE 6)

transported in real time back to our ground station. It's more of a precision-mapping tool."

Development of the NOVA was a joint venture between the Corps of Engineers and aerospace engineers from the University of Florida. The NOVA is made of hybrid fiberglass and a carbon-fiber composite. Rechargeable lithium-polymer batteries supply power to the electric motor that operates the propeller.

"One of the key things about the development of this tool, since the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) program was one of the initial targets for it, it had to be developed as a waterproof tool," said Taylor. "It works extremely well in wet environments. It can land safely on the water, and it can take off and land in very small areas"

The pilot resumes control of the NOVA and begins guiding it in circles toward its final descent. As it emerges into view, it seems to hang in the air for a moment, as the pilot works the controls to slow it down and guide it toward a soft landing on the water.

"Altitude 13," Morton says.

All grows quiet again, except for Morton's status updates and the occasional sound of the NOVA motor as the pilot keeps it in the air as long as possible, guiding the plane as close as possible to the airboat. The NOVA finally splashes gently into the lake, the motor of the airboat cranks up, and the crew quickly retrieves the plane.

"Its primary mission started off as being a CERP resource," said Taylor, "but we have since found that it is applicable to many other Corps activities, like invasive species monitoring and construction monitoring and Regulatory reconnaissance. We're in the process of expanding its use for beach renourishment projects, and we're getting inquiries from other Corps districts for various activities."

Taylor also points out the financial benefits from the information the NOVA is able to provide.



Biologist Jon Morton looks up from his ground station to track the NOVA Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) as it flies over his boat. Morton was leading a Corps team using the NOVA to get photos from the air above Lake Okeechobee in November. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

"We've detected invasive species change, and the effectiveness of treatments on the invasive plants, Taylor said. "That helps us save taxpayer dollars because we can actually monitor contract effectiveness to determine if the monies are being spent in the right place and if the treatments are effective or not."

The mission complete, the team can fly the exact path again if they desire at some point in the future, as the coordinates of the flight have been stored in the computer.

"We can reproduce our flights by reusing the same program in a flight and fly it again in six months or six years, said Taylor. "We can fly over the exact same course with a great degree of precision, which is one of the things that allow us to detect change over time." ♦

Corps opens National Levee Database BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

People across the nation who have an interest in learning more about the levees that protect them from high water now have another tool at their disposal.

In October, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers opened the National Levee Database to the public. The database includes information that describes the construction, operation and maintenance on 2,200 levee systems associated with the Corps.

"It's a complete snapshot of the inventory of federal levees, their location and condition," said Randy Rabb, Jacksonville District Levee Safety Program Manager.

The database includes mapping tools, which allow users to view levee locations, and data points that provide real-time readings of river gauges and weather radar. The database is intended to be a tool for federal, state, and local response agencies, levee system sponsors and operators, and the general public.

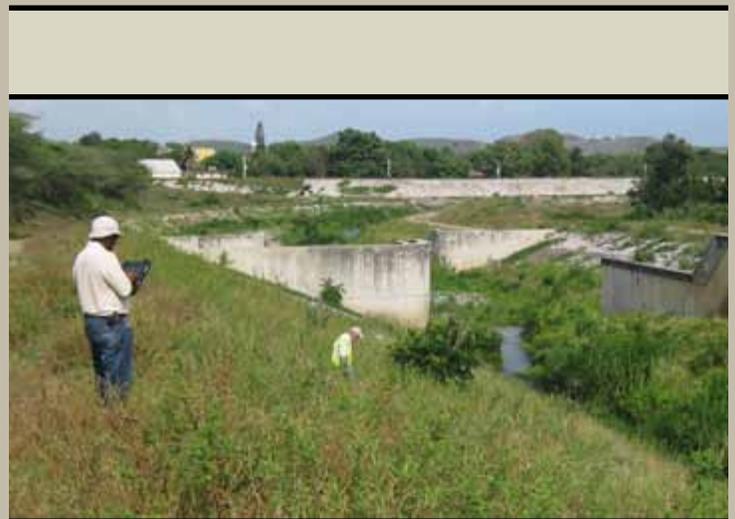
Now that it's been unveiled, plans are in the works to expand the database further. Program officials want the database to include all levees in the United States so the site can provide a single, comprehensive source of information to those who are interested.

"Getting it out to the public is the first big step," said Rabb, "this is the starting point."

Identifying and inventorying additional levees will be among the next steps as the database evolves. However, expanding the database will be challenging as no single agency has oversight of all levees. While the Corps has visibility on 14,700 miles of levees currently in the database, officials have estimated another 100,000 miles of levees exist.

"The database will be dynamic," said Rabb. "The database will be expanded to include levees outside the Corps program. New Corps levee projects will be constructed, and more detailed information on Corps levees presently in the database will be added."

In addition to information on the levees, the site offers tools for users to better navigate the database, including on-line manuals, training guides, and presentations. ♦



Inspectors check the condition of a levee in the Portugues North Tieback system near Ponce, Puerto Rico. (PHOTO BY JEFF BERGEN)

Corps discusses environmental and economic benefits of restoration at annual Everglades Coalition Conference

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH



Stu Appelbaum, Chief of the Jacksonville District's Planning and Policy Division, spoke as a panelist on the "Expediting Return on Restoration Investments through the Central Everglades Planning Process" plenary session Jan. 6. (Photo by Jenn Domashevich). RIGHT - Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (right) received the James D. Webb Award at the Everglades Coalition Conference Jan. 7. Julie Hill-Gabriel (center), State Everglades Coalition Co-Chair, presented the award along with Dawn Shireffs (left), National Everglades Coalition Co-Chair. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

Representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District spoke at the 27th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference, Jan. 5-8 in Stuart, Fla., the largest annual forum for discourse on Everglades restoration and conservation.

This year's theme was "Everglades Restoration: Worth Every Penny," and much discussion was driven around the environmental and economic benefits of restoration.

Stu Appelbaum, chief of Jacksonville District's Planning and Policy Division, spoke as a panelist on the "Expediting Return on Restoration Investments through the Central Everglades Planning Process" plenary session Jan. 6. The panel's discussion was primarily focused on the Central Everglades Planning Project, which has set a goal to deliver within two years a finalized plan, known as a Project Implementation Report, for a suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades in preparation for congressional authorization as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The Corps is leading this planning effort in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

"I have heard concerns about the fast pace of this project and if you can keep up with us," said Appelbaum in regards to the Central Everglades Planning Project. "Yes, you can. We want you to keep up with us and we want you to stay involved. We invite you to be a part of the process with us."

The panel included Terrence "Rock" Salt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; Herschel Vinyard, Secretary of the Florida Department Environmental Protection; Shannon Estenoz, Director of Everglades Restoration Initiatives for the Department of the Interior; and Melissa Meeker, Executive Director of the SFWMD.

"One thing I learned from my boss is if you get the planning right, the money will follow," said Salt. "If it's the right thing to do and we're moving forward, the money will be there."

Similar thoughts were expressed by Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, as she spoke during a lunch session Jan. 6.

"Together, with our partner, the South Florida Water Management District, we're going to have more action and less paper pushing," Darcy said as she referenced the Central Everglades Planning Project. "I am proud to say that the study's scoping process is on track and will be completed by the end of the month. I hope to be invited here again next year so I can come back with the draft PIR (Project Implementation Report) in hand for the central Everglades."

During the conference, Darcy was presented with the James D. Webb Award for ushering in a new realm of consistent progress in Everglades restoration.

"She has provided guidance, inspiration and leadership for so many people in this room, and for that we thank you," said Julie Hill-Gabriel, State Everglades Coalition Co-Chair, who presented the award along with Dawn Shireffs, National Everglades Coalition Co-Chair.

Also recognized during the conference was Jacksonville District Commander Col. Alfred Pantano, Jr., who received the Bill Sadowski Award on behalf of 1000 Friends of Florida in recognition of outstanding and distinguished service to the state of Florida, the Everglades and its restoration. Nathaniel Reed, Vice Chairman of the Everglades Foundation, presented Pantano with the award on behalf of 1000 Friends, where he serves as chairman emeritus and founder. Reed had also expressed his gratitude to Pantano during an earlier conference session.

"What can we say to a friend, a dynamic man, who attracted a superb staff to work with him," Reed said. "We say thank you for your time, energy, perception and leadership."

Pantano served as a panelist during the "Managing Lake Okeechobee for Shared Prosperity: Who Gets What, When, and How Much" panel Jan. 7, which discussed what can be done to share Lake Okeechobee's prosperity.

"I do believe as Americans, we need to get real about fresh water," said Pantano. "Water is our most precious resource. You all have a

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 9)



CORPS DISCUSSES (continued from PAGE 8)

responsibility to tighten up your views and your culture of the lake. Don't get consumed by small battles and lose sight of the bigger goal."

The panel included Dr. Paul Gray, Lake Okeechobee Watershed Program Science Coordinator of the Audubon of Florida; Irene Kennedy Quincy, partner at Pavese Law Firm; Rae Ann Wessel, Natural Resource Policy Director of the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation; and Mary Ann Martin, owner of Roland and Mary Ann Martin's Marina and Resort.

"Conservation is critical. If the lake's not healthy, the rest of the system is not going to be healthy. It's that simple," said Wessel. "It's not that we don't have enough water, it's that we're not sharing it nicely."

Additional discussions focused on how to maximize project benefits and continue much-needed momentum to keep restoration benefits moving forward by operating projects at their full potential in the "Operating Projects to Benefit Southern Estuaries" breakout session Jan. 7. In this session, Howard Gonzales, chief of the Ecosystem Branch, served as a panelist.

"We're really out ahead in regards to adaptive management," said Gonzales. "We are already putting these items into effect, which allows us to have project monitoring in place. We are monitoring everything from water quality to ecology to confirm that projects are performing the way they need to perform."

Also serving as a panelist at this year's conference was Tori White, deputy chief of the Regulatory Division, who spoke during the "Restoration in Lean Times: Doing More with Less" breakout session Jan. 7, which discussed how to get ecosystem restoration projects built in light of state and federal cutbacks.

"When determining appropriate compensatory mitigation, pursuant to our regulations, the Corps can consider whether a proposed mitigation project for ecosystem restoration, such as a CERP component, is environmentally preferable and would have a higher likelihood of ecological success and sustainability than mitigation at a federally-permitted mitigation bank or in lieu of fee," said White. "If CERP identified land is determined to be the most appropriate compensation, the permit's special conditions will provide for appropriate monitoring and maintenance in the interim if and until incorporated into a federal project. The permit condition must also clearly state that such land or mitigation cannot be used as local sponsor credit or in-kind contribution toward the federal project since that would constitute supplanting of ecological credits required for another purpose." ♦



Col. Alfred C. Pantano (right), commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District receives the Bill Sadowski Award from Nathaniel Reed at the Everglades Coalition Conference in Hutchinson Island, Fla. Jan. 7. (PHOTO COURTESY DAWN SHIRREFFS, NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION)

Stakeholder input sought at public meetings for Central Everglades Planning Project

BY JENN DOMASHEVICH



An open house was held at both public meetings prior to the formal presentations and comments to provide attendees with the opportunity speak with Corps members of the CEPP team, such as Brad Foster (left). (PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jacksonville District hosted two public meetings in December to give all interested individuals, groups and agencies an opportunity to comment and ask questions as the Corps begins to develop a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP).

The goal of CEPP 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, in preparation for congressional authorization as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The Corps is leading this planning effort in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District.

"Public participation is a key component of the Central Everglades Planning Project," said Kim Taplin, Corps project supervisor for CEPP. "These meetings will not only provide information, but they will also provide the opportunity for everyone in attendance to have input."

The public meetings were held Dec. 14 in Plantation, Fla., and Dec. 15 in Clewiston, Fla. Numerous stakeholders attended the meetings, which included open houses before formal presentations and comments were made. There were 39 attendees at the meeting in Plantation, and 11 attendees made comments. At the meeting in Clewiston, there were 21 attendees and three attendees made comments. The comments received during these public meetings will be taken into consideration as the Corps prepares the draft EIS for CEPP.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE AT:
http://evergladesplan.org/pm/projects/proj_51_cepp.aspx

Monument dedicated to memory of Corps team member

BY ERICA ROBBINS



Jim Jeffords, chief of Jacksonville District's Operations Division, remembered Jim Hammond with Hammond's family and members of the Corps family. (PHOTO BY ALAN ADAMS)

For many, the holiday season brings poignant reminders of family, friends and co-workers who have been lost. When co-workers are also friends and feel like family, it can be even more difficult. During the holidays, the Corps family came together to unveil a monument to honor and recognize the service of former Operations Section Chief James H. Hammond, Dec. 8 at the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston.

"Today we are here to celebrate Jim Hammond and memorialize his great service to the nation and to the Corps. I can honestly say that not a day goes by that I don't think about Jim," said Jim Jeffords, chief of the Operations Division. "Being part of the family – and Jim was big on family – we wanted to have something that we could see to remind us of him. Now, every time we drive into work, we can see this memorial and think of Jim and what he was to us – a great leader, a mentor, supervisor, teacher, as well as a family man – a husband, a grandfather, a father."

Jeffords thanked Hammonds' wife Ana, his son James and his wife Loreal, and their four children for joining the Corps family for the unveiling ceremony. "This memorial is very special to us, from our family to your family," said Jeffords.

"It's great to see the family again. You're right, there's hardly a day that goes by when I don't think of Jim. He's one of those who really touched me. I want to be a go-to guy, and that's what Jim was to me. He had the right answer or could get the right answer," said Lt. Col. Michael Kinard, turning to Hammond's family. "He was a strong person that we all leaned on in our family, as I'm sure that you did in your family. This memorial really does go on and shows Jim's dedication to the Corps."

The granite monument was unveiled at the foot of a live oak tree planted in Hammond's honor near the pavilion in the South Florida Operations Office complex in June 2011. Hammond served as the operations section chief from 2005 until he passed away at age 58 on March 25, 2011.

Hammond joined the South Florida Operations Office as an electrician in 1997 and was promoted several times. He became a supervisory

facilities maintenance specialist and supervised 48 employees responsible for the operations and maintenance of approximately \$1 billion worth of infrastructure within central and southern Florida. Hammond served 32 years of federal service with the U.S. Army, Navy Air Warfare Center and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Jim was an invaluable coach and mentor to all employees," said Steve Dunham, chief of the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. "He rose up through the ranks and never forgot his fellow employees. He was the supervisory heart and soul of our office and is dearly missed. He was a great friend and mentor to our employees."

"Jim was our go-to guy, who knew everything about the Okeechobee Waterway, our locks and dams, water control structures and maintenance requirements," said Jeffords. "Jim served our nation as a great veteran and civilian. He earned the Jacksonville District's Equal Employment Opportunity Award in 2009 and Supervisor of the Year Award in 2010." ♦



Juan Hammond reads the inscription on the memorial plaque at the foot of the live oak tree planted in his grandfather's memory. (PHOTO BY ERICA ROBBINS)



Schneider receives Steel de Fleury Medal

BY ERICA ROBBINS



Lt. Col. Michael Kinard (left), deputy district commander for South Florida, and Jim Jeffords (right), chief of the Operations Division, presented the Steel de Fleury Award to longtime Clewiston team member Stephen Schneider at a ceremony in Clewiston Dec. 8. (USACE PHOTO)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District honored and recognized 44 years of outstanding service by Stephen E. Schneider when he was awarded the Steel de Fleury Medal Dec. 8 at the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston.

"This special award reflects the respect and admiration you have earned during 44 years of outstanding contribution and service," said Jim Jeffords, chief of the Operations Division, as he presented Schneider with a certificate signed by the Chief of Engineers.

Lt. Col. Michael Kinard, deputy district commander for South Florida, presented the Steel de Fleury medal to Schneider. "The engineer regiment adopted the de Fleury medal as an award because of the values demonstrated by the man for whom it was struck – values of special meaning to Engineer Soldiers," said Kinard. "The de Fleury Medal was the first congressional medal struck. It recognizes both civilian and military personnel for outstanding contributions to the United States and to Army engineering. This prestigious award is named after LTC Francois Louis Tesseidre de Fleury, a French engineer who served with the American Army during the Revolutionary War."

"No man can be great without others," Steve Schneider said, as he dedicated the medal to his teammates. "This belongs to the office. This isn't mine, it's ours. There isn't anyone who gets something like this on their own. They gave it to me, but the office earned it."

Schneider worked his entire 44-year federal career at the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. He began as a laborer in 1967 and was promoted to equipment operator, diving supervisor and Civil Engineering Technician. He is the most experienced civil engineering technician for all major maintenance and repair projects in the South Florida Operations Office. His knowledge, skills and abilities in dewatering, inspecting, repairing and rewatering structures are shared with leaders and teammates who seek his guidance on the best ways to handle complex field tasks. Schneider provided much-needed emergency support through more than a dozen major hurricanes that struck the Lake Okeechobee region.

"Steve has dedicated 44 years to our office and helps others do their jobs better every day. He always finds the best solutions to field challenges," said Steve Dunham, chief of the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. "All supervisors, work leaders and fellow employees highly respect Stephen for his superb dedication, work ethic and exceptional knowledge of Lake Okeechobee and its vast array of water control structures." ♦

Women's education— Women's empowerment

COMMENTARY BY LUCY SOTO, EEO OFFICE

As a woman, this year's theme makes me reflect about the importance of education in our lives and how at times as contemporary women we take it for granted. In our day, the pursuit of a formal education for most women in our nation is a matter of choice. Even for women with severe financial constraints, there seems to be some way of pursuing an education, even if it may require great sacrifice. Therefore, it seems to depend on how much we sincerely want to pursue such an education and the priority it poses at certain moments in our lives. In some instances the pursuit of a formal education may not be a priority because we may have other interests or goals that take precedence. It may also depend on our values or on how we have been raised. But whatever our reasons or circumstances, what is important to keep in perspective is that because of the efforts that some men and women made many years ago, and continue to make today, the opportunities and rights for women to pursue an education continue to be achieved.

Just for a moment, think about your great-grandmother, your grandmother, or maybe even your own mother. What opportunities were afforded to them to pursue an education? And I'm not referring to obtaining a graduate or undergraduate degree. I'm going as far as them graduating from high school or even attending school at all. How far they made it may have depended on the historical moment they were living at the time when they were growing up. The opportunities may have been few, if not nonexistent. And that, in part, bowed to the reigning mentality of the time that a woman's role was to get married, have children, and tend to the home. Therefore, an education was not required.

How different that is today for most women! As women, we must always keep in mind how privileged most of us are to have the opportunity to make a choice on our education. Let's not forget this.

Sometimes we only think of education in terms of formal education. However, nowadays there are other ways and means available to us to keep ourselves educated without necessarily obtaining an undergraduate or graduate degree. For those of us working for the federal government, the opportunities are even greater. Unfortunately, at times we fail to take advantage of those opportunities because we fail to take responsibility for our own education. We mistakenly assume that furthering our education is the responsibility of our employer or supervisors. But when we seriously think about it, in most cases how much education we have received depends on the decisions we have made—or continue to make—in our lives, on how much we desire it, or how important it is for us.

As a woman, how great it is to experience that education is available to us regardless of our gender! So let's not forget that it has taken many years and the sacrifice of some extraordinary men and women to eradicate the misconception that the opportunity of having an education should be offered only to men. And although it has taken our nation a long while to understand that having an education cannot be determined on the basis of one's gender, it's comforting to know that our nation is moving in the right direction.

As women, may we never take for granted the opportunities available to us today. ♦

Knowledge
is Power
Francis Bacon

Jacksonville District team receives Beacon Award

BY ERICA ROBBINS

The Lake Okeechobee Visitor Center Rehabilitation Project is a shining example of the success that can be achieved by working together as a team to achieve a mission. The team was honored with the American Recreation Coalition's (ARC) 2011 Beacon Award at a 2011 ceremony in Washington, D.C.

The Beacon Awards recognize outstanding efforts by federal agencies and partners in harnessing the power of technology to improve public recreation experiences and federal recreation program management. They were created to encourage experimentation with and use of new technologies to improve visitor experiences and recreation program management.

"The Lake Okeechobee and Okeechobee Waterway, Jacksonville District, and their Lake Okeechobee Visitor Center Rehabilitation Project have been selected as the 2011 ARC Beacon Award recipient," said Michael Enschede, chief of operations for civil works. "The rehabilitation project modernized two visitor centers and an information center with interactive educational exhibits on invasive species, native wildlife, water resources management and lock operations. The exhibits also explained the complex interrelationship between the Corps water management actions and the environment, agriculture, water supply, recreation and flood risk management. This recognition demonstrates a high level of commitment to excellence and brings great credit upon themselves, their partners and the Corps."

Natural Resource Program Manager Adam Tarplee and Ranger Richard Bailey accepted the award on behalf of the Corps team, which included rangers, lock operators and many other Corps team members. Input from volunteers and visitors was also considered.

"It was a challenge for the team to create visitor centers that would appeal to a wide audience," said Tarplee. "We wanted to provoke visitors' attention, relate to their experience and reveal key Corps messages, such as the complexities of managing Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee waterway. The goal was to make the experience interesting and fun for children, seniors and everyone in between."



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chief of Operations for Civil Works Michael Enschede (left) presented the Beacon Award to Jacksonville District's Natural Resource Program Manager Adam Tarplee and Ranger Richard Bailey, who accepted the award on behalf of the Corps team. (PHOTO COURTESY THE AMERICAN RECREATION COALITION (ARC))

The two-year project included redesign of three visitor facilities, replacing static exhibits with interactive displays that share the complexity of water management and consequences for recreation, navigation, water supply, flood risk management and environmental stewardship.

The new American Disabilities Act-compliant exhibits – touch-screen monitors, each with multiple 2-5 minute, bilingual videos – are supplemented by a website and a trailer that is available for visits to schools and community events. The technology leverages the human resources of a small park ranger staff and a smaller number of lock operators.

The themes of the new interpretive program include "Trail of Discovery," the story of the 110-mile-long Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail and "Alien Invaders," about invasive species that threaten to eliminate native species. Visitors can even play a game called "Question of Balance" which shows the consequences of various water-allocation decisions. Technology applications are being shared widely within the Corps professional community on the Corps' Natural Resources Management Gateway website and through social media, including Facebook. ♦

DREDGING UP HISTORY



Workers prepare to fill and place sandbags along the St Lucie River Sept. 26, 1947. Major hurricanes struck Florida in 1947, putting 90-percent of southeast Florida under water at one point. As a result of these storms and the resulting damage, Congress passed a flood control act in 1948 authorizing the Central & South Florida Flood Control Project. (USACE HISTORICAL PHOTO)

VETERANS DAY 2011



Jacksonville District team members and families gathered to march in the annual Veterans Day parade Nov. 11. (PHOTO BY LISA MOON.)

DoD recruiting facilities support completes year at 100%

BY JEAN PAVLOV

Jacksonville District's Real Estate Division completed 100 percent of its programmed actions in the recruiting facilities program in fiscal year 2011. The program consisted of seven closures, three expansions of existing facilities, three new office acquisitions, one reduction of an existing facility, nine office relocations (involving 18 individual facilities), 24 renewals of existing leases (involving 48 facilities) and 59 upgrades to existing facilities.

The Recruiting Facilities Program is a program to locate, lease and manage adequate retail and office space to support the Armed Forces Recruiting mission. "We support the Armed Forces in their production career centers as well as their administrative functions," said Tina Goral, chief of the leasing section.

The recruiting program is funded annually by Congress on a fiscal year basis. Jacksonville District managed more than 200 recruiting facility leases and saved \$200,000 for the fiscal year. "These savings were realized through accomplishment of the closure and reduction actions," said Goral, "as well as in renewal actions where we were able to negotiate rates at or below existing rental rates."

Real estate support to the DoD Recruiting Facilities Program is provided to the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps and Air Force Reserve. "This year we added the Air National Guard to our list of recruiting customers," added Goral. ♦

Bechara Groundbreaking



Col. Al Pantano, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, talks to stakeholders about the benefits of the Bechara Middle Section flood control project during a groundbreaking ceremony in San Juan, Puerto Rico Jan. 10. With Pantano (left to right) are Jorge Santini, Mayor of San Juan; Luis Fortuño, Governor of Puerto Rico; Pedro Pierluisi, Resident Commissioner. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

Biologists team up to combat invasive species

BY BARRY VORSE



An unidentified contractor sprays water hyacinth on Lake Okeechobee near Jacksonville District's South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston. A new SOP being developed by district biologists will detail how control of invasive species will be considered throughout the life cycle of Everglades restoration projects. (PHOTO BY BARRY VORSE)

Biologists from Planning and Policy Division's Environmental Branch and Operations Division's Invasive Species Management Branch have been working to develop a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to address invasive species issues in every phase of Everglades restoration projects. Invasive species can reduce, and even prevent, achieving ecosystem restoration benefits, and can be very costly to manage.

Sue Wilcox, Environmental Branch and Angie Huebner, Invasive Species Management Branch have been working closely for months to have every project give full consideration to invasive species at every step along the way toward a completed and operational project.

"We have received great collaboration from the Planning and Policy Division in this effort," said Bill Zattau, chief of the Invasive Species Management Branch. "We have already seen progress. In the long run, it will make ecosystem restoration projects more successful in achieving restoration benefits and reducing operations and maintenance costs."

The effort is currently called, "Incorporating Invasive and Native Nuisance Species Management into the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP)." Projects that have already adopted components of the SOP include Site 1 Impoundment, Picayune Strand Restoration, the Decompartmentalization Physical Model, and Indian River Lagoon-South.

"What we are doing now," Wilcox said, "is working on guidance for how we should address invasive species on projects from the planning through the design, construction and operations phases. In other words we are trying to incorporate invasive species awareness, prevention and preparation in the entire life cycle of the project."

Huebner said the goal is to accomplish invasive species management in a coordinated and comprehensive effort. "We are trying to stay on the same page all the way through a project," Huebner said. "We want invasives to be a consideration from A to Z."

Wilcox noted that impetus for the joint effort goes far beyond the two divisions. "We have headquarters guidance on this effort," Wilcox said. "And Col. Pantano (district commander) has been in full support as well."

"And it should also be noted that South Florida Water Management District has sought this solution as well. They were finding projects to be more costly unless the invasive species issue was addressed early on in the course of a project."

The SOP, now in draft form, states that plans for restoration of natural habitat as a CERP project must include an assessment of the need for future management activities to control exotic/invasive or nuisance native species. Species, distribution and potential impacts to the restoration effort will be described along with detailed plans and cost to manage, to ensure that federal project ecosystem restoration benefits are realized.

"Sue and I are very optimistic about this SOP. The SOP calls for an invasive species management plan for each CERP project, which will be a living document, updated as projects move forward to ensure success in managing invasive species and achieving ecosystem restoration benefits," Huebner said. ♦

Building Strong with USACE libraries BY ORIANA ARMSTRONG

From an historical stance, libraries and knowledge management are interchangeable. There exists a mutual understanding between the two that, the more the input of knowledge, the lesser the cost of its use. In recent years the trend within scientific fields is to designate "knowledge" as a form of currency, which then sets in motion a train of thought that places learning, knowledge, and professional reading directly within the realm of cost effective commodities that grow human potential; build character; expand mental capacities; and motivate superior performance.

Think of it, if we acknowledge that technical competence is the key to professional survival in critical economic times, what next comes to mind should be, how then, shall we manage our continuing education, sharpen our expertise, and maintain access to viable knowledge centers? Could that be labeled as sustainability? Does the word "library" fit into this equation?

Highly recognized as a premier public engineering agency, the Corps has long acknowledged that continuous learning is key to quality, yet we find we are grappling with a somewhat fractured knowledge environment that lacks systematic control of an ever-burgeoning, ever-spiraling amount of digital literature coupled with an audio parallel or the underlying print format of literature.

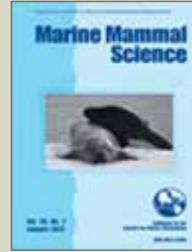
The USACE Campaign Plan well documents the critical need for a stable knowledge foundation throughout its tenants on technical competency and the overarching requirement for sustaining our knowledge base. In solution, a consortium of district libraries has been quietly assuming rights of access to this vast array of intellectual property, incorporating centuries of experience in subject authority control garnered from their affiliation with the Library of Congress, and utilizing the expert descriptive controls implemented by the American Library Association and its subsidiaries. The funding of this noble effort is tenuous to say the least.

Professional literature will say that the main purpose of any library is to reduce cost. Thus in theory, the library department should be able to be run on the cost savings to the main organization. For example, one shared library book equals 20 purchased books; one shared electronic library subscription equals 200 purchased subscriptions; one librarian or knowledge manager on data research equals a team of seven engineering specialists.

Yet even with these logical findings in view, funding for the USACE Electronic Library is tentative. The enterprise lacks congressional mandate, projected research funds, or perhaps a visionary board member who recognizes how key the requirement for direct knowledge access is to an organization. Jacksonville District's Library has been named as a member of the HQ Knowledge Management Advisory Board, and hopes to work towards an acceptable national mandate and adaptation for shared funding of these knowledge enhancements. ♦

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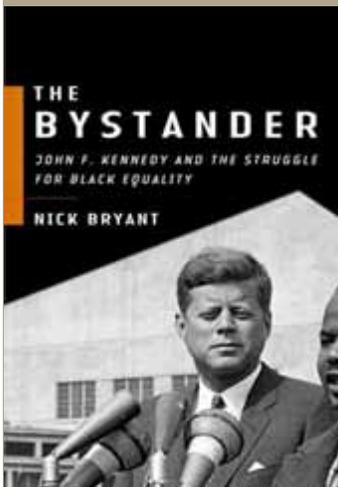
Published for the Society for Marine Mammalogy, this journal contains significant new findings on marine mammals resulting from original research on their form and function, evolution, systematics, physiology, biochemistry, behavior, population biology, life history, genetics, ecology and conservation. Original and review articles, notes, opinions and letters are featured. It serves as a vital resource for anyone studying marine mammals.

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BOOKNOOK

THE BYSTANDER: JOHN F. KENNEDY AND THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK EQUALITY

BY NICK BRYANT. BASIC BOOKS. ©2006.

Author Bryant seamlessly explicates the years of Kennedy's first campaign for public office in 1946, his rise in the U.S. Senate, and his successful presidential campaign of 1960 to illustrate how he deftly handled civil rights issues to gain crucial political support from southern whites and blacks, as well as from urban black populations in the north. Without a clear statement during most of his presidency, however, Kennedy provided fuel for staunch white supremacists to maintain segregation, causing black activist groups to seek militant responses—a combination that led to some of the most violent outbreaks of the early 1960s. Through manuscripts, letters, exclusive interviews, and audiotape recordings, Bryant illuminates the play-by-play between politicians and activists surrounding election campaigns, speeches, meetings, and legislation at every civil rights-related turn of Kennedy's public service, while effectively narrating the political and social swelling and aftermath of such high-tension episodes as the Freedom Rides, James Meredith's enrollment in the University of Mississippi, and the bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church in Birmingham, Alabama — A meticulously researched volume. ♦

BOOKLIST ©AMERICAN LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

2011 YEAR (continued from PAGE 3)

break ground on this first component of the Indian River Lagoon-South project.”

Also in October, the intergovernmental South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force endorsed a state-federal initiative to expedite planning for key restoration projects in the heart of America’s Everglades. Now under way, the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) has set a goal to deliver within two years a finalized plan, known as a Project Implementation Report, for a suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is leading this planning effort in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District.

Public meetings were held in December, to give interested individuals, groups and agencies an opportunity to comment and ask questions as the Corps begins to develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for CEPP. A public comment period was also open through January 2012.

The 2010 Report to Congress for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) was finalized and delivered to Congress in November. The report details the collaborative effort of participating agencies and their combined commitment to improve the Everglades ecosystem. It was the second CERP report prepared for Congress and is required every five years by WRDA 2000.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE AND HERBERT HOOVER DIKE



A view near Culvert 8 on Herbert Hoover Dike, which has protected communities surrounding Lake Okeechobee from potential flood risks for more than 70 years. (USACE PHOTO)

Although portions of the Everglades as well as areas west of Lake Okeechobee observed above average rainfall, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) website indicated Florida’s 2011 rainy season was 20 days shorter than average, with rainfall about five to seven inches less than a typical rainy season. This shorter rainy season and low rainfall followed a dry winter and spring, with a net effect of persistently low Lake Okeechobee water levels.

Water releases from Lake Okeechobee were made throughout the year, providing fresh water for the benefit of the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

Jacksonville District awarded the last two task orders of the cutoff wall construction contract for Reach 1 of Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD), between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade. Of the 21.4 miles under contract, 15.6 have been installed, reducing flood risk for lakeside communities. Contracts for the removal of one culvert and replacement of four 80-year-old culverts were also awarded in 2011.

The Okeechobee Waterway project and the Inspection of Completed Works project, each partially funded by ARRA, ensured that lock navigation structures, pump stations, canals and other structures were inspected, repaired and/or replaced, to support continuing safe and efficient operations.

In June, the HHD team welcomed engineers from the Iraqi Ministry of Water, a delegation led by the U.S. Navy and sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The Iraqi delegation visited STA-1E and its pump stations as well as a cutoff wall construction site, with a goal of learning about securing contracts, better understanding construction management and viewing different methods of technology. They benefitted from understanding the history of the Corps’ problems with seepage and how the Corps evaluates those conditions and uses cutoff walls to mitigate them.

“Our projects are very similar to what they have going at Mosul Dam... they could directly relate their experiences to ours and I think that was extremely valuable,” said David Paul, lead civil engineer for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Risk Management Center. Mosul Dam, which is aging and in need of repair, is Iraq’s largest dam and the Middle East’s fourth largest reservoir – a critical energy source that provides power and electricity to several countries.

In November, Jacksonville District also hosted visitors from the Netherlands, who toured two cutoff wall construction sites as well as the Culvert 14 removal site.

DAM AND LEVEE SAFETY



The Levee Safety Program had another busy year conducting inspections of levees. More than 600 miles were inspected in 2011 as part of two programs aimed at identifying potential levee issues before they lead to larger problems. (PHOTO BY JEFF BERGEN)

Jacksonville District conducted periodic inspections of 34 levee systems, totaling 320 miles, and routine inspections of 21 levee systems totaling 312 miles. Risk assessment screening was completed on 10 levee segments.

Routine inspection items include vegetation, encroachments, closure structures, erosion, animal burrows, pump operation and culverts. Periodic inspections include verifying proper operation and maintenance; evaluating operational adequacy, structural stability and safety of the system; and comparing current design and construction criteria with those that were in place when the levee was built.

“Public safety is the number one goal of the Levee Safety Program,” said Pantano. “We want to make sure levee systems are reliable and do not present unacceptable risks to the public, economy or environment.”

2011 YEAR (continued from PAGE 3)

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The third most active storm season on record saw 18 named storms, 11 tropical storms and seven hurricanes. Only one, Irene, made landfall on the U.S. mainland, in North Carolina after first hitting Puerto Rico, causing flooding, power outages and minor damage.

Jacksonville District deployed teams across the nation in support of emergency response efforts following severe weather events such as flooding and tornadoes. Teams assisted with debris removal, temporary power, temporary housing, infrastructure assessment and critical public facilities such as hospitals, schools and police and fire stations.

The Housing Planning and Response Team was deployed to support the critical facilities mission in Alabama and a temporary housing team provided reach back design support to St. Paul District, designing a group site of approximately 50 units in Burlington, N.D. within two weeks.



Jacksonville District's Housing Planning and Response Team was deployed to support the critical facilities mission following devastating tornadoes in Alabama. (USACE PHOTO)

Employing lessons learned following Hurricane Katrina, Jacksonville District's South Florida Operations Office conducted its first emergency exercise in partnership with the Florida Army National Guard in June. Using a Chinook helicopter capable of lifting up to 17,000 pounds of rock and sand, teams practiced lifting and dropping bags of sand around Herbert Hoover Dike. Jacksonville District stockpiles and strategically places emergency supplies well in advance of hurricane season. The exercise provided an additional level of preparation in the unlikely event of a potential breach of the dike.

A functional exercise followed, also in June, to further focus on preparedness at Herbert Hoover Dike. The exercise was conducted simultaneously at the Jacksonville District headquarters, the South Florida Operations Office and the Palm Beach County Emergency Operations Center in West Palm Beach, Fla. with participation by federal, state and local agencies.

Demonstrating selfless service, Jacksonville District team members also voluntarily deployed during the year to support U.S. Army Corps of Engineers missions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Bahrain, Kuwait and the Dominican Republic.

INVASIVE SPECIES MANAGEMENT

Nearly 12,000 acres of invasive aquatic plants have been treated on Lake Okeechobee and the St. Johns River in fiscal year 2011.

Jacksonville District team members conducted the first inspections for invasive vegetation in the district's Dredged Material Management Areas, treating 140 acres of salt cedar as part of an early detection and rapid response effort.



Photo shows a closeup view of Tamarix. The tiny seeds of the plant are wind-dispersed, and absent the Invasive Species Management program, could spread for miles. (PHOTO BY JESSICA SPENCER)

Approximately 1,500 acres of terrestrial vegetation was treated in the 8.5 Square Mile Area, a component of the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park project.

Jacksonville District's Invasive Species Management team provided technical assistance to several other Corps districts and contributed to the Great Lakes Mississippi Intrabasin Study on Asian carp problems. In fiscal year 2011, the district also shipped 25,000 alligator weed flea beetles to five different states, reportedly the most successful use of bio-controls in the world.

COASTAL AND NAVIGATION

In January 2011, Jacksonville District completed dredging a 3.5-mile length of the Palm Valley North Reach segment of the Intracoastal Waterway to its authorized 12-foot depth. The \$4.7 million project was completed several months ahead of schedule, enabling safer, more efficient transit of cargo along the waterway between J. Turner Butler Boulevard and Palm Valley. Approximately 260,000 cubic yards of material was deposited in an upland disposal area about four miles south of the dredging area. The Intracoastal Waterway – Jacksonville to Miami Project was co-sponsored by the Florida Inland Navigation District and was partially funded by ARRA.

Jacksonville District's maintenance dredging of the Puerto Nuevo River in Puerto Rico also began in January 2011. Rapid upstream runoff, inadequate channel capacity, constriction at bridges and elimination of the flood plain by urbanization threatened to cause severe flooding for 7,500 residents and 700 commercial and public structures valued at over \$3 billion. The plan of improvement protects against severe flooding by construction in the Margarita Creek and the Puerto Nuevo River and its tributaries, including 1.7 miles of earth-lined channel, 9.5 miles of concrete-lined channel, 5.1 miles of which are high velocity, and two debris basins. The plan will also require the construction of five new bridges, the replacement of 17 bridges and the modification of eight existing bridges.

The third and final snagging and clearing operation was completed on the Ocklawaha River in March. The waterway had not been cleared in several years and a 2009 survey had identified nearly 500 snags, ranging from small brush, saplings and leaning trees to large fallen trees and other debris. The project was fully funded by ARRA and ensured unobstructed navigation and enhanced public safety.

A project to install a \$1.4 million manatee protection system at the Port Canaveral locks was completed in April, two weeks ahead of schedule. The contractor worked on an accelerated schedule and

(CONTINUES ON PAGE 17)

2011 YEAR (continued from PAGE 16)

around three NASA shuttle launch reschedules to accomplish the work, which had been postponed at the public's request, to allow unimpeded navigation throughout hurricane season.

Jacksonville District and Manatee County held a groundbreaking ceremony Nov. 14 to kick off the Cedar Hammock-Wares Creek project. The project will address drainage channels that are currently inadequate to carry runoff from a five-year-frequency rainfall. The new plan will provide a ten-year level of protection. Work will consist of dredging approximately 37,000 cubic yards of sand, dewatering it and transporting it by truck to a landfill for disposal.

"Successful projects are a result of great partnerships," said Pantano. "The Wares Creek project exemplifies how a true partnering spirit can ensure great success."

Recently, the Jacksonville Port Authority received welcome news when the Mile Point project received unanimous approval by the Civil Works Review Board to proceed with the project. The \$40 million construction project to correct a navigational hazard and restriction in the St. Johns River now goes to various state and federal agencies for review and comment. A final Chief of Engineers' report will follow, the final step before Congress is asked to authorize and fund the project.



A view of Mile Point near Jacksonville, where a proposed \$40 million construction project will correct a navigational hazard and restriction in the St. Johns River. The proposal received unanimous approval by the Civil Works Review Board. (PHOTO COURTESY JACKSONVILLE PORT AUTHORITY)

The Lake Worth Inlet Feasibility Study has been accepted into a Pilot Program to Expedite Feasibility Studies. The study will examine improvements to the federal navigation project at Palm Beach Harbor, which has not seen any improvements in more than 40 years. The existing channel is 33 feet deep and 300 feet wide, too shallow and narrow for modern size vessels. The team is formulating plans to widen and deepen the channels.

The pilot program requires a significant investment in time and resources early in the study process. Status of the study assumptions and scope will be shared through six in progress reviews and four decision point meetings. This investment early in the process should provide dividends by simplifying draft and final feasibility report reviews and approval and reducing the study schedule by a year.

HURRICANE AND STORM DAMAGE REDUCTION

Early completion of the Duval County Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project on Atlantic and Jacksonville Beaches helped to protect the beaches and upland structures during Hurricane Irene. The project was completed August 16, almost a month early and just a week prior to Hurricane Irene.

"Project inspections have been conducted by our coastal engineers and the project performed beautifully," said Steve Ross, project manager. Ross explained that some sand has been moved from the



U.S. Rep. Ander Crenshaw (R-FL 4), right, visited the Duval County Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project site, where he was briefed by Steve Ross (left) and Russ Tolle (center). The project was completed almost a month early and just a week prior to Hurricane Irene, and Ross said that it "performed beautifully," successfully protecting the beach and upland structures. (PHOTO BARRY VORSE)

berm and distributed to the waterward portion of the project, but it is expected to return naturally with ocean wave action.

The Duval County Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction project is among the oldest and most successful beach restoration projects in the state of Florida, and was honored in 2009 by the American Shore and Beach Preservation Association as one of the seven best restored beaches in the nation.

Approximately 700,000 cubic yards of material was dredged from a borrow area about seven miles offshore and placed in two reaches, one on Atlantic Beach and one on Jacksonville Beach. The \$11.8 million project widened the beach berm from 20 to 80 feet in width, and raised the elevation of the intertidal beach by about three to five feet.

A public workshop was held in Bunnell in October, to solicit input to be used in developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Flagler County Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Project.

Beach and dune erosion, both long-term and storm induced, is the greatest problem in the Flagler County area. Due to the unique beach sediments and proximity of A1A and existing coastal development, Flagler County's dune system is experiencing a long-term erosion trend with little opportunity for natural recovery. The establishment of a functional dune system will be key in meeting the study objectives to reduce damages to infrastructure and maintain environmental quality. A Feasibility Study is currently under way.

REGULATORY

Jacksonville District's Regulatory program, the largest in the Corps, exceeded program goals for the year. More than 540 Individual Permits were issued and nearly 2,900 General Permits were verified in fiscal year 2011. Three new mitigation banks were issued.

Regulatory team members conducted 1,373 compliance inspections and resolved 151 cases, exceeding all National Performance Standards. Nearly 50 outreach events were conducted, as well as a mitigation banking workshop and a public workshop to address the status of non-compliant structures along the Palm Valley reach of the Intracoastal Waterway.

Jacksonville District partnered with the State Historic Preservation Office on a Memorandum of Agreement concerning data sharing and

2011 YEAR (continued from PAGE 17)

with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission on a new Endangered Species Act key for manatees.

Two scoping meetings were held in March to gather public input to an Areawide Environmental Impact Statement (AEIS) for Continued Phosphate Mining in the Central Florida Phosphate District. Mining of phosphate has occurred in the central Florida region for more than 100 years and the Corps has issued Department of the Army permits for mining activities since 1977 under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. With additional permit actions pending, the Corps determined that an AEIS would more accurately address past, present and reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts than reviewing each permit application individually and separately. The AEIS will provide a comprehensive, consistent framework on which to base future decisions concerning continued phosphate mining in this area.



Jose Rivera, right, talks with property owners at a Sept. 20 meeting in Ponte Vedra Beach, Fla. The meeting, which addressed the status of structures along the Palm Valley Reach of the Intracoastal Waterway, was followed by a successful availability session at the local library in October, to provide "one-stop service" for the community. (PHOTO BY NANCY J. STICHT)

A draft Environmental Assessment (EA) associated with the review of a permit application for a natural gas pipeline project in Puerto Rico, known as Via Verde, was released for public review and comment. The EA documents the extensive Corps' review and evaluation process to date on the permit application submitted by Autoridad de Energia Electrica/Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority (PREPA), San Juan, P.R. to install a natural gas pipeline, encompassing 1,672 acres and traversing 235 rivers and wetlands and 369 acres of jurisdictional waters of the United States. Under the Clean Water Act, a Department of the Army permit is required when a proposed project may impact waters of the United States, including wetlands. The Corps evaluates such projects in consultation with resource agencies and considering input from all interested parties. After the public comment period closes in January 2012, the Corps will take one of three actions – finalize the EA and issue the permit, deny the permit, or proceed to development of a more rigorous Environmental Impact Statement.

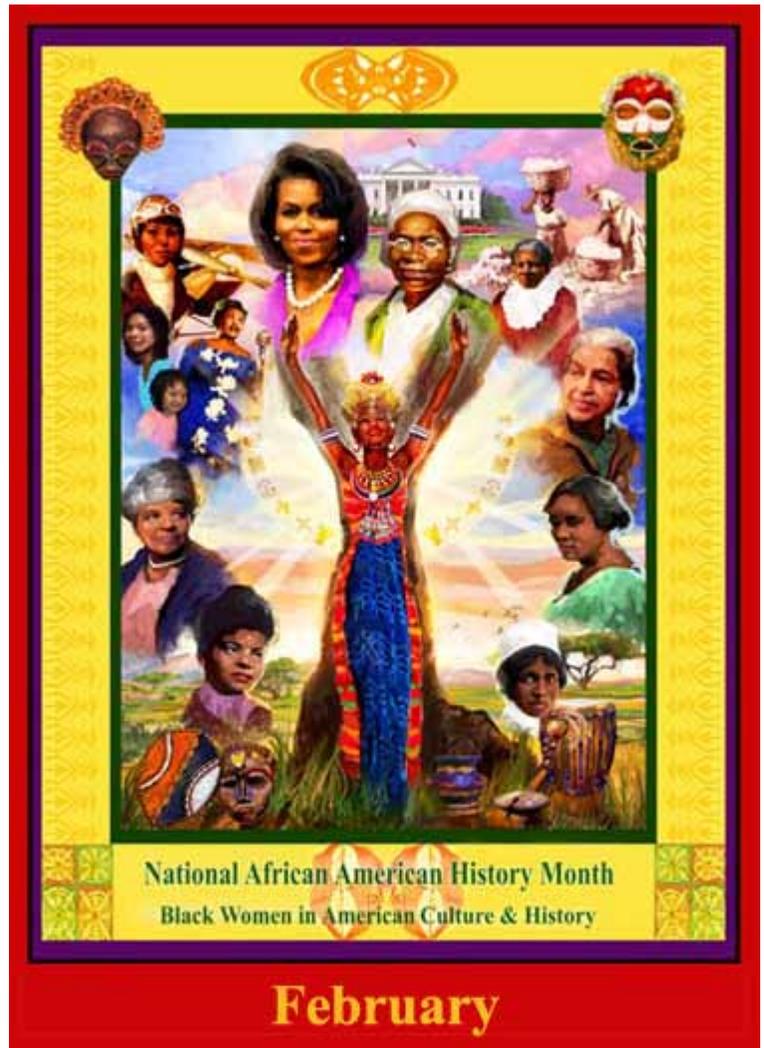
RECREATION

The Lake Okeechobee Visitor Center Rehabilitation Project received the American Recreation Coalition's (ARC) 2011 Beacon Award at a ceremony in Washington, D.C. The Beacon Awards recognize outstanding efforts by federal agencies and partners in harnessing the power of technology to improve public recreation experiences and federal recreation program management. See full story on page 12 for more on this prestigious award.



Visitors enjoy the swimming beach at W. P. Franklin recreation area. Jacksonville District's recreation areas at Lake Okeechobee received more than 5.5 million visitors in fiscal year 2011 and volunteers contributed more than 14,000 hours to welcoming and serving the public and educating them in water safety. (PHOTO BY PHIL HART, PARK RANGER)

Jacksonville District recreation areas around Lake Okeechobee received more than 5.5 million visitors in fiscal year 2011, an increase from 5.2 visitors the previous year. Volunteers contributed more than 14,000 hours to welcome and serve visitors at the recreation areas and to promote water safety education throughout the district. ♦



FAMILY READINESS NETWORK



WELCOME HOME

- MARK BENNETT
- ROBERTO CHEVRES
- JESSICA MCCAFFREY
- ERASMO RIVERA
- EARL WAGNER
- ANGIE WASHINGTON
- LARRY WOOTERS



FAREWELL TO

- RONNIE HUEBNER
- RICH NEWTON
- KENNETH POINDEXTER
- RUSS TOLLE



TOP: Roberto Chevres is welcomed home by Okee. BOTTOM LEFT: Earl Wagner (second from left) is welcomed home by (from left) Kim Brooks-Hall, Jim Jeffords and Lt. Col. Clint Barker. BOTTOM RIGHT: Erasmo Rivera (center) receives a warm welcome from his family and from Lt. Col. Clint Barker and Okee. (PHOTOS BY MARIA EGGERS)

"Thank you to everyone who supported the care package donation drive for our deployed employees." – MARIA EGGERS, FAMILY READINESS SPECIALIST

Thank you to the volunteers—Shawndreka Lanier-Douglas, Sirisha Rayaprolu, Wendy Dauberman-Zerby, Brittany Jones, Michael Ornella and Stan Pilinski—that helped to sort the many donations that came from district team members to create care packages for those deployed in Afghanistan during the holidays.

THANK YOU FROM AFGHANISTAN

"Thank you so much for the goodie box. It is much appreciated. Please tell everyone thank you for me. Happy Holidays to all!" – SARAH SHEA

"Hello and thank you! I received your card and wonderful package of goodies yesterday – it sure was a morale booster! Thank you for your generosity and kind thoughts. I hope everyone has a great Christmas and holiday season – see you all next Spring. God Bless." – FRANK FISCHER

"Please let everyone know how grateful I am, receiving my second package in Afghanistan. Merry Christmas to all!" – PEDRO DAVILA

"Just wanted to say thanks for the goodie box and please relay my appreciation to all that gave a helping hand packing boxes and signing the card. No matter how old you are its always exciting to get a box of goodies in the mail. Thanks again for the support!" – SHAWN

"Thank you soooo much!!! I was surprised and excited!!!" – ANGIE WASHINGTON

"To my Jacksonville District family members, I received the care package two days ago. I cannot adequately express my deep appreciation for your thoughtfulness. It means the world to me to be remembered by people so special and dear to me. I wish each and everyone a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Thank you again for the care package." – EUNICE FORD

"Everyone, I received the care package yesterday. Thank you to everyone who helped put it together." – JONATHON JENKINS

"Thanks to you and everyone for the Christmas card and care package." – CHUCK COMEAU

"I want to thank you and whomever else is responsible for gathering and sending all the goodies. Take care and again thanks for thinking of us." – LINDA SOUZA-BARNEY

"Jacksonville District Family, thank you for your support and the wonderful Christmas care package. Enjoyed by all in the office here. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year" – DAN FINKE

JAXHAPPENINS'

FEBRUARY – BLACK HISTORY MONTH, AMERICAN HEART MONTH

- FEB 3—National Wear Red Day
- FEB 9—Project Review Board (PRB)
- FEB 14—Valentine's Day
- FEB 16—Black History Month Brain Brawl
- FEB 16—Moore Haven Lock Manatee Protection System public meeting; 6pm at Jacksonville District South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston
- FEB 19-25—National Engineers Week
- FEB 20—President's Day
- FEB 22—River Acres Information Session; 4pm-6pm at Bassinger Community Center in Okeechobee
- FEB 24—Engineering Career Day
- FEB 28—Black History Month

MARCH – NATIONAL WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH, NATIONAL NUTRITION MONTH

- MAR 8—Project Review Board (PRB)
- MAR 11—Daylight Saving Time begins
- MAR 13—New employee orientation
- MAR 17—St Patrick's Day
- MAR 20—First day of Spring

APRIL – CANCER CONTROL MONTH, ALCOHOL AWARENESS MONTH

- APR 12—Project Review Board (PRB)
- APR 16-20—Family Readiness Week
- APR 22—Earth Day
- APR 25—Administrative Professionals Day

FRN UPCOMING EVENT

SAD DEPLOYMENT ROADSHOW
MARCH 2012

PRESENTED BY
VALERIE CONERWAY
SAD Deployment Coordinator

Learn more about the deployment process.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
JUAN RODRIGUEZ
904-232-2403

PARTINGSHOTS 2011 YEAR IN REVIEW



JANUARY



FEBRUARY



MARCH



APRIL



MAY



JUNE



JULY



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER



OCTOBER



NOVEMBER



DECEMBER

JANUARY - Col. Al Pantano (center) makes a point during a panel discussion at the Everglades Coalition Conference held Jan. 6-9, 2011 in Weston. (USACE PHOTO). **FEBRUARY** - Miss Florida 2010, Jacklyn Raulerson, helped break ground on the \$79 million Picayune Strand/Faka Union Canal Pump Station Project Feb. 18 near Naples, Fla. Joining Raulerson (L-R) were Terrence "Rock" Salt, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Atlantic Division; and Capt. Erica Lager, project manager. (PHOTO BY STACY CAGLE). **MARCH** - Orlando Ramos-Gines, project manager, addresses more than 200 contractors and business owners who attended a March 17 meeting to learn more about submitting proposals to build the Indian River Lagoon-South C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area. A \$32-million contract for the project was awarded in July, and a groundbreaking ceremony was held in October. (USACE PHOTO). **APRIL** - John Zediak (center) explains the importance of managing water resources to children who attended Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day April 28. (USACE PHOTO). **MAY** - Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite, South Atlantic Division commander, helps place bio-control insects on plants following a groundbreaking ceremony for the Melaleuca and Other Exotic Plants Eradication research facility May 10 in Davie, Fla. (USACE PHOTO). **JUNE** - Students in St. Johns County learned about the animals that live in the Everglades, during one of many outreach events conducted by district team members throughout the year. (USACE PHOTO). **JULY** - As of July, construction was 51% complete at Portugues Dam near Ponce, Puerto Rico. The \$375-million project will reduce the impacts from flooding for nearly 40,000 people along the Portugues River. (USACE PHOTO). **AUGUST** - A citizen offers comments during a public meeting August 15 to discuss options for Mile Point near Jacksonville. Improvements to Mile Point and JAXPORT will be necessary for the port to accommodate larger ships which could be traversing the Panama Canal in the next few years. **SEPTEMBER** - Workers observe as a trench is dug at Herbert Hoover Dike around Lake Okeechobee, continuing construction of a cutoff wall. In September, the Corps started another phase of rehabilitation with the award of contracts to replace four of the 30+ culverts around the dike. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL). **OCTOBER** - Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy (center) talks to Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite (left), South Atlantic Division commander and Col. Al Pantano (right), Jacksonville District commander during a boat tour of the St. Lucie Lock & Dam Oct. 28. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL). **NOVEMBER** - The Cedar Hammock Wares Creek Flood Risk Reduction Project broke ground Nov. 14 in Bradenton, Fla. to address inadequate drainage channels and eventually provide a ten-year level of protection from flooding. **DECEMBER** - Gina Paduano Ralph, environmental lead, explains the environmental considerations associated with the Central Everglades Planning Project at a Dec. 14 public scoping meeting in Plantation, Fla. (USACE PHOTO)