JAXSTRONG®

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COMMANDER'S CORNER
MESSAGE FROM COL. ALAN DODD

A GLANCE AT 2012 FROM OUR REARVIEW MIRROR; EYES FRONT AND CENTER FOR 2013

Happy New Year! I hope you took a little time to relax and enjoy time with friends and family during the holidays and have returned to work reinvigorated for 2013 and the challenges and opportunities it holds for us as a district. First, I commend all of you for an exceptionally well-executed fiscal year 2012 and to successfully closing out the year. So even though we are starting a new calendar year, we are one quarter into our 2013 fiscal year. The pressure is on as budgets tighten and timelines shorten. Much is expected of all of us.

Let's take a moment to celebrate our significant 2012 accomplishments:

- Awarded 1,207 contracts totaling $363,313,927.
- With major appropriations categories, non-federal funds and our IIS program, obligated $473 million.
- Processed approximately 10,000 permit and regulatory actions.
- Had five Chief's Reports signed.
- Signed a project partnership agreement with the port of Miami.
- Dealt with Beryl, Debby, Isaac and Sandy and never missed a beat.
- Literally stopped traffic at the Tamiami Trail bridge as we moved this project closer to completion and closer to restoring a more natural water flow to Everglades National Park.
- Awarded nine dredging projects that will help keep our waterways navigable.
- Renourished four beaches, substantially protecting structures during tropical storms and hurricanes.
- Under civil works transformation we are moving ahead as planned on the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and are now almost one year into our two-year goal. Our second pilot project is the Lake Worth Inlet Feasibility Study, benefiting Palm Beach Harbor, which hasn't seen any improvements in more than 40 years.

The reputation we have for excellence is well deserved and I'm proud to be your commander. Now, we turn our attention to the second quarter of fiscal year 2013 and start a new calendar year. The coming months will be just as professionally daunting as past years and will require your continued dedication, energy, intellect and skills. I'm confident in your ability to deliver.

In December alone, we reached some key stakeholders with very strategic messages about Jacksonville District at the 16 County Coalition Ecosystem Restoration Summit and a series of Central Everglades Planning Project public meetings. The goal of CEPP is to deliver within two years finalized plans for a suite of restoration projects in the Central Everglades for congressional authorization. Because of the compressed time line, CEPP is part of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Pilot Program for Feasibility Studies so it is very important that we hit our goals on this.

We also have a lot of work ahead on the ports of Miami, Jacksonville and Everglades. Our Regulatory, Operations, Contracting and Engineering Divisions seem to be working around the clock. Here's to a happy, safe and successful new year and to demonstrating why you have the reputation as being the best district in the Corps!

Army Strong. BUILDING STRONG®. JaxStrong.

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

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ON THE COVER

Water flows through the gates of the St. Lucie Lock in late September, as Jacksonville District started discharges from Lake Okeechobee to stem the rapid rise in lake levels after Tropical Storm Isaac. The releases began Sept. 19 and continued until early November. STORY ON PAGE 3.
(PHOTO BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL)

Milestones reached at Herbert Hoover Dike as dedication to water management balance continues

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

Work continues at the Culvert 11 site near Port Mayaca to replace a water control structure in Herbert Hoover Dike. Thirty-two structures, dating back to the 1930s, are scheduled to be removed, replaced or abandoned. (USACE PHOTO)

The past year saw both low water and high water at Lake Okeechobee, as well as completion of one project and the start of others on Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD).

The best news occurred in October, when the last section of cutoff wall in the dike between Port Mayaca and Belle Glade was accepted by Jacksonville District construction representatives. The action meant 21.4 miles of cutoff wall that had been under construction since 2007 was in place, reducing the risk of failure for the southeast portion of the dike.

The focus of repair activity at the dike is now replacement and removal of water control structures, also known as culverts. Beginning in the 1930s, 32 structures were installed and are now seen as the greatest risk to continued stability of the dike. Jacksonville District removed Culvert 14 south of Port Mayaca in the spring. Two replacement projects began in January – one at Culverts 1/1A between Clewiston and Moore Haven; the other at Culverts 11/16. Work on the replacement projects is expected to continue through 2015.

In September, the district awarded another contract for replacement of Culverts 3/4A between Clewiston and South Bay. Work on that project is expected to begin shortly. Contracts are expected to be awarded in early 2013 for the abandonment of three additional culverts near the city of Okeechobee on the north side of the lake. The district is expected to award contracts for the replacement of six other water control structures later in the year.

A long-reach excavator "demucks" an area near Culvert 1A while replacing the water control structure between Moore Haven and Clewiston. Jacksonville District has two ongoing culvert replacement projects, and awarded a contract for a third project in September. In total, 32 water control structures are expected to be removed, replaced, or abandoned over the next six years. (USACE PHOTO)

In early June, the district hosted 27 students from 20 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and South America as they toured HHD and learned about the repair work. The visit was part of a trip for students enrolled in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) Institute for Water Education. The students were candidates for a Master of Science degree in Hydro-informatics, a program that uses modeling and information technology to help solve hydraulic and other water-based environmental problems.

While construction continues, Engineering Division continues to conduct analyses aimed at guiding the future direction of repairs to the dike. These analyses will be used as the basis for a Dam Safety Modification Study (DSMS), which is expected to be finalized in 2014. Information in the DSMR is expected to guide development of the next round of HHD projects. The ultimate goal is to improve the dike's Dam Safety Action Classification (DSAC), which currently classifies the dike as a structure with very high risk in need of repair. Due to the amount of work needed, it may be a full decade before work is finished.

For water managers at Lake Okeechobee, 2012 was a year filled with typical challenges of not having enough water, then suddenly being in a position of having too much water.

For much of the first half of the year, the lake's water level dwindled as water was supplied for various uses around the lake, including crop irrigation. A series of water releases was made to the Caloosahatchee Estuary to help offset rising salinity, but those releases had to be suspended when the lake dropped below the lower end of its preferred minimum of 12.5 feet. The summer started off with steady rains, but it wasn't enough to cause a noticeable rise in the lake…until the end of August and Tropical Storm Isaac.

Isaac passed over the Florida Keys Aug. 26 and made its way into the Gulf of Mexico. Heavy rain associated with Isaac worked its way up the Atlantic coast, dumping more than 15 inches of rain in Palm Beach County, and more than eight inches on Lake Okeechobee. This caused various streams and canals that drain into the lake to fill up as well. Within two weeks, Lake Okeechobee had risen nearly three feet, and the district began discharging water from the lake Sept. 19. Two weeks

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 5)**

Ports are focus of national spotlight in 2012

BY AMANDA ELLISON

The Jacksonville Harbor Deepening Study, included in President Obama's "We Can't Wait" Initiative, is being conducted on an expedited schedule. The Jacksonville Harbor (Mile Point) Navigational Study achieved a signed Chief of Engineers' Report and Project Design Agreement, critical steps in moving the project to Congressional authorization and appropriation. (USACE PHOTO)

Ports were thrust into the national spotlight in 2012 after President Obama announced the "We Can't Wait" Initiative, which placed several of Jacksonville District's port projects and studies onto the fast track for implementation.

As a part of the initiative, President Obama identified seven nationally and regionally significant infrastructure projects to be expedited to help modernize and expand five major ports in the United States, including the port of Jacksonville and the port of Miami.

"One way to help American businesses grow and hire is to modernize infrastructure," said Obama.

The Jacksonville Harbor Deepening Study is moving forward at an unprecedented pace, with the study schedule timeline being moved up by 14 months. The project team is hard at work to ensure that the draft feasibility study will be completed and finalized by April 2013. The study is examining benefits and costs of deepening the federal navigation channel from its existing authorized project depth of 40 feet to a maximum project depth of 50 feet.

In order to keep the public fully informed and engaged in the process, bi-monthly conference calls are open to public participation. Two public meetings were held in 2012, to present the community with preliminary findings of the ecological modeling portion of the study. Several more public meetings are planned for 2013.

The Jacksonville Harbor (Mile Point) Navigational Study reached several critical milestones when the Chief of Engineers' Report was approved and the Project Design Agreement was signed. The approval of the Chief of Engineers' Report is a critical step towards moving the project forward to Congress for authorization and appropriation. The joint signing of the agreement will allow the design of the project to move forward.

"This is another tremendous step forward for Mile Point as we move into the design phase of the project," said Jerry Scarborough, chief of the Water Resources Branch. "This project is of critical importance to those who navigate the St. Johns River and will provide a much-needed solution for the maritime industry as well as the surrounding community."

The Port of Canaveral achieved a significant milestone in October, when team members successfully presented the Canaveral Harbor Feasibility Study to the Civil Works Review Board. The feasibility study is only the second of its kind nationwide to be implemented under Section 203 of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986. WRDA Section 203 allows the project sponsor to conduct the feasibility study itself, with the Corps acting as a consultant.

Extensive coordination and partnering between the sponsor and the Corps aided in the success of the study and helped shave critical time off of the project schedule. Due to the team's efforts, members of the Civil Works Review Board commented that the presentation was one of the best efforts they have seen.

The Miami Harbor project is well under way and is moving full steam ahead. A permit for the project was issued in August and the project was advertised in October. The contract award is anticipated in March 2013. ♦

The Port of Miami, one of two Jacksonville District projects included in the administration's "We Can't Wait" initiative, welcomed four million cruise passengers last year and anticipates doubling its cargo traffic over the next decade. A contract award for the project is anticipated in March 2013. (USACE PHOTO).

MILESTONES REACHED (CONTINUED FROM **PAGE 3**)

Water flows through the gates of the Moore Haven Lock in October, as Jacksonville District started discharges from Lake Okeechobee to stem the rapid rise in lake levels after Tropical Storm Isaac. The releases began Sept. 19 and continued until early November. (USACE PHOTO)

later, the district increased the releases to 4,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the Moore Haven Lock and 1,800 cfs at the St. Lucie Lock. In early November, as the lake water level started to decline again, the releases were suspended to the St. Lucie Estuary, but were continued for environmental reasons in the Caloosahatchee.

The decision on water releases was guided by the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule (LORS). LORS was the result of a multi-year study on water management that included significant input from the public. It was developed to balance the performance of multiple project purposes while preserving public health and safety. Everything is considered, including but not limited to historical lake levels, current weather conditions and forecasts, hydrologic outlooks, estuary conditions and needs, lake ecology conditions and needs and levels in water conservation areas.

One of the authorized uses of water in Lake Okeechobee is to maintain suitable levels in the canals and streams that form the Okeechobee Waterway, which runs from the Atlantic Ocean at Stuart to the Gulf of Mexico at Fort Myers. The district operates five navigational locks along the waterway. Business continues to be brisk, and the district undertook multiple projects to keep the locks fully functional.

At Moore Haven, the lock was closed during the early summer for installation of manatee protection system (MPS) equipment. The MPS equipment protects manatees in the vicinity of the locks from being caught in a closing gate. Upon completion of the MPS installation at Moore Haven, all five locks in the Okeechobee Waterway are now equipped with the protective devices.

In addition to the repairs at Moore Haven, the district closed St. Lucie Lock in late June to conduct emergency repairs on a faulty seal that was preventing full closure of the gates. Both locks were operational by mid-July.

To standardize the operations of Corps locks across the nation, the district reduced the operating hours for the locks Nov. 13. The locks are now open 12 hours daily, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Under this nationwide plan, operations will be reviewed annually at each lock, and hours will be adjusted based on the lockage activity.

Another busy year is in store in 2013. Additional contracts for replacement of water control structures are expected to be awarded. Water managers will continue to strive for balance in meeting the environmental needs of the estuaries, while ensuring adequate storage is available in Lake Okeechobee for the next hurricane season, which starts June 1. ♦

When the call comes, Jacksonville District team members respond

BY JOHN H. CAMPBELL

Jacksonville District Electrical Engineer Gerald Deloach assesses damage to a building in Moonachie, N.J. that was damaged by Hurricane Sandy. Deloach was one of a dozen people from Jacksonville District that deployed to the impact zone. (PHOTO BY ANDREW STAMER, NEW ENGLAND DISTRICT)

Jacksonville District's Emergency Management Branch worked with nearly 50 district employees on deployment missions at home and abroad during 2012.

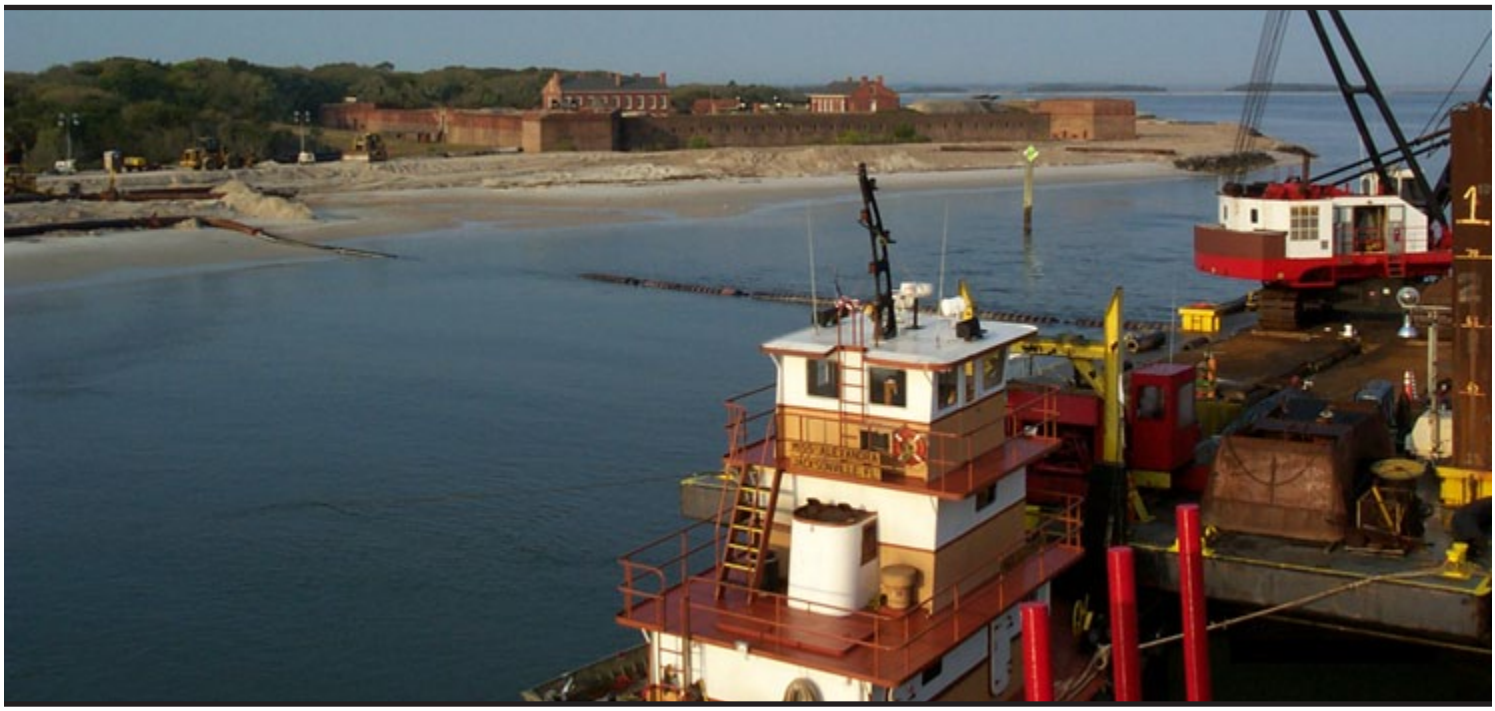
At the end of November, 32 district team members had deployed to Afghanistan, while 16 others had responded to three tropical systems that impacted Florida and the north Atlantic. Twelve were sent to New Jersey and New York to assist with emergency response following Hurricane Sandy. Seven others had earlier assisted with damage assessment following Tropical Storms Debby and Isaac.

In Afghanistan, the Corps still operates two districts as part of its Transatlantic Division. The Afghanistan Engineer District North is headquartered in Kabul, and is currently under the leadership of former Jacksonville District Commander Col. Al Pantano. The Afghanistan Engineer District South is headquartered at Kandahar Airfield. Both districts are working on projects to support remaining American military forces in the country, and to support Afghan National Security Forces as they prepare to assume the lead in security operations in 2014.

However, hurricane season saw its share of deployment activity as well. Tropical Storm Debby dumped heavy rain on northern Florida in late June, causing flooding that closed I-10. In late August, Tropical Storm Isaac made its way through the Gulf of Mexico, also bringing heavy rain for most of south Florida. For each storm, the Corps dispatched teams to assist with assessment of damage along impacted beaches.

In October, Hurricane Sandy made its way north along the Atlantic Coast, finally reaching land in New Jersey. Sandy knocked power out for millions, and resulted in the activation of 12 Jacksonville District employees. The Jacksonville team assisted with the assessment of damaged critical infrastructure, such as fire stations, schools and other key facilities. They also assisted with the development of technical reports to help guide the recovery process. ♦

Dredging and beach programs experience active year BY AMANDA ELLISON



Sand was placed at Fort Clinch State Park following the dredging of Kings Bay Entrance Channel at Fernandina Harbor. (USACE PHOTO)

Florida's shorelines saw a flurry of activity during 2012. The state experienced several storm systems that caused erosion impacts to a host of federal beach projects. In addition, a few beaches saw new sand placed on their shores as a result of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' dredging projects.

Storm season is always an active time for Florida, and 2012 was no exception. Both Tropical Storm Debby and Hurricane Sandy left damage to numerous shorelines in their wake. The Corps spent a considerable amount of time assessing damage across the state from both of these storms.

The impacts were so significant to some areas that the Corps initiated the Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Hurricane Shore Protection Projects (HSPPs) under Public Law 84-99. The program allows the Corps to supplement local efforts to repair federal flood control projects damaged by floods and/or hurricanes, and federally authorized and constructed HSPPs damaged or destroyed by extraordinary wind, wave or water action. The program allows the amount of sand necessary to restore federal projects to pre-storm conditions.

Several shore protection projects occurred throughout the year, including South Beach in Miami, Fla., one of the state's top tourist destinations, providing millions of dollars in revenue each year. The Corps closely coordinated efforts with the city of Miami and local businesses, to ensure minimal impacts to tourists and residents during the work.

The St. Johns County Shore Protection Project was completed in November 2012. Dredging for the Kings Bay Entrance Channel at Fernandina Harbor was also completed. During the Kings Bay Entrance Channel dredging project, approximately 50,000 cubic yards of beach quality sand was placed at Fort Clinch State Park. The dredging project allowed for maintenance of the entrance channel, which was critical to commercial cargo transiting the port.

The Corp's newest dredge, named *Murden*, made its debut on a Jacksonville District project in Clearwater, Fla. During its first voyage, the 163-foot vessel undertook a maintenance dredging project at Clearwater Pass.

The *Murden*'s visit to Jacksonville District was unique. Usually vessels of this nature operate in the northern half of the Atlantic coast, and rarely make their way to the southeast. However, timing was perfect and the vessel was ready for work at precisely the same time as the district needed it for a project.

"Recently there has been little to no funding available for shallow draft projects. Bringing in a dredge with the technical capabilities of the *Murden* is greatly beneficial," said Jose Bilbao, project manager. "In this case, we were fortunate to have the MURDEN in the area and the Corps was able to do the job, and efficiently place the sand in the littoral system where it will provide coastal benefits."

Another Corps dredge worked at the Ponce De Leon Inlet. The *Currituck* conducted maintenance dredging at the inlet entrance channel and inlet channels leading up to the Intracoastal Waterway.

"It is very unique to have two Corps vessels working on our projects at the same time," said Bilbao. "It rarely happens, and we are fortunate to have both of these vessels simultaneously fulfilling our project needs. It's a huge benefit for us all."

For its 89th annual meeting, the Coastal Engineering Research Board (CERB) met in Jacksonville. Established by public law in 1963, the CERB functions as an advisory board to the Chief of Engineers. The theme of the meeting was "Regional Sediment Management – Uniting Navigation, Beaches and the Ecosystem." The objectives of the meeting were to examine the challenges with port and navigation development and operation, beach and coastal development and managing storm damage risk; and to examine the challenges to coastal ecosystems restoration, resilience and sustainability, all with a focus on coastal engineering requirements.

The conference was a great success, and Jacksonville District received many compliments for a job well done. "I wanted to personally thank Jacksonville District for hosting the CERB this week," said Col. Ed Jackson, South Atlantic Division commander. "It was extremely well planned and executed and I personally learned a great deal." ♦

Everglades restoration takes several leaps forward BY JENN MILLER

Construction of the $81 million Tamiami Trail project began in 2010, with the first concrete pour on the bridge deck taking place in July 2012. A one-mile bridge and 9.7 miles of raised and reinforced road will allow increased water flows essential to the health and viability of the Everglades. (PHOTO BY JENN MILLER)

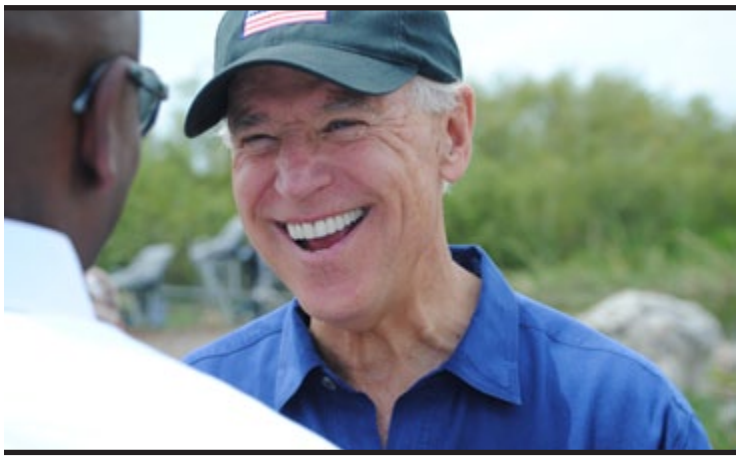
For Everglades restoration, the year started off with lots of excitement and momentum as the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) accelerated, with the ambitious goal of delivering – within two years – finalized plans for congressional authorization for a suite of restoration projects in the central Everglades.

CEPP is a key project being implemented under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Planning Transformation Process, which will streamline the project planning process to produce concise Chief of Engineers reports faster and at lower cost. The project is currently in the analysis phase.

"Together with our partner, the South Florida Water Management District, we're going to have more action and less paper pushing," said Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Jo-Ellen Darcy in reference to CEPP at the 27th Annual Everglades Coalition Conference in January 2012.

The Everglades provided the backdrop for high level events, including a visit from Vice President Joe Biden to Tamiami Trail April 23 to discuss the administration's efforts to restore the Everglades.

"About a mile from here, we're building a bridge to raise up the Tamiami Trail so there can be a natural flow of water," Biden said.



Vice President Joe Biden visited the Everglades in April, to discuss the administration's ecosystem restoration priorities and efforts. (PHOTO BY JENN MILLER)

Construction of the $81 million Tamiami Trail project, a key component of the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park, began in 2010. The project includes constructing a one-mile bridge and raising and reinforcing an additional 9.7 miles of road, allowing increased water flows that are essential to the health and viability of the Everglades.

"Last year, the Corps of Engineers' construction project generated 6,600 good paying jobs for Floridians and their families – and thousands of indirect jobs," Biden said. Restoration projects currently under way will garner "$46.5 billion net additional revenue to the state of Florida – just as a consequence of this restoration."

By July, the first concrete pour took place on the bridge deck of the Tamiami Trail bridge. Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick saw the bridge under construction first-hand when he visited the Everglades in October to see the restoration work being performed by Jacksonville District and its partnering agencies.

"USACE has one of the largest environmental restoration and sustainability roles in the federal government, and the Everglades restoration is our largest project of this kind," said Bostick. "After viewing first-hand the enormous challenges facing Everglades restoration and meeting with our partners in this effort, I am absolutely convinced that working together, we can achieve restoration goals and improve this ecological treasure for future generations."

Col. Alan Dodd, Jacksonville District commander, and members of the project team also attended the site visit with Gen. Bostick to discuss the ongoing construction at the site.

"Progress continues to be made in Everglades restoration," said Dodd. "This progress is contingent upon the commitment of this district and our partnering agencies. Through a dedicated and collaborative effort, we will not only continue to move forward in our restoration goals but also fulfill our obligation to the nation to preserve this national treasure."

Progress also continued at the Kissimmee River Restoration (KRR) project with the excavation and connection of two oxbows to the C-38 canal, located on the Kissimmee River. A component of the project, the KRR Reach 4 Backfilling Project, received an Environmental Merit Award in the 2012 Chief of Engineers Awards of Excellence Program.

"I am excited for this once-in-a-lifetime experience to work on a project that's restoring an ecosystem and giving back to the local area," said Richard Hearne, KRR project construction control technician.

Excavation work also progressed at the Indian River Lagoon's C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area, as the intake and the eastern C-133 canals are being excavated under the project's first contract.

Everglades restoration projects not only made progress in the field, but also made progress in the review and approval process. Three restoration projects received Records of Decision this year and have been transmitted to Congress to await authorization: the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Project, Broward County Water Preserve Areas and Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1 Project.

"The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1 Project has come through important milestones over the past two years," said project manager Tim Brown. "Achieving a signed Record of Decision for this project demonstrates how the Corps is committed to Everglades restoration and has what it takes to execute the program successfully. I'm looking forward to implementing the next phase of this project and turning dirt."

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1 Project achieved a signed Record of Decision in 2012. The project is essential to achieving restoration of tidal wetlands and nearshore habitats within Biscayne Bay, including Biscayne Bay National Park. (USACE PHOTO)

Also receiving a signed Record of Decision was the Everglades Restoration Transition Plan (ERTP), which provided the authority for ERTP to replace the current Interim Operational Plan for Protection of the Cape Sable Seaside Sparrow (IOP), and modified current water management operations of the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) project.

"ERTP incorporates more flexible operating criteria to better manage Water Conservation Area 3A for the benefit of multiple species," said project manager Donna George. "It represents a positive step towards balancing the competing needs of a complex system."

A multi-agency partnership preserved a critical piece of land for Florida panthers this year, which ultimately will encourage the natural recovery of the panther population by providing habitat where animals can den and stalk prey and migrate from southern Florida to areas north of the river.

Through the collaborative efforts of numerous federal, state and private organizations, the 1,278-acre American Prime property in Glades County, a property described as a "keystone tract" in the single most important area in the state for ensuring the natural recovery of Florida panthers, was purchased by The Nature Conservancy May 16.

A unique collaboration between federal, state and private organizations preserved the single most important area in Florida for ensuring the natural recovery of Florida panthers. (USACE PHOTO)

The Corps prepared all the necessary documents to facilitate the easement exchange that would allow for the creation of the proposed "panther corridor," enabling panthers to disperse from habitats restricted to south Florida.

"The successful completion of this land acquisition effort makes me very proud to be part of the multi-agency team, our organization and our mission," said Karl Nixon, deputy chief of the Real Estate Division. "It reaffirms to me that, when people unite for a common goal of protecting valuable habitat, we can make a difference."

The fourth biennial evaluation of progress being made in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) was also released this year by the National Research Council.

According to the report, twelve years into the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project shows little progress made in restoring the core of the remaining Everglades ecosystem; instead, most project construction so far has occurred along its periphery. To reverse ongoing ecosystem declines, it will be necessary to expedite restoration projects that target the central Everglades, and to improve both the quality and quantity of the water in the ecosystem.

"With the continued financial support of the administration and the state of Florida, progress continues to be made with Everglades restoration," said Howie Gonzales, Ecosystem Branch chief. "In partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, we are currently planning, designing and constructing multiple components of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), with more planned for the future." ♦

Work continued on the Kissimmee River Restoration project, and the Reach 4 Backfilling portion of the project received an Environmental Merit Award in the 2012 Chief of Engineers Awards of Excellence Program. (USACE PHOTO)

From state-of-the-art school to complex environmental projects, IIS sets the standard

BY NAKEIR NOBLES

Shovels hit the ground, signifying the beginning of construction for a state-of-the art elementary school at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. The school is one of the first Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) schools that will incorporate 21st century school design elements. Pictured (left to right): Michael Gould, DoDEA school superintendent; Maj. Gen. Antonio J. Vicens, Adjuntant General of the Puerto Rico National Guard; Dr. Elizabeth Middlemiss, DoDEA headquarters; Col. Susan Heard , Fort Buchanan commander; Lydia Blazquez, Antilles Elementary School principal; Capt. J.C. Cordon, deputy district engineer for the Antilles; Yamil Castillo, chief, Antilles Construction Office; and William Gilbane, III, Gilbane Company. (PHOTO BY VICTOR NEGRON)

Innovation and outside-of-the-box thinking were some of the keys to success for the Interagency and International Support (IIS) Branch in 2012.

Jacksonville District has begun work on the Antilles Elementary School at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico. The $51 million project is being constructed for the Department of Defense Education Activity (DoDEA) under a design-build contract awarded in June 2012 to Gilbane Building Company.

The state-of-the-art school is one of the first DoDEA schools to incorporate 21st century design elements. It will serve approximately 890 students and a staff of 120 and will include a gym, health services, art rooms, flexible studio learning areas and exploratory and outdoor spaces. The two-story school will also have an open floor plan that will accommodate future flexibility of the interior spaces and encourage collaboration. A groundbreaking ceremony was held Nov. 29 and construction is anticipated to be completed by April 2014. Once completed, the school is expected to achieve a Leadership Engineering and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver rating as an energy efficient and environmentally sustainable school.

The Defense Environmental Restoration Program for Formerly Used Defense Sites (DERP-FUDS) section went above and beyond, surpassing the national goal for contract obligations.

"I'm proud of this team," said John Keiser, team lead and FUDS program manager. "They made progress on 90 active projects in fiscal year (FY) 2012, and collectively raised their hand to receive not one, not two, but three plus-ups in FUDS funds between June and August. After receiving the final funds the afternoon of Aug. 30, the team awarded $2.8 million in contracts within about 24 hours, pushing the nationwide obligations to 90.4 percent and helping the national FUDS program meet its August metric."

Overall, Jacksonville District's FUDS team met or exceeded every established headquarters FY12 FUDS metric and obligated more than 170 percent of the scheduled program.

The district completed the first Five Year Reviews of previously approved decision documents for six projects: Brooksville Turret Gunnery Range, Fort Pierce Naval Amphibious Base, McCoy Air Force Base, Fort Segarra Virgin Islands, Camp Gordon Johnston and Air to Ground Gunnery Range Pinellas and formally closed out one site, the former McCoy Air Force Base, after resolving with regulators that the site no longer required reviews. Five Year Reviews are required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), the law under which the DERP-FUDS program is implemented, to ensure that remedial actions continue to be protective of human health and the environment.

The receipt of a site rehabilitation completion order from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection confirmed the completion of work at the former Lee Field, Building 245 and the former Drew Field, Site 2. The regulatory agency also concurred with completion of work at two former chemical warfare materiel project sites, the former Brooksville Army Airfield in Hernando County and the former Fort Pierce Naval Amphibious Base in St. Lucie County.

The governor of Puerto Rico submitted a request to the Secretary, Department of Defense (DoD) to conduct a study related to the possible presence of unexploded ordnance remaining on the Northwest Peninsula of the island of Culebra from past military use of the site. Jacksonville District's FUDS team was subsequently given responsibility for completing this congressionally mandated study within 174 days, when historically this type of project takes 18 months.

Despite working in a remote location, performing the fieldwork in the peak of hurricane season, and encountering more than 40 munitions during fieldwork, the Corps completed the study in 170 days, optimizing use of existing site information and data from new field investigations. The 408-acre study area was characterized according to the density

and accessibility of unexploded ordnance that could possibly remain in the area, and individual costs were itemized for each density and accessibility condition. This information will be useful in the continued protection of the community members and tourists who use the area as well as the environment. Upon receiving the report, a DoD official commented, "I thought it was excellent! It addressed all the issues clearly and succinctly. Nice to see a nice, high quality, short report."

The district awarded three Remedial Investigation contracts for various water areas around Culebra, with the first phase of field operations beginning in November 2012. The purpose of the initial phase is to establish baseline physical conditions and environmental resources.

Approximately 11,000 lineal feet of pipeline and 10 underground storage tanks were removed from the former Arecibo Airdrome in Puerto Rico. *(USACE PHOTO)*

Contractor field operations and district oversight resulted in the successful removal of approximately 11,000 lineal feet of pipeline and 10 underground storage tanks from the former Arecibo Airdrome in Puerto Rico. This removal eliminates the hazard from any possible petroleum or oil remaining on the site.

Work was also completed at the former Point Lima Gun Emplacement site in Puerto Rico.

The FUDS team used new technology, a helicopter magnetometer, for its initial fieldwork at the Avon Park FUDS in Highlands County, Fla. The helicopter, which flies at 30 to 40 mph just six feet above the ground, produces a better signal response from ferrous metallic debris at the site. Because of the open prairie land and minimal obstructions at the site, use of the helicopter was ideal. Four 649-acre and two 20,000-acre munitions response sites were flown and characterized. The work was completed at a fraction of the cost of ground-based digital geophysical mapping.

The completed Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study at the former Brooksville Turret Gunnery Range, which documents the nature and extent of potential contamination, resulted in a reduced area for future remedial response actions, from approximately 10,000 acres down to 100 acres. The end result will be a more focused remedial response with substantial cost savings for the taxpayer.

According to the project manager, Frank Araico, the Brooksville Turret Gunnery Range was "a daunting site in excess of 10,000 acres which contained everything from heavily wooded areas to densely populated areas."

Many challenges were overcome during the project. There were large seasonal populations which complicated fieldwork. "We worked during the winter, at peak population, which complicated fieldwork. We had to do a lot of evacuations."

Araico said with this project, more evacuations (to establish a safety perimeter during fieldwork) were done in one day than is typically done for an entire project.

"Although we had complications and challenges, we got the work done on time and within budget," Araico said. ♦

Left photo - workers prepare for a "blow-in-place" detonation of munitions discovered at Brooksville Turret Gunnery Range; Right photo - dust rises following the detonation. This work is done by trained professionals; the Corps adds a caution to the public that if suspected munitions are found, follow the 3Rs of explosives safety: RECOGNIZE the item may be dangerous; RETREAT without touching or moving the object; and REPORT its location to local law enforcement. *(USACE FILE PHOTOS)*

Invasive Species biologists combat explosion of aquatic plant growth

BY ANNIE CHAMBERS

A warmer than normal winter and heavy early season rains contributed to the highest levels of water hyacinth on the St. Johns River and Lake Okeechobee since 1986. (USACE PHOTO)

The year 2012 brought many challenges for the Invasive Species Management (ISM) Branch to tackle. Multiple factors led to the highest levels of water hyacinth on Lake Okeechobee since 1986.

Water hyacinth invades lakes, ponds, rivers, marshes and other types of wetland habitats. According to the Early Detection and Distribution Mapping System website, water hyacinth can reproduce and quickly form dense floating mats of vegetation, sometimes doubling in size over a two week period. These dense mats reduce light and deplete oxygen levels for submerged plants and aquatic invertebrates.

Biologist Jon Lane explained the myriad factors that led to the explosion of aquatic plant growth this year.

"The warmer than normal winter did not kill back the water hyacinth as usual and the heavy early season rains flushed those plants out of the nursery areas and into the St. Johns River and Lake Okeechobee; and the abundance of snail kite nests prevented treatment in certain areas on Lake Okeechobee," said Lane.

About 8,350 acres of floating vegetation were removed from the St. Johns River and 11,961 acres from Lake Okeechobee. This is much higher than last year. Typically 500 acres are removed monthly. In 2012, almost 2,000 acres were removed each month.

The ISM team worked with the Florida Fish & Wildlife Commission and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct aquatic plant management within pre-determined buffers on Lake Okeechobee. Although the snail kites are often found in the Lake Okeechobee area, this is the first year there's been a large-scale impact. The snail kite nests were located precisely where contractors needed to spray to manage aquatic plant growth.

November brought the first sightings of the old world climbing fern in St. Johns and Duval counties. Prior to this year, this aggressive, exotic plant grew primarily in south Florida, so the migration to north Florida was alarming.

The Invasive.org website describes old world climbing fern as a perennial that can reach lengths of more than 90 feet and often invades swamps, glades and hammocks. It forms dense mats that smother underwater vegetation and native shrubs and trees and increases fire

(CONTINUES ON **PAGE 12)**

Left photo - Alligatorweed flea beetles were shipped to the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission in May 2012 for release at Lake Conway, Ark. (PHOTO BY MATT HORTON, ARKANSAS GAME & FISH COMMISSION). Right photo - Jacksonville District team members from the Palatka Field Office collect alligatorweed flea beetles for export to other states. The hearty appetites of these effective bio-control agents have significantly decreased the use of chemicals to control alligator weed. (USACE PHOTO)

Recreation and water safety remain important missions BY ERICA ROBBINS

Fishing at sunset on Lake Okeechobee. (USACE PHOTO)

Recreation and water safety are important, ongoing missions for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the nation's leading provider of outdoor recreation. USACE has more than 420 lake and river projects in 43 states that attract nearly 370 million visitors each year.

During fiscal year 2012, Jacksonville District recreation areas along the Okeechobee Waterway hosted more than 9,000 campers, and more than 8,000 people visited the interactive exhibits at the recently updated visitor centers at the W. P. Franklin and St. Lucie Locks.

A dedicated group of volunteers contributed close to 18,000 hours to welcome and serve visitors at the recreation areas and to promote water safety education throughout the district. Park rangers and volunteers reached out to more than 3,000 people during 10 events around Lake Okeechobee and the Okeechobee Waterway, as well as at the Palm Beach International Boat Show. Another successful ongoing volunteer program provided 647 school water safety programs to more than 3,700 students again this year.

"Visitor safety at USACE parks and recreation areas is our highest priority," said Rick Pelzl, supervisory park ranger. "Our park rangers, volunteers and partners continuously promote water and boater safety and education."

As part of an initiative to reach target audiences, Jacksonville District and the USACE water safety mascot, Bobber the Water Safety Dog, teamed up with NASCAR to promote water safety at the Daytona 500 Feb. 24 and at the Camping World Truck Series race at Homestead-Miami Speedway Nov. 16.

"Being part of the NASCAR events is another incredible opportunity for our rangers and volunteers to talk about water safety with race teams and fans, many of whom are also great fishermen and outdoorsmen as well," said Adam Tarplee, natural resource manager. "Running the Bobber the Water Safety Dog logo on the hood decal of the #07 'Wear Your Gear' truck provides great name recognition and branding for our water safety program."

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

Another key effort this year was the redesign of the www.recreation.gov website, part of a strategy to engage visitors with enhanced interactive content and more multimedia, mobile, trip-planning tools. The seven million visitors who use the website each year are able to make reservations, see ready-made itineraries for destination cities and search for activities on an interactive map. The interagency website guides visitors to 90,000 sites on federal lands, including national parks, wildlife refuges, waterways, forests and recreation areas. ♦

(CONTINUED FROM **PAGE 11**)

risks. Thick mats of dead fronds that grow into trees act as fire ladders, bringing the fires into the tree canopies.

The ISM team is currently working with the First Coast Invasive Working Group (FCIWG) to eradicate the fern in dredge management areas along the St. Johns River. The FCIWG is a five-county task force that works to prevent and control invasive species in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and St. Johns Counties.

Alligatorweed is an emergent, or rooted, floating plant that invades aquatic areas and adjoining uplands throughout the southern United States. The thick mats often displace native vegetation and wildlife habitat, clog waterways, restrict water oxygen levels, increase sedimentation, interfere with irrigation and prevent drainage.

Jacksonville District undertakes a yearly collection of alligatorweed flea beetles from local waters for shipment to locations where alligatorweed is becoming a problem. In May, the Aquatic Plant Control Operation Support Center collected and sent 49,799 alligatorweed flea beetles to six different states.

The hearty appetites of these effective bio-control agents have significantly decreased the use of chemicals to control alligatorweed. Three years after the release of the alligatorweed flea beetle in Florida, the Corps suspended herbicide spraying of alligatorweed.

Jacksonville District is the only district in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers with an Invasive Species Management Branch. It is also host to the Aquatic Plant Control Operation Support Center, which assists the entire Corps with invasive species management issues. Jacksonville District team members travel around the country to assist in aquatic plant removal.

Jeremy Crossland, biologist, assisted the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) technology team to complete the Aquatic Nuisance Species Control Paper titled Inventory of Available Controls for Aquatic Nuisance Species of Concern – Chicago Area Waterway System.

The GLIMRIS team is a regional, collaborative effort that includes various Corps district and division offices, as well as centers of expertise and research laboratories.

The control paper will explore options and technologies that could be applied to prevent aquatic nuisance species transfer through aquatic pathways between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Recently the team began a risk assessment process to test the technologies proposed in the control paper. The proposed technological controls will be presented to Congress by January 2014. ♦

Old World climbing fern, a perennial that can reach lengths of more than 90 feet, invades swamps, glades and hammocks. Photo by Jessica Spencer. (USACE PHOTO)

Busy year for nation's largest regulatory permitting program

BY NANCY J. STICHT

Cypress trees dominate the forested wetlands that occupy about 1.6 million acres or 5 percent of the state of Florida's landscape, according to the University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences Extension website. The most flood-tolerant of all Florida tree species, cypress is the largest tree in North America east of the Rocky Mountains and can live for hundreds of years. The Corps protects such aquatic resources through its regulatory program; Jacksonville District's is the largest program in the nation. (PHOTO BY DAVID CLAYTON, NWFWMD)

Jacksonville District's regulatory permitting program, the largest in the Corps, exceeded all national performance standards in Fiscal Year 2012. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that 94 percent of general permit decisions were completed within 60 days of receipt of a complete application and 82 percent of individual permit decisions were completed within 120 days of receipt of a complete application.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for regulating structures and work in navigable waters of the U.S. under Sections 9 and 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 and the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. (including wetlands) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. The Corps also regulates the transportation of dredged material for the purpose of ocean disposal under Section 103 of the Marine Protection, Research and Sanctuaries Act of 1972. The objective of the regulatory program is to protect the nation's aquatic resources, while authorizing development through fair, flexible and balanced permit decisions.

Between Oct. 1, 2011 and Oct. 1, 2012, Jacksonville District processed 2,590 general permit applications and 613 individual permit applications. Additionally, 2,426 desktop and 530 field jurisdictional determinations, or the identification of waters of the U.S. that fall under the Corps' legal jurisdiction, were issued. Jacksonville District also finalized two mitigation banks, Star 4 and Southport, with a potential credit generation total of 543.03.

When a proposed project or action will create unavoidable impacts on the nation's aquatic resources, the Corps may require mitigation as a condition of the permit. Most commonly, mitigation involves the creation, enhancement or restoration of wetlands and their functions. The Corps' goal is to have sustainable compensation that will meet the needs of the watershed in which the impacts occurred.

Compensatory mitigation, a requirement of the Clean Water Act, is a sequential, three-step process. Permit applicants must first make every effort to avoid and then to minimize impacts to aquatic resources; finally, for projects that will cause unavoidable adverse impacts to aquatic resources, compensation is required to make up for those impacts.

Compensatory mitigation may be done on or off the project site, by the permittee or through in-lieu-fee sponsors or mitigation banks. Between 2009 and 2012, permittee-responsible mitigation created, enhanced or restored 13,652 acres of wetlands and 261,499 linear feet of streams in Florida, in-lieu fee mitigation resulted in 1.9 million credits and mitigation banks provided 549 credits throughout Florida.

Public involvement is an important part of the Corps' decision-making process. Public Notices are issued to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on issues of concern associated with proposed projects. Public meetings are sometimes held, to explain and foster understanding of the Corps' program and processes and to receive information from the public.

Major actions by Regulatory Division in 2012 included:

- **Ridge Road Extension**: Pasco County and the Florida Department of Transportation proposed extending the existing Ridge Road approximately eight miles, which will include impacts to water bodies that are within Corps jurisdiction. The Corps is in the process of reviewing nearly 2,000 comments and consulting with appropriate state and federal resource agencies.
- **Titan/Tarmac LLC, King Road Limestone Mine**: The Corps received an application for a proposed project to mine limestone on about 3,900 acres of a 4,800-acre area in Levy County over an approximate 100-year period. The project was anticipated to impact up to 2,069 acres of wetlands and 1,818 acres of uplands and the applicant proposed to restore and/or preserve 4,195 acres of wetlands and 331 acres of uplands in an adjacent area, in addition to preserving up to 522 acres of wetlands and 329 acres of uplands on the proposed mine parcel, a portion of which abuts the Waccasassa Bay preserve State Park. A public meeting to present the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) was held May 31 in Inglis, Fla. The final EIS is currently in development.
- **Draft Area-wide Environmental Impact Statement (AEIS) for Continued Mining in the Central Florida Phosphate District:** The Corps received four phosphate mining project permit applications (Ona, Desoto, Wingate East and South Pasture Extension) and prepared the Draft AEIS to address direct and indirect impacts

associated with the four projects as well as other mining projects that might be proposed within the reasonably forseeable future. Public meetings were held in Lakeland, Fla. and Punta Gorda, Fla. in June. A final EIS, incorporating comments received throughout the process, will be published by spring 2013.

- **A1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB):** The Corps issued a Public Notice Aug. 28 with a 30-day public comment period and a public scoping meeting was held Sept. 6 in West Palm Beach, Fla., in preparation for the development of a draft EIS for the South Florida Water Management District's proposal to construct and operate the A1 FEB. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce peak stormwater flows to assist in achieving water quality standards in the Central Flowpath of the Everglades Protection Area. It includes a 15,000-acre shallow impoundment area that would store approximately 60,000 acre/feet of water approximately four feet in depth. The scoping process identifies concerns of federal, state and local agencies as well as any affected native American Indian Tribes, proponents of the action and the public. The draft EIS is still in development and is anticipated to be completed in December.
- **Via Verde Natural Gas Pipeline:** The Puerto Rico Electric and Power Authority proposed to construct and install a 24-inch diameter steel natural gas pipe line approximately 92 miles long with a construction right-of way of 150 feet wide, that would transverse the island of Puerto Rico. Thousands of public comments were received on this controversial project, and the Corps was in the process of finalizing an Environmental Assessment when the applicant withdrew the pending application Oct. 11.
- **Programmatic General Permit (PGP):** Jacksonville District issued SAJ-99, effective Nov. 15, to the state of Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to authorize the deposition of materials and other work for the purposes of clam and oyster aquaculture in navigable waters of the U.S. that are within the state's jurisdiction. The PGP helps to avoid duplication of permitting and reduces the need for separate approval from the Corps and the state of Florida for minor work, reducing costs and increasing efficiency.

In addition to processing permit actions, federal regulations also authorize the Corps to respond when unauthorized or non-compliant activities in waters of the U.S. occur. In 2012, 23 compliance and 66 enforcement cases were resolved.

Six species of pitcher plants (Sarracenia) are found in Florida's wetlands, with the greatest concentration found from Franklin County to Escambia County. The unique plant is carnivorous, attracting and trapping insects that decompose in the plant's liquid, creating a nitrogen-rich "fertilizer." England and Japan both have gardens that feature North American pitcher plants, and they are a major attraction. According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, pitcher plant habitat in Florida is "at risk, primarily from lack of fire management and from drainage by ditching." All wild pitcher plants are protected by state and federal laws. (PHOTO BY NANCY J. STICHT)

The 2,155.3-acre Sand Hill Lakes Mitigation Bank, managed by the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NWFWMD), is preserving and restoring wetlands, natural lakes and associated upland buffers in the Choctawhatchee River and Bay Watershed. Mitigation banks like this one provided 549 credits for compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts to aquatic resources throughout Florida. (PHOTO BY DAVID CLAYTON, NWFWMD)

A major compliance and enforcement case occurred at the Port of the Americas in Ponce, Puerto Rico, where year-long negotiations for the settlement of violations resulted in a signed Consent Decree, effectively resolving permit non-compliance issues that violated the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act. The violations had resulted in impacts to endangered species, cultural resources and historic properties protected under the National Historic Preservation Act and Endangered Species Act. The benefits of the Consent Decree included the development of compensatory mitigation that will compensate for 97 acres of seagrass and 59 acres of wetland impacts, the creation of a buffer to protect the Ponce Playa Historic District and the existing archeological site (including human remains).

Time, changing public needs, evolving policy, case law and new statutory mandates have contributed to the regulatory program's breadth, complexity and authority. In making its decision, the Corps considers the value of the aquatic ecosystems involved, the views of federal, state and local agencies and interest groups and 21 public interest factors. Every permit application is objectively reviewed within the same laws and regulations, and the Corps is neither a proponent nor opponent of any project. ♦

Antilles Update

Work continued this year on Portugues Dam, the first thick arch roller-compacted concrete dam in U.S. territory. Public meetings are planned for early 2013 and construction is expected to be completed in the fall of 2013. (PHOTO BY DAVID DOLLAR)

Osvaldo Collazo and the Antilles regulatory team provided a regulatory status brief and discussed challenges with the governor's deputy chief of staff, Nathan Simmonds at the St. Thomas Governor's House Dec. 12, 2012. Pictured along the right side of the table (left to right):Jose Cedeno; Edgar Garcia; Osvaldo Collazo; Capt. J.C. Cordon; Sindulfo Castillo. (PHOTO BY CLARA FREEMAN)

Left photo - Jacksonville District broke ground on the Bechara Middle Section of the Rio Puerto Nuevo flood control project in a ceremony held Jan. 10 in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Speakers included (left to right): Jorge Santini, mayor of San Juan; Luis Fortuño, governor of Puerto Rico; Pedro Pierluisi, resident commissioner; Danny Galan, secretary of Puerto Rico's Department of Natural and Environmental Resources; and Jose Rosado, former deputy district engineer for the Antilles. Right photo - Officials participating in the groundbreaking ceremony included (left to right): Jorge Ayala; Alberto Gonzalez; Rosado; Ricardo Franco, east region president of contractor DRAGADOS USA; Galan; David Hobbie; and Jerry Scarborough. (PHOTO BY JOHN CAMPBELL)

Team members from the Antilles regulatory, contracting and construction offices helped a group of University Gardens High School students with a school project earlier this fall. The students interviewed the Corps representatives about their role in the agency and what the Corps does in support of the local community. "Our Antilles team is always looking for ways to support the local community beyond our daily duties as government employees," said Capt. J.C. Cordon, deputy district engineer for the Antilles. "This was a perfect opportunity to show the Corps' enduring values, guiding principles and core competencies." (PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. J.C. CORDON)

In a first-time effort and in response to a request from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Caribbean Field Office, Jacksonville District team members accompanied USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service personnel on a tour of civil works projects in Puerto Rico Nov. 30. The purpose of the interagency coordination meeting was to follow up on environmental commitments made during the planning phase of the projects and to discuss upcoming work. The group visited the Rio Puerto Nuevo Flood Control Project, Bechara Middle Section; the Rio de la Plata Flood Control Project and Fort San Geronimo. Pictured (left to right) are Wilmel Varela, Capt. J.C. Cordon, Jorge Ayala, Felix Lopez (USFWS), Wilberto Cubero and Nelson Colon. (PHOTO COURTESY CAPT. J.C. CORDON)

IN OTHER ANTILLES OFFICE NEWS:

- ***Read more on the groundbreaking for the new Antilles Elementary School at Fort Buchanan and the environmental restoration program in Puerto Rico on page 9.***
- ***Read about regulatory actions in Puerto Rico on page 13.***

2012 Engineering Career Day taught students about sustainable future

On Feb. 24, 2012, more than 130 high school seniors, juniors and sophomores from northeast Florida participated in an annual event that has grown and become more popular with students and teachers each year. "Sustaining the Future" was the theme of the 2012 Engineering Career Day, hosted by Jacksonville District during National Engineers Week. The event offers area high school students the opportunity to learn about engineering education and careers. Teams competed in an engineering trivia challenge and a take-home design challenge, in which they constructed a wind turbine. Upon arrival at the event, the teams completed a surprise design requiring real-time decision making. Fernandina Beach High School took first place and received their award from former Jacksonville District Commander Col. Al Pantano (right), and Capt. John Heinzel (left), president of the Jacksonville Post of the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), event co-sponsor. Heinzel spoke with the students about the opportunity to experience further engineering challenges with SAME Engineering Camp Scholarships. ♦

PHOTO BY DAVID KIMERY

Planning is under way for the 2013 Engineering Career Day, scheduled for Feb. 22, 2013

Carter receives Steel de Fleury Medal

Lt. Col. Thomas Greco (left) presented St. Lucie Lock Leader Michael L. Carter (center) with the Steel de Fleury Medal Dec. 19 at the St. Lucie Lock in Stuart, Fla. Also present was South Florida Operations Office Chief, Steve Dunham (right) - (PHOTO BY ERICA ROBBINS)

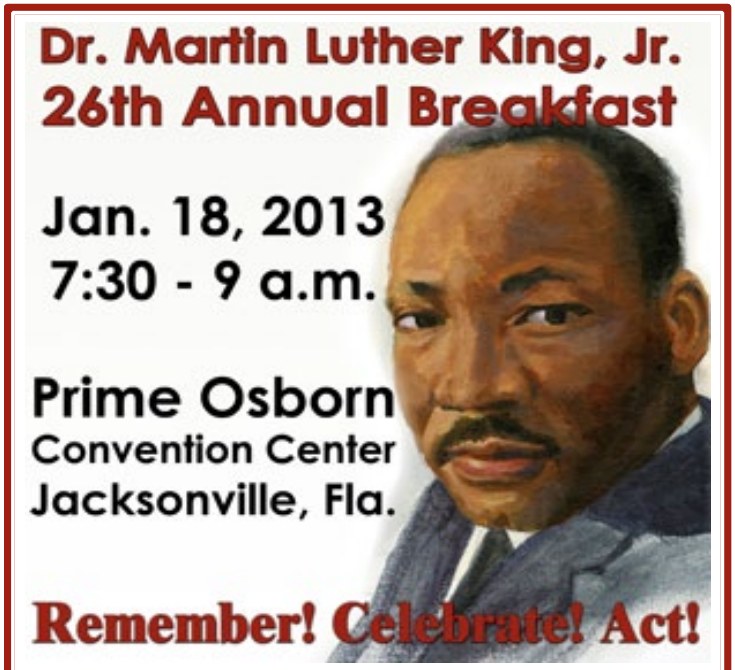
Toys for Tots 2012

Jacksonville District's Sandcastle Club participated in the annual Toys for Tots drive, sponsored by the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve, to collect new, unwrapped toys for distribution as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in the local community. Pictured (left to right) are Elizabeth Fiocchi, Wendy Dauberman-Zerby, Lisa Clark, Col. Alan Dodd, Michael Ornella, Carrie Bond and Michael A. Ornella, who helped pack and move the more than four large boxes of toys donated by district team members. (Photo by David Kimery)

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

WELCOME HOME

LINDA LEE
RICHARD NEWTON



The keynote speaker is Ambassador Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta, congressman from Georgia's 5th district, and United States Ambassador to the United Nations. Jacksonville District's Special Emphasis Committee will reserve tables. Tickets are $25 and may be purchased from Adam Morrison, 904-232-3660 or Murika Davis, 904-232-1604.