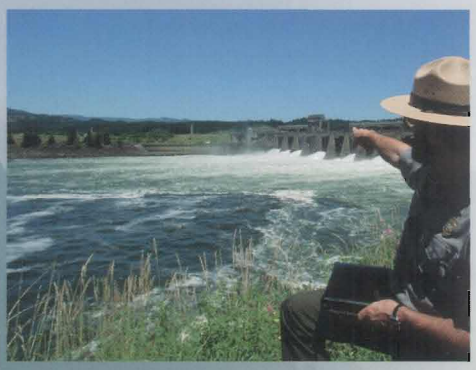
Create a World of Difference...

with a career in Park Management

Covering an entire wall of Jim Runkles' office at Bonneville Lock and Dam in Cascade Locks, Oregon is an organizational chart. As Park Manager, one would expect Jim to be pictured at the top, except here he's at the bottom. "my job is to support everyone who's picture is above mine, " says Jim. "Everyone who is meeting the public, turning the wrenches, adjusting the fish ladders -- they are the ones doing the job and they deserve to be on top."



Jim's responsibilities at Bonneville are indeed broad. They involve, in his words, "overseeing everything on the project that doesn't produce power or pass ships through navigation locks ." These include management of natural and cultural resources, landscape, building and vehicle maintenance, first aid and rescue and the visitors center -- the largest and most visited one (500,000 visitors each year) operated by the Corps.

The challenges notwithstanding, Jim loves his work primarily because of its diversity and the constant opportunity he has to interact with all employees. "We take a lot of pride in listening to others", says Jim. "In fact, Bonneville has led the way in Total Quality Management by implementing 40% of the suggestions submitted from technicians to administrative staff."

For Jim, recognition as the Natural Resource Management Employee of the Year was a dream come true for someone whose career in natural resources began quite early on the farm where he was raised. "A manager cannot be employee of the year without an outstanding supporting staff," reflects Jim. "Bonneville has such a staff, as do other Corps projects throughout the country. What we offer is so wide and varied that you can't possibly get bored."

"At the Corps, we believe strongly that if you have been doing a job the same way for five years, it's time to reevaluate what you're doing. Our goal is to make every day a challenge; an adventure."

Jim Runkles
Park Manager

...AND CARLOS LOPEZ

Serving in the same capacity as Don, but nearly halfway across the country is Carlos Lopez, a park ranger at Barren River Lake in Glasgow, Kentucky. Carlos' duties are similar to Don's at Bonneville, such as park and recreation management, environmental compliance and interaction with the public through such programs as water safety for children and adults, and administration of shoreline use permits.

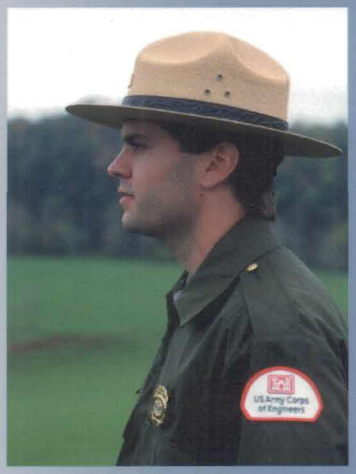
What Carlos appreciates most about his job is his "menu of responsibilities." The rangers at Barren River Lake rotate their duties to ensure a well-rounded experience for all, not to mention a collegial team spirit.

"My mission is an interesting mix of maintenance of the physical parameters of the park and recreation areas as well as direct interaction with the public," says Carlos. "You never know what is going to happen from one minute to the next. At one point you may be issuing a shoreline permit, and the next you are responding to a disturbance in the campground. You must be prepared."

Carlos was rewarded for his preparation in 1993 with the Commanders Award for Civilian Service for assisting in the rescue of a drowning victim.

Previously a park ranger with another federal land management agency, Carlos plans to stay with the Corps because it offers a park ranger promotion potential, on-the-job training and variety. According to Carlos, "why would I go anywhere else when I am making a good living doing something I really love to do?"

US Army Corps of Engineers



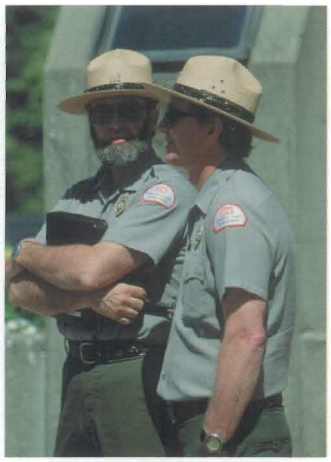
"For a park ranger, the Corps offers the best opportunities – opportunities for promotions as well as cross-training. But most importantly, you have opportunities to build good relationships with people."

Carlos Lopez
Park Ranger

Meet Park Rangers,

Don Hibbs...

A six-year member of Jim Runkles' park management staff at the Bonneville Lock and Dam is park ranger, Don Hibbs, who describes his job as "protecting the visitors from the park and protecting the park from the visitors." This "protection" ranges from maintaining security to leading tours of nature trails.



"The Corps' most important resource is its people, and the bottom line for them is education. The Corps came through for me at a critical time, so I am coming through for them. When you love something, it's easy to do it well."

Don Hibbs
Park Ranger

Don actually began his Corps career as a photographer, but thanks to Corps flexibility, returned to school part time to study resource management so he could fulfill his heart's desire of working outdoors.

During his career as a park ranger, Don has organized Earth Day events as well promoted the concept of stewardship and citizenship as a T.R.A.I.L. ("Teaching Responsibility and Individual Leadership") Boss instructor to young people.

In 1991, a program implemented by Don to protect and preserve a small population of Barrett's Penstemon (a threatened plant species) was awarded a "Take Pride in America " award. According to Don, the award illustrated why he's a ranger: "I want to keep the world as beautiful as it is today for future generations."

One of the highlights of Don's career so far was being selected in August 1993 to represent the Corps at the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia -- one of only 13 Corps rangers given this honor. "Although it was great to be with 30,000 scouts," recalls Don, "it was wonderful to be around the other Corps rangers. I learned more in a week than I did during a term at school. I was overwhelmed by the calibre of our people ."