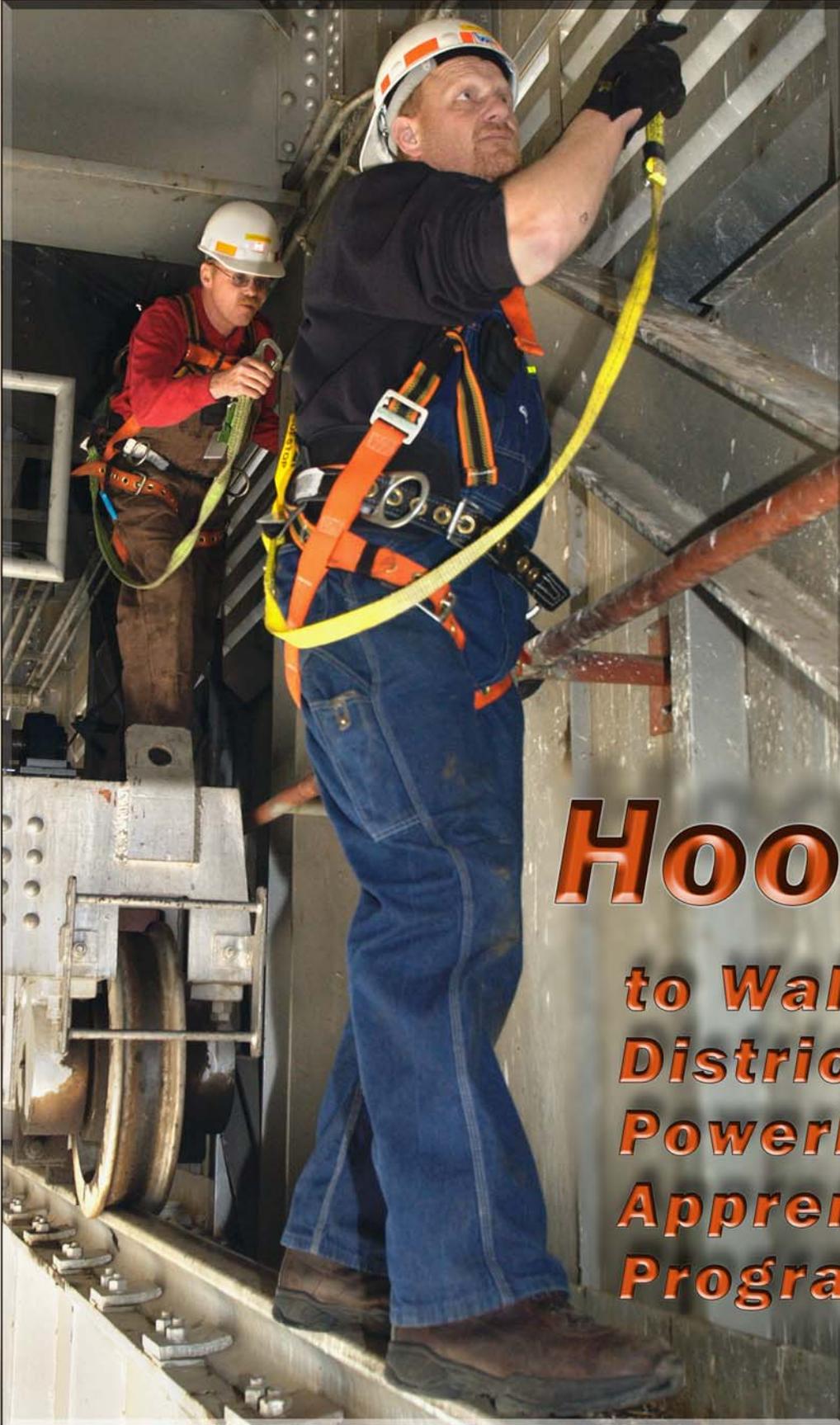




US Army Corps
of Engineers ®
Walla Walla District



The fortuitous part of Lucky Peak was working over 30 years at the same location. See Page 7.



Hook up

*to Walla Walla
District's
Powerhouse
Apprenticeship
Program*

FROM WHERE I SIT

Powerhouse Apprenticeship Training Program keeps dams in business

By **Marty Mendiola**

If you can say that success is confirmed by tangible evidence, then the Powerplant Apprenticeship Program has left a very welcome impression all over Lower Granite Lock and Dam.

The apprenticeship program provides consistent, targeted training for operation and maintenance of a multi-



Marty Mendiola

purpose hydropower facility. Besides technical training, the program stresses the importance of how to work safely with instruction on lockout/tagout, working in confined spaces, personal protective equipment, safety devices, arc flash, and many more issues. The environment in which the trainees will work necessitates constant awareness of safety for all.

The program is not static. New

technology is incorporated into the training: the art and science of hydropower facility operation, acquisition of new mechanical or electronic systems, and new equipment, all require constant updating of knowledge and skills.

I like the program's design: it allows input of suggestions for change and enhancement through the training program committee, whose members include senior operations leaders, maintenance supervisors, union representatives, and operations managers representing all the hydropower projects in the District. The committee ensures the apprenticeship program meets the

District's and region's needs for quality, technically advanced individuals to fill the trades and crafts positions.

Approximately 50 percent of Lower Granite's operators, electricians and mechanics are graduates of the apprenticeship program. We've had tremendous success here. The training program can provide upward mobility: numerous District utility workers, biological science technicians, wage-grade employees and others, several from Lower Granite, have successfully completed the program.

Operations and maintenance crews benefit tremendously when trainees assist during critical activities including transformer testing, unit overhauls, fishway and navigation outages. These occasions provide trainees hands-on, up close exposure to our systems while simultaneously supporting project craftspeople.

Like many Corps river dams in the Northwest, Lower Granite is in a transition period as employees retire and

vacate positions vital to the operation and maintenance of hydroelectric power plants, and subsidiary navigation locks, fish facilities, intake structures and spillway areas. It would be a challenge to find enough qualified employees to replace the retirees without the Power Plant Apprenticeship Training Program.

Walla Walla District has many

varied customers and special interest groups focused on our work. It's critical to maintain a well-trained, technically-capable workforce, to ensure reliable power generation, safe passage of fish, and safe and reliable navigation.

Mendiola is Operations Manager at Lower Granite Lock and Dam.



photo: Rick Haverinen

Terry Filson puts Apprentice Powerhouse Operator Lisa Krieger through her paces with a practicum exam at McNary Lock and Dam.

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On the Cover...

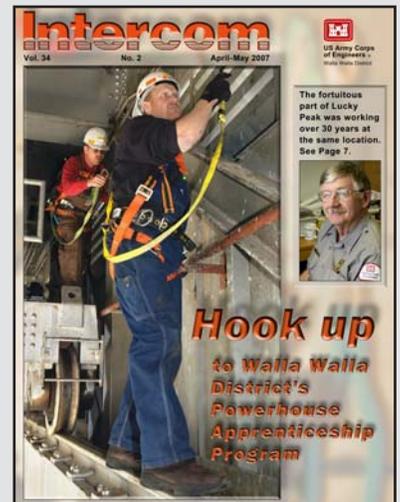


photo: Rick Haverinen

Jim Metzger, an Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic, slides the clamp for his safety harness while traversing a particularly lofty section of rail in one of the cranes at McNary Lock and Dam. He is followed by Power Plant Mechanic Grant Wageman, after inspecting the crane's drive mechanism. Metzger is one of eight apprentices who has completed his training and will graduate June 21.

Affable in Afghanistan



photo: Gina Baltrusch

The Leadership Development Program graduated its most recent class April 16 in a ceremony held in Walla Walla. Left to right are: Glenn R. Matlock, Jr., Robert F. Wall, Stephen Hall, Cynthia Boen, Mark F. Plummer, Deborah A. Norton, Tracy Schwarz, Danielle Stephens, Stuart Mellick, Gail Hicks, Dale Rincker, Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. Tony Hofmann, and David Alexander. For information about the program call Debra Mallard at 509 527-7024.



Michael Doherty dons desert BDUs just before leaving the States in February for a deployment in Afghanistan. Doherty is a regulatory project manager in Coeur d'Alene, where he evaluates applications for Dept. of the Army permits. He will be a construction representative for the Corps while overseas, watching over contracts for mission operations.

Civilians can now earn \$2000 bonus by referring recruits to Army

Civilian employees have been added to a recruit referral bonus program operated by the Dept. of the Army.

The program pays \$2,000 if the referral results in a successful enlistment in either the Active U.S. Army or the U.S. Army Reserve.

The referral bonus program pays eligible Soldiers, retirees and now Department of the Army Civilians, for referring individuals who enlist in the Army. The program has received 15,000 referrals since it was introduced.



Information about the Referral Bonus Program is on the Army Referral System - Sergeant Major of the Army Recruiting

Team (ARS-SMART) Web site at www.usarec.army.mil/smart/.

Benefits for those enlisting in the Active Army include enlistment bonuses up to \$40,000; up to \$72,900 for college with the Army College Fund and Montgomery G.I. Bill; up to \$65,000 to repay qualifying student loans; and up to \$4,500 a year in tuition assistance while serving.

Benefits for those enlisting in the Army Reserve include enlistment bonuses totaling up to \$20,000; up to \$23,724 for college with the Selected Reserve Montgomery G.I. Bill with kicker; up to \$20,000 to repay qualifying student loans; and up to \$4,500 a year in tuition assistance while serving.

Current qualifications to enlist include U.S. citizenship or permanent legal resident status; age 17-42 years for both Active Army and Army Reserve; healthy, good physical condition and good moral standing; and high school graduation or equivalent education.

Learning alfresco...



photo: Robert Little, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Park Ranger Joyce McDonald and her husband David explain to fourth graders the various ways that juvenile salmon can travel around and through dams. The students also played the inter-agency collaborative board game "The Salmon Life Cycle." The 2007 Salmon Summit is an annual event at Horn Rapids Park and is organized by Benton County Conservation District. The May 8 gathering attracted over 1500 students who released salmon fry they had raised in their classrooms into the Yakima River and they spent the remainder of the day learning from federal, state, and local agencies, organizations, and tribes about the fish and various salmon issues in our region.

Apprentices are the I



By Rick Haverinen

Learning the ropes for a powerhouse apprentice is a lengthy process of understanding what prescribed knots to tie and also when you need to make up a new one that hasn't been used before.

Apprentices are taught that the proper operation and maintenance of a hydroelectric dam provides many services to the public and protects the complicated river environment, but an error could result in astronomical repair costs or even harm to man or nature.

"There's a huge level of responsibility because not only are you maintaining equipment that's going to power your house, your neighbor's house, your parents' house, and everybody you know," said Terry Filson, "but you're also taking care of equipment that belongs to the

Left to right: Powerhouse Mechanic Daniel Tate explains the workings of an oil pump to Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic Jeff Pedersen; Apprentice Powerhouse Operator Lisa Krieger controls a turbine prior to switching its generator on-line; Apprentice Powerhouse Electrician Scott Jones threads a length of electrical conduit; and Terry Filson concentrates on responses from an apprentice during an oral board examination.

United States. So the stewardship is immense. I'm impressed. The idea of being a civil servant is entirely embodied in what we do. It might seem like we're fixing a toilet, but we're taking care of something that's taking care of the country."

Filson likes to be called the "training dude." He nurtures the Walla Walla District apprenticeship program which recruits and trains students for operations and electrical and

mechanical maintenance in powerhouses.

Responsibility has a certain hierarchy. Filson's charge is making sure the powerhouse apprentices are going to be dependable and that they have the training they need for their positions on the industrial side of public service.

"These folks are kind of under a microscope," Filson said. "If we see something that needs to be adjusted, we kind of tweak it a bit, either attitude or their ability to show up to work on time."

Filson and journeymen in the Walla Walla District measure apprentice applicants according to three A's: demonstrated aptitude, attitude, and adaptability.

"The adaptability thing is important, especially for the people who want to come into this program later in their lives," Filson said. "They have to be able to put a previous career behind them, and allow someone else to be the expert and tutor them."

The process of actually instructing the apprentices is up to the journeyman electricians, mechanics and operators in the powerhouse.

"The old hands didn't get to

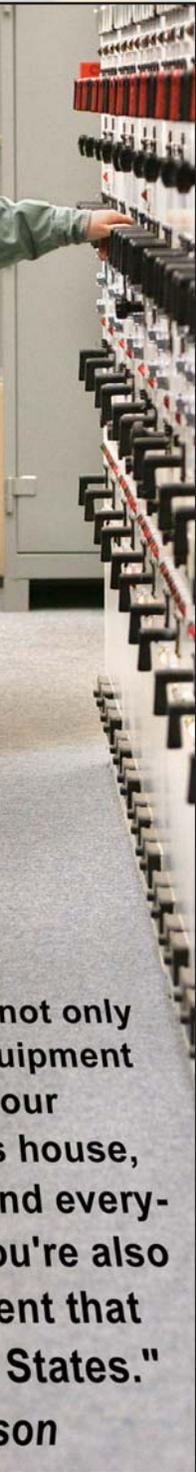


"There's a huge level of responsibility because not only are you maintaining equipment that's going to power your house, your neighbor's house, your parents' house, and everybody you know, but you're taking care of equipment that belongs to the United States."

Terry Filson

be old hands by being bumps on a log," Filson said, "and they have a pretty good feel for who can learn quickly and who can't. Journeymen are incredibly good teachers."

Legacy of 'Old Hands'



not only
equipment
our
house,
and every-
you're also
ent that
States."
son

"I love training them, teaching them some of my old tricks and hopefully they'll pass it on when they get up to my age," said Herb Scheuerlein, a powerhouse electrician.

Scheuerlein has been an electrician for 40 years, 22 of which were spent at McNary Lock and Dam, the location for the apprentice training program.

Another journeyman mentoring apprentices at McNary is Powerhouse Mechanic Daniel Tate, who has also worked at Bonneville Dam, the Dalles, and Lower Granite, investing over 16 years with the Corps.

"They probably should have started (the apprentice program) 20 years earlier because we're a little behind the game now," Tate said. "There are a lot of older guys retiring and a lot of knowledge is leaving the plant."

The apprentices are not only responsible for learning the ropes from their seniors, but they are charged with offering creative ways to improve upon existing procedures.

"We're trying to become the new holders of the information," Filson said. "In the old days when folks who couldn't write had a

history they wanted to share, someone had to memorize it. That's what we've done in the Corps of Engineers. We've not documented a lot of our processes, and the students have to learn those processes

and get them documented.

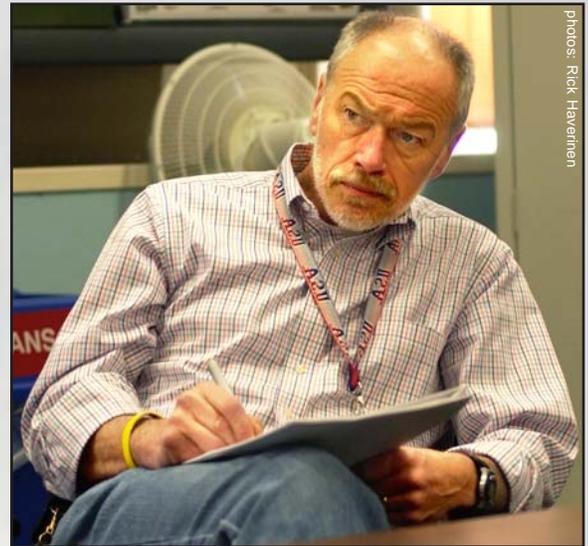
"I call it crawling inside the old guys' heads because when they leave, we're going to be dealing with people that have never seen some of the things that need to be done; some of the ways that we can take the units apart, for example, just haven't been done lately. So the students have to not only assimilate as part of the team, but they have to be able to interpret well what these craftsmen are leaving behind. That's what apprentices are, a legacy of the craftsmen that work here."

"I really hate to see them go," said Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic Robert Meyer. "We just lost two mechanics last week that retired, and they both have been great mentors for me. I really appreciate them and all they have to teach."



Meyer was referring to Stan Reese and Byron "Buzz" Hall.

"They taught me all types of things in the machine shop," Meyer said. "If I didn't understand something, I just went to Buzz and he could tell me."



Photos: Rick Havenmen

Meyer became a powerhouse apprentice as a co-op student from Spokane Community College.

"I love turning wrenches so this is what I like to do," said Jim Metzger, another apprentice powerhouse mechanic. "I'll definitely do at least 20 years here. We work on everything from a pump that weighs maybe 20 pounds up to units which weigh 20 tons, so it's a very challenging job."

Metzger got into the program after learning about it from a phone call to Walla Walla District's Human Resources Office. He had to pass the rugged entrance exam, a tool to test aptitude.

"The placement test ensures we get somebody that wants to come here to our district," Filson said, "and we give it only here. They have to come here on their own dime from wherever they are in the country. We have people that come from all over; Alaska, Florida, Louisiana, Arizona, California, Wisconsin, and those are only some of the states."

The exams only begin with the placement test. The powerhouse apprentices can expect an array of difficult written, oral and practical examinations at least every six months during their three- or four-year training programs.

"We have a complex hiring process,"

See APPRENTICES, page 6.



APPRENTICES, from page 5

Filson said. “We have multiple panels review the people before they’re even interviewed, so we get very good



people. You normally have your job performance evaluation done once a year? Well, we do it every month.”

Although much of practical savvy of

the apprentice program takes place in the head, the most often repeated theme about the instruction is to teach the hands what to do.

“We focus very strongly on the hands-on,” said Gary Smit, McNary’s mechanical worker in charge.

“The only way you’re going to learn how to do this type of work, is to do it,” said Bob Martin, McNary’s electrical worker in charge.

“It’s a good opportunity for me to get the hands-on training that I need,” said Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic Jeff Pedersen.

“You get down and dirty and you’ve got the tools and equipment that you don’t have at home that you can build and work with,” said Apprentice Powerhouse Electrician Scott Jones.

“That’s the best way we learn; on the job,” said Powerhouse Mechanic Daniel Tate.

The positive results have been noticed by Ford Shockman, Walla Walla District Vice-President of the United Power Trades Organization, the union that represents the power house employees.

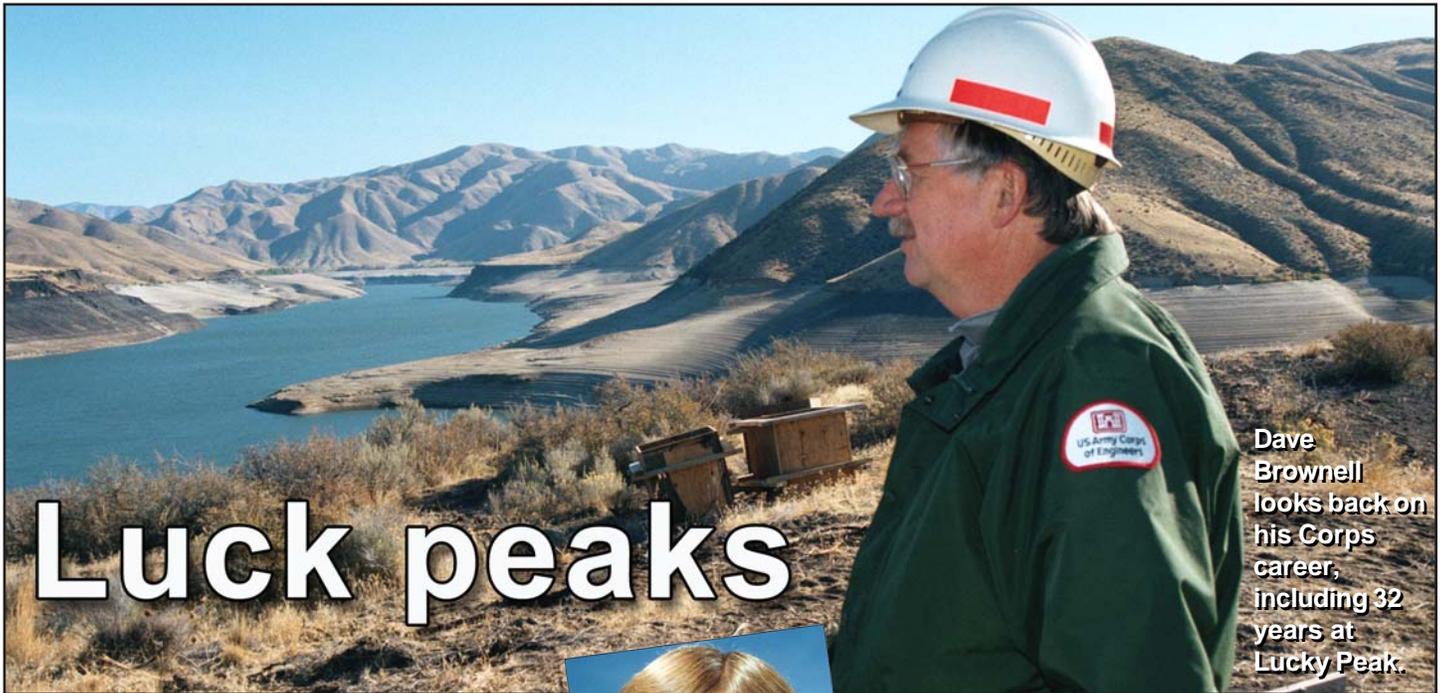
“To the union itself, being as we’re all bargaining unit members, we try to take ownership of the projects and our work, and we take pride in it,” Shockman said. “The training program right now is turning out some of the best apprentices that I’ve seen in the last 30 years that I’ve been in the District. I’ve seen some that are as good or better than some of the journeymen that have been here for 5-10 years.”

“The expertise is truly in the hands of the journeymen,” Filson said.

The current class of apprentices had its graduation ceremony set for June 21, 10 a.m., at McNary Lock and Dam in Umatilla, Ore.



Clockwise from upper left: Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic Robert Meyer takes a turn at the metal lathe; Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanic Jim Metzger climbs up one of McNary’s cranes; and Jeff Pedersen, left, and Gerry Giedeman, both Apprentice Powerhouse Mechanics, replace hydraulic hoses on one of McNary Dam’s intake gate support beams.



Dave Brownell looks back on his Corps career, including 32 years at Lucky Peak.

photo: Michael Jaroski, Lucky Peak Ranger, retired

By Rick Haverinen

Part of the good fortune at Lucky Peak might have been due to the presence of Dave Brownell, who called the recreation area just outside of Boise his own for 32 years.

“When I came in the actual title was park manager,” Brownell said, “but at the same time you were the project manager, and eventually the term became the operations manager.”

Brownell recently retired from his U.S. Army Corps of Engineers career, which began in 1973 at McNary Lock and Dam in Umatilla, Ore. as natural resources manager.

After Brownell graduated from college he had a four-year stint in the U.S. Air Force before landing at McNary in 1973, moving on to Lucky Peak in 1975, and giving up absolutely no ground after that.

“I think I’d been at Lucky Peak about two weeks, and they were right in the process of receiving back a lot of land that had primarily been parks leased to the Idaho Dept. of Parks and Recreation,” Brownell said. “I didn’t have staffing to take care of all the new parks, and didn’t have enough equipment. I had quite a front end adjustment curve.”

Lucky Peak’s staff in 1975 was six people, including Brownell.

“Today we have seven,” Brownell said, “but the work requirement changed once the powerhouse came in. A lot of our maintenance on the dam was not required any more, especially in the outlet area because the water was being discharged through the powerhouse rather than through the old outlets which were really subject to routine damage just due to the discharge.”

The Lucky Peak powerhouse went into service in 1988 and is operated by Seattle City Light.

Lucky Peak hires two temporary rangers and temporary maintenance workers for the busy summer months.

“The visitation has increased dramatically,” Brownell said. “Last year we had 1,100,000 visitors. It’s extremely intensive use, especially on the weekends and holidays.”

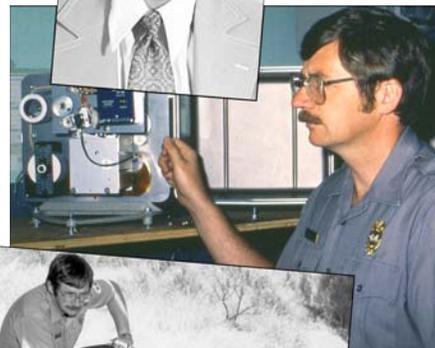
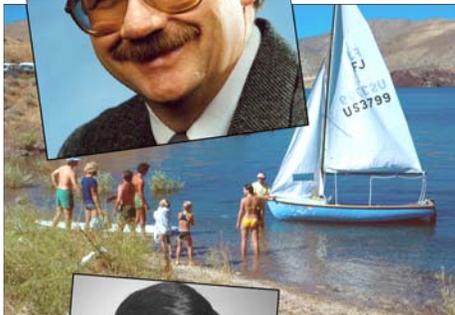
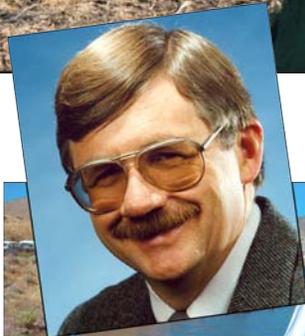
Brownell said that Boise started to grow when he arrived at Lucky Peak 32 years ago, and the city

continues to spread rapidly.

“I think one of the dramatic changes that’s accelerating right now is habitat encroachment of the growth out of Boise impinging on the mule deer winter range,” Brownell said.

Brownell said the best part of working for the Corps at Lucky Peak over his long career was working with his staff people and all the other folks that a recreation area manager encounters.

“One of the satisfying things was being in action with all the agencies near Boise,” Brownell said. I think that dealing with a myriad of folks can present challenges because not everybody’s goals are overlapping, but just working it out and the compromises that need to be made, are kind of synergy. Once you get all those folks on the same page, you feel like you’re better than any single entity.”



Dworshak officially scenic



photo: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Dworshak Reservoir in Ahsahka, Idaho has made ReserveAmerica-Camping Club's list as having one of the Top 25 Scenic Views in the nation, according to the camping reservation company's Web site.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers natural resources staff received a letter and certificate informing them of the honor on June 1, said Paul Pence, natural resource manager at Walla Walla District's Dworshak Dam and Reservoir.

ReserveAmerica's Web site touts Dworshak Reservoir as "a treasure worth discovering in North Central Idaho. From majestic Grand Fir and Ponderosa Pine trees growing on the steep hillsides, to the open grassy meadows where the deer and elk graze, Dworshak has something for everyone. In springtime the sound of water rushing over rocks combines with the coolness of dense forests and the

majesty of mountain peaks to create a scene both rugged and beautiful. Eagles, hawks and osprey soar through the skies in search of prey. Elk, white-tail and mule deer, black bear, cougar, moose and wolves all call Dworshak home."

"We're really excited about the award," said Pence. "Our Corps staff and recreation area lease partners work hard to make Dworshak a great place for visitors to enjoy the outdoors."

Dworshak Reservoir is no stranger to attention for its outstanding outdoor recreation opportunities:

* May 2006 - Dworshak's Dent Acres was the only campground in the state of Idaho honored as one of ReserveAmerica's "Top 100 Family Campgrounds," based on criteria requested by family campers including park amenities, beautiful outdoor scenery and educational facilities.

* Oct. 2006 - A new Idaho State record smallmouth bass was caught at Dworshak Reservoir.

* Feb. 2006 - Anglers in search of salmon and steelhead are lured to Dworshak's new fishing platform installed just downstream of the dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

ReserveAmerica is a "one-stop shop" for outdoor recreation reservations for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, USDA Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and Bureau of Reclamation. Reservations for federal campgrounds may be made online at www.reserveamerica.com or by calling toll-free (877) 444-6777. For a complete list of the ReserveAmerica-Camping Club "Top 100" parks and "Top 25 Scenic Views," go online to www.thecampingclub.com/zztop100/indextop.html.



photo: Gina Baltrusch

Digging into Earth Day at Mill Creek

Park Ranger Chris Alford got some help with an Earth Day project April 21 when students from Whitman College pitched in to level ruts and low spots in the Mill Creek nature trail that runs around Bennington Lake. In addition to smoothing about one-half mile

of the trail, the crew also removed litter of the plastic milk jug variety from the diversion dam forebay. Alford worked with the students four hours, enough time to explain missions of the Corps and how the Mill Creek flood control system operates.