INTERCOM

US Army Corps of Engineers, Walla Walla District
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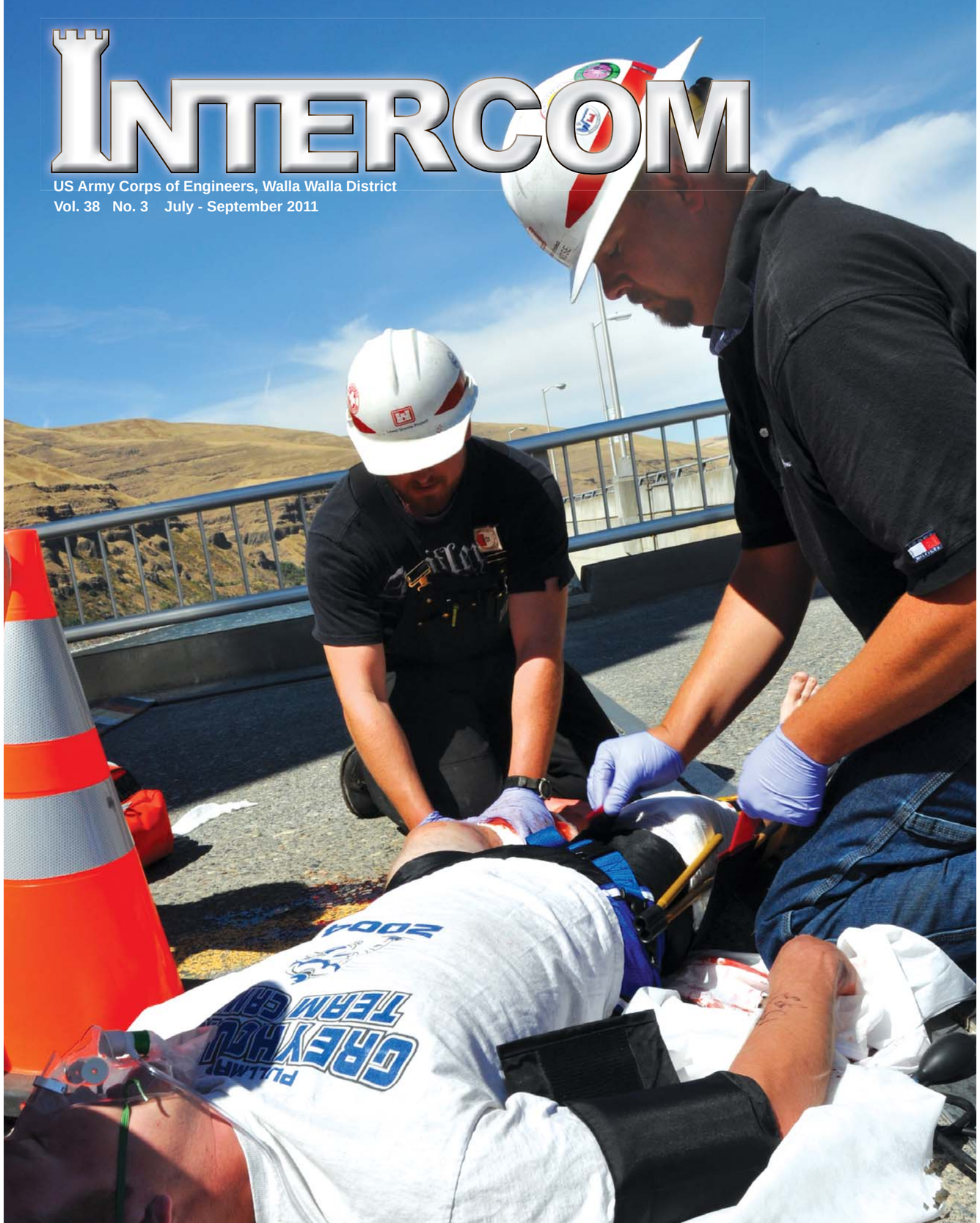

From Where I Sit

Looking ahead to a great year

I've been asked many times this last year how I like being the District Commander. The answer is simple, I love it! The most important reason is YOU; the great employees of this District! You are professionals who care deeply about your part of the mission. I can see this through your day-to-day execution and how you act during unexpected situations. The second reason is our mission. We make a difference locally, nationally, and internationally every day, but our local mission is where we have the largest positive impact. This issue of the Intercom highlights a wide variety of accomplishments and it only scratches the surface.

There are a few things I'd like to ask you to focus on as we enter the 2012 fiscal year: Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO), safety and program execution.

OCO is still our number one mission in USACE. This District continues to answer the call to support our nation's priority. Consider this opportunity and talk to your supervisor if you wish to deploy. Your supervisor will weigh the impacts against the mission and try to identify the right timing and make a recommendation—only I can decide not to deploy someone.

Thank you for supporting each other during deployments, whether by backfilling work in the District or taking care of families—both are critical to successful deployments.

Safety is paramount throughout the upcoming year. We have a Safety Implementation Plan developed with input from across the District. This is a great opportunity to improve in the safety arena and have record-low safety incidents. The only way we can ensure this is if we all are willing to speak up if we see something and have a little humility and willingness to adjust our actions if we need to work on a safety issue. The added focus for safety this year is because you are the District's most important asset and we can't accomplish our mission as well if you aren't a part of it.

You may not be aware that FY11 was our biggest year of obligations ($220,721,182) and expenditures ($209,076,431) to date! More importantly, we bought down our risk, were instrumental in protecting people's lives and property, and we've continued to improve in areas while sustaining the things that we're great at. How did we do it? Teamwork and disciplined planning and execution. FY12 is off to an even better start thanks to so many people's efforts since the 3rd quarter of FY11. I look forward to our best year of execution because I'm confident we will accomplish what we set our minds to.

FY12 is going to be an excellent year and I look forward to seeing this great District do more great things!

Lt. Col. David Caldwell, District Commander

Contents

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On the cover

Utility Worker Chris Ensley, left, and Power Plant Electrician Randy Wise respond to a "victim's" broken leg at an annual emergency response drill at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Colfax, Wash.

photo by Terri A. Rorke

Mill Creek improves dam safety rating

photos by Stephen Doherty

story by Bruce Henrickson

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District shared information about the recently improved safety rating of the Mill Creek Storage Dam in a public meeting in August near Walla Walla, Wash.

The new rating was part of an ongoing nationwide "Dam Safety Action Classification" (DSAC) safety effort by the Corps at each of its dams including the two dams at the Mill Creek project—the diversion dam on Mill Creek and the storage dam that holds Bennington Lake.

Each Corps dam was initially assigned a DSAC rating on a scale of I to V (one to five) with DSAC-I being least safe.

An initial May 2008 DSAC rating assigned Mill Creek Storage Dam at DSAC-I or "urgent and compelling" based on a brief records-only review.

The Corps headquarters dam safety Senior Oversight Group recently improved the Mill Creek Storage Dam DSAC rating to DSAC-III or "high priority" based on a completed Issues Evaluation Studies (IES) report and ongoing "interim risk reduction measures."

"Public safety is our highest priority, and keeping the public informed of our progress in making our dams safer is an important part of that effort," said District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell.

The storage dam's initial 2008 rating was due primarily to potential dam seepage and piping issues within the foundation of the dam when Bennington Lake is more than 17 percent full for an extended period of time.

In October 2009, the storage dam was upgraded to DSAC-II or "urgent" after additional data gathering and a preliminary IES report that showed the risk for dam failure under normal operations was not as high as originally estimated.

The District also began implementing a series of "interim risk reduction measures" in 2008 to improve public safety.

Corps officials held a series of public meetings about the storage dam and the diversion dam.

The Mill Creek Diversion Dam has carried a DSAC-II rating since its initial classification in January 2009 and is undergoing further review.

For more information about the DSAC process, click the "Dam safety" tab at *www.nww.usace.army.mil*.

(Above, left and below, right) Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell talks to public meeting attendees about the recently improved safety rating of Mill Creek Storage Dam near Walla Walla, Wash. in August. (Below, left) District Hydrology and Hydraulics Chief Mark Lindgren explains the new DSAC rating at the public meeting.

One team effort

(Left page) Scenes from landing zone officer training at Lucky Peak Dam and Lake in May. (Right page) From left to right: Power Plant Mechanic Sean Meyer, Maintenance Worker Greg Eickman and Power Plant Mechanic John Richter respond to "victims" in the annual emergency response drill at Lower Granite Lock and Dam near Colfax, Wash., in September.

photos by Keith Hyde

Lucky Peak trains for emergency response

At the invitation of Ada County Marine Unit, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District and Idaho State Parks and Recreation joined St. Lukes' Landing Zone Officer training in May at Spring Shores Marina, a common spot for air ambulance responses at Lucky Peak Dam and Lake, Idaho.

Participants learned the importance of many aspects of landing zone management, including how to handle flying debris and identifying hazards, with a strong emphasis on denying vehicle and pedestrian access through the landing zone.

"In large part a reflection of joint training opportunities, open communication, and shared public safety missions, emergency responses at Lucky Peak are always a one-team drill," Lucky Peak Natural Resource Manager Keith Hyde said.

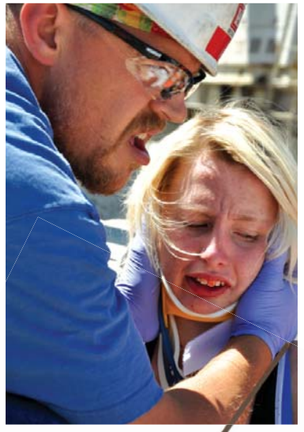
"We coordinate, contribute, and work closely together, so when misfortune knocks our Corps team, Boise and Ada county law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical services, state parks employees and other partners are looking out for each other, poised and ready to act," he said.

Besides Spring Shores Marina, landing zones Barclay Bay and Macks Creek often receive several life flight visits during the summer.

In 2010, Lucky Peak had five life-flight visits for accidents and illnesses and four Bureau of Land Management chopper landings for fire response, according to Lucky Peak Operations Manager Joyce Dunning.

photos by Keith Hyde

photos by Keith Hyde



When minutes matter

An employee's pager buzzes at Lower Granite Lock and Dam. "EMERGENCY. Head to visitor center," it reads. As a trained emergency medical responder volunteer, he swiftly grabs his trauma gear bag and rushes to the scene on the August afternoon. As he makes his way to the casualty, the clock is ticking. He knows that if the casualty is without oxygen, it will only take six minutes for him to die. Fortunately for today, the response is a drill. But the responder and his team react as expediently as if it were a real scenario.

The fastest response times for local emergency medical services to arrive to the Walla Walla District's most remote dams range from 12 to 45 minutes.

That is why Lower Granite, located 25 miles away from the closest hospital in Colfax, Wash., holds yearly emergency response drills.

During the past 11 years, Lower Granite has evolved its annual emergency response drill.

"We started with a broken leg and worked up to head injuries," said the dam's Trauma Team Technical Advisor Sara White. As a prior search and rescue team member with the National Park Service, White coordinates the training along with Independent Emergency Response Trainer Mark Stevens.

See RESPONSE on 7

story and photos by Terri A. Rorke

Three graduate from apprentice program

by Gina Baltrusch

Three students graduated from the Walla Walla District Hydropower Apprentice Program in June.

Scott C. Stolz, an Army veteran from Kennewick, Wash., works at Lower Monumental Lock and Dam as a power plant mechanic.

Robert D. Henderson, a Navy veteran from Lewiston, Idaho, works at Little Goose Lock and Dam as a power plant electrician.

Matthew C. Huston, a Navy veteran from Hermiston, Ore., works at McNary Lock and Dam as a power plant electrician.

The apprentice program, based at McNary Lock and Dam near Umatilla, Ore., develops trades and crafts journeymen to serve in District hydropower facilities.

The program typically graduates three to four apprentices each year. Depending on prior education, or simultaneous enrollment in a related college education program, students can pursue a three or four-year program to become electrical, mechanical or operations journeymen.

The first year focuses on gaining general hydropower knowledge, after which each student pursues a dedicated craft that signifies the start of a new career. The next two to three years are spent under the guidance of journeymen and a rigid academic curriculum. Academic work includes textbook studies, computer-based training and a strong emphasis of hands-on training.

During their apprenticeship, students gain work experience at all six hydroelectric facilities in the District before they join the workforce as craftspersons.

"Across the Corps, we've recognized the need to plan for a sustainable workforce as a large percentage of our current workforce nears retirement eligibility. This program enables the District to better meet its future craftsman needs. Apprentices learn from the masters, rather than trying to glean that knowledge out of a book at a later time when the experts may not be here to help them," said Pete McGuckin, Walla Walla District's training officer for the program.

"This graduation ceremony serves to recognize the students' efforts and welcome them to the ranks of journeymen, and to thank the craftsmen who coached them."

photo by Tony Sijohn

Robert D. Henderson

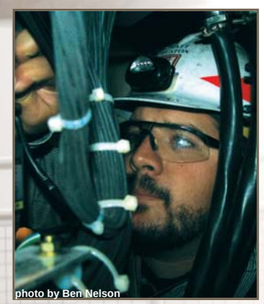


photo by Ben Nelson

Matthew C. Huston

photo by Bryce Thompson

Scott C. Stolz

photo by Tony Sijohn

Welcome to the District Deputy Commander Maj. Baker

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District welcomed Maj. Rodney S. Baker as its new deputy District commander on Aug. 22.

The Durand, Mich. native arrived to the District after most recently serving as the executive officer for the Security Force Assistance Team, at the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Maj. Baker offered initial impressions about his new assignment.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to work at Walla Walla," he said. "This is my first USACE assignment and I have learned quite a bit in the first few weeks with much more to learn. I'm impressed with the strong relationships that have been built within the District and pleased to be a part of that.

"My wife and I grew up in small rural communities in Michigan. Coming here after many years of living in big cities brings a sense of home to us. I look forward to continuing to work and learn from everyone and hope I can contribute to the team as much as my predecessor did."

Major Baker and his wife, Keyara, live in Walla Walla with their two daughters, Addison and Meriel.

Maj. Baker's background includes earning a Bachelor of Science degree with a civil engineering major in 1997 from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. In the same year, he was commissioned in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He also earned a Master of Science degree in civil engineering from the University of Missouri-Rolla in 2002.

Maj. Baker is a registered Professional Engineer in the State of Missouri.

His previous assignments include working in a variety of units including the 38th Engineer Company (Medium Girder Bridge), 130th Engineer Brigade in Hanau, Germany, with a deployment to Croatia. He was the assistant plans officer and brigade maintenance officer for the 130th Engineer Brigade, Hanau, Germany with a deployment to Albania. He also served in C Company, 8th Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division and deployed to Baghdad, Iraq.

Maj. Rodney Baker

photo by Lt. Col. Decker Hains

District Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist Andrew Dankel-Ibáñez speaks to students in a Hispanic Youth Exploring Engineering and Sciences Camp at Walla Walla University in August. About 15 Latino high school students participated in the camp from area schools.

¡Ganas! District inspires students in Hispanic youth camp

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District had a chance to participate in a week-long Hispanic Youth Exploring Engineering and Sciences Camp at Walla Walla University in August.

The District was one of several community organizations that offered presentations on developing leadership skills.

The camp's focus was to inspire local area youth to pursue careers in engineering and sciences.

Previous District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Decker Hains, Equal Employment Opportunity Specialist Andrew Dankel-Ibáñez and three engineers participated in the camp.

Dankel-Ibáñez gave a presentation titled "Motivation: ¡Ganas!".

"As one of the major employers in the valley, the District recognizes its role in ensuring that talented, diverse students have access to gainful employment opportunities in our community," Dankel-Ibáñez said. "Fortunately, by providing Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) programs for our local underrepresented student populations, our community is cultivating the best talent from a diverse labor force while addressing the disparity of representation in STEM fields."

Student Mitzi Rodriguez said that the question and answer portion of the camp was very helpful to her.

"By them telling us how they chose what they wanted to do in college made me more relieved about life after high school. They also talked about some major points that would help us to be successful," Rodriguez said.

RESPONSE, continued from 5

Employee emergency responders are trained on everything from injury stabilization and medical and trauma care to childbirth and hazardous materials situations. An annual response drill follows their training.

The 12-member team performs these drills to prepare for real-world, real-time, medical emergencies at the remotely located dam facility.

"We train not only for all the general injuries and illnesses, but for industry-related types of emergencies," White said.

Every year, the team works closely with local community fire and rescue squads, state and county law enforcement, regional helicopter and fixed-wing medical evacuation support, and the regional emergency communications dispatch center.

According to White, the drill not only promotes a close professional working relationship with regional agencies, but also facilitates a trained and well-equipped emergency medical team on site that can provide life-saving care until EMS arrives for advanced treatment and transport.

"Minutes can cost lives if life support isn't provided in a timely manner. Our goal is to keep them alive until help gets to us," White said.

With 28 years of emergency response training, Independent Trainer Mark Stevens said he was very pleased with the team's motivation and commitment to the program.

Lower Granite Technical Support Chief Benjamin Feider said, "The training was a good chance to interact with local emergency response services and was a reminder that it could be me getting hurt out there just as easily as someone else."

Since joining the emergency response team in December 2008, Feider has seen the training used in multiple real emergencies—everything from a back injury to a car accident.

2011 REGIONAL FLOOD FIGHT A SUCCESS

With record flooding all across the nation, 2011 had one of the most eventful flood seasons in recent history ... And the Pacific Northwest saw no exception.

by Terri A. Rorke

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District, the states of Idaho and Wyoming, and local communities were challenged with mitigating the third highest water runoff and one of the highest snowpacks on record in the Snake River Basin since 1997.

After activating its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in May— the first time since 1996—the District deployed 15 people during the course of three months as part of flood-fight teams that included engineers and support personnel to Southeast Idaho and Teton County, Wyo.

"This was an extremely challenging year," said District Senior Water Manager Stephen Hall. "We we were successful in working closely with our community partners and managed to regulate a very high water year with very little flood damage."

As chairman of the board of Teton County Commissioners in Wyoming—one of the areas affected this year—Commissioner Benjamin H. Ellis explained how close coordination with the Corps helped in the flood fight.

"By working together closely we were able to track weather conditions, monitor river flows, and respond to changes in dam releases and impacts to the area's levee system, all while keeping the public informed of our respective efforts," Ellis said.

Hall said flood damages were also mitigated because of a little cooperation from the weather.

"We were fortunate that it was a slow melting year," he said. "As we look back, it could have been much worse."

The Corps took a proactive approach in early 2011 when it analyzed the amount of snowpack in the mountains and began discharging water in the reservoirs to make room for expected inflow.

According to Idaho Bureau of Homeland Security Director Brig. Gen. Bill Shawver, the Corps' resources and proactive approach to flooding made a difference.

"Every time I talk to an emergency manager from one of those impacted counties they are quick to point out that the resources the Corps provided were instrumental in reducing flooding," Shawver said.

The Corps' coordinated effort with multiple agencies such as Idaho's Bureau of Homeland Security and Bureau of Reclamation made this year's flood fight a success, according to District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell.

"Because of pre-emptive measures, communities were prepared and we were successful in protecting the public," Caldwell said.

But well before any signs of an imminent flood event, the Corps was preparing for an emergency.

District flooding preparation first began in September 2010 when District Emergency Operations personnel performed a communications drill in Ada County, Idaho, for flooding along the Boise River.

In February 2011, the District, state of Idaho and National Weather Service held flood-fight awareness training sessions throughout Idaho, focused by the Idaho "Silver Jackets" cooperative group, a coalition of federal and state agencies that work together to develop comprehensive and sustainable solutions to Idaho's flood hazard issues.

In these sessions, Walla Walla District Disaster Response Manager Jeff Stidham helped regional officials understand their roles and responsibilities before this year's flood event.

The flood courses trained local responders on flood response basics ranging from monitoring river and weather conditions to planning operations and filling and placing sand bags.

"Preparation is key for any potential disaster, but especially so for flooding," Stidham said. "That's because any effective flood response takes time to ramp up."

"If you wait until the water is coming over the banks, it's too late for anything but heading for high ground."

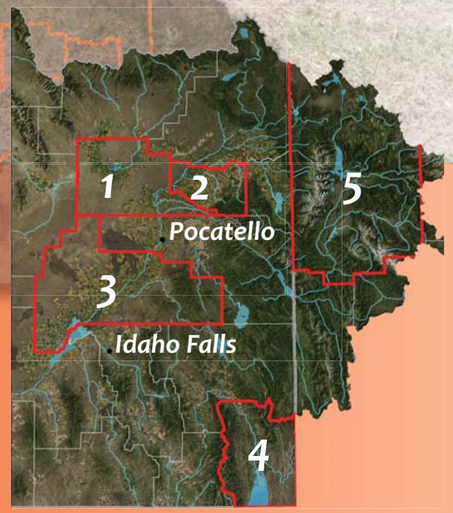
see FLOOD on 10

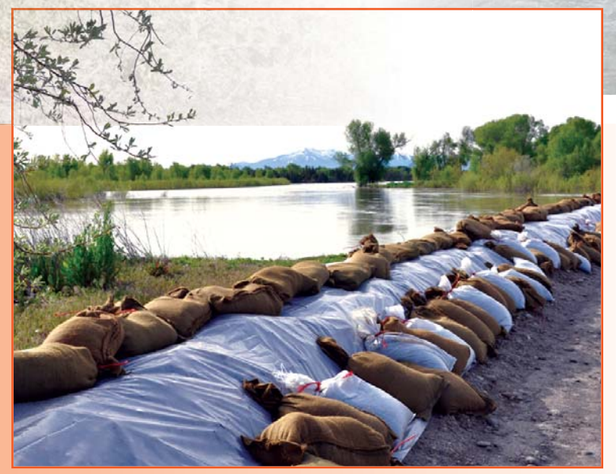
photos by Amber Larsen and Ken Koebbeling

(Above) District Hydraulic Jonathan Petersen coordinates flood fight operations in Bingham County, Idaho in June. (Right page) Scenes from flood fight activity in Idaho and Wyoming.

The Walla Walla District assisted the following counties impacted by spring 2011 flood events:

1. Jefferson County, Idaho
2. Madison County, Idaho
3. Bingham County, Idaho
4. Bear Lake County, Idaho
5. Teton County, Wyoming





from RESPONSE on 9

"The 2011 flood fight was an overwhelming success because of an effective partnership between local, state, and federal agencies that included training, preparations, communications, and a very proactive approach. We can't control the weather or the rate of runoff, but we can mitigate risk by working with others."

Lt. Col. David Caldwell,
Walla Walla District Commander

photo by Amber Larsen

2011 Corps flood fight facts

* This was a regional flood fight that **crossed both Corps district and division boundaries**. Portland District provided four trailer-mounted "Crisafulli" pumps (also known as "PTO-powered trailer pumps") to the Walla Walla District for use in Jefferson and Bear Lake counties in Eastern Idaho. Three of those pumps were sent to support flood-fight efforts in Jefferson County. The other pump was sent to help Bear Lake County flood fighters, which is within Sacramento District, part of South Pacific Division.

* The preliminary estimate of flood damages prevented by the Walla Walla District for the 2011 fiscal year is **$646 million**.

* The District spent **$353,000** during the 2011 flood fight. This figure includes construction, labor and supplies (not including sandbags).

*A total of **15** District employees deployed between May and July while the District's Emergency Operations Center was activated.

* About **550,000** sandbags were issued by Walla Walla District throughout Southeast Idaho and Jackson Hole, Wyo. (500,000 of those sandbags were supplied by the Corps' Seattle District, while 50,000 were from Walla Walla District's stockpiles).

* **100** rolls of six mil plastic sheeting were issued to three counties.

* Corps emergency management experts deployed to the Jackson Hole, Wyo., area in May to support Teton County's flood preparation efforts and monitor levees along the upper Snake River near Jackson.

* The Corps drafted Dworshak Reservoir near Orofino, Idaho, lower than it's been since 1999 to create **1,969,300 acre feet of flood-storage capacity** on the North Fork of the Clearwater River. All that available space was used for inflows when the reservoir reached full-pool elevation on Jul. 12, 2011.

NOTE: It takes about two acre feet to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool.

For more information on the regional 2011 flood fight, scan the QR code to the right:

District power team helps East Coast recover from Hurricane Irene

by Terri A. Rorke

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District sent a twelve-member emergency power team to Fayetteville, N.C., Aug. 25, to help the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) respond to power losses to three million people following Hurricane Irene's assault on the Eastern Seaboard.

photo by Ken Wanderscheid

Within 24 hours of receiving FEMA's request to send a power team to provide emergency power technical assistance to the disaster zone, the District's power team departed and spent about a week and a half supporting FEMA operations in North Carolina.

The District emergency power team consists of an action officer, mission managers, mission specialists, a mission liaison, logistics specialists, a contract specialist and emergency power quality assurance specialists.

Power team members supported FEMA at emergency management staging areas and operations centers throughout the state.

The all-volunteer team provide backup electrical power generation anywhere needed. Members agree to be in an on-call, ready-to-deploy status.

photo by Mike Deccio

District Contract Specialist Jean Desjarlais and Power Plant Electrician James Lyerly take inventory of personnel and equipment at staging area at Ft. Bragg, N.C.

Corps signs water resources partnering agreements

photo by Terri A. Rorke

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell signs a partnering agreement with Cynthia Clark, an engineer from the Idaho Water Resource Board. The two organizations agreed to conduct geological and operations studies of the Weiser River near Weiser, Idaho.

by Gina Baltrusch

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District and the Idaho Water Resource Board (IDWRB) signed two partnering agreements in August to conduct geological and operational studies of the Weiser River near Weiser, Idaho.

The Weiser River Watershed covers a large area in southwestern Idaho where its headwaters originate in the southern end of the Seven Devils Mountain Range and the west central mountains of Idaho before flowing into the Snake River.

Creating additional water storage on the major tributaries of the Snake River in Southwest Idaho, including the Weiser River, has been studied by private, state and federal parties for more than 50 years.

Specifically, the Corps studied the Weiser River basin comprehensively from 1987 through 1994. In March 2011, the District completed a gap analysis study in partnership with the IDWRB – the Weiser-Galloway Gap Analysis, Economic Evaluation and Risk-Based Cost Analysis Project.

The partnership-agreement teams IWRB with the Corps to conduct two new technical studies that will address those critical gaps:

1) **The Snake River Operational Analysis Project** will study a range of potential river-operating scenarios that seek to optimize system operations with incremental volumes of new water storage on the Weiser River, including flood control, irrigation, hydropower production, storage, recreation and flow augmentation requirements while maximizing economic benefits.

2) **The Weiser River Geologic Investigation and Analysis Project** will study the safety, suitability and integrity of the geologic structures at the proposed dam and reservoir site. Study activities will include mapping, core-sampling and analysis to identify or rule out potential structural weaknesses or seepage potential of a proposed dam and reservoir at this location.

These two technical studies are authorized by Section 22 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1974, which allows the Corps to provide planning assistance to states and tribes.

The Planning Assistance States (PAS) Program permits the Corps to use its technical planning expertise to supplement and support state and Indian tribe efforts to undertake broad, statewide, comprehensive water resources planning. This program is cost shared on a 50 percent federal and 50 percent non-federal basis.

"We just completed one of the most successful projects ever done between the Corps and the Idaho Water Resource Board," said Jack Peterson, senior advisor to the IDWRB. "Our extraordinary partnership with the Corps during the past two years working on the gap analysis is the reason we want to partner with them again on these new studies that are vital to future of Idaho's water resources."

"We're excited to be working with the state of Idaho again on the Weiser-Galloway studies," said Rebecca Kalamasz, District Planning Branch chief. "These two technical analysis studies are essential to helping Idaho make future water-planning decisions."

The Corps and IWRB will work together to develop two project management plans to more specifically develop the scope and schedule of the studies to be conducted.

Architectural illustration of future Hanford Reach Interpretive Center in Richland, Wash.

District completes reviews on Hanford Reach Interpretive Center

by Bruce Henrickson

The Walla Walla District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed both an environmental compliance and real estate review of the Hanford Reach Interpretive Center proposal.

The Corps approved the City of Richland's request to enter into a sublease agreement with the Richland Public Facilities District, which would allow construction of the Center on Corps-leased land in Columbia Park West in Richland, Wash.

The Center is a project of the Richland Public Facilities District proposed to be built on land currently leased by the District to the City of Richland for park and recreation purposes.

The Corps review included two important components—National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance plus approval of a proposal for the City of Richland to enter into a sublease agreement with the Richland Public Facilities District.

"Like many other proposals we receive, this proposal was evaluated in great detail within a well-established review process," said Lt. Col. David Caldwell, Walla Walla District commander. "It's a complex process, and it's how we serve as good stewards of the environment and federal real estate."

The Corps of Engineers is the lead federal agency for environmental review of the proposal and worked within an established NEPA compliance process. The environmental review process involved local entities, state and Federal agencies and Indian tribes.

The District assessed the proposed Center's environmental compliance with eight federal laws, two federal executive orders, and three Washington state laws and permits. NEPA compliance for the project was comprised of the Corps conducting a public scoping meeting, preparing an Environmental Assessment (EA), submitting it for public review, addressing public comments received in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), and signed approval of the FONSI by Lt. Col. Caldwell.

Additionally, the Corps completed a real estate review of a sublease between the City of Richland and the Richland Public Facilities District for use of the federally owned, Corps-administered property.

While the Walla Walla District is not a signatory to that sublease, the District's lease with the City of Richland requires a review of any subordinate real estate agreements proposed for the federally owned land.

The project has been coordinated by the District with the City of Richland, Richland Public Facilities District, Washington State Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Washington State Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Nez Perce Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and the Wanapum Band.

Each agency, organization or tribe was contacted and provided information on the proposed center.

The Corps provided technical consultation with three tribes that requested it.

Corps partners with Milton-Freewater on levee

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District Commander Lt. Col. David Caldwell, Deputy District Engineer Alan Feistner, far left, and Civil Engineer Herb Bessey, center, brief Oregon U.S. Rep. Greg Walden about levee repair work in Milton-Freewater, Ore. in September.

by Terri A. Rorke

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District officials had a chance to update Oregon U.S. Rep. Greg Walden on levee repair work at the Nursery Bridge stilling basin in Milton-Freewater, Ore., in September.

The work is part of a $2.85 million bond passed by the Milton-Freewater Water Control District in November 2010 to repair eroding concrete that will make the structure safe by Corps standards, which currently has a rating as "unacceptable".

In 2008, the Corps rated the project as "unacceptable" because of inoperable culverts, riprap damage, unwanted vegetation, and damage to the concrete drop structure.

The rating makes the project ineligible to receive federal assistance if it was damaged by a flood or storm.

As a result, Federal Emergency Management Agency designated certain portions of Milton-Freewater as being in a flood plain.

Walden said the progress being made on the repairs is remarkable given the current economic situation, especially in regards to the local community coming together to approve the bond issue.

The repair work is on schedule and expected to be completed before November 2012.

The Corps constructed the Walla Walla River Flood Reduction Project near Milton-Freewater, Ore. in the 1950s, and turned over the project to Milton-Freewater on May 19, 1966.

The project consists of 5.3 miles of channel improvements and revetted levees.

The levees are designed to carry a flow of 18,600 cubic feet per second (cfs) with two feet of freeboard. The concrete drop structure below Nursery Bridge has a design discharge of 12,000 cfs or a 140-year event. The 100-year flow is estimated at 10,600 cfs.

The sponsor is responsible for operating and maintaining the project while the Corps performs routine inspections to verify proper maintenance, owner preparedness, and component operation under the Rehabilitation and Inspection Program.

The Corps will inspect the project when the sponsor completes maintenance deficiencies to determine eligibility to be placed back in the PL 84-99 rehabilitation and inspection program. Meanwhile, the Corps will continue to provide maintenance recommendations and lead an interagency working group to arrive at a levee vegetation solution.

Updated progress from sponsor:

- Repair damaged concrete on drop structure – 50 percent.
- Clean, repair, video tape culverts – 80 percent.
- Review, correct, approve encroachments – 80 percent.
- Repair damaged bank riprap below Nursery Bridge - Future
- Repair riprap near Couse Creek Bridge – Scheduled for next year.
- Remove unwanted vegetation – System Q complete, tried goats on other systems.
- Hydraulic analysis of channel capacity – Vicinity of 15 Ave. Bridge has insufficient freeboard.
- Design and construction scheduled for next year.
- Restore channel capacity – Design 50 percent. Design and construction scheduled for next year.

QUIET GROUND SPEAKS LOUD

story and photos by Terri A. Rorke

Walla Walla District Archaeologist Ray Tracy examines a rock during a compliance excavation. Every construction project proposed on Corps land is approached assuming construction will damage artifacts.

"Let's discuss this," Ray Tracy says as he closely examines a gray rock.

"Basalt?" asks fellow U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District archaeologist Scott Hall in response.

They conclude that the rock is basalt, but not a cultural artifact created by a human. Instead, the archaeologists determine the piece of stone was broken by natural forces, not by human hands.

Depending on the type of rock the team finds helps them determine whether they discovered a natural or cultural phenomenon.

So for Corps archaeologists, quiet ground speaks *loud*.

"The rule of thumb in archaeology is that attractive land today was also attractive land 100 years ago," Tracy says about the Columbia River, which has always been a popular place for modern and ancient camping, fishing and hunting.

The archaeologists are digging for remnants of past life as part of a compliance excavation on a proposed construction project.

They must determine if the Corps land in Franklin County, Wash. contains any historical, cultural or scientific resources before construction can begin.

After determining the discovered basalt rock indicates no cultural phenomena, it's back to the methodical digging and meticulous turning of every rock, dust grain and telltale object.

The District performs archaeology as part of its cultural resources management mission.

The compliance excavations are normally performed by Corps contractors, but today Tracy and Hall are digging as an extra precaution.

"As the federal agency that manages this land, we're dedicated stewards of its cultural, historical and scientific resources, including archaeological sites," Hall said.

"Essentially, this land is property of the entire nation, so it is our obligation to act as stewards and manage those responsibilities."

Every construction project proposed on Corps land is approached assuming construction will damage artifacts. Therefore, archaeological surveying is a requirement.

Each project in the Corps must comply with federal laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which requires the Corps to consult with Tribes, the State Historic Preservation Office, and other parties.

This cautious approach is especially important in years with increased flooding, as in spring 2011, because floods have the potential to expose previously buried archaeological sites.

If artifacts are more than 100 years old, they are protected under the Archaeological Resources Protection Act making it a federal crime to remove them or damage protected sites.

If the public encounters an artifact, it's important to immediately notify the federal land manager. Do not disturb or move the object either, Tracy said.

The artifact is not only the legal property of the U.S., but the resource has "context"—indicators used by archaeologists to determine its age and cultural significance, if any.

Through their training, archaeologists are able to study history discovered through the context. What most passersby are oblivious to is very noticeable to them.

This information can be easily lost if the object is disturbed or moved.

The discovered history is very important to the archaeologists. But as Hall says "it's not the artifacts themselves that's so important; it's the story that lies behind the artifacts."

(Right) District Fishery Biologist Jason Achziger dumps dirt in a sift where Archaeologist Ray Tracy looks for evidence of cultural phenomona on a proposed construction project in Franklin County, Wash.

A year under the Hazara sun

Ron Ashley reflects on year-long Afghanistan deployment

by Terri A. Rorke

Scenes from Ron Ashley's recent deployment in Afghanistan

photos courtesy of Ron Ashley

You can sense satisfaction as Ron Ashley excitedly talks about his recent one-year deployment in Afghanistan, a sojourn filled with hard work, long days and many environmental and cultural challenges.

His journey in central Afghanistan among the Hazara people, claimed descendants from 13th century Mongol ruler Genghis Khan, was filled with contrast and opportunities as he saw an interesting mix of people who, for example, still use primitive threshers in their farm fields, but have modern cell phones.

Ashley dove into this mix by working closely with Afghans as a construction representative.

His work afforded him many occasions to teach. He describes how Afghans commonly approached him calling out "Mr. Engineer, tell me how this works!"

Ashley was part of a team of four Walla Walla District employees who served as construction representatives on numerous civil works projects.

Collectively, they worked on about 250 projects—all making lasting differences in this underdeveloped country.

The team provided independent government cost estimates, performed quality assurance inspections, and offered assistance to Afghans on proof of land ownership and on basic infrastructure and facility-building projects like wells, roads and bridges.

While facing extreme weather and rough terrain, Ashley traveled to both the most populated and most remote corners of Afghanistan, where he says people can count on one hand how many times they've seen Americans.

He's lived in Afghanistan for at least part of every year since 2006 on three separate Corps deployments, while working on nearly 160 projects combined.

During his most recent deployment, he worked on about 70 projects alone.

He also taught Afghans basic trades in a training program first established by Corps employees, Power Plant Operator Bill Stratton and Mechanical Engineer Carl Knaak, at the New Zealand Base in Bamyan.

Both Knaak and Stratton returned to Afghanistan over the years to continue the combined construction effort as well.

During that time, the team has had the opportunity to not only see projects built from start to finish, but to also see how people's lives have changed.

Ashley scrolls through before and after photos of projects he's worked on.

"This is where the hospital complex is supposed to be built," he says.

It's a simple photo of a few Afghans standing in a desolate field, including a white-coat-clad doctor staring off into the distance with his hands clasped behind his back.

Seemingly, he's envisioning how the building will look once it's finished.

"I just got an e-mail that the hospital is now under construction," Ashley said with a smile.

The smile is justified because many believe that every completed project the U.S. turns over to Afghanistan means the people are closer to stability.

In June, President Obama announced his plan to withdraw 10,000 U.S. troops by the end of the year.

The transition of control is expected to be complete by 2014 when Afghans will be responsible for their own security and civil works projects.

The Afghans are preparing for this transition.

"They are good students. They want to progress, but they still want to keep their culture," he said.

During his latest deployment, Ashley not only spent a year working on construction projects, but also on building a great rapport with the people he lived beside while stationed in Bamyan.

"I probably had a thousand conversations over cups of tea," he says.

Because of the relationship the foreign forces built with the locals, the Hazara would look out for their new friends by warning them about traveling to dangerous areas or being cautious around suspicious people.

In July, NATO announced that it handed over control to local forces in Bamyan, according to BBC news. This is the first of seven areas planned for transition of security in Afghanistan.

But if you ask Ashley, there's still time to make a difference.

"I said that was my last deployment, but I'm thinking about giving it another go."

More than **220** Walla Walla District employees have deployed in support of either the Overseas Contingency Operations or the Global War on Terrorism missions since the 9/11 attacks.

Stepping out to help out

by Terri A. Rorke

Second article in a two-part series on how the Cost Engineering Branch supports the Corps and beyond.

photos courtesy of John Gornick

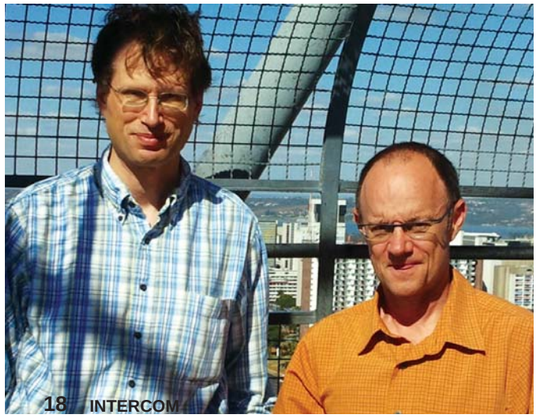
Directory of expertise

The Walla Walla District's Cost Engineering Branch carries a lot of responsibility as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers National Directory of Expertise (Cost DX) for all U.S. civil works projects and the "Support for Others" program. The DX also provides cost estimating services on all projects from the planning phases through construction, maintenance, and facilities' rehabilitation. This second part in a two-part series offers a closer look at how District engineers are making a difference around the Corps and beyond.

Support for others

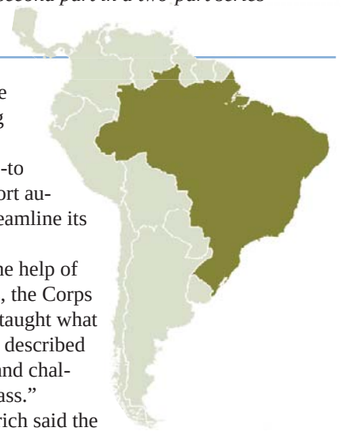
In June, Walla Walla District Civil Engineer Kurt Friederich had a chance to travel to Brazil--the largest country in Latin America. But he wasn't there to sightsee. At the request of Brazil's port authority, Friederich and fellow colleague, Portland District Cost Engineer John Gornick, taught port authority cost engineers in a week-long Dredging Prospect Course in Brasilia.

This is one of the Cost Engineering Center of Expertise's main missions, "Support for Others," which includes serving organizations outside of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



The Brazilians wanted to learn Corps practices because they are trying to find a way to standardize their port authority program, according to Friederich.

One of the differences Friederich learned about the two countries was that Brazil allows boats from all over the world to enter its ports, while the U.S. only permits U.S.-flagged vessels to enter. This is one reason why the Brazilians wanted to learn about the District's software program, the Cost Engineering Dredge Estimating Program (CEDEP)--to help the port authority streamline its operation.



With the help of translators, the Corps engineers taught what Friederich described as a "fun and challenging class."

Friederich said the class also benefited the Corps because the trip allowed all the participants to exchange professional knowledge. He said the training was well-received and the Brazilians are already discussing the possibility of another class in the future.

Although it's uncommon for the District to travel abroad to conduct training, countries such as Russia, Germany and Brazil have already called on Walla Walla District for its cost engineering expertise.

National level

The Cost DX supports the Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. by creating and updating all cost engineering regulations and guidance.

The DX also serves as a consultant to support the headquarters on high-risk projects.

With highly trained individuals in various areas such as cost, scheduling risk, earned value management, contracting, construction modifications, regulations and FAR requirements, the cost estimating DX either already has the experience or can find a subject-matter expert to provide support where needed.

Training

The DX is actively involved in learning new techniques, methods and practices used in the federal and private sector applications. DX engineers pass on their knowledge to the cost community and other Project Delivery Team (PDT) members.

The Corps of Engineers Dredge Estimating Program (CEDEP) is used Corps-wide. Trained DX personnel use the software to develop and communicate potential costs and schedules of dredging projects and identify potential risk areas that the Corps PDT can focus on to allow for fair project estimates.

DX experts provide Proponent-Sponsored Engineer Corps Training (PROSPECT) to teach dredge estimating in and outside of the Corps (see "Support for Others" on left page).

The DX also provides instruction for several other PROSPECT classes including Cost and Schedule Risk Analysis and Civil Works Cost Estimating. Along with Friederich, other DX engineers have developed course details and served as instructors.

As an example, District Civil Engineer Jim Neubauer developed a certification course for cost estimators who provide Agency Technical Reviews (ATR) for projects needing authorization at the Congressional level. The ATR process is an effort to improve and ensure the quality and creditability of Corps decisions. He trained more than 100 cost engineering professionals to date.

The cost engineers also provide ad hoc training, both formal and hands-on, upon request. Several districts have sent junior level cost personnel to Walla Walla District for mentoring. The visiting engineers work on their own district project work while receiving over-the-shoulder mentoring from DX personnel.

"This has been a win–win opportunity because it allows individuals to receive customized real time training from senior level folks, while the DX facilitates enhanced future communication and partnership with other districts," Cost Engineering Chief Kim Callan said.

(Above, left) In June, District Civil Engineer Kurt Friederich, right, conducts a dredging course for Brazilian port authority cost engineers with Portland District Cost Engineer John Gornick in Brasilia, Brazil.

Local level

The Cost DX also provides budgetary estimating support to local projects, to include programming estimates and Independent Government Estimate preparation (required for award of all construction contracts and most supply/service contracts).

"There are specific regulations which dictate what and how an IGE is prepared. Mainly, an estimate is only considered an IGE if it has proper signatures from, at the very least, include the chief of cost engineering," explained Callan.

Engineer streamlines cost risk tool

After working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District a little more than a year, Cost Engineer Jim Jetton helped create a cost-estimating tool that cost engineers will use country-wide.

In July, Jetton was awarded the District Corps Day New Employee of the Year Award for developing a streamlined risk analysis process for projects costing less than $40 million.

photo by Terri A. Rorke

Jim Jetton

Corps regulations stipulate that all project cost estimates in the reconnaissance, feasibility, and preconstruction engineering and designing phases have risk-based contingency applied to them.

Projects estimated at costing more than $40 million go through a "formal cost and schedule risk analysis." However, there was not a definitive process for smaller projects until now.

The formal cost and schedule risk analysis is very involved because it uses statistical analysis and requires qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating risks and generating contingencies, according to Jetton.

"Projects under the $40 million threshold were including contingencies that weren't based on risk. And per our regulations, they need to be," Jetton said.

"Jim Neubauer, Cost Estimating Branch agency technical review coordinator saw the need for the process to be streamlined and standardized so that cost engineers across the country can develop more accurate risk-based contingencies for smaller projects."

The new "abbreviated risk analysis" process offers cost engineers a simpler process for evaluating risks on projects costing less than $40 million, while saving time and creating more accurate estimates. The new tool is already being recommended by Corps headquarters to districts across the country.

The process not only helps cost engineers develop accurate cost estimates, but also helps project delivery teams create more accurate budgets and identify risks that need to be addressed as the project develops, Jetton said.

"We don't want a lack of appropriate planning to keep the job from progressing," Jetton said.

"We want to give everyone a realistic portrayal of how much the project will likely cost to construct."

Jetton said the new streamlined process will also help reinforce Corps regulations requiring that risk-based contingencies are applied to government estimates.

PATH AHEAD: Core team leads Corps maintenance vision

by Terri A. Rorke

photo by Brandon Frazier

photo by Rob Lustig


photo by Keith Hyde

(Above) McNary Lock and Dam. (Main) Five-year tunnel inspection at Lucky Peak Dam and Lake, Boise, Idaho.

The dutiful mechanic marks off a checklist. He's checking this list off for what seems to be the hundredth time. It's routine, preventive maintenance. It's behind the scenes and seemingly repetitive but many do not realize that simply checking off this list may be the District's key to carrying out its maintenance mission. And District Operations Chief Rick Werner wants to share this key. Because, according to Werner, maintenance is everyone's business.

BUSINESS CULTURE

"It's not just the foreman's business," Werner said. "It's also the ranger, the control room operator and the fish biologist who have to effectively communicate their priorities in order for maintenance staff to know how and when to approach their mission"


photo by Frank Wachob

Werner and Maintenance Engineering Chief Kimberley Oldham started developing the revamped maintenance system while previously working for Seattle and Portland districts. Now at Walla Walla District, Werner and Oldham are "trying to build a business mindset around our maintenance mission. And we're in the business of selling reliability."

Werner aims to help everyone understand that if he can get the right people doing the right work at the right time, the District can offer the maximum benefit to the region.

"As a business, we need to provide our product at minimal cost," Werner said. "If you don't do the right work at the right time, the asset is not going to be there when you need it and will probably cost you more money, energy and time in the long run. It's about sustaining the investment. That's why we do maintenance."

VISION

"We aim to be proactive stewards of entrusted resources," Werner said. "These parks, dams and waterways aren't mine. They're the taxpayers. We are here to operate and maintain these projects."

Werner said it is important to approach maintenance with a business-mindset because there are more resources than people to get the job done.


photo by David Lewis

"I can shut everything down to do maintenance but if I do, it affects energy production and fish passage and that affects the region. It makes more sense to perform a repair when you're already doing scheduled routine maintenance," Werner said.

A CORPS CORE

Werner and Oldham gradually have been building up a maintenance team that serves as the core group implementing the vision of getting the District synergized. The team is made up of maintenance chiefs, engineers, schedulers and planners and technicians.

"The business of maintenance is not on everyone's radars, unlike some other business lines that focus on how we can work on project management process better or how we can design something better," Werner said.

Ice Harbor Lock and Dam Maintenance Chief Scott Thoren said his role is to implement "reliability excellence."

"In some ways, we are getting back to basics and relearning old maintenance processes that used to be standard within the District, such as having the crews prepare a maintenance report after completing non-routine or special evolutions," Thoren said.

"In other ways, we are choosing the best practices from industry leaders to help maximize optimize our maintenance and warehousing practices and synchronize the equipment reliability efforts within our operations and maintenance sections. We are the guardians of these gems in and near the river; they deserve our best efforts."

See MAINTENANCE on 22

From the field

Jim Simonsen
Little Goose Lock and Dam Maintenance Chief

When the hydropower dam facilities were first built, we had new equipment and a lot of the same people who built the dams stayed on as maintenance and operations staff. But today, most of that crew's expertise disappeared when people retired, and there were few records kept of how the work was accomplished.

In order to survive in today's business climate, we need to change the way we operate. Without uniform standards and specific goals, the work is accomplished in different methods and procedures at each facility. This results in an inability to compare each facility's practices. It's difficult to determine who is doing it 'right' and understand what to improve and how to do so.

It's been shown that continuing to use old methods while trying to maintain aging infrastructure is ineffective. Successful industries change methods to improve both maintenance and operations. Now, as a "business" in the District, we must reevaluate our practices or we risk failing at our primary missions.

Instead of doing maintenance strictly on the basis of time, we need to consider additional factors like: How many used hours does one generator have compared to the units in the plant? Does a unit with 600 hours of run time need as much maintenance as one that has 3,000 hours of run time? With enough of the right type of information and accurate risk assessments, we may determine we only need to do annual maintenance on the unit with less run time every two years.

The maintenance team is working on updating equipment hierarchies, reviewing how our warehouses operate and setting up job plans. Meanwhile, planning and scheduling will become the main driver of both maintenance and operations in making sure we have all the parts and pieces necessary to complete a job before we start it and also completing the work at a time that will cause the fewest problems.

By implementing these new practices, the District is creating a foundation for first-class maintenance and operation.

The result of these changes will ultimately result in a highly trained workforce.

MAINTENANCE, continued from 21

CHALLENGES AHEAD

The maintenance team faces both expected and unexpected challenges ahead.

Expectedly, "reactive" maintenance is the most costly mode of operations. The most efficient form of maintenance is planned and scheduled maintenance with a target of less than 10 percent reactive work as an industry best practice.

"It may take you four or five years to plan, design and build a structure, but then you have to operate and maintain it for another 50," Werner said.

The District must also prepare for many unexpected consequences of operating aging infrastructure in a progressing society.

"One of the biggest challenges with this business is that it's not prescriptive," Oldham said. "We don't have manuals that tell us how to turn a dial. And we don't know when external factors may affect our operations."

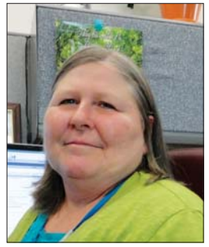
Some of the units are operating differently than what they were originally designed to do. The District had to adapt the units for evolving demands and changes, pushing structures outside of their design criteria.

"We've changed our operations to meet extenuating requirements as we learn more about needs for fish and the environment," Oldham said.

Much of the District's efforts revolve around operating six hydropower facilities, and none of it can be done without maintaining the equipment. So if maintenance may seem like a behind the scenes kind of mission, remember the key to mission success lies in the hands of everyone in the District ... because it's your business, too.

A few Core maintenance faces

Kiplan Nottingham
Maintenance Technician
Ice Harbor



Ginger Leroue
Maintenance Technician
Little Goose

Scott Thoren
Chief of Maintenance
Ice Harbor

'MAC' MAKES IT TO THE TOP

Lucky Peak Dam and Lake Maintenance Worker Monte A. Crawford, known as "Mac," was recognized with a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-wide level award for his performance successfully leading a $100,000 intake tower wire rope replacement project. The job was only performed twice before in the dam's history.

Mac earned the 2011 fiscal year's National Castle Award at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters level.

Mac's 27 years of Corps service includes his position at Lucky Peak, where he's worked 10 years.

Mac was previously recognized in December 2010 with a "special act award" for his "outstanding leadership, dedication and support in the overall coordination and success of the rope replacement project and for returning the emergency gates to service without incident," according to Lucky Peak Operations Manager Joyce Dunning.

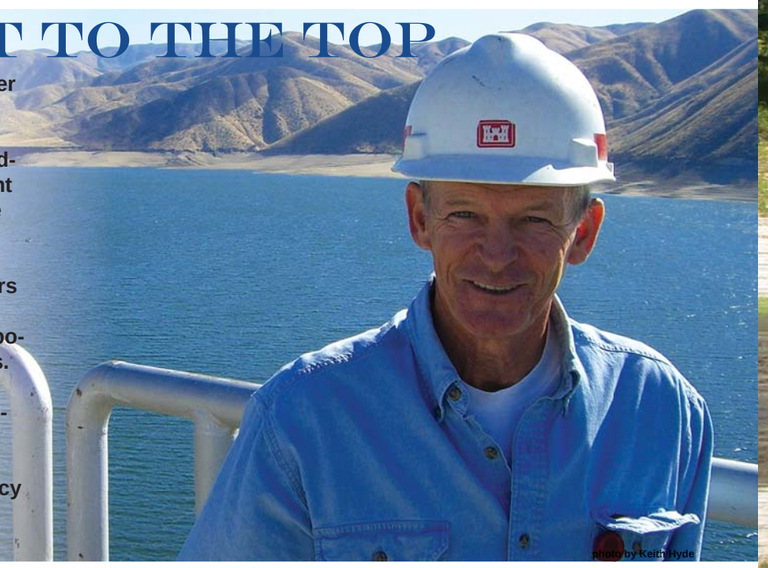


photo by Keith Hyde

Cub day in the park

About 100 Cub Scouts participated in a day camp at Rooks Park near Walla Walla, Wash. in June. Some of the camp's activities included cooking, beading, leatherwork, obstacle courses, BB-gun shooting and archery. As part of a community service project, the Cub Scouts also weeded a planter bed at the park entrance and planted plants donated by local businesses.

photos by Jeremy Nguyen

"A Dam Volunteer and Proud Of It"

story and photos by Penny Bray

Penny Bray

Summer at last, and my husband and I are back in our favorite area, Dworshak Dam and Reservoir in Ahsahka, Idaho. Planning for an R.V. retirement gave us a terrific lifestyle as U.S. Army Corps of Engineers volunteers. As our second season at Dworshak opens, we are once again amazed at the project, thrilled by the natural beauty, and welcomed as part of the visitor center staff.

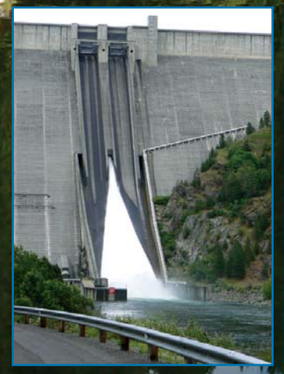
The summer season welcomes visitors eager to hear about the history of the river and reservoir and learn the benefits of our dam. Students and curious travelers can experience the conception, construction and completion of the dam and reservoir through films, exhibits and, best of all, the dam tour. I love the expressions of wonder at the "hows" and welcome all questions.

Frequently there are questions I don't have the answer to, like "how were the creeks named?" But finding the why and how and relaying the information really creates a sense of pride because we are not only able to respond to our visitors' concerns, but we also learn something new. Often I can find the answers from the project manager if a question is dam-related, but other times I mine the brains of the natural resources team managers and rangers.

Learning while sharing our experiences is a joy, but the true pleasure is the nature of it all. River to reservoir, water to power and wildlife viewing are all a part of a marvelous cycle.

As spring faded to summer we had the awesome experience of seeing the reservoir go from the lowest level in decades to collecting the record run-off from a tremendous snow pack and seemingly endless spring rains. I told visitors about the severe historical flooding, while they told me about the money they earned as young people filling sand bags by the river at the fairgrounds. Their memories are a wonderful source of information.

Every day we have endless opportunities to learn while working with the team of rangers and resource management personnel. So we truly thank you for the wonderful USACE volunteer program. You are the best.



Another hit at Corps Day

Every summer, the Walla Walla District takes a day to relax, soak up the sun and recognize employee achievements. (Main) Katie Sinclair hits a volleyball in a competitive Corps Day match at Rooks Park in June. (Left, above) Corps family kids glide down the ever-popular water slide. (Left, below) District Paralegal Specialist Amber Trukositz winces as District Fishery Biologist Tim Wik's child, Josiah, 10, prepares to pop a water balloon.

photos by Terri A. Rorke

Annual Corps Day winners

Engineering Excellence Award

KEVIN RENSHAW, Mechanical Engineer, District Headquarters

New Employee of the Year

JAMES JETTON, Civil Engineer, District Headquarters

Support Employee of the Year

CASEY FOREST, Administrative Support Assistant, Lucky Peak Dam

SHELLY WEST, Management Services Specialist, Dworshak Dam

Distinguished Retired Employee

DAVID A. OPBROEK

Former District Construction Chief David Opbroek speaks to personnel at June's town hall. Opbroek is the District's Distinguished Retired Employee of the year. He retired in 2009 after 34 years of service.

Employees of the Quarter

WILLIAM GERSBACH

HERB BESSEY

McNary Lock and Dam Mechanical Engineer Supervisor Art Maldonado presents McNary Electronic Systems Control Craftsman William Gersbach with an employee of the quarter award at the June Corps Day town hall meeting. (Right) District Supervisory Civil Engineer Yvonne Gibbons presents Civil Engineer Herb Bessey with an employee of the quarter award.

Outstanding Achievement Award

JOHN CHATFIELD, Power Plant Electrician, Dworshak Dam

LEROY PHILLIPS, Environmental Resource Supervisor, Boise Regulatory Office

ALLISON YOUNG, Maintenance Management Technician, Dworshak Dam

photo by Joe Saxon

photo by Joe Saxon

photo by Joe Saxon

(Top) Jordon Fink, Kent Bernard, Jon Petersen and Jon Renholds showcase the winning trophy. (Above) Bernard and Fink display the defense that shut down their opponents. (Right) Renholds' jumpers, drives and defense-propelled the District to two wins against the Red Monkey Lounge team, including a 20-13 finals victory. (Right, below) Corps friends, family members and supporters observe the action.

Peach Basket Classic

Story by Joe Saxon

Corps Crowned Corporate Challenge Champs

photo by Kevan Schneidmiller

USA Today and Rand McNally recently anointed Walla Walla as America's *Friendliest Small Town.* However, one weekend a year in August, the welcoming streets of Walla Walla turn into a blazing battlefield where more than 300 teams compete in a three-on-three basketball tourney in which tenacious defense, deadly long range shooting and composure, or lack thereof, separate winners from losers.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Walla Walla District's four-man team of Hyrdraulic Engineer Jon Renholds, Hydraulic Engineer Jon Petersen, Contracting Trainee Kent Bernard and Electrical Engineer Jordon Fink came up roses at the Peach Classic, sweeping their opponents 4-0 en route to the title.

Keys to victory, according to Bernard, a former Eastern Oregon offensive lineman, included "practicing two to three days a week for three weeks prior to the tournament, keeping our composure, mental toughness and scouting our opponents to determine their strengths and weaknesses."

That approach bore fruit, particularly during the second game of the tournament when they faced a tough Washington State Penitentiary team.

"The Penitentiary was the toughest team we faced," Bernard said. "Athletically we outmatched them, but they presented a tough physical matchup.

A tough physical matchup they overcame when Petersen's late game heroics and jumper locked down the jailers 21-17.

After grinding their way to the title, Petersen summarized their Peach Basket Classic experiences saying, "It was a fun team-building event and a good opportunity to represent the Corps."

photo by Joe Saxon

photo by Joe Saxon

A FAIR TIME

Walla Walla District shares mission at the Walla Walla County Fair

story and photos by Terri A. Rorke

The District participated in its biggest community relations event of the year-- the Walla Walla Fair & Frontier Days. About 95,000 fairgoers had an opportunity to stop by the District's booth featuring informational displays, a Lower Monumental Lock and Dam model, an educational streamtable and a theater for attendees to watch District mission videos while they rest their feet.

This year, about 50 volunteers interacted with about 1,600 people who visited the Corps booth. Seamoor, the Corps' official Water Safety Serpent mascot also interacted with area elementary students as part of "Education Day." Seamoor serves as a steward of reminding the public about water safety.

Every year, the Corps makes an effort to educate the community on its various missions at the county fair.

(Main) The "Ring of Fire" amusement ride offers one of many attractions at the fair. (From left to right) District Technical Support Chief Dwayne Weston tours the fair grounds with his wife, Angela and children, Keegan and Sydney; Scene from this year's Corps booth; Students from Blue Ridge Elementary School in Walla Walla, Wash., eagerly raise their hands when Seamoor, the Corps official Water Safety Serpent mascot asks a question. About 440 children interacted with Seamoor at this year's fair; District Purchasing Agent Lana Murry talks to Jeremy Fetter, 13, with his parents of College Place, about wetlands and flooding over a streamtable at the fair.

I'M WITH THE CORPS

Roy Clark

Name: Roy Clark

Position: Worker-In-Charge at Little Goose Lock and Dam, Starbuck, Wash.

Describe your job.

I've been with the Corps for eight years now. As worker-in-charge, I ensure that all work assigned by the crew foreman is completed in a timely and efficient manner. I also handle mechanical issues as they arise. I assist the foreman with managing a team of mechanics, riggers and utility hands to accomplish all daily missions—both scheduled and unscheduled. I keep all the project management sheets up-to-date and help plan all of the annual outages.

What is the biggest challenge you've faced in your current position?

The biggest challenge so far was making the transition from working as a mechanic to working as a foreman on the same crew. It was challenging to one day be a mechanic on the floor and the next day having extra responsibilities of managing the same crew effectively. As a mechanic, I only had one job assigned to me at a time.

As a working foreman, I need to know what is going on with all the jobs assigned out to the mechanical crew and stay up-to-date on all jobs being worked in the plant with other crews and contractors to help me better plan work schedules. This can be very challenging at times.

Describe a few accomplishments you've experienced with your job.

The one I am most proud of the crew for is the T-1 bushing repair job. We worked side by side with the Bonneville Power Administration and came together as a team with people we never worked with before. I must say that the crew at Little Goose was flawless at removing and replacing the T-1 transformer bushing. When T-1 came back online, I was extremely proud of the mechanical crew for successfully working as a team to accomplish the mission.

What is the most rewarding part about your job?

The most rewarding thing for me is to see a group of individuals get together with their own ideas for problem-solving, but in the end they come together as a team with one solution and execute the fix as a team.

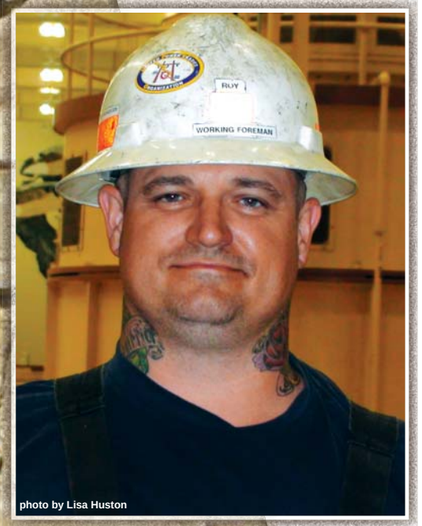


photo by Lisa Huston

Please highlight a notable milestone or memory in your position.

I worked as a foreman for 90 days in a developmental position before I was selected as the working foreman. On the first day of the job, we had to take the navigation lock out of service. I was running around like a chicken with its head cut off and I look back now and it just cracks me up. My foreman came out and pulled me aside and made me look at how the crew was getting all worked up because of how I was acting. I just wanted to do a good job, but I was trying to get everything done all at once and it actually takes a couple of days to un-water the navigation lock. I learned a lot that day. My foreman and I still crack up when we think about it.