

# CORPS' PONDENT

Vol. 39, No. 5 September - October 2015



US Army Corps  
of Engineers  
Portland District

An unusually calm day  
on the John Day River

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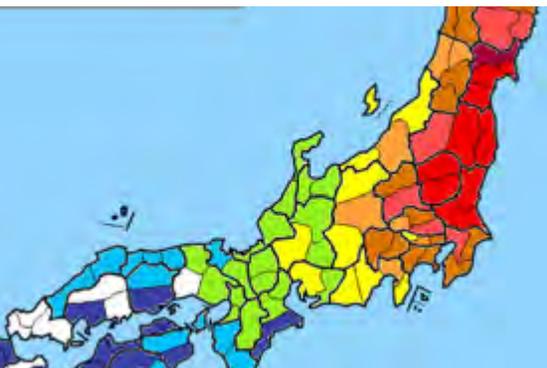
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Cover photo: Vanessa van der Borg, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division

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**Commander: Col. Jose L. Aguilar**  
**Chief, Public Affairs: Matt Rabe**  
**Editor: Erica Jensen**





# Commander's Column

**P**ortland District,

I am writing to you upon the conclusion of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians conference, which took place in Spokane Sept. 14 through 17. There were nearly 60 tribes represented and I engaged with many of our region's tribal partners and chairmen during my time at the event. Northwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. Scott Spellmon and District commanders Col. John Buck and Lt. Col. Tim Vail, from Seattle and Walla Walla districts, respectively, also attended.

As I have stated many times, relationships are critical to everything that we do and our relationships with the tribal members in our area of operations remains strong.

For the past few months, Portland District has focused on year-end execution. Thank you for all of your efforts to finish strong for fiscal year 15.

The District conducted a Continuity of Operations COOP exercise at The Dalles Lock and Dam Aug. 25. Thanks to operating project manager Ron Twiner and his team for hosting this event which involved a full accountability exercise for the District. Another emergency exercise led by the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other participating agencies will happen Oct. 15. There, responders are expected to react to a possible Cascadia event, in which a 9.1-magnitude earthquake impacts our region. For more about this event, and especially how our dam safety could be impacted, read Scott Clemans' article "Shake out? Don't freak out: Dams generally do well in earthquakes" later in this issue. [As a side note, I want to thank everyone who contributes to the *Corps'pondent* by submitting articles, photos or story ideas.]

With flood season approaching, this is your reminder to dust off your preparedness plans and ensure you have taken appropriate emergency readiness measures for your family, home and car. Do you have emergency kits and action plans for them? And, more importantly, does your family have a plan for how they will contact one another in the event of an emergency?

During August and September, the team hosted Brig. Gen. Spellmon for two days. He visited several projects and areas, and was tremendously impressed with your professionalism and dedication to duty. We also hosted several leaders from

Afghanistan and Iraq to help inform and educate them as they continue to build engineer capacity in their countries.

In terms of upcoming events, watch for information on the update to our history book over the next several months. As many of you know, our last publication included a history of the District which took us through the year 2000. The

new edition will cover the important work we've completed during the past 15 years. This will be a multi-year effort and we want it to be complete and accurate. If employees, retirees, family members or friends of the District have something to contribute, please contact Matt Rabe in our Public Affairs Office.

Two final items:

First, we updated our FY16 Standing Order (including our unit battle rhythm, OPLAN and District calendar), which will reduce friction and add predictability in the future, at the end of September.

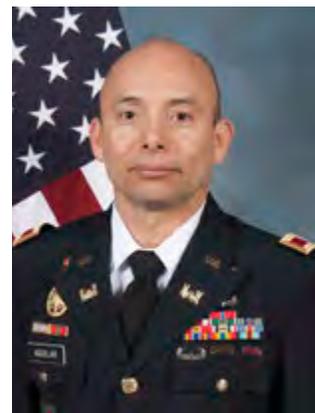
Second, the District's Block 300 team members are preparing for an upcoming renovation of the building and workspace. This enormous undertaking will add some friction during the next year or so – but is worth the short term pain because of the benefits and efficiencies Block 300 occupants will gain for years to come. Please be patient and start cleaning out your areas now.

By the time you read this, we will have started fiscal year 2016. With that, happy fiscal new year to all of you – thank you for your continued service to our Nation. 

Competence follows Character.

*Col. Jose Aguilar*

61st Colonel of the District



**Col. Jose L. Aguilar**



# Portland District People

## Matt Chase

Civil Engineer, Dam Safety Section, Engineering and Construction Division



*Matt Chase is a technical lead in the Dam Safety Section who works on various routine and non-routine dam safety activities. This means he's responsible for helping to ensure the integrity and viability of Portland District's dams, which also means, bottom line, that he's responsible for helping to ensure the safety of the Pacific Northwest public, their property and the environment.*

### How does your job fit into our District mission?

Our District mission is pretty "dam" heavy. We have 21 active dam projects, and all of these have downstream consequences to some degree. Minimizing risk at these projects and protecting the public is a big part of what the Dam Safety Section is about, and is an important mission for the Portland District.

### What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I enjoy traveling to the various projects and being a part of something that has historical value.

### What is the one thing you need in order to do your job better?

A better-looking and more sophisticated clone of myself to do some of my more mundane tasks would help. But seriously, there are two things I can think of: First, I want to have a better understanding of some of our product development processes. Gaining this, I think, is just a matter of time and being involved in more projects, and doing some research on my part. Second, I want to better understand our stakeholders' concerns and interest in our work. In my previous line of work as a consultant there weren't nearly the number of stakeholders involved in a project. Coming to the Corps has been a real eye-opener for me as far

as the range of different stakeholders involved in a given project.

### What challenges do you encounter when doing your job?

Balancing dam safety work with outside commitments. Besides my "day job" in the Dam Safety Section I am also a technical lead for a spillway gate rehabilitation job and I am involved to some degree with seven or eight other project development teams. So, balancing and prioritizing that work can get difficult at times.

### First job?

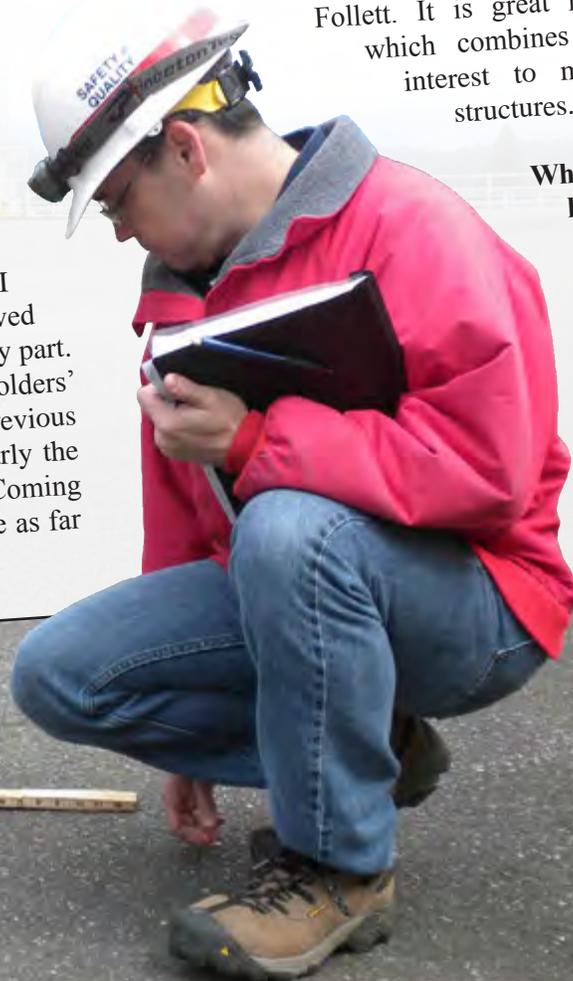
My first real job was working at a dairy. I fed and milked a herd of about one hundred head of cattle. I was 14 years old. It was hard work.

### Favorite book and why?

*The Pillars of the Earth* by Ken Follett. It is great historical fiction which combines two things of interest to me: history and structures.

### What are your hobbies?

I enjoy music a lot. Listening to music and playing music – I pretend to play guitar. Also, I try to go running when I can. 



# Portland District launches new feature celebrating retirees

**W**e're launching a new *Corps'pondent* feature intended to celebrate and commemorate our retirees' legacies to the Portland District. We'll do this by highlighting their careers and contributions to the District as well as feature their activities after retirement which could include any or all of the following – second careers, volunteer efforts, bucket list experiences, hobbies, travels and other daily life adventures.

Please consider serving as one of our featured retirees. It's simple – just respond to the questions below and email them to Portland District's Public Affairs Office along with photos: one of you when you worked for the Portland District and others (two or three) that highlight some of your activities since retiring. After that, you'll be contacted by a member of the PAO staff who will write your brief article based on your responses. And, don't worry, you'll get a chance to review your story before it is posted online. If you have questions, e-mail Erica Jensen at [erica.n.jensen@usace.army.mil](mailto:erica.n.jensen@usace.army.mil) or call 503-808-4516. 

## Tell us what you've been up to?

Name:

Former position at Portland District:

How long retired?

Describe a career highlight that happened while working for the Portland District?

Many consider retirement as a time to mark of their "bucket list." What have you marked off and what did you gain from the experience?

Do you volunteer? If so, in what capacity and for who? How has this experience changed or affected you?

Have you started a 'second career'? If so, what are you doing and why? What inspires you or motivates you as you do your job?

Do you continue to follow the activities of the Portland District? If so, do you consider yourself an ambassador of the Portland District – in terms of sharing what we do with those within your circle of influence?

What would you say you know now about living a happy and successful life that you didn't know when you were twenty?

What are some important lessons you feel you learned during your time working for the Portland District?

What's the best way to describe your retirement?

Tells us about:

- Your favorite film or book
- A meal that influenced your life
- A person who inspires you
- Your favorite travel destination

Doesn't have to be all, maybe one or two.

Email your responses along with photos of you (at work for the Corps and during your retirement) to [cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil](mailto:cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil).

Thanks again for your support and for considering sharing your post retirement story. It's a great chance for us and for others to catch up with you and learn what you've been up to!





# Portland District's walking and running teams remain unstoppable

Beaten and bruised, but certainly not broken!

**P**ortland District employees have competed for years against one another and even the world in Oregon's Hood to Coast/Portland to Coast event held every year during the last weeks of August. This year, they were again unstoppable even in the pouring rain and raging winds.

"If This Van's a Walk'n Don't Bother Knock'n"



Front row left to right : Leslie Rychlik, Northwestern Division; Steve Schlenker, Engineering and Construction Division; Jessie Fox, Bonneville Lock and Dam.  
Back left to right: Vicki Bell, Hydroelectric Design Center; Melissa Rinehart, Operations Division; Teri Cote, Safety and Occupational Health Office; Cheryl Rockawski, private citizen; Greg Lackey, private citizen. Monica Carter, Safety and Occupational Health Office; Patti Williams, Operations Division; Justy Boyd, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division; Shelly Hanson; Operations Division.

**2**

Captains

(Van 1: Patti Williams and Van 2: Melissa Rinehart both from Natural Resource Management)

**130**

Miles

**12**

Team members

**49**

Placement out of 127 teams in mixed-walker category

**30**

Hours

**47**

Minutes

**54**

Seconds





## Dam Runners

Photo 1 from left to right: Silas Sanderson, Engineering and Construction Division; 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Ben Waring, Northwestern Division; Jeff Tilton, Engineering and Construction Division; Dennis Petross, Engineering and Construction Division; Capt. Dan Robledo, Willamette Valley Project; and Portland District Commander Col. Jose Aguilar.



Photo 2 from left to right: Bob Hoffman, Jeremy Britton and Derek McCurdy, Engineering and Construction Division; Kate Michie and Bree Brende, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division.



**1**  
Captains  
(Bob Hoffman, from  
Engineering and  
Construction Division)

**11**  
Team members

**28** Hours  
**37** Minutes  
**33** Seconds

**198**  
Miles

**40**  
Placement out of  
130 teams in mixed-  
runner category

Corps of Engineers photos





# By the Numbers

## One Dam Fine Powerhouse



Left to Right: Aldo Reyes-Lopez, Engineering and Construction Division; Sally Bird-Gauvin, Gauthier, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division; Heather Hall, Office of Counsel; Mike Shanahan, private citizen; Alison Burcham, Salina Hart, Karen Kuhn, Mary Ocholi and Jason Miller, Engineering and Construction Division.

**4**  
Placement out of  
45 teams in mixed-  
walker category

**29** Hours  
**12** Minutes  
**59** Seconds

**11**  
Team members

**130**  
Miles

**2**  
Captains  
(Van 1: Alison Burcham and  
Van 2: Aldo Reyes-Lopez  
both from Engineering and  
Construction Division)

Corps of Engineers photos





# Oregon Silver Jackets: a model to the nation

By Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

**T**he Oregon Silver Jackets, an interagency team that addresses flooding emergencies and flood preparedness within the state, was recently named the national 2015 Silver Jackets Team of the Year.

The Silver Jackets is a national initiative under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Flood Risk Management Program, which leverages the resources of state and federal agencies to prepare and respond to flood emergencies. Silver Jackets partnerships allow agencies to coordinate actions before, during and after a flood event.

Karen Durham-Aguilera, the director of Contingency Operations and Office of Homeland Security, Headquarters, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, notified Northwestern Division Commander Brig. Gen. Scott Spellmon of the award. She said the Oregon team is an exemplary model of the Silver Jackets program.

“I commend this team,” said Durham-Aguilera. “I am extremely pleased that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters has had the opportunity to work together with the Oregon SJ partners to accomplish the team’s goals.”

Durham-Aguilera said the team has made excellent progress in flood risk management in Oregon. Tools developed for prioritizing emergency management activities in the state are so useful they’re being expanded for use in Washington, Idaho and Alaska.

“The partnerships formed within the Silver Jackets program are invaluable,” said Portland District Commander Col. Jose Aguilar. “When we work together we can find new ways to use existing data, information and resources that ultimately help us all better serve our communities and the nation.”

The team’s public outreach efforts were also cited as reasons for the commendation.

“Flood awareness and readiness is key to minimizing risks and damages,” said Ryan Cahill, Portland District

Silver Jackets interim coordinator. “Last year we worked with the cities of Albany, Turner and Oregon City to install signs showing high water marks of some of the historical flood events in their communities. The signs serve as monuments that remind the communities of the potential for major flooding.”

The team also developed a flood preparedness and recovery webpage with information and resources for use before, during and after a flood.

Current Oregon Silver Jackets projects include evaluation of a flash flood warning system in Mitchell, Oregon, a non-structural flood risk assessment of Johnson Creek in Portland and outreach efforts to communities in Eastern Oregon about the regulatory process.

The Oregon team was selected for the 2015 honor by a vote of their peers: Silver Jackets team members throughout the United States. They will be formally recognized for their accomplishments this fall at the 2015 Flood Risk Management Workshop in Southbridge, Massachusetts. 



Corps of Engineers photo

Ryan Cahill, Portland District Silver Jackets interim coordinator, installs high water mark signs Dec. 12, 2014, at Monteith Riverpark, Albany, Oregon. The Oregon Silver Jackets team plans to post high water mark signs in other Oregon communities to build public awareness of flood risk.



# Portland District Resident Engineer receives national honor

Albert Wright named 2014 Military Contingency Responder of the Year

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

**W**hen Albert Wright, Vancouver Resident Engineer, deployed to the South Kabul Resident Office in February 2014, he expected to gain valuable career experience and see a part of the world he had never seen. Little did he know he would be named the 2014 Military Contingency Responder of the Year, recognized by the Chief of Engineers for his efforts and change people's lives – including his own – in the process.

Deploying to support emergency operations in Joplin, Missouri in 2011 showed Wright how important such missions are. "My family and I have been very lucky. We've never experienced a time when our community needed help the way Joplin did," he said. "It opened my eyes to opportunities where I could help."

Albert Wright is named the 2014 Military Contingency Responder of the Year.



Corps of Engineers photos

Albert Wright, second from left, meets with local national quality assessment staff, accompanied by Command Sgt. Maj. Kirkpatrick, left and Col. Helmlinger of the Corps' Kabul District.



Albert Wright with his family and Col. Aguilar, is named the 2014 Military Contingency Responder of the Year

Wright felt that his professional and personal lives in 2014 allowed him to help communities in Afghanistan, a country torn apart by years of war, so he applied and was selected as the Resident Engineer and Administrative Contracting Officer for the Kabul South Office, Afghanistan, for nine months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. “I was excited – I love to travel and this was a place I never thought I’d get to see,” he said.

As Resident Engineer, Wright oversaw more than 10 multi-million dollar projects located throughout North and South Kabul districts. One challenge he faced was the inability to make on-site visits to most construction sites due to security concerns. “Security was vital and we couldn’t just decide to travel to a construction site – a security detail was required to travel and often one was not available. It was a challenge overseeing more than 100 quality assurance representatives without the opportunity to meet them face-to-face,” Wright said.

One site visit to the Marshall Fahim National Defense University in Kabul reinforced the need for security. During a meeting to give an overview of water issues to representatives of the U.S., NATO and other countries that were funding restoration work in Afghanistan, a gunman dressed as Afghan security opened fire on the meeting, killing Army Maj. General Harold Greene and injuring 16 others.

“Our support to overseas contingency operations is a vital part of the Corps’ mission. We continue to deliver innovative technical and engineering solutions in Afghanistan, Iraq and other joint operations around the globe. I am proud of the work that has been exemplified by Mr. Wright and all of our personnel who have deployed voluntarily in support of our nation’s efforts. We have this reputation of being the best and that’s because of the extraordinary work that we do every day.”

Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick  
Chief of Engineering

Wright, who was slightly injured, was able to arm himself and provide cover for emergency response personnel. When the firing ended, he continued rendering aid to the wounded and helped ensure they were transported to a medical evacuation point. Wright was presented the Meritorious Civilian Service Award from Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Chief of Engineers, for his immediate action, bravery and selfless sacrifice during the incident.

“It’s just part of the job – you know it could happen,” Wright said. “You don’t look for it, but you realize it’s part of life.”

Three months later Wright returned to his duties at the Vancouver Resident Office, where he uses the insights he gained on his current projects. “I came back with a different perspective. I have seen first-hand how lucky we are as Americans, who have never had to rebuild our entire country after years of war. Working with people from other

“Albert’s work in the high-pressure contingency environment prepared him well for his current assignment as the temporary Supply/Service Branch Chief in Contracting. Albert needed to learn a new business process while working with contract professionals who have different skill sets and expertise. I am looking forward to Albert’s return to Construction Branch later this fall.”

Kevin Garmire  
Chief, Construction Branch  
Engineering and Construction Division





The Afghanistan National Police Transportation Brigade in Wardak Province was one of many projects Albert Wright oversaw during his nine-month deployment.

cultures to build understanding helped me find ways to work with people to gain a common perspective,” he said. “My experience helps me relate to people in my life – friends, employees and contractors. You don’t have to come from another culture to not understand each other.”

The attack at the university also changed his perspective. “I used to take life for granted, but not anymore. You never know what will happen. Now I appreciate every moment with my family, my friends and my colleagues. I’ve heard that said before, but now I understand what it means.”

His desire to help when emergencies happen remains. “It’s part of who I am,” he said. “I will always be ready to help. You know, people often doubt whether what they do makes a difference. Maybe they think their job is too small to impact a situation, but collectively it does matter. It really is a team effort and what each of us does is important. I try to never forget that.” 

“Albert Wright is a person of tremendous character who was selected for this deployment because of his superb technical and leadership competence. His commitment to mission accomplishment is unsurpassed and his ability to quickly learn about a situation and take decisive action makes him invaluable in any scenario- especially in emergencies. I’m very proud to work with Albert and congratulate him and his family on this well-deserved national honor and to thank them for their sacrifices in service to our nation.”

Col. Jose Aguilar  
Portland District Commander

## Military Contingency Responder of the Year Award

The Directorate of Contingency Operations and Homeland Security, Headquarters, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers each year recognizes civil and military contingency responders who performed their duties exceptionally well during their support of civil disaster and military contingency operations. Employees are nominated by their home districts for their work in the previous calendar year related to Field Force Engineering activities. FFE provides engineering services to the military, Department of Defense and federal agencies in support of military and catastrophic disaster relief operations relevant to national security.

Nominations should highlight significant contributions and demonstrated leadership under pressure and/or efforts that bring new or unique improvements to FFE operations.

Albert Wright was nominated by Portland District, won the endorsement of Northwestern Division and was selected as the 2014 Military Contingency Responder of the Year by a panel headed by Karen Durham-Aguilera, director of HQUSACE Contingency Operations and Homeland Security.



# Are You READY!

Some disasters strike without any warning. Have you thought about those supplies you'll need the most? They will usually be the hardest to come by. Enlist your children to help gather supplies for your family's emergency kit. It'll bring you a sense of relief, and your kids a feeling of empowerment.

Make sure you have enough supplies to last for at least **three days**. Think about where you live and your needs. Consider having a large kit at home, and smaller portable kit in the car or your workplace.

*If a big storm is coming...*

- ✓ Fill your car with gas
- ✓ Fill plastic bags with water and place them in the freezer
- ✓ Get extra cash out of the bank
- ✓ Fill prescriptions

## Emergency Supplies List

- 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.)
- Can opener
- Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Water – at least a gallon per person, per day for drinking and hygiene
- First aid kit
- Prescription medication and glasses
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family
- Change of clothes to last for at least 3 days, including sturdy shoes; consider the weather where you live
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and other personal items
- Feminine hygiene supplies
- Fire extinguisher
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Dust mask, and plastic sheeting and duct tape, to help filter contaminated air
- Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio and extra batteries
- Flashlights and extra batteries
- Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger
- Whistle to signal for help
- Household chlorine bleach and medicine dropper (when diluted nine parts water to one part bleach, bleach can be used as a disinfectant. Or in an emergency, you can use it to treat water by using 16 drops of regular household liquid bleach per gallon of water. Do not use scented, color safe or bleaches with added cleaners.)
- Local maps
- Cash or traveler's checks
- Emergency reference material such as first aid book or information from [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)
- Important family documents such as copies of insurance policies, ID, and bank records in a waterproof, portable container
- Pet supplies
- Infant formula and diapers
- Paper and pencil
- Books, games or puzzles (let your kids pick these out themselves!)
- Your child's favorite stuffed animal or security blanket
- Pet food and extra water for your pet

*Don't forget to think about infants, elderly, pets, or any family members with special needs!*



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>



# Getting Ready

## Seven tips to winterize your home

Plan for possible isolation in your home by having sufficient alternate heating fuel; regular fuel sources may be cut off. Be sure wood stoves or space heaters are properly ventilated and observe fire safeguards.

Keep fire extinguishers on hand, and make sure everyone in your house knows how to use them. House fires are an additional risk as people use alternate heating sources – without observing safety precautions.

Clear rain gutters; repair roof leaks and cut away tree branches that could fall on your house or other structure during a storm.

Insulate pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic and allow faucets to drip a little during cold weather to avoid freezing. Learn how to shut off water valves (in case a pipe bursts).

Winterize any other structure that may provide shelter for you or your family, neighbors, livestock or equipment.

Know ahead of time what you should do to help elderly or disabled friends, neighbors or employees.

Extend the life of your heat supply by insulating walls and attics, caulking and weather-stripping doors and windows, and installing storm windows or covering windows with plastic.

## When the storm hits

Stay inside when a winter storm approaches. Exposure to cold can cause frostbite or hypothermia and become life-threatening. Infants and the elderly are the most susceptible. Take the following steps during a winter storm.

Make sure pets have plenty of food, water and shelter.

Close off unneeded rooms and stuff towels or rags in cracks under doors and cover windows at night. Ensure that all doors and windows are weatherproofed.

Eat and drink sufficient amounts of waters. Food provides the body with energy for producing its own heat. Keep the body replenished with fluids to prevent dehydration.

Wear layers of loose-fitting, lightweight warm clothing. Remove layers as necessary to avoid overheating. Ensure that each member of your household has a warm coat, gloves or mittens, hat and water-resistant boots.

Never use a generator indoors! If you decide to use a back-up power generator be sure that it is properly ventilated outdoors. Avoid using BBQs indoors for heat and cooking. Use of both items indoors can easily lead to carbon monoxide poisoning.

# for Winter



## What's in your emergency kit?



**“A flash light and a first aid kit because my kids fall down and I want to be prepared.”**

**Bree Brende  
Planning, Programs and Project  
Management Division**

**A fire extinguisher and three days of food because I get hungry.**

**Alan Stokke  
Engineering and Construction Division**



**“I have water and batteries. You always need water and batteries are a great alternate power source.”**

**Col. Jose Aguilar  
Portland District Commander**





# Water safety campaign targets sports fans

Commentary and photos by Christie Johnson, Willamette Valley Project

*“In baseball, hitting a grand slam guarantees that everyone on base reaches home plate safely. When you’re boating, you can make sure everyone gets home safely by having everyone in your boat wear a life jacket. This is a friendly reminder from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District.”*

**T**his clever message was announced over the loudspeaker during an Emeralds Baseball Game this past August as part of a Portland District campaign to promote water safety among sports fans – specifically, males ages 18-35. According to recent statistics, this demographic is the most likely to drown while recreating at Corps reservoirs.

## College Sports

For the past two years, Portland District has promoted water safety at University of Oregon and Oregon State University spring sporting events, which are ideal venues for sharing safety tips with our target audience of young men. During the games, we used public service announcements,

electronic videoboard displays, and 30-second radio commercials to catch the eyes and ears of Beavers and Ducks fans. Through a variety of messages, we encouraged them to wear their life jackets, swim in designated areas only, boat sober and avoid cliff-jumping.

During 2014 and 2015, we shared these messages at four spring football games, 15 baseball games, and one track and field event, and they were broadcasted on 10 different radio stations. We don’t know how many people saw or heard our messages, but according to the University of Oregon, each spring football game alone attracts more than 45,000 attendees!



Park Ranger Christie Johnson and “Bobber the Water Safety Dog” educated boys and their fathers about water safety following the game at the Eugene Emeralds Scout Night.



Before and during the game, a Willamette Valley Project ranger and volunteer quizzed sports fans about water safety and give out prizes.

Corps of Engineers photo

**Emeralds Baseball**

The Portland District also attended Boy Scout Night at the Eugene Emeralds Baseball Game last August to promote water safety to soon-to-be young men and their fathers. In addition to public service announcements on the loudspeaker and video-board, we provided safety tips at an information table and participated in a radio interview with Matt Dompe of KUJZ FM 95.3 “The Score” during their live broadcast of the game.

One of the highlights of attending the game was the opportunity to introduce the Corps’ water safety mascot, Bobber the Water Safety Dog, to almost 4,000 baseball fans during the opening ceremony. After the game, Bobber appeared again for photos, hugs and high-fives as scouts and their families came onto the field to camp overnight. As the scouts set up their tents, Bobber cartoons played on the video board, teaching water safety while entertaining the boys. (You can also view these cartoons at [www.bobber.info](http://www.bobber.info).)

**Working with local teams and universities is a great way to connect with the audience that needs to hear the messages most. By potentially reaching over 200,000 sports fans, we can help ensure that visitors to our reservoirs make it home safely.**



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers water safety messages were displayed on the Oregon State University video-board.



“Bobber the Water Safety Dog” and Emerald’s mascot “Sluggo” entertained the crowd before the baseball game.

Photos by Christie Johnson, Willamette Valley Project



# ShakeOut?

## Don't freak out:

### Dams generally do well in earthquakes

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

**O**n Oct. 15 at 10:15 a.m., almost 400,000 Oregonians and millions more worldwide will practice how to respond to an earthquake as part of the Great ShakeOut Earthquake Drills.

Scientists tell us that the Pacific Northwest is due for a very large earthquake – possibly as large as magnitude 9.0 – from the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Pacific Coast. Such a large earthquake could potentially impact our dams.

The historical performance of dams in seismic events has been exceptionally good. Only one concrete dam in modern history has ever failed as the result of a seismic event, mainly due to the fault running directly beneath it. Generally, concrete dams have sustained only minor damage.

The data on the performance of embankment dams is more limited, but the number that have failed as the result of a seismic event is still extremely small.

For example, in the March 11, 2011, 9.0 earthquake off Japan – basically the western Pacific version of a Cascadia event – only one small irrigation dam (of older and possibly inadequate design and construction) completely failed. Of 252 dams inspected the next day, six other embankment dams had shallow cracks on their crests, but were functioning with no problems.

In another recent example, no embankment dams failed and only a few suffered more than minor damage in the Feb. 27, 2010, 8.8 earthquake off Chile – basically the South American version of a Cascadia event.

The likelihood of a complete dam failure as the result of a seismic event depends on the size and location of earthquake, the reservoir level, the dam's current operational status and a host of other factors. But in general, the risk of a dam failure in the U.S. contributes only a very small portion of the overall risk to even the most exposed individuals living below a dam.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dams were built to the seismic standards of the day; the agency is now conducting studies of all its dams to better understand their vulnerability to a Cascadia-level event. Experts expect that at least some





Corps dams would sustain deformation and other damage – including damage to spillway gates, regulating outlets and/or powerhouses – that might impact the Corps’ ability to manage downstream flows, but may not necessarily lead to a catastrophic dam failure.

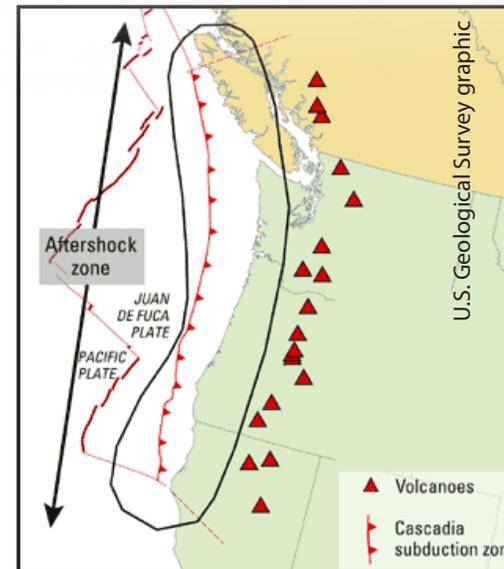
Regardless of likelihood, though, one of the most effective risk reduction measures for such an event - or any other lesser dam safety emergency - is an effective evacuation plan. The Corps encourages residents downriver from its dams to work with their local emergency management agencies to understand their risk, learn to how get emergency alerts and develop a plan to respond.

If October’s drill was a real earthquake, the Corps’ emergency action plan is clear: Dam operators would make immediate inspections, searching for evidence of damage or disturbance. Depending on the magnitude and distance of the earthquake and the intensity of the effects in the immediate vicinity, a team of dam safety experts might also be dispatched to conduct more in-depth technical inspections and make recommendations for remedial action, if necessary.

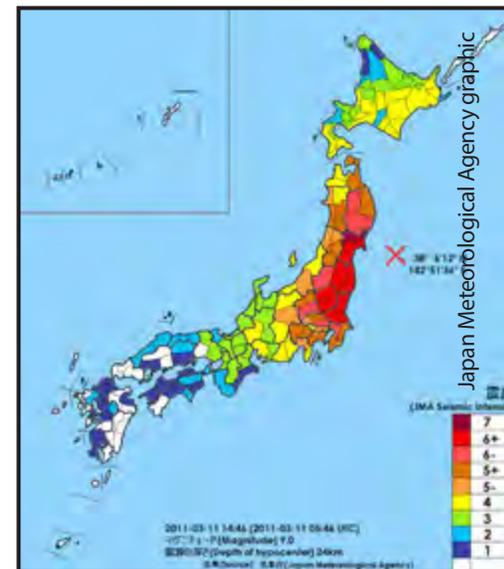
Obviously, if the operators’ inspection finds the dam’s ability to manage downstream flows is compromised, the Corps would immediately alert city and county emergency managers downriver, who would in turn issue alerts and evacuation notices as needed. The Corps regularly conducts complex drills with county and city emergency managers to plan how everyone would jointly work through such emergency scenarios. 

To learn more about the Great ShakeOut, go to: <http://www.shakeout.org/oregon/>.

Scientists tell us that the Pacific Northwest is due for a very large earthquake – possibly as large as magnitude 9.0 – from the Cascadia Subduction Zone off the Pacific coast.



The 2011 earthquake off Japan – basically the western Pacific version of a Cascadia event – caused the failure of only one small irrigation dam and damage to six others out of over 250 in the area.





# SHARING THE CORPS MESSAGE:

You are the face of the Corps. Share these messages with your family, friends and community.

## Corps begins accepting some permit applications electronically

**T**he U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is expanding efforts to transition to paperless permitting.

The Portland District Regulatory Branch is accepting electronic permit applications for several Oregon counties and some Washington ports. Counties where permit applications can be emailed are: Coos, Curry, Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Hood River, Jefferson, Malheur, Morrow, Sherman, Umatilla, Union, Wasco, Wallowa and Wheeler.

Washington ports served by the Portland District, including the ports of Vancouver, Kalama, Longview, Chinook and Ilwaco, can also submit electronic applications.

The Corps will continue to accept hard copies of applications from applicants who do not have the ability to submit an electronic version.

Joint permit applications, wetland delineations, permit modification requests, monitoring reports, jurisdictional determination requests and other requests should be emailed to [PortlandPermits@usace.army.mil](mailto:PortlandPermits@usace.army.mil).

Applicants will receive an electronic notification with the project number and contact information for the project manager assigned to the review. Correspondence, including the final permits, will be provided electronically unless permittees request a hard copy of these documents. 



The Portland District administers one of the largest regulatory permitting programs within the Corps of Engineers, providing for the protection of waters of the United States, including federally delineated wetlands and navigable waters.



The Corps evaluates permit applications for construction activities that occur in the Nation's waters, including wetlands.