

CORPS' PONDENT

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Portland District

Bald eagles linger every winter in trees at Westrick Park waiting for a meal of American shad to pass through the powerhouse and sluiceway at The Dalles Dam.



CONTENTS

Commander's Column



pg.6

January-February 2013

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 3 Commander's Column
- 5 Portland District People
- 6 Precious cargo at The Dalles Dam
- 7 Corps sends Fall Creek Reservoir to the bottom to make fish passage the tops
- 8 Iron will brings John Day Chief through his first "Ironman"
- 10 Westrick Park – A winter vacation destination for the nation's symbol
- 12 Corps, Oregon small ports navigating tough financial times
- 14 Rare mushrooms discovered after prescribed burn
- 15 Fender's blue butterfly population doubles in size
- 16 Corps messages



pg.4



pg.8



Visitors flocked to The Dalles Lock and Dam for the third annual Eagle Watch, held Jan. 19 and 20. More than 30 eagles were seen roosting and feeding in Westrick Park, located across the Columbia River from the visitor center parking lot, where visitors watched through telescopes and binoculars. The park, closed to the public several years ago due to security restrictions, became a secluded, quiet location – a perfect wintering site for bald eagles and other migratory birds. The Dalles Dam park rangers want to remind everyone that the visitor center parking lot is always a great place to eagle watch, regardless whether the visitor center is open, so bring your 'scopes and binocs and check it out! Cover: Photo illustration by Fritz Bentz

Live your life without regrets

In these uncertain times, it seems a lot of people are spending a lot of time worrying. Worrying, will sequestration affect my job? Will I get that next promotion? Will my 401K be sufficient when I retire?

I find it interesting that many of us, myself included, worry about things over which we have no control. How we often will prioritize how we spend our time, even subconsciously, on things that are destructive to our well being versus being constructive. How this often leads to us missing the opportunity to enjoy the moment in which we are living. I, too, am guilty of this. So, please allow me the indulgence of writing about this a bit.

and feel a sense that we missed out on a child's birth, an opportunity to truly know our parents or grandparents by engaging them to hear their life story, by getting to know our co-workers on a personal level or by enjoying the great gifts, hobbies, and other activities which may help enhance our lives.

As I've talked to folks throughout the District, I will often appear eccentric to some as I forego asking about a job they're working on or another work-related issue, but may veer off to ask them about personal interests. I don't think this is because I'm an eccentric, but rather because I want to reinforce with all of you that we are much more than

an employee, we are much more than a job. We are parents, siblings, children and friends. The job we do, though an important contribution to society and often a necessity to meet our basic needs, is only a part of who we truly are and what we represent to our society.

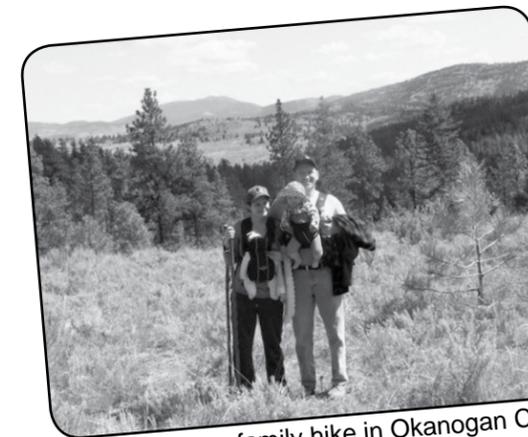


Photo provided by Col. John Eisenhauer

An Eisenhauer family hike in Okanogan Country

Recognizing and prioritizing life issues is paramount to being able to realize accomplishment in our lives. No one wants to look back at their life when we reach our golden years

You've often heard people talk about work-life balance, and I even recently wrote about this topic on my blog. I want to reinforce my position on work-life balance here. In that blog post, I wrote about the issue of use-or-lose leave at the end of the



Col. John Eisenhauer, P.E.

calendar year. I'm going to borrow from that post and refine it to communicate that message here as well as I know some of you may not get the opportunity to read it there.

I talked to several employees in the month of December who came into work while on use-or-lose leave. Although I thanked them for their dedication to the mission, I was also a little saddened about the fact that they were interrupting their well-deserved personal time. It made me wonder if not being able to use one's leave was a symptom of improperly managing work/life balance throughout the year.

I'm extremely proud of the dedication and personal sacrifice each of you makes for our Nation, but I'd also ask you to consider that none of us is indispensable. Therefore, it is just as critical that we take personal time to rejuvenate and

Continued on page 4

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Commander: Col. John Eisenhauer, P.E.
Chief, Public Affairs: Matt Rabe
Editor: Erica Jensen





Continued from page 3

refresh, and fully enjoy the rest of our lives and who we are as a whole. We all need to prioritize the balance of work and life. If we don't, it hurts us personally and our impact and support to the organization.

That said, the federal government has a very generous leave program. It allows our employees to enjoy leisure time to mitigate the stress encountered in daily work. I fully encourage all of you to use your hard-earned leave throughout the year. Invest time with your families, further develop your interest outside of work or even expand upon them.

When you reach your golden years of retirement, I imagine very few will say they should have spent more time at the office. Live your life without regrets and take the time to invest in yourself. If you're going to err in the balance of work and life, choose life. 

COL Ike

Top: Lance Helwig, Chief, Engineering and Construction Division, is a half-season Portland Winterhawks ticket holder who regularly enjoys weekend hockey games with his family. From left to right: Savannah, Heidi, Lance and Hanna.

Center: Kevin Brice, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, along with his wife, Peggy, visited Pont du Gard last summer, a Roman-era bridge and aqueduct near Avignon, France.

Bottom: Brent Mahan, Director, Hydroelectric Design Center, navigates rough slickrock riding a unicycle near Zion National Park, Utah.



Photo provided by Helwig family



Photo provided by Brice family



Photo provided by Brent Mahan

Portland District People

Nathan Jones

General Maintenance crew, Willamette Valley Project



Describe your job?

I work on the General Maintenance crew. I was recently appointed as a WG-10 work leader on a 120-day temporary assignment. I have been with the Corps of Engineers since 2005.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I love the diversity. Day-to-day operations take us all over the entire Willamette Valley. Any given day, we could be plowing snow at Cougar Reservoir, hauling salmon from the Fall Creek Reservoir Fish Facility or mowing upland prairies at Fern Ridge Reservoir. Every day is different.

What challenges do you encounter when doing your job?

Working in a highly diversified job can be a challenge in itself! We don't have the luxury of mastering one skill set. Rather, we must be proficient truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, boat operators, mechanics, fabricators, carpenters ... the list goes on. These are hats we wear throughout the year and, in my opinion, a big responsibility.

What do you like most about working for the Portland District?

The Portland District allows me to be close to home. I grew up in the Pacific Northwest and this is where I want to raise my family. The Portland District is big enough that a person can grow with their career as much as they want – while still able to live in a small tight knit community. It is the perfect fit for me.

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

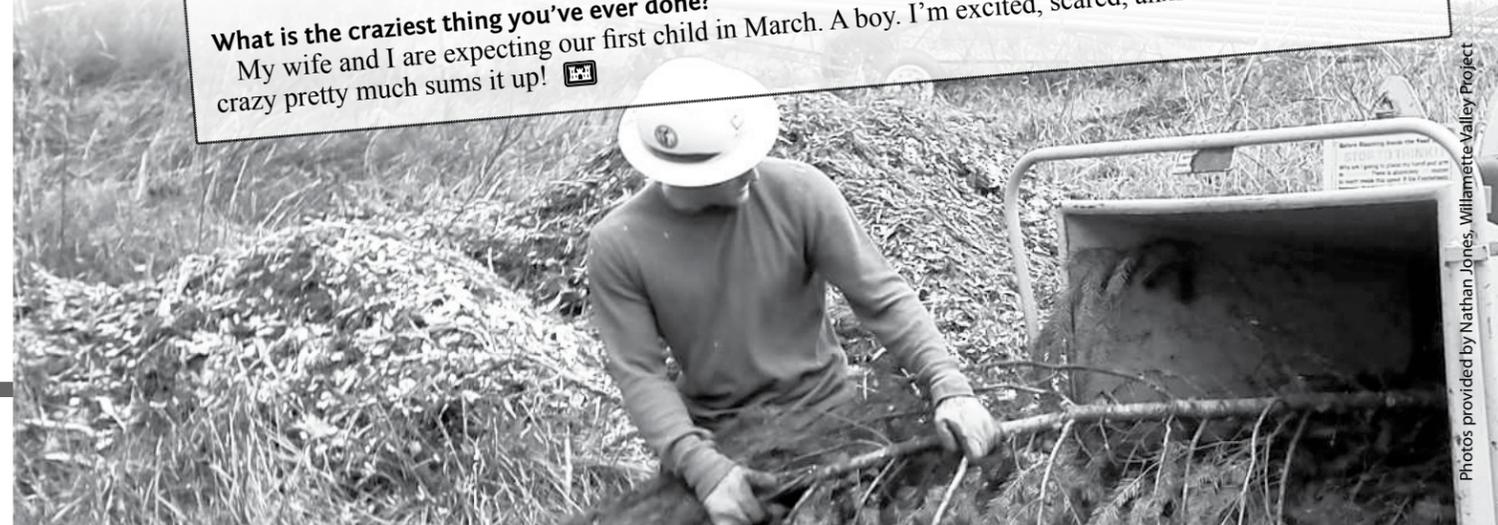
The General Maintenance crew is divided into three sections: Operations and Maintenance, Recreation, and Environmental. Each has its own core competencies. In the past year and a half my supervisor has encouraged cross training among the crew, which has been a huge asset as we can now effectively backfill for just about anyone, at any time. From this, a wealth of historical knowledge has been passed down to younger employees

What are your hobbies?

I am extremely passionate about the outdoors, specifically hunting. It has been a big part of my family's culture. Growing up, one of my uncles worked for a hunting magazine. Through the years I have been lucky enough to follow him on his adventures with a video camera to document his different hunts. This has led to filming hunts professionally which have been featured on the Outdoor and Sportsman channels. I have an awesome wife who is fully supportive of my hunting addiction. She never complains that I use my all leave for hunting trips in the fall ... I mean ALL my leave. She is so great.

What is the craziest thing you've ever done?

My wife and I are expecting our first child in March. A boy. I'm excited, scared, anxious... crazy pretty much sums it up! 



Photos provided by Nathan Jones, Willamette Valley Project



Precious cargo at The Dalles Dam

Story and photos by Amber Tilton,
The Dalles Lock and Dam

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife employees dewatered the east fish ladder at The Dalles Lock and Dam Dec. 3. Dewatering is done during the winter months so the fish ladders can be inspected and workers can perform needed maintenance or repairs when fish are not migrating. This is important because the ladders are the only channel for fish to get upriver and around the dam.

Workers began by lowering bulkheads, or doors, into the ladder to reduce the flow of water and lower the depth. Once the water was at a safe level, the work began. Employees climbed down into the chilly, 30-foot wide concrete canyon and started directing fish through a maze of weirs toward the downstream exit. This slippery fish ladder is over a third of a

mile long, or 1,801 feet. The weirs are staggered every 16 feet, with holes in the bottom to allow fish to swim through. Contrary to what many people think, fish usually swim through the weirs rather than jump over them.



Fish that were not guided to the downstream exit were carefully scooped into nets and placed in bags. Once contained, the precious cargo was attached to a rope and pulled out of the ladder. Up top, the staff gently took the package and lowered it over the dam and safely back into the Columbia River. Adult salmonids were released upstream of the dam and juvenile salmonids were released downstream. All other fish were released at the most convenient location except lamprey, which were held for the Nez Perce Tribe for a reintroduction program. Occasionally, a crane was needed to lift large sturgeon out of the ladders. Other fish commonly seen are steelhead, carp and shad.

After the fish were carefully returned to the river, The Dalles Dam employees moved forward with the maintenance and repair work in the fish ladder. After the work was finished, the bulkheads were removed and the ladder was ready to again offer safe passage around the dam. 

Top: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife employees dewater The Dalles Dam fish ladder.

Center: Fish remaining in the ladder are collected and returned to the Columbia River.

Bottom: Employees guide fish toward the downstream exit as water levels decrease in The Dalles Dam fish ladder.



Corps of Engineers photo

Corps sends Fall Creek Reservoir to the bottom to make fish passage the tops

By Doug Garletts,
Willamette Valley Project

Each year, juvenile spring Chinook salmon protected under the Endangered Species Act must travel through Fall Creek Dam east of Eugene, Ore., on their way to the Pacific Ocean, where they eventually mature into adults and return inland to spawn in their natal streams.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has usually held Fall Creek Reservoir at a minimum elevation of 728 feet above sea level for flood damage reduction during the rainy winter season. Unfortunately, juvenile fish prefer to swim near the surface, and at that elevation they have a hard time finding a route through the dam due to the depth they must dive. In addition, when they do find a route, many fish are injured due to harsh passage conditions through the dam structure.

To increase juvenile passage and survival through Fall Creek Dam, the Corps in 2011 lowered the elevation of the reservoir to 680 feet. Data has shown that lowering the reservoir pool to that level during juvenile migration results in roughly a ten-fold increase in the numbers of adult salmon that later return to Fall Creek compared to holding the reservoir at 728 feet.

The Corps completed Fall Creek Dam in 1965. For over 45 years, the calm waters of the reservoir have allowed for large accumulations of fine sediment as well as coarse material, such as wood, sand and gravel. Without the dam, this material would have travelled downstream, providing a natural source of enriching nutrients and spawning gravels to the lower reaches of Fall Creek and the Middle Fork Willamette River.

Lowering the reservoir to near historic creek bed elevations has

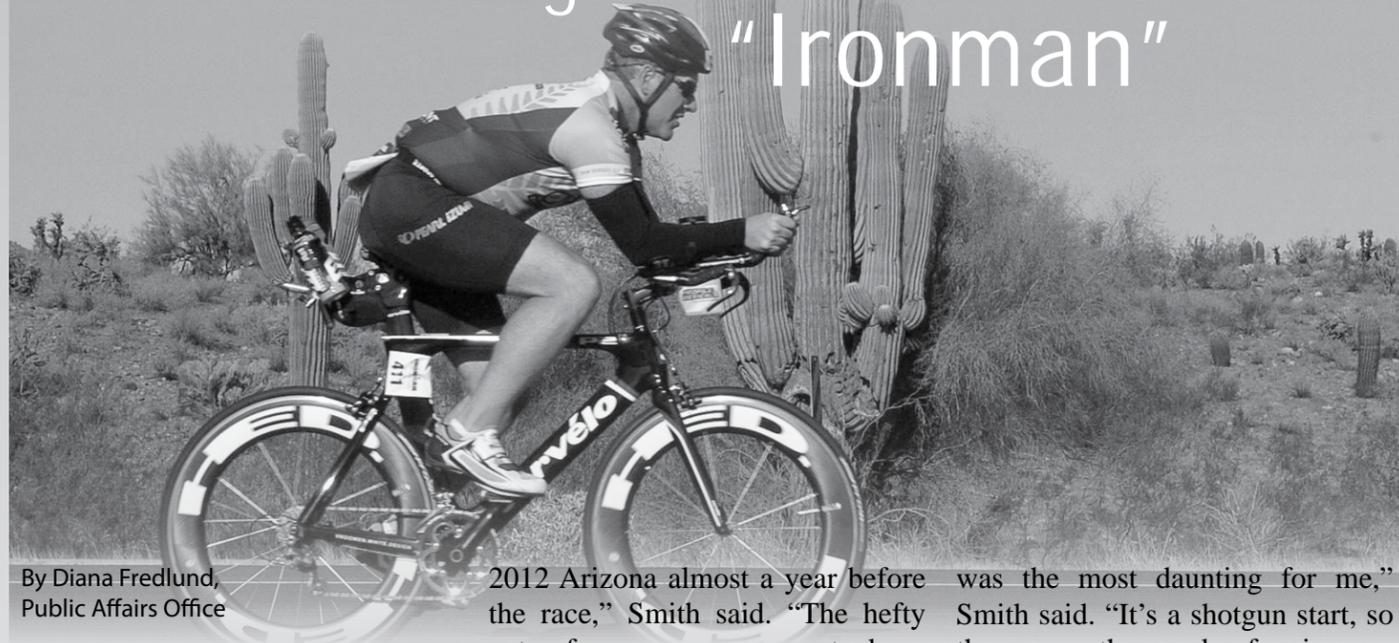
allowed this material to move downriver again. Plankton, aquatic plants and insects, and larger vertebrates such as fish and mammals all benefit from the cycling of nutrient-rich waters. The entire food web downstream of the reservoir will see a great benefit over time from the liberation of the trapped material.

As the reservoir begins to fill in January, the sediment-rich reservoir bottom will once again be covered by calm water and turbidity downstream will drastically lessen. The creek channel will reshape itself into a more natural, dynamic system similar to what it was pre-dam. The natural cycle of renewal will turn once again. 

Above: Fall Creek – minus water in the reservoir – drawn down to 680 feet above sea level in November 2011.



Iron will brings John Day Chief through his first "Ironman"



By Diana Fredlund,
Public Affairs Office

The glare of lights pierced the Arizona night sky while thousands of people waited. Seconds clicked away on the clock as a solitary figure moved toward the finish line. With his final steps, Glen Smith raised his arms in triumph: after 13 hours, 43 minutes and 45 seconds, his first full-distance triathlon was complete – he was an Ironman!

One doesn't become a triathlete by taking the easy road. Smith, the operations project manager at the John Day-Willow Creek Project, trained for more than a year before the big event, held Nov. 18, 2012 in Tempe, Ariz. "I needed an incentive, so I signed up and paid the \$1,300 entry fee for the Ironman

2012 Arizona almost a year before the race," Smith said. "The hefty entry fee was one reason to keep working – I knew I'd lose it if I didn't compete."

Triathlons are staged at varying distances from a sprint to a full-distance Ironman. While Smith had participated in many shorter-distance competitions, this was his first full-distance event.

Smith swam 2.4 miles, biked 112 miles and ran 26.2 miles during the Arizona Ironman. "The swimming

was the most daunting for me," Smith said. "It's a shotgun start, so there were thousands of swimmers in the water. I got kicked and scratched, but everyone was nice about it. I got kicked in the face and the guy apologized right after." The course was a single loop around Tempe Town Lake in 60-degree water.

After the swim, Smith changed into riding clothes and took off on his bike for three 37-mile laps into the Sonoran Desert. "You have to train for these long distances,

building up your time," Smith said. "I had a lot of long, six- or seven-hour bike rides during training. But riding in the desert was incredible! I felt very good throughout the ride."

After 112 miles on a bike, Smith was ready for the third and final challenge: running a marathon. "The most important thing my training taught me was how to fuel my body for these long distances. I was hoping to beat the 13-hour mark and at 11 hours I felt pretty good, but then I slowed down a lot – I kind of crashed," Smith said. "My training helped me get back on track so I could keep moving forward. With a couple hours of running left, that was critical."

Smith credits the race volunteers for much of his accomplishment. "When you're on the road and starting to feel every inch of pavement, you can kind of get lost in yourself. There are volunteers all along the route who are cheerful and very helpful. They can really get your mind off yourself and the pain you're feeling." He plans to return the favor this year by volunteering for the Ironman 2013 in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Smith, like many 50-year olds, started training in order to stay in shape. Training for an Ironman, which is simply a triathlon with a successful brand name, is more than exercising a few times a week. Smith hired an online trainer, who tracked his workouts, recommended books to read and helped him build up his distances. "My online coach

helped me train specifically for the Arizona race," Smith said. "He'd competed in the race before and knew the course. He could tell me where the pitfalls were."

Smith's training schedule was intense, with essentially three separate races to complete. "I put in hours at the pool, hours running and a lot of hours biking," he said. "This is my version of climbing mountains – not everyone does this. I don't consider myself a natural athlete, but through training it's become my healthy obsession."

His online coach helped him get through the rough spots, including training injuries. "In 2007 I couldn't even run a mile. I tried to build up too quickly and battled some injuries," Smith said. "My coach kept me on a level progression. He did most of the planning, so I didn't have to think about that and just trained." He credits his coach with getting him successfully across the finish line, even if he'll have to wait to achieve his personal goal of completing a triathlon in less than 13 hours.

"There will be another triathlon, no doubt. There's something about the combination of pushing yourself near your limit, the incredibly supportive volunteers helping you through, and crossing that finish line with all those people cheering – it was a personal high." 

Opposite page: Smith bikes 112 miles in the Sonoran desert during the 2012 Ironman Arizona competition Nov. 18, 2012.



Above upper: To prepare for this grueling all-around competition, Smith hired an online coach to track his workouts. He credits his coach with teaching him how to maintain good nutrition during the 13-hour endeavor.

Above lower: After swimming 2.4 miles, biking 112 miles and running a 26.2-mile marathon, John Day-Willow Creek Operations Project Manager Glen Smith completes his first full-distance triathlon.

All photos courtesy FinisherPix.com

MARATHON DISTANCE			
<i>Triathletes have a variety of distances they can choose</i>			
Name	Swim distance	Bike distance	Run distance
Sprint	0.5 mile	12 mile	3.1 mile
Olympic	0.93 mile	25 mile	6.2 mile
Half-distance	1.2 mile	56 mile	13.1 mile
Full distance	2.4 mile	112 mile	26.2 mile



Westrick Park – A winter vacation destination for the nation’s symbol

By Bob Cordie,
The Dalles Lock and Dam

The bald eagle population in North America is doing well these days. Numerous articles and studies herald their comeback, and a visit to Westrick Park, near The Dalles Lock and Dam between late December and March also provides tangible evidence: nearly 50 bald eagles congregate there every winter in the park’s trees.

Why Westrick Park? The simple answer is food. Bald eagles aren’t picky eaters, but they are rather fond of fish – whether dying or long dead. They aren’t the most efficient fish catchers, though – not like Osprey, which dive into the water for their meal. No, bald eagles need their prey to be floating on top of the water so they can easily scoop it up. That’s one reason why Westrick Park makes such a perfect staging area – it overlooks the river – and dinner.

The Columbia River hosts large populations of American shad, ranging in numbers from between one and five million fish per year. Shad migrate upriver in mid-summer to spawn in the reservoirs behind the dam, where many remain during the winter. As they work their way back downstream, they can be easy pickings for predators



Photo by Fritz Bentz

waiting for them to pass through the powerhouse and sluiceway at The Dalles Dam. For migrating eagles, this is a perfect scenario to capitalize on: an easy food source to be had without expending too much energy.

Although the park is a favorite of eagles, The Dalles Dam fisheries staff are concerned about the birds’ safety. There are numerous wires stretching across the river intended to deter gulls and other birds from feeding on juvenile salmonids during the spring and summer. The wires must remain in place through the winter, which is when the eagles also are present.

For the biologists, the avian deterrent lines raised many questions: Do they interfere with eagles feeding? Can the eagles see the lines? Do they fly into the lines? Can more lines be installed in the future, if needed, or should some of the existing lines be removed?

To help answer these questions, the fishery staff observed Westrick Park eagles for nearly 130 hours last winter to collect information about their behavior patterns. Results showed no eagle contact with the lines – and that eagles concentrated their feeding just downstream of the avian line array. So it seems that Westrick’s eagles do, in fact, avoid

At left: Every winter bald eagles stage themselves in trees at Westrick Park, waiting for a meal of American Shad to float by in the waters of the Columbia River.

Below: Bald eagles are not deterred from feeding just downstream of the avian line array at The Dalles Lock and Dam.

At right: Large populations of American shad are easy prey for predators waiting for them to pass through the powerhouse and sluiceway at The Dalles Dam.



Photo by Bob Cordie, The Dalles Lock and Dam

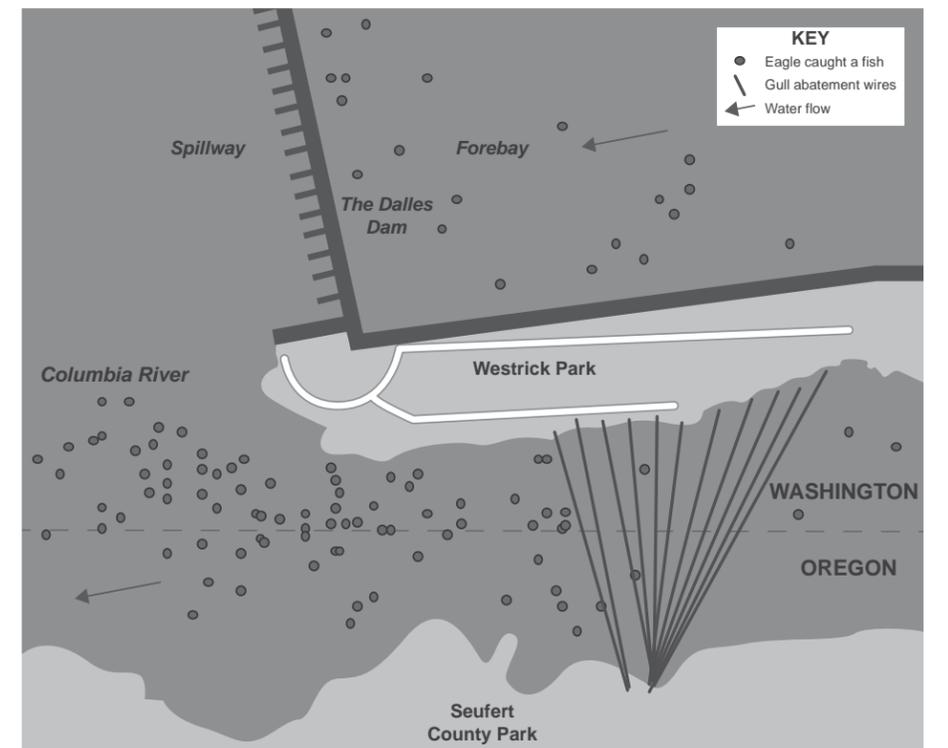


Photo by Fritz Bentz

the avian lines and are able to find sufficient feeding areas outside the deterrent areas. With that concern cleared up, the lines can be left in place – but no new lines will be added that may interfere with the eagles’ primary feeding areas.

A second season of observation is planned this winter by the dam’s biologists to confirm their findings, but until further notice, Westrick eagles can still consider the park their premiere winter vacation and dining destination.

If you’d like to see the eagles, bring your telescopes or binoculars to The Dalles Dam Visitor Center parking lot, which is located directly across the river from Westrick Park. To reach the visitor center from Interstate 84, take exit 87 and go east on Brett Clodfelter Way.



Eagles at Westrick Park avoided avian deterrent lines as they were often observed catching their dinner by fishery staff in areas downstream of the wires and in The Dalles Dam Reservoir.



Photo by Lynda Charles, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Corps, Oregon small ports navigating tough financial times

By Michelle Helms,
Public Affairs Specialist

One of America's most unique coastal ports is silting in. The channel between the dock at the Port of Port Orford, Ore., and the Pacific Ocean has become so shallow fishermen have to wait until the highest tides to go fishing. Port Orford is a unique harbor, but the problem they're facing is becoming a common one nationwide.

The United States is working under the constraints of a difficult fiscal environment. A difficulty reflected in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' navigation maintenance budget. Corpwide, low-use navigation projects were identified for a 50 percent reduction and funding for low commercial use projects was cut in 2012 by more

than \$70 million nationally. Funding for low-use harbors was completely eliminated unless they serve a critical life and safety function and even then, funding was reduced.

The Port Orford navigation channel was last dredged in 2010. The small, low-use harbor has only received two appropriations since 2004 and it did not receive money in fiscal year 2012. Port Orford is the first Oregon port to feel the impact of dwindling federal dollars; other low-use ports on the Oregon coast are not funded in the President's proposed budget for fiscal year 2013.

The Corps' Portland District leaders met in October with Port Orford residents to tell them the agency doesn't have the money to dredge their small harbor.

"It is difficult to have to deliver this kind of news," said Col. John Eisenhauer, District Commander. "Pragmatically, it's better for the community to know what's happening in order to make informed decisions about their future."

The District has worked with small ports along the Oregon coast for decades, dredging navigation channels, clearing the way for commercial fishermen and recreational mariners traveling between their harbors and the Pacific Ocean. National priorities have shifted, however, due to the

Above: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' navigation budget for low-use projects was cut in 2012 by more than \$70 million nationally. The Portland District is working with small harbors on the Oregon coast, including the Port of Port Orford, to find alternative maintenance solutions.

constrained budget. Many once-funded work projects are now without federal support at a time when much of its infrastructure has passed its operational life and needs major rehabilitation. The bottom line is that there is more navigation infrastructure than there is money to maintain it.

Nationally, the Corps navigation maintenance budget has been steadily declining and the agency must direct funds to programs that provide the highest national economic return on investment. To do this, the Corps established tons-shipped benchmarks to prioritize dredging projects: ports with commercial shipping enterprises that transport more than 10 million tons annually are considered high-use ports; those that support one million to 10 million tons of cargo are moderate-use harbors; ports supporting less than one million tons are classified as low-use harbors.

Most low-use harbors in Oregon don't fare well when ranked against the hundreds of harbors nationwide, all of them competing for the same

money. In 2010, Oregon's low-use harbors that are maintained by the Corps collectively had fish landings totaling 36,000 tons, valued at \$44 million.

Low-use harbor communities nationwide are facing the same challenges and many are searching for solutions, including partnering with state and county governments. People at the Port Orford town hall offered ideas and showed a willingness to find new ways to accomplish the dredging they need to keep their port open for business.

"Port Orford community members presented several good ideas," said Jim Mahar, the District's chief of operations. "By coming together to organize, prioritize and possibly fund the most cost effective idea they can be successful. Their leadership plays an active role in the solution."

The Corps values the long-standing relationships with Oregon's coastal communities and the agency is not walking away, says Kate Groth, coastal projects

manager. She says the District will continue to work, within the Corps authorities, with the port managers and community leaders to support alternative maintenance solutions.

"We can support the ports with channel surveys, maintaining environmental clearances and consulting with them on dredging and coastal processes," said Groth. "These ports are considered low-use ports by the national criteria, but they are the backbone of Oregon's coastal communities. It is important for us to listen to their needs."

It is not easy to tell a small community that the Corps does not have the resources to maintain their low-use port. Even so, Eisenhauer said he appreciated the opportunity to talk directly to Port Orford community members and was encouraged by the open and honest conversation.

"Coming here, having these conversations, working together to find sustainable solutions to strengthen communities, for me this is a true example of democracy."

- 50% reduction in funding for low-use navigation projects, 2012 Corpwide
- \$70M cut in funding for low commercial use projects, 2012 nationally
- 2010 the last year Port Orford navigation channel was dredged
- 2 appropriations for low-use harbor Port Orford navigation channel since 2004



Rare species find Fern Ridge a welcome home

Rare mushrooms discovered after prescribed burn

Story and photos by Rhiannon Thomas, Willamette Valley Project

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers botanists discovered a new site for the rare Pruitt's Amanita mushroom at Fern Ridge Reservoir west of Eugene, Ore., Nov. 20.

Soils and botany student intern Leanna Van Slambrook spotted some white mushrooms popping out of the charred, soggy ground on the southwest side of the reservoir after a prescribed burn and remembered that a rare Amanita had been found after a burn a few years back. She and Rhiannon Thomas, a botanist for the Corps' Willamette Valley Project, photographed and collected specimens for identification. Amanita experts confirmed the mushroom's identification during a later site visit.

No scientific description of the species has yet been published. It is the same species as David Arora's Anonymous Amanita, (name also unpublished) a California species described in his book, *Mushrooms Demystified*. The Corps' Fern Ridge Project is the only known location for the mushroom outside of California.

Pruitt's Amanita was first discovered at Fern Ridge Reservoir in 1975 by Eugene naturalist Hal Pruitt, in a field of planted Sudan

grass. The mushrooms at the reservoir are unusual because they grow in seasonally flooded sites. On Pruitt's first visit to the site, they found hundreds of the mushrooms floating in the water. Pruitt's Amanita was seen at this site again in 1976 and 1977 but was not spotted again until 1998, when a Corps botanist discovered a new site about a mile away in native wet prairie.

A large fruiting was seen in another native wet prairie near the first site after a 2002 prescribed burn. This led to speculation that the species may fruit heavily after disturbance such as fire.

All three Oregon sites are on land already protected as a Research Natural Area by the Willamette Valley Project, in addition to being within the State of Oregon's Fern Ridge Wildlife Area.

Historically, Willamette Valley wet and upland prairie habitat was maintained by fire. Its suppression threatens prairies and many species dependent on them, including several listed under the Endangered Species Act. Scientific studies



Pruitt's Amanita mushrooms at Fern Ridge Reservoir are unusual because they grow in seasonally flooded sites.

have demonstrated the benefits of prescribed burning to species like Bradshaw's lomatium, Kincaid's lupine and Fender's blue butterfly.

The prescribed fire program at Fern Ridge Reservoir is intended to return fire to the prairie habitats the Corps manages. Since 1988, the Corps and its partners – with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's Eugene District as burn planner and leader – have executed 16 prescribed fires of up to 100 acres.

For more information about the Corps' environmental efforts at Fern Ridge Reservoir, visit the Portland District website at <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/WillametteValley/FernRidge.aspx> 

Fender's blue butterfly population doubles in size

By Rhiannon Thomas, Willamette Valley Project

The population of endangered Fender's blue butterflies has doubled at Fern Ridge Reservoir since last year, according to a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers survey.

The Corps' 2012 estimate of 3,769 Fender's blue butterflies at 11 sites near the reservoir west of Eugene, Ore., is the species' largest known population and continues a trend of positive population growth since it was first detected on Corps lands in 1998. Surveys in 2011 estimated a population of 1,687 butterflies.

This species of butterfly, found only in Oregon's Willamette Valley, was believed to be extinct from 1937 until it was rediscovered in 1989. The species was listed as endangered in 2000.

The known population of Fender's blue butterflies has increased dramatically since their rediscovery. Corps biologists credit a combination of factors for the species' recovery, including restoration of prairie



A newly emerged female drying her wings on woolly sunflower, an important native nectar plant.



A worn male Fender's blue butterfly at rest on bracken fern. This individual emerged about a week earlier and is nearing the end of his life.

habitat by planting the butterfly's larval host, the federally protected Kincaid's lupine; control of invasive species; discovery of new populations; and improved monitoring methods.

Recovery of the Fender's blue butterfly and other prairie species of Western Oregon and Southwest Washington is a collaborative effort between the Corps, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Geological Survey, Oregon and Washington state agencies and a variety of non-governmental organizations.

For more information about the Fender's blue butterfly, visit the USFWS Oregon Fish and Wildlife Office website at <http://www.fws.gov/oregonfwo/Species/Data/FendersBlueButterfly/>.

For more information about the Corps' environmental efforts at Fern Ridge Reservoir, visit the Portland District website at <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Locations/WillametteValley/FernRidge.aspx> 

All photos by Wes Messinger, Willamette Valley Project



Sharing the Corps' message

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

Corps serves a role in regional bridge project

The Columbia River Crossing project to replace the current Interstate 5 Bridge over the Columbia River is complex and stirs widespread public opinion. The Corps does not maintain an opinion about the project but our level of involvement in it is increasing. We anticipate more news media attention and your neighbors and friends may start asking questions about our role.

- We are following the U.S. Coast Guard's discussions with CRC about the proposed height and clearance of the replacement bridge. We provided CRC with the height and operational requirements for our dredge *Yaquina* so we can maintain the federal navigation channel upstream of any new bridge.
- We must issue two permits under Section 408 of the 1899 Rivers and Harbors Act before CRC can start any construction. These will ensure that construction and all conditions after project completion do not interrupt or interfere with the maintenance and operation of federally authorized levees or the navigation channel.
- CRC also needs Clean Water Act Section 404 permits to place dredged or fill construction material in the waters of the U.S. for the main bridge crossing and the proposed new Hayden Island bridges.



Courtesy Washington State Department of Transportation

Our Regulatory, Planning, Programs and Project Management, Engineering and Construction, and Operations offices have worked with CRC over several years to explain the required contents and quality of their permit applications. This is a common practice to streamline the use of resources by the Corps and permit applicants. We will continue to work collaboratively with CRC through these permit processes.

Sea lion predation at Bonneville Lock and Dam

Male California and Stellar sea lions swim the Columbia River to Bonneville Lock and Dam in mid- to late-February to eat part of the annual spring migration of sturgeon, salmon, steelhead and other anadromous fish. They do this to gain weight and energy for the spring mating season and leave by mid-May. The number of fish eaten by sea lions has increased nearly every year since studies were first undertaken by the Corps.

- Our role in sea lion issues at Bonneville Lock and Dam is limited to monitoring sea lion numbers and their predation; evaluating the effectiveness of management techniques; and keeping sea lions out of our fishways.
- We support the actions of NOAA Fisheries Service and state and tribal agencies to ensure the protection and continuity of native fish species.
- We contracted with U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services to harass sea lions from the dam structure to keep them away from the fishway entrances. Wildlife Services is not shooting or killing sea lions.
- While we operate the dam and the fishways, NOAA Fisheries Service has the responsibility for sea lions under the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and the state fish and wildlife departments have hands-on responsibility for any animal within its borders.
- Stellar sea lions, which can be hazed but are protected from removal, are having increasing impact on white sturgeon below Bonneville Dam.



Corps of Engineers photos