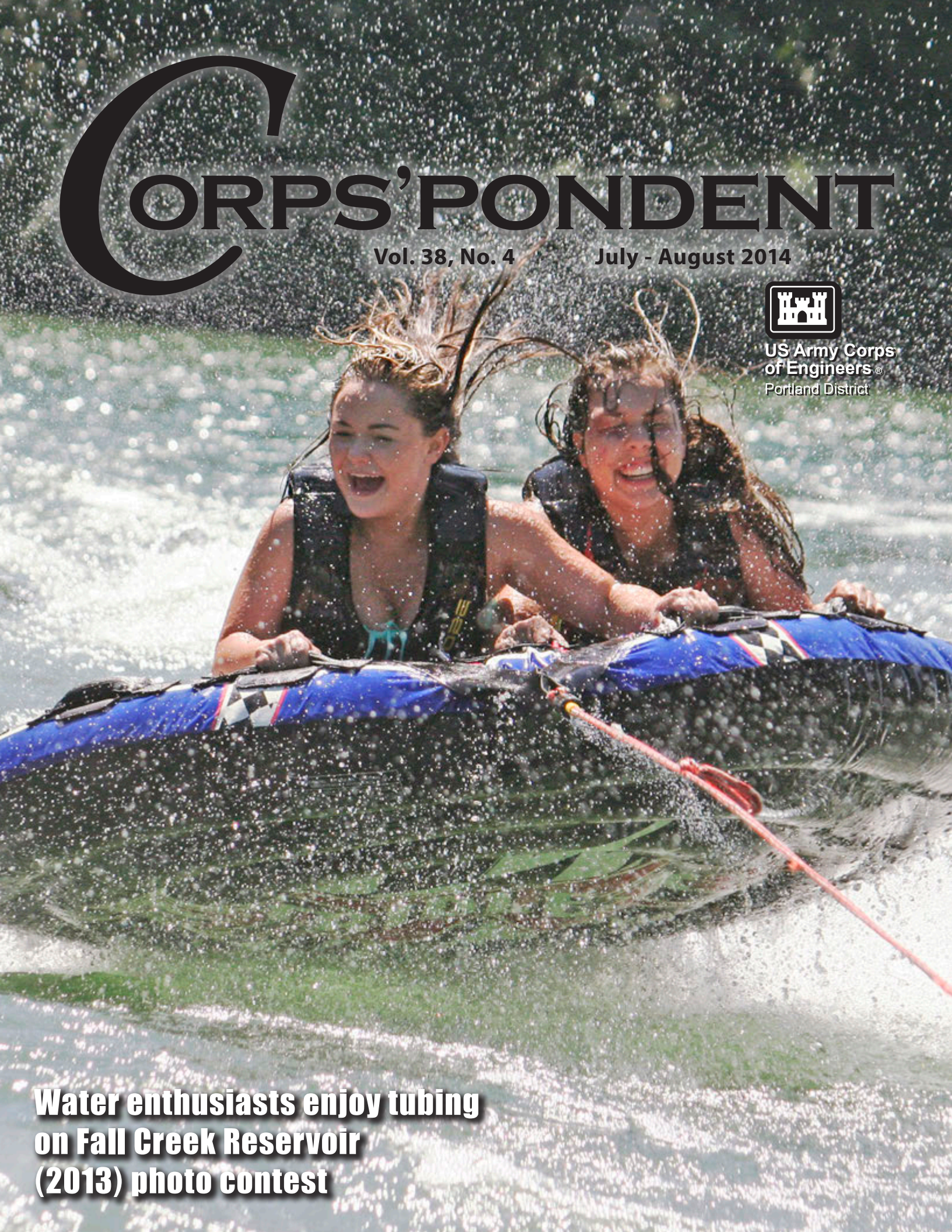

CORPS'PONDENT

Vol. 38, No. 4 July - August 2014

US Army Corps of Engineers®
Portland District

Water enthusiasts enjoy tubing on Fall Creek Reservoir (2013) photo contest

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Cover Photo: Kyla Shouten and Kasey Petersen, both 21, Springfield, Ore., enjoy tubing on Fall Creek Reservoir. (Kyra Fulkerson, Willamette Valley Project, 2013 Photo Contest)

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

Commander's Column

Benefitting tomorrow's children

Last time, I wrote about my travels around the District and my goal to gain situational awareness of our operational environment in order to quickly integrate into our District team. Though I'm not there yet, thank you all for a superb education. Everywhere I go I learn more about elements which contribute to the tremendous reputation of this District. All of those elements are grounded in a culture of character, competence and commitment.

We are building a legacy for the benefit of our children tomorrow.

I was reminded of this last July when I participated in the unveiling of a plaque designating The Dalles Lock and Dam as an American Society of Civil Engineers National Historic Civil Engineering Landmark.

We started constructing The Dalles Dam in 1952, just a handful of years after the end of World War II. According to Christopher Goodell, who nominated the dam for historic recognition, the dam is unique in that it doesn't span straight across the river like most dams in the Pacific Northwest, but is L-shaped. It was constructed this way to follow and take advantage of the navigation channel which flows through a deep underwater canyon. Also, its powerhouse and much of the structure also were built on dry land on exposed bedrock – making it a lot cheaper to build.

The project benefited the local community by providing jobs and other economic resources right after the war and the Corps' early engineers, construction workers and other employees worked hard, setting high standards and making sacrifices so that the dam could be completed by 1957. Their innovation and expertise were the reasons the dam was less costly to build; their innovation and determination to get the job done has brought tremendous benefit to many generations living in the Pacific Northwest.

This is just one example of our legacy and reputation for innovation and excellence. There are many more at Bonneville, John Day, the dams in the Willamette Valley and Rogue River Basin, and here in Block 300.

Projects such as these are important reminders and tangible evidence of the great things our employees have achieved together and inspire our continued commitment to live up to the successes of those public servants who came before us.

As we move into the future we should have the same mindset of our earliest employees. We can emulate their high standards and ethics and always ask how we can make it better. We will challenge ourselves: the task – bring the greatest benefit to generations.

This applies to every one of us as we conduct daily operations – at whatever level. It applies as we move forward collectively as a District to support our missions … like executing upcoming repairs to the MCR jetty system and completing necessary environmental work to support fish and wildlife in the Willamette Valley (as mandated by the biological opinion).

As we approach our year-end closeout I want us to have this mindset.

Col. Jose L. Aguilar

This means we have to do what we say we will do and what we have been directed by the American people and our Administration – within the confine of legal, ethical and moral imperatives. We have to look at everything we do and ask where we can improve, be more cost efficient and productive. We must look at our processes with new eyes and be willing to make changes, where necessary.

Portland District's reputation was built on a capable and innovative workforce. Today, we are still continuing that standard of excellence – by being principled, competent and innovative – so that we will continue to successfully meet our missions in the Pacific Northwest and, ultimately, the needs of tomorrow's children – just as our forefathers have done for us.

Competence follows Character

Col. Jose Aguilar

Portland District People

Monica Carter

Occupational Health Program Manager
Safety and Occupational Health Office

Monica Carter oversees the District's medical surveillance program, which includes pre-appointment, periodic, exit and fitness-for-duty physical assessments along with other wellness programs.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I like working collaboratively with others across the District – toward an end solution, while also improving processes at the same time.

How does your job fit into our District mission? What's an example of this?

Employee physical qualification is the backbone of a safe, healthy and productive workforce. While physical wellness is an individual responsibility, Portland District is obligated to provide a safe working environment, enhance worker efficiency and minimize employee illnesses. I help ensure this through a proactive and interactive medical surveillance program.

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

I like the people and the location. Everyone has something to offer, so slow down and listen. Oregon is the closest to my childhood home of Romania. I love the versatility and the fact that Oregonians do not mind standing up for their beliefs and causing some ripples in the water. Portland District was the beginning of my Corps career and it will be my end also.

Favorite film?

Cool Hand Luke. It's a movie about rebelliousness, hope and resilience – and it reminds me of my father who has the same temperament as Luke. I imagine my father had the same mindset when he attempted to, and finally broke free of the communist regime in Romania. He was caught twice and the authorities attempted to set "his mind right," just as the warden did to Luke. But as Luke did, my father continued to fight for our family's freedom for life and expression. Eventually he successfully swam from the shores of Romania across the Danube River to the Yugoslavian border. In 1977 he immigrated to the United States, and in 1979, my mother, brother and I followed.

What are your hobbies? Why do you like them?

I got the travel bug from my parents. They wanted my brother and me to see the world. Within two years of immigrating to the United States we had visited all 48 continental states – leaving Alaska and Hawaii to explore later. In 2005, after the loss of my parents, my brother and I traveled to Alaska and Hawaii in their honor. I enjoy traveling aboard and plan a trip every two years to some new destination.

Corps dredge crews support U.S. Coast Guard mission

By Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

While it doesn't happen every day, it's not unusual for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredges to assist in an emergency. Recently both the *Yaquina* and *Essayons* were called on to support the U.S. Coast Guard in search and rescue missions in Oregon and Alaska.

Yaquina Captain Mark Keen says crews typically respond to reports of sinking or capsized boats. For instance, in 2012, crewmembers rescued a kayaker who was in the water after waves flipped his boat near a jetty.

Not an ordinary call for help

The call from the Coast Guard to the *Yaquina* on June 15 was different.

"The Coast Guard called the dredge and informed us that they had a report of a small plane crashing into the ocean just north of the North Jetty at the Siuslaw River," said Keen. "We got the rescue crew and lookouts ready and headed that way."

It was low tide and the *Yaquina* was about four miles from the crash site, waiting for the tide to come in to resume work on the channel. The ship immediately headed toward the site. A Coast Guard lifeboat from Siuslaw Station arrived just two minutes ahead of the *Yaquina*; a Coast Guard helicopter arrived shortly after.

"The plane was pretty close to the shore so we couldn't get in real close," said Keen. "We sit high in the water, and they asked us to steam back and forth along the crash area and assist in the search."

Keen said they saw wreckage floating in the water, but did not see any victims.

A June 16 news release from the Lane County Sheriff's office said the body of Richard Munger of Florence, Oregon, was recovered June 15 by the Coast Guard. His grandson, 15-year-old Benjamin Dressler of Washington was also on board the plane. A Seattle Times story dated June 18 states Dressler's body was not recovered but authorities believe he, too, died in the crash.

Crews always ready to assist

The *Essayons* and her crew were dredging the Cook Inlet, Alaska, June 7, when the Coast Guard was called to rescue three people from a sinking 16-foot riverboat. Captain Jeffrey McDonald immediately launched the rescue boat manned by boat operator Derrick Pinetti and rescue swimmer Ryan Mhyr. They arrived at the scene just ahead of the Anchorage Fire Department vessel whose crew rescued a father, two children and a puppy from the sinking boat. Alaska State Troopers were standing by to assist in the rescue.

Corps of Engineers photo

The dredge *Yaquina* passes through the jetties June 16, as it enters the Siuslaw River near Florence, Oregon.

"This case demonstrates both the value of teamwork with our partner agencies and the importance of wearing a lifejacket whenever you're underway," said Cmdr. Shawn Decker, chief of response, Coast Guard Sector Anchorage. The Coast Guard thanks the Alaska State Troopers, Anchorage Fire Department and the crew of the *Essayons* for their assistance in this incident."

The dredge crews' ability to respond and provide assistance to partner agencies is due to their own commitment to safety. Their work takes them into areas where it would be easy for someone to fall overboard; the crews practice man overboard drills and train regularly to rescue people from the water.

Do you have what it takes to be a Corps of Engineers Statesperson?

A commentary by Matt Rabe, Public Affairs Office

You've overheard those conversations. You know, the ones about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Maybe you've been approached by someone because they knew you work for (or retired from) the Corps.

Did you know enough to relate to what they were saying or asking? Were their facts or assumptions correct? Did you know more about the topic than they did? What did you say? Did you say anything?

For me, anytime I hear someone talking about fishing from jetties along the Oregon Coast, I immediately engage and let them know about the dangers of such activities. The debates between my uncle and I are legend in my family.

Deciding to engage a stranger in conversation can be challenging. It can be especially difficult if the topic is unfamiliar to you, their tone is aggressive or the topic is controversial. One of the roles of the Public Affairs Office is to help employees (and retirees) understand the mission and activities of the Corps. There are several reasons for this, but a knowledgeable workforce can enable employees to serve as ambassadors or statespersons in the community.

The Corps is duty-bound to keep the public informed of its activities. There are several formal methods we use to accomplish this task: news media engagements, a public website, social media (such as Facebook and Twitter) and working with park rangers who meet with the public on a daily basis. But there are informal ways the Corps keeps the public informed and one is through its workforce.

But that informal workforce conduit only works if the employees are knowledgeable and willing to engage. Are you?

Retiree Dave Beach, former operations project manager for Channels and Harbors Project is one such person. "Whenever my ear picks up a mention of any Corps-related activity, I chime in as appropriate... with enthusiasm. When appropriate, I also straighten out folks on our role and that of Congress ... oftentimes very misunderstood!"

Another retiree who stays engaged with the District is Col. (retired) Terry Connell who commanded the District from 1979 to 1982.

"I do seek to remain very much a part of the 'Corps Family,' which I strongly believe continues on into retirement," Connell said. "I share in the interest of supporting our Corps missions and accomplishments with friends and others in the community, and seeking for people to better know and understand the values and returns that are realized."

Corps statespersons don't need to know everything about everything. A general understanding of the agency's mission is good start. For example, the Corps is part of the United States Army. It is a water resource development

Continued on pg. 18

Photo of John Day Lock and Dam by Robert Van der borg, Corps of Engineers retiree

As one of Portland District's primary missions, hydroelectric power is a common topic of discussion among the general public. Are you prepared to answer their questions about where their power comes from?

Corps of Engineers images

You can learn about Portland District by reading Corps'pondent or by visiting its website to access current information and links to other Corps districts and resources.

Rogue Basin mechanic's innovation improves oil accountability

by Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

One of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Environmental Operating Principles is being accountable for activities that may impact the environment. Keeping track of the thousands of gallons of oil used in our dams' powerhouses is definitely a big-ticket activity in that respect.

Paul Horvath, a power plant mechanic at Portland District's Rogue River Basin Project, came up with a simple but innovative way to do just that with the oil used to lubricate hydropower generator bearings to help powerhouse operators.

Those bearings use a lot of oil. Monitoring the levels of that oil at William L. Jess Dam to make sure the generators are operating properly and the environment is being protected can be difficult.

"Our electronics tech acquired digital sensors to monitor oil levels," Horvath said. "I was tasked with finding out how to mount them in various sump tanks, which would have been difficult – taking the generators offline, disassembling systems, that sort of thing."

But the digital sensors were hopefully still going to improve on the existing system – visual sight glasses that were very inaccurate and required many connecting points that were an endless source of nuisance leaks.

"Any two people would have come to different conclusions as to how much oil was in the tank after looking at those old sight glasses," said Jim Buck, operations project manager for the Rogue River Basin Project.

Horvath did some research and found and installed an improved sight glass system that eliminated 10 of 13 contact points, which reduced the leaks and greatly improved monitoring accuracy.

He then machined the top of the new sight glasses to accept the digital probes and readouts, which now monitor the oil level inside the sight glass chambers themselves.

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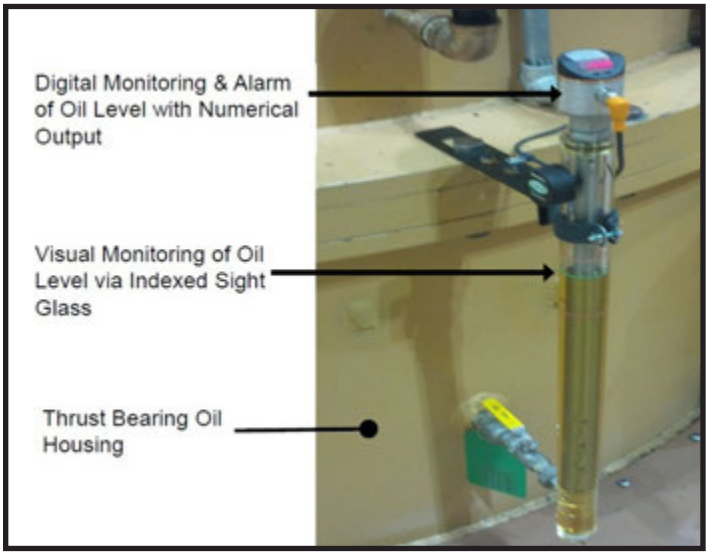
Photo by Jim Buck, Rogue River Basin Project

"Paul and the entire crew have fully embraced the (oil accountability) program. They see its value and want to support it." – Jim Buck, Rogue River Basin Project operations manager.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers photo illustration

Horvath's innovation allows powerhouse operators to check bearing oil levels visually and digitally at the same time.

Small projects make a big

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

This article is the first in a series of Portland District success stories.

When thinking about projects undertaken by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District, most people think of big, multi-year projects. Did you know the Corps started and completed an entire project in four months for about $100,000?

The Small Projects Team, made up of engineers and members of the District's Construction Branch, works closely with District experts to design, contract and execute a growing number of small projects. They may not be as big as the projects you're used to seeing, but they are as vital to the District's operations as any turbine replacement or fish facility construction.

"There are actually more small projects being executed than the traditional ones most people think of," said Mike Magee, the SPT lead engineer. "They generally are low-risk, with small budgets and short deadlines, while maintaining the District's expectation of high quality. They may not be complex projects, but they are often critical, helping the District meet its obligations and operate efficiently."

The team was formed because District leaders recognized it cost about the same to execute both large and small projects and since its beginning, SPT successfully executed its mission. "The SPT was formed in 2006. District leaders knew a small project's focus was important, but everyone wanted to be sure we were prepared to take on the work. When I arrived the team was working on five projects – two in the design phase and three that were yet to be awarded," Magee said. Magee, started with Portland District in 1999, but left for a few years to work at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Returning to the District in 2013, he says he saw the team's workload increase.

"The SPT started with a handful of dedicated staff set on developing streamlined procedures and testing innovative methods to execute the District's smaller projects, always with a focus on high quality standards," Magee said.

Photo by Katherine Groth

The Small Projects Team repaired portions of the Coos Bay dock, one of 33 projects being completed by the team. The Corps dredge *Yaquina* moors at the dock when it works in the area. Work included replacing the wood braces near the water level, a damaged mooring dolphin and the gangways used by the crew.

Photo by Fenton Khan

A fish weir is lifted into place at the Foster Dam spillway that includes a Passive Integrated Transponder tag detector. When they pass by the detector, small PIT tags inserted into juvenile fish provide data, allowing fish biologists to monitor their path to the Pacific Ocean. The Small Projects team helped the Willamette Valley Project complete the work in time for the 2014 juvenile fish spring migration.

"Building on these foundations, we have grown into an eight-person team and we are currently tracking 33 projects from start to finish." Each project has a different focus but each one meets the small project criteria: well defined scope, low-to-medium risk potential, minimal technical requirements and good cost-savings potential.

One project the team successfully completed was the Cascades Island Total Dissolved Gas Monitoring Station Sensor Piping Replacement at Bonneville Lock and Dam. The sensor, which operates 1,400 feet downstream of Bonneville's spillway, is monitored by U.S. Geological Survey and plays a key role in the District's support of NOAA Fisheries' 2008 Biological Opinion. During the previous three years the piping used to deploy and house the sensor had failed, putting the Corps' compliance with the BiOp at risk. The piping's failure meant the Corps would be unable to reliably deploy and protect the sensor, which is used to monitor total dissolved gas in the waters below the spillway as required under the terms of the BiOp. Without the sensor in place, the spillway's flows cannot be adjusted to ensure viable TDG levels for juvenile fish as they travel toward the Pacific Ocean. The sensor must operate effectively during the April to August spill season.

The project's design phase began in December 2013 with a statement of work; the team expected a Notice to Proceed for the contractor by mid-March. That left just three months for the team to plan and design the pipe replacement, prepare the contracting package and award the contract. "A traditional project's timeline would likely have taken more time and money to execute due additional reviews and competing resourcing demands," Magee said.

The contractor began the work March 14, 2014. The pipe was replaced, and the contractor demobilized and offsite by March 27. "The whole team – not just the design team members, but those in Contracting, Safety, Operations and the resident offices – worked together to plan and execute a critical element in the Corps' operation," Magee said. "Thanks to everyone we were able to design and execute a reliable fix to ensure the Corps remained in compliance with the BiOp."

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Photo by Corina Popescu

Workers install a flow plate near a juvenile fish passage system at Bonneville that keeps juvenile fish from entering the turbine. The Small Projects Team installed an experimental flow plate to confirm that it works. Results are still pending, but based on preliminary data the plate seems to be working.

Photo by Mike Magee

A construction crew replaces the pipe that protects a total dissolved gas sensor at Bonneville Lock and Dam. The U.S. Geological Service uses the sensor to measure levels of dissolved gas in the spillway. The Small Projects Team designed and installed the new pipe in time for the 2014 juvenile fish migration which began in April.

Corps proposes action to manage double-crested cormorant predation of Columbia River fish

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

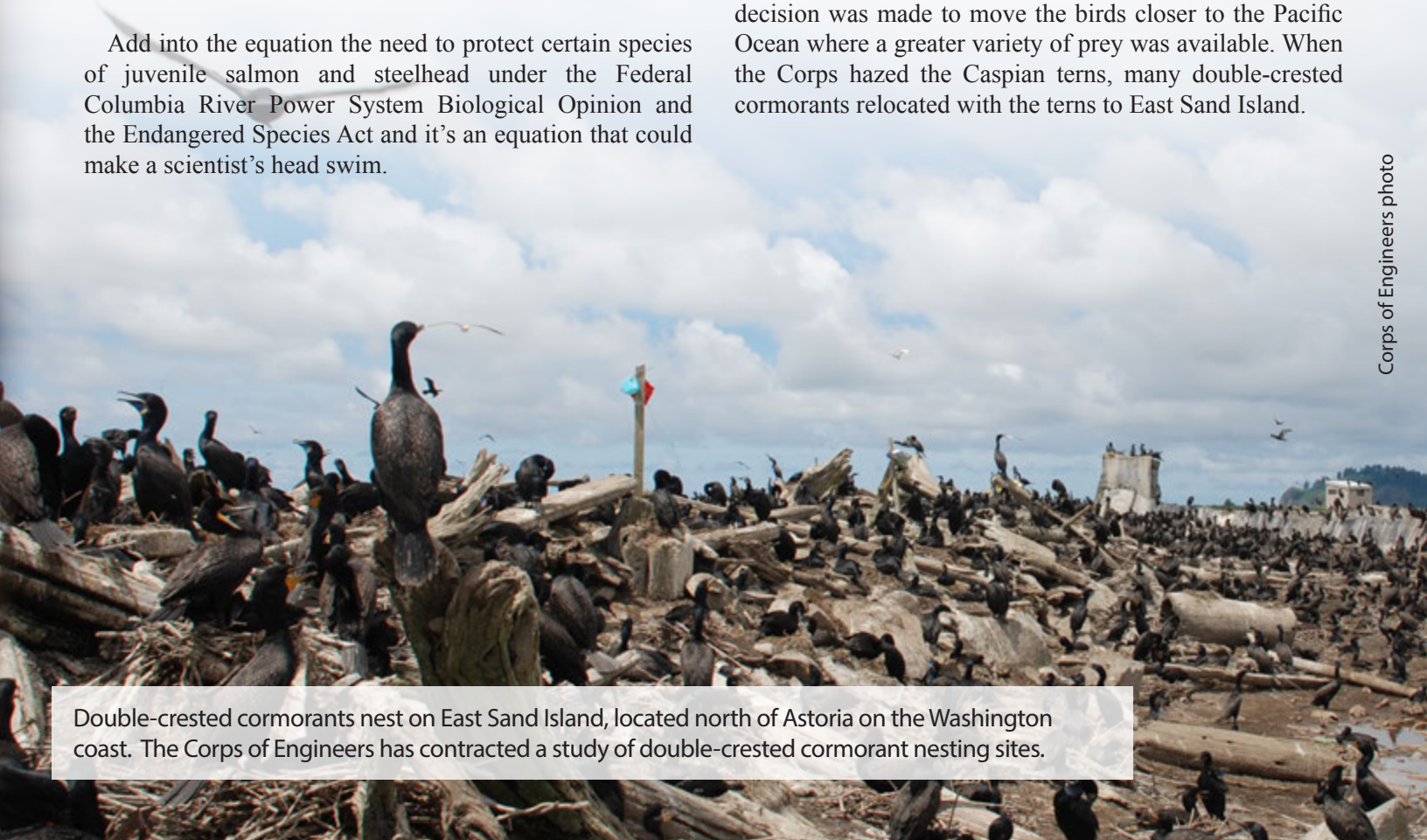
Seabirds eat fish - it's what they're supposed to do. Juvenile Columbia River salmon and steelhead have to travel from their natal streams to the ocean to grow. For the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the problem arises when as many as 18 million young fish get eaten by double-crested cormorants in one year, many of which are species listed under the Endangered Species Act.

In early May, during peak nesting season, double-crested cormorants can eat up to one pound of fish per day at East Sand Island. With about 14,000 nesting pairs feeding young chicks, that adds up to a lot of fish.

Add into the equation the need to protect certain species of juvenile salmon and steelhead under the Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion and the Endangered Species Act and it's an equation that could make a scientist's head swim.

East Sand Island lies just off the Washington shore a few miles inland from the mouth of the Columbia River jetty system. During much of its history, a wide variety of sea birds like Caspian terns and several species of cormorants made their nests on the small island.

In the late 1990s, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers began hazing Caspian terns from Rice Island, located deeper in the Columbia River estuary. Federal agencies realized the terns were eating a larger percentage of juvenile salmon and steelhead, known as smolts – and that percentage was impacting Endangered Species Act-listed salmonids. The decision was made to move the birds closer to the Pacific Ocean where a greater variety of prey was available. When the Corps hazed the Caspian terns, many double-crested cormorants relocated with the terns to East Sand Island.



Corps of Engineers photo

Double-crested cormorants nest on East Sand Island, located north of Astoria on the Washington coast. The Corps of Engineers has contracted a study of double-crested cormorant nesting sites.

As part of its dredge operations near the MCR, the Corps placed dredge materials on ESI. The sandy soil offered nesting habitat that many birds, including double-crested cormorants, found inviting: sandy ground, good access to nesting materials and an abundant supply of smolts.

"The Corps has been studying the cormorant population on ESI since 1997, analyzing the birds' nesting habits and smolt consumption," said Joyce Casey, chief of the Portland District Environmental Resources Branch. "In 1998 there were about 6,000 breeding pairs on the island; today there are more than 14,000."

Since then, the size of other cormorant nesting colonies on the West Coast appear to have remained static, while the population at ESI has dramatically increased.

Research focused on understanding how cormorants interact with the habitat and their neighbors – including how dispersing them throughout the region could impact other areas. "We contracted with researchers from Oregon State University's Oregon Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit to determine, in part, whether a smaller nesting habitat would make the island less suitable for the cormorants," Casey said.

It didn't. Double-crested cormorants seemed unaffected, even when the habitat got downright crowded. "The research showed that as the habitat size decreased, the cormorants just moved in closer to neighboring nests," Casey said. "Moving the birds to another location in the region isn't likely, given the abundance of prey in the estuary. We need to address this as a regional issue."

The Corps is the lead agency for the Columbia River Estuary Double-Crested Cormorant Environmental Impact Statement, which will designate a plan to manage the largest cormorant colony in North America. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Wildlife Services and the Fish and Wildlife departments of Oregon and Washington are cooperating agencies, which means the plan has input from all agencies.

An EIS is an in-depth document prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. NEPA requires federal agencies to consider environmental impacts and evaluate reasonable alternatives in the decision making process.

Corps of Engineers photo

Researchers with Oregon State University study double-crested cormorants at East Sand Island in the Columbia River estuary. The research is funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. A researcher records data from banded cormorants near ESI.

"Preparing an EIS is a long process," said Sondra Ruckwardt, Cormorant EIS project manager. "We must document our research methods and results, consult with other agencies and tribal nations, determine the scope of the study – including an opportunity for members of the public to help define the scope, draft the document, provide a public comment period, finalize the document and prepare the Record of Decision for the Corps' Northwestern Division commander's signature."

The Corps has been studying cormorant nesting behavior since NOAA Fisheries released its first FCRPS BiOp in 2000. The BiOp provides guidance for juvenile survival rates through the federal dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers. But as fish passage improvements helped the smolts to safely pass the dams, another threat was waiting in the estuary: many thousands of seabirds looking for food to feed their young, including double-crested cormorants.

"The juvenile survival rates at Corps dams have increased based on improvements we've completed, such as the Bonneville juvenile fish passage system and The Dalles spillwall. We have spent millions of dollars improving fish passage since 2000 and there's not much more we can do to

improve them," Casey said. That's why the Corps needed to create a plan to manage avian predation, Casey added.

"In the initial BiOp, NOAA Fisheries notified the Corps it needed to come up with a plan to decrease the impact of cormorant predation on ESA-listed juvenile salmon and steelhead," Ruckwardt said. "It's impossible for us to protect only the ESA-listed smolts, so the management plan has to protect all the juveniles passing by East Sand Island."

NOAA Fisheries included a deadline for the Corps to comply with specific target populations in the 2014 update of the BiOp. "The target colony size, with a base cormorant population level of about 5,600 breeding pairs, was determined by NOAA Fisheries as a sustainable predation rate that would allow both double-crested cormorants and ESA-listed smolts to thrive," Ruckwardt said.

That means the Corps must reduce the colony size by about 8,000 breeding pairs, or 16,000 individuals by the end of 2018. The draft EIS evaluates alternatives to reach this BiOp goal. "The BiOp is an important tool to help the Corps satisfy the requirements of the Endangered Species Act," Ruckwardt said. "Reducing the cormorant population in the Columbia River estuary back to the base period level is one way that a management plan can address this issue of increased predation. We need to find an alternative that will allow us to meet our 2018 deadline."

Corps of Engineers photo

Researchers from Oregon State University band a cormorant chick at ESI. The band provides data about the bird's range and behavior.

Corps of Engineers image

Environmental impact statements, because they address environmental issues, are usually controversial and this EIS is no exception. The draft EIS outlines four alternatives to reach the required target population; the Corps' preferred alternative, culling up to 16,000 individual birds over the next four years, is based on the best science available to the Corps and the cooperating agencies.

"I think the numbers surprised a lot of people," Casey said. "Cormorants are long-lived birds, so less lethal measures will not get us to the target population by the 2018 deadline. None of the researchers and biologists working on this EIS got into their careers to kill birds. It's a difficult decision, but we all believe it is the best solution based on everything we have learned, especially since our goal is to reduce predation throughout the entire 168-mile estuary."

The controversy is fueled by both sides of the issue. Groups like the Audubon Society of Portland are firmly against the preferred alternative, while groups like the Association of Northwest Steelheaders and tribal fishers feel equally strong about its necessity. The draft EIS is currently available for public review and comment and the Corps is receiving thousands of comments.

"The purpose of the comment period is to give agencies, organizations and individuals the chance to review our data and offer suggestions on something we may have missed," Ruckwardt said. "We would like to have someone offer another alternative that still gets the Corps to the target population size by 2018 and reduces predation throughout the estuary. Study the data and tell us about something we might have missed."

The Corps and the cooperating agencies are hosting open houses and webinars during the comment period. The meetings offer direct dialog with the biologists and staff who have done the research and understand the process.

After the public comment period ends, the team will review and address all the comments in the final document.

At the request of the Audubon Society of Portland, the Corps has extended the comment period by two weeks, meaning comments must be received by Aug. 19.

"All comments we receive become part of the public record and every one will be considered, whether it's 'I hate what you're planning' or 'here's something I think you missed,'" Ruckwardt said. "The final EIS will be complete in fall of 2014 and we'll have a final management plan by the end of the year." The Corps will begin implementing the plan in spring 2015.

Ruckwardt and her team know not everyone will be pleased with the final result. "There are strong feelings on both sides of the issue. We know seabirds eat fish. The problem is that the double-crested cormorant colony at East Sand Island is eating ESA-listed juvenile salmon and steelhead at an unsustainable rate."

To learn more about the Columbia River Estuary Double-Crested Cormorant Environmental Impact Statement visit the Portland District website. An executive summary and the complete document are available at *http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/CormorantEIS.aspx.*

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Small projects make a big impact in Portland District

Word is getting around the operating projects about the SPT's great work and Magee wants the project requests to keep coming.

"Most people recognize a small project when they see it, but our challenge has been changing the traditional work model so they think of us when they first start planning a project," Magee said. "We can help get many of their critical projects done quickly, with solid work procedures and, I may add, usually at a significant cost savings to them."

George Medina, the project manager for the Bonneville Powerhouse 2 Fish Guidance Efficiency Project, that the team completed in April, was impressed with the process and the team. "The whole team did an outstanding job. They worked with a diverse group of partners for input and executed a well-designed project. Timing was important, because this project supported decreasing juvenile fish mortality and it needed to be done before the spring migration." In less than three months the team designed, pulled together specs, found a contractor, awarded a contract, then fabricated and installed a flow control device – all ahead of schedule, Medina said.

The Small Projects Team prides itself on helping its customers find creative solutions to critical problems on time and within budget, but its members benefit as well. "The SPT provides a snapshot of the Engineering and Construction Division's process of executing a project from inception to completion," Magee said. "You can see a job through construction in a short period of time. Many design projects span several years, but a small project typically spans only a couple of months. Team members learn about a wide range of projects, which keeps everyone interested and engaged."

Magee believes there's a bright future for the Small Projects Team, including leading the Corps to a more innovative approach to many of its projects. "Successful and innovative means to accomplish tasks can be applied elsewhere to improve other processes to meet objectives in the District's Policy and Procedures manual, our quality control manual. All of us are proud to create an opportunity to build new foundations for future processes."

Best of all, since the team works with projects lasting only a few months, there is often room in the queue for new projects. "Managers can either talk directly with an team member to learn if their project is a good candidate, or they may present their project via the EC Technical Lead Request process, which includes an SPT screening," Magee said.

Large projects don't always offer the most cost-effective methods to perform the work necessary to maintain the District's resources and meet its many missions. Sometimes all that is needed is a reliable, cost-effective means of getting a smaller job done – and the Small Projects Team is ready to do just that – on time and with a much smaller budget.

Leadership Development Program welcomes new class

Fifteen employees selected for this year's Portland District Leadership Development Program will spend the next year together, honing their presentation skills and learning about leadership principles in action.

A capstone project will conclude the program demonstrating and highlighting their personnel management, team building and project development skills.

The class will be facilitated by Lance Helwig, chief of Engineering and Construction Division and Sheryl Carrubba, Senior Navigation Program Manager for Northwestern Division, both of whom bring a tremendous amount of individual, organizational and national leadership experience to the three academic components of the program.

Sheryl Carrubba (Facilitator), Senior Navigation Program Manager, Northwestern Division

LDP is an intensive year-long program that requires time, dedication and commitment. Coursework is at the graduate level and participants can either earn college credits toward a master's degree or the slightly less rigorous certificate of completion.

Lance Helwig (Facilitator), Chief, Engineering and Construction Division

Join Portland District in welcoming this year's new class … together they have a combined 140 years of service to the Corps.

To learn more about this year's LDP class, visit Portland District's Strategy Office intranet page.

Ray Guajardo, Chief Power Plant Operator, Bonneville Lock and Dam

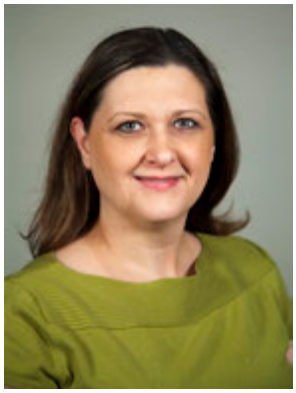
Cindy Studebaker, Fisheries Biologist, Environmental Branch

Chris Walker, Fisheries Biologist, Operations Division

Ian Chane, Fisheries Biologist, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division

Alison Burcham, Environmental Engineer, Engineering and Construction Division

Shawn Worthington, Chief, Protection System Section for the Hydroelectric Design Center



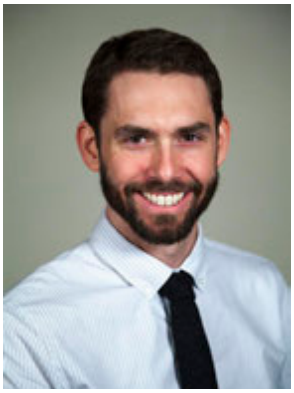
Lorraine Stoeckel, Program Analyst, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division

Alan Stokke, Mechanical Design Engineer, Engineering and Construction Division

Barbara Cisneros, Environmental Resources Specialist, Environmental Branch

Ann Layman, Budget Analyst, Willamette Valley Project

Catherine Campbell, Mechanical Engineer, Hydroelectric Design Center



Chris Page, Archeologist, Regulatory Branch

James Calnon, Chief, Mechanical Design Section, Hydroelectric Design Center

Kathryn Newhouse, Contracting Officer, Contracting Division

Smart Ocholi, Computer Engineer, Hydroelectric Design Center

Matt Craig, Dam Safety Program Manager, Engineering and Construction Division

Dive teams pool resources for busy season

Partnerships provide mentor opportunities

By Rick Benoit, Operations Division, and Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

Divers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dive team buddied up with U.S. Navy and commercial divers to complete their latest, and busiest, work season. The team completed about 50 jobs in six months – some as close to home as Bonneville Lock and Dam and others as far away as Japan.

Portland District serves as the management hub for the regionalized Rapid Response/Technical Dive-ROV (remotely-operated vehicle) Team, authorized by commanders and supported by divers and logistics staff from both Portland and Walla Walla districts.

"This season was extremely busy, beyond previous years," said Portland District's deputy district dive coordinator and ROV program manager Todd Manny. "It's been crazy busy–just how we like it!"

U.S. Navy dive teams from Bangor, Washington, and the Navy Undersea Warfare Center in Keyport, Washington provided critical operations and safety expertise during several of the Portland and Walla Walla project dives and ROV missions.

This longstanding partnership with the Navy helped the Corps to collaborate, execute and/or oversee 31 dive operations at eight Corps dams in the Northwestern Division, Manny said.

The team completed 10 underwater missions considered as either emergency, time critical or out-of-schedule, meaning the dives would eliminate imminent threats to life, property or operations. For example, the Portland District dive team quickly coordinated repairs to fix a leaking crack in the fish ladder exit on McNary Dam's Washington shore, which threatened worker safety. They also corrected a water flow problem at Cougar Dam's new portable floating fish collector that prohibited fish passage.

The Keyport and Bangor Navy teams provided nearly 30 days of safe, efficient and cost effective diving on 10 missions. Keyport Master Chief Petty Officer Chad Leaman, master diver and 25-year Navy veteran, describes the work as exciting, totally out of the ordinary and challenging: "People are always amazed when I tell them we're doing work on a Columbia River dam. With that experience and our relationship with the Portland District, we've been referred to other Corps District jobs."

The composition of mission teams depends primarily on the schedule and the skills and abilities needed to complete the tasks safely and efficiently. Preparing for dives requires

A U.S. Navy diver prepares for an emergency cold-water dive in January at McNary Dam to assist with a crack repair in the North Shore Fish Ladder.

Gear is set on deck carefully for an upcoming dive at Foster Dam

some familiarity with the dam's infrastructure, so teams will often practice their dives and actions on land if a task or area is new to them. The Portland dive office reviews all dive plans prior to water entry and a registered engineer frequently verifies after-dive reports.

"These operational training exercises are one of many benefits of working at Corps facilities," said Navy diver Chief Petty Officer Brett Eversmann of the Puget Sound Naval Shipyard Dive Locker. A dive locker is a diver's "fire station" where they get their assignments and store their gear. Eversmann adds that divers from partnering organizations can familiarize themselves with Corps operations and facilities, an advantage in the event of an unforeseen disaster. "This collaboration provides rigging, inspection, cutting and welding, and mobilization experience that is crucial to a junior diver's progression within in the Navy diving community."

"Few other dive lockers are ever afforded an opportunity to dive on these rivers or on operating dams," adds Chief Petty Officer Jared Butler, a Navy dive team supervisor with 15 Corps diving missions under his belt. "It is exciting because you can be doing an inspection on one dive and drilling, fixing and making recommendations that might save thousands of dollars on another dive."

Manny, himself a retired Navy diver, agrees, "These joint missions are an excellent example of a win-win relationship for the Corps. The other dive teams get exceptional training and work experience, and the Corps gets jobs done well and safely."

50 dives in 6 months

Between October 2013 and April 2014, the team assisted with dive oversight in Japan, Puerto Rico and Hawaii. They prepared and presented three week-long classroom trainings, and planned the execution of four dives at U.S. Army installations, including West Point, New York and Fort Meyers/ Henderson-Hall in Washington, D.C. The team's dive and ROV expertise reached Virginia and Maryland, the Corps' Seattle, Kansas City, Omaha, Tulsa, Albuquerque and San Francisco districts and south to the Corp's Engineering Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi.

Corps and U.S. Navy divers

work on some highly technical assignments that use a variety of skills. Here are some examples of dives and tasks often completed in nearly freezing water, with no in-water visibility and among piles of floating organic debris and manufactured trash.

- Conduct a below-water ultrasonic inspection of spillway gates to determine structural integrity and the ability to hold water back at Bonneville Lock and Dam
- Inspect removable spillway weir skin plates at Walla Walla District's Lower Granite Dam for rust, corrosion and structural weakness. These weirs are multi-million dollar structures that assist with fish passage through dams.
- Repair a Lower Granite Dam juvenile fish facility's water pump to assist with fish passage. The team cleared the trash rack, cleaned bulkhead slots and sills and assisted with the placement of bulkhead to allow workers to drain the pump chamber and work in the dry.
- Survey for and locate unexploded ordinance in Naha Port (Okinawa, Japan) and Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Perform engineer-certified structural inspections of waterfront facilities such as piers, seawalls and docks for the Department of Army's Infrastructure Management Command and the Corp's Engineering Research and Development Center in Mississippi.
- Investigate illegal dumping of debris by contractor-operator dredge for Seattle District.
- Assist with removal of water intake valves at John Martin Dam in Hasty, Colorado.
- Release immovable bulkhead at Fish Ladder Entrance Lamprey Prototype at McNary Dam on the Columbia River.

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Do you have what it takes to be a Corps of Engineers Statesperson?

agency. Its people maintain dams built to reduce flooding and produce hydroelectric power. The Corps doesn't operate all dams and it cannot stop all flooding. And, we are still managing sediment from the 1980 eruption of Mount St. Helens.

"Water management and its inherent supply aspect are invaluable resources provided by the Corps. And emergency preparedness and response, as in the case of Mt. St. Helens and the many storm and flood events prove to be extremely beneficial," Connell added.

The Corps also has a worldwide mission to support Soldiers in other countries and provide international civil works support, when requested, through the U.S. State Department.

The key to any conversation is the ability to separate fact from fiction, and knowing where to get accurate information.

I've already mentioned a few sources of information, namely the District's public website. The Public Affairs Office, working with project managers and business line experts, has amassed a collection of information, videos and public process actions from the Portland District. From this website, you can also tap into information from other Districts or the headquarters office.

You are readers of another source … the Corps'pondent. This newspaper is published six times a year and is distributed in hardcopy and on the Internet.

And, when we learn the evening news will feature District activities – especially if the story is controversial – we send out our understanding of the situation to employees via email. We can't always do this, but it is another means to ensure you have the information you need to understand the facts. What other tools would be beneficial to you?

District leadership wants you to be proud of your employment with the Corps and the valuable missions we are entrusted to execute. Portland District commander Col. Jose Aguilar is very quick to point out that the more than 1,200 District employees enjoy a great reputation because of the great legacy left by the thousands of people who came before us. And, that we have a responsibility to carry that legacy forward, ever contributing to the story. To paraphrase the commander, we are writing that next chapter today. How will it read?

Continued from pg. 7

Rogue Basin mechanic's innovation improves oil accountability

The sight glasses in turn are plumbed into the generators' bearing oil. This allows an operator to check oil levels both visually and digitally in one reading.

"Operators don't like to be blind," Horvath said. "They want to see their oil. Now they can see it really well – it makes checking oil during their inspections much easier."

The digital monitor also automatically sends oil level data to the powerhouse operator's computer, which analyzes the data around the clock. An automated alarm notifies the operator of low or high oil readings so a visual inspection can be made immediately.

Closely monitoring oil levels is part of an overall District oil accountability program that helps powerhouse crews better prevent or more quickly respond to oil leaks and spills that might otherwise cause serious environmental and equipment damage.

"For crew members, oil accountability could be another burden, something to address after they finish their regular work," Buck said. "But Paul and the entire crew have fully embraced the program. They see its value and want to support it."

In fact, the William L. Jess powerhouse crew supports it so much that it was his teammate, power plant electrician Richard Bebout, who suggested that Horvath's innovation was worthy of an award, and drafted the nomination for the Corps' Innovation of the Year Award.

Horvath joined the Rogue River Basin Project in 2007 after nine years at Portland District's John Day Lock and Dam Project, where he completed the powerhouse mechanic training program.

Water safety in the classroom and on the road

A commentary and photos by Amber Tilton, The Dalles Lock and Dam

Successful water safety outreach has to start with engaging the audience. With increasing emphasis on water safety in the past several years, I wanted to do something different, something dynamic.

So in September 2010, I began a water safety poster contest at The Dalles Middle School. A poster contest wasn't something I'd done before, so I gathered ideas through a community of practice called the Corps' Ranger Network and explored the Interpretive Exchange Toolbox on the Natural Resource Management Gateway Website. I decided to target sixth grade students so I contacted the local middle school's principal and health teachers to see if they would participate. I also reached out to Safe Kids Columbia Gorge, a committee I've been part of since 2010. They offered to donate the prizes for the contest (life jackets) and the brown paper grocery bags for the kids to make their posters on.

I developed a basic plan for the annual contest: park rangers teach water safety programs to 6th grade health students throughout the school year, kids create a poster based on something they learned about water safety with winners announced at an end-of-year assembly. The ranger staff picks the best posters based on originality, creativity and the clarity of the water safety message. Afterwards, the remaining posters were printed onto grocery bags that are donated to the local farmer's market and food bank to spread the water safety message out to the community at large.

Not content to rest on these successes, my supervisor challenged me: How do we build upon the poster contest to make it bigger than students learning about water safety and their posters circulating through the community?

In response, I developed the idea to have the artwork for the winning, best-in-contest poster be transformed into an outdoor highway billboard. I contacted our local billboard company, Meadow Outdoors, who was happy to partner with us in this public safety campaign!

So here we are, four years after the first poster contest with water safety billboards designed by young artists from the local middle school and Meadows Outdoors as a new partner in water safety.

We have reached our kids, and they've spread the message throughout the community with their posters. Now we are also sharing their messages with all who drive by our little town: Life Jackets Save Lives!

Visit *http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/About/WaterSafety.aspx* for more about the Corps' Water Safety Program or information about how to hold a water safety poster contest in your community.

SHARING THE CORPS MESSAGE:

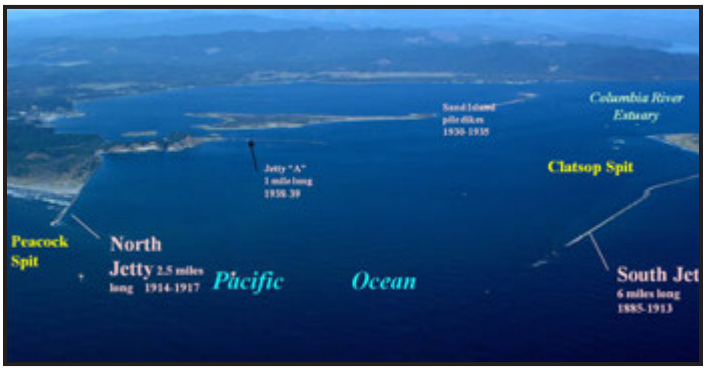
You are the face of the Corps. Share these messages with your family, friends and community.

MCR North Jetty access restricted beginning fall 2014

Spread the word!

Access to the North Jetty at the Mouth of the Columbia River will be restricted beginning in October 2014, as the Portland District begins the next phase of the major rehabilitation of the jetty system.

- The Corps will mobilize equipment and personnel to replace a culvert under Jetty Road in Cape Disappointment State Park, and place material in the lagoon at the jetty's root. A fence will identify the active construction site, which will be off limits to the general public. The project will stop erosion and stabilize and protect the root of the structure.
- Project details and a map showing the construction area and impacts are available at *http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Currentprojects/MouthoftheColumbiaRiverjetties.aspx.*



Corps of Engineers image

The Corps operates and maintains three jetties and the navigation channel that serves as the border between Washington and Oregon. The north jetty, built from 1913 to 1917, is 2.5 miles long. Jetty "A" was built in 1939 and is 0.3 miles long. The north jetty and jetty "A" are on the Washington side of the Mouth. On the Oregon side is the south jetty, built from 1885 to 1895 and 6.6 miles long

The MCR North Jetty will be off limits to the general public beginning October 2014 as the Portland District begins repairs to the structure. The North Jetty was completed in 1917 and has undergone repairs and rehabilitation several times since original construction. The current rehabilitation project is scheduled to be complete in 2019.

- Cape Disappointment visitors should expect construction-related traffic, road closures and some traffic delays. Jetty Road will be closed during the culvert replacement, and the west side of the east parking will be closed to accommodate construction staging. Access to Benson Beach from Jetty Road may be temporarily restricted during this time.
- After the culvert work is complete, Jetty Road between the east parking lot and the northern gravel parking lot will be closed Monday through Friday with plans to open on weekends and holidays. Some additional closures may be necessary at times as the lagoon fill project continues into spring 2015.
- Park visitors can access Benson Beach during the road closure on foot from the east parking lot or the northern gravel parking lot.

Photo by Billie Johnson, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers