



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District

CORPS' PONDENT

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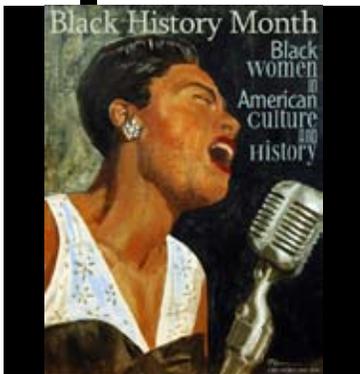


Portland District's Readiness Team and the Multnomah County Drainage District partner for crisis response training.



January - February, 2012

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Commander: Col. John Eisenhower, P.E.
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 Editor: Erica Jensen



Planning for 2012 and beyond



Greetings, Portland District Team

As we embark on a new year, we are already into the second quarter of executing our FY12-14 Portland District Operations Plan.

The OPLAN guides the District in support and achievement of USACE goals and objectives, as identified in the USACE Campaign Plan and the Northwestern Division Campaign Implementation Plan. As such, it is our roadmap to success in the years ahead.

As a District, we will align and synchronize our work and make deliberate and informed corporate decisions on the best use of our resources to achieve our OPLAN end states. When requirements outside the OPLAN arise, we will make a corporate decision to either divert resources or incorporate new objectives and adjust work priorities as necessary.

As you can see, the OPLAN is a dynamic product that changes over time. I share the Chief of Engineers' intent for the District to be one disciplined team – in thought, word, and action – and to meet our commitments, with and through our partners, by “saying what we will do, and doing what we say.”

I ask each of you to embrace the OPLAN . . . to read it, know it, and support its execution through the performance of your duties. Your individual performance and future professional development serve as the foundation of success for the achievement of the District OPLAN's goals and objectives. Thus, you ultimately determine our level of mission success and subsequently contribute to the success of USACE overall.

You helped shape this year's OPLAN. In January 2011, we asked senior leaders across the District to solicit employee input to identify areas where Portland District could improve our performance. Your collective voice was heard — all of you offered more than 80 suggestions.

To help focus our organizational energy, these suggestions were streamlined by the District's Business Process Management Group into 17 focus areas for improvement. Then a group of 60 employees, representing a cross section of the organization, convened a two-day planning summit workshop to further refine the focus areas to just a few actions that the District would focus on over the next three years to improve our performance.



Col. John Eisenhauer, P.E.

The new actions you identified that have been adopted for our FY12-14 OPLAN are as follows:

- Knowledge/Data Management
- ACE-IT Roles/Responsibilities
- Streamlining Timekeeping Procedures
- Environmental Sustainability

Detailed information on these actions as well as OPLAN actions continued from FY 2011 are available on the District's intranet at: <https://w3.nwp.usace.army.mil/de/docs/FY12-14NWPOPLAN.pdf>.

This issue of Corps'pondent contains articles that will further your understanding of how critical you are to shaping the District OPLAN and, thus, the success of our District. Thanks for your support. 📧

Actions Continued from FY11:

- Contingency Operations (Action 1)
- Columbia River Basin (Action 3)
- Columbia River Treaty (Action 4)
- Regulatory Programs (Action 5)
- Risk Based Asset Management (Action 7)
- Quality Management (Action 10)
- P2 (Action 11)
- IDPs & Supervisory University (Action



Employees critical to mission success

By Erica Jensen, Public Affairs Office

When asked, Greg Vincent, a supply technician in the Portland District's warehouse, said part of his job supports the operation of the Corps' dredges, the Essayons and Yaquina. He's proud that his job helps keep our navigation channels open for shipping, which in turn, supports our Northwest economy – which meets one of the District's important missions.



Greg Vincent, a supply technician, Portland District warehouse.

Corps of Engineers photo

Vincent's work also supports the District and Northwestern Division with materials handling, stock and inventory control, product receiving and property disposal – all of which support USACE goals for mission execution and business process efficiencies.

Every employee's job (and even their future professional development) directly impacts the District's ability to achieve its operations planning goals. Because of this, each employee should know how their job relates to the Portland District Operations Plan -- which is a three-year roadmap that supports the District's mission and describes improvements to the efficiency and effectiveness of ALL of its operations.

The OPLAN also supports the achievement of goals and higher-level purposes of the USACE Campaign Plan, the Army and the Nation. It includes action items, key tasks and measurements – but ultimately, the District's operational success depends on YOU.

If you were asked, could you identify how your position supports the District's mission as well as to which of the four primary goals of the USACE Campaign Plan your job relates?

Do you know how important you are to our mission success – now and in the future?

[Editor's Note: Effective Jan. 29, Vincent was promoted to new duties as environmental compliance coordinator and safety specialist for the Channels and Harbors Project.]

EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTION

How do I contribute?

Q. I spend a lot of my time doing CEFMS tasks, how do I support the OPLAN?

A. Training-related actions support workforce development; timekeeping contributes to business process efficiencies.

Q. I work in contracting, how do my efforts contribute to the OPLAN?

A. Successful delivery of quality contracts enables mission execution, workforce development (enables people to work, providing them opportunity to continue to improve their talents through their work efforts) and effective business process efficiencies.

Q. I do repairs at the operating project, how do my efforts support the OPLAN?

A. Repairing project facilities ensures successful operations of our critical infrastructure and supports mission execution and business process efficiencies.

Q. I do design work, how does what I do contribute to the OPLAN?

A. Design drawings on fish-related or navigation structures enable us to meet requirements in our Biological Opinions, enabling us to ensure mission execution and productive relationships.



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District



Portland District

Mission

The dedicated people of the Portland District provide vital public engineering services to the Pacific Northwest and Nation during peace and war to strengthen our security, promote a strong economy, and enhance environmental sustainability.

We will accomplish this by our commitment to the Army and the Nation by:

- ◆ Improving and maintaining navigation for economic development and safety
- ◆ Preventing and reducing flood damage
- ◆ Restoring, enhancing and maintaining ecosystems
- ◆ Generating reliable and efficient hydropower
- ◆ Regulating activities in wetlands and waterways
- ◆ Supporting combat, stability, and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach-back capabilities
- ◆ Providing Corps-wide expertise in hydroelectric planning and engineering
- ◆ Providing safe and healthful recreational opportunities for the public



USACE Campaign Plan goals

Mission execution

Deliver USACE support to combat, stability and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach back capabilities.

Productive relationships

Deliver enduring and essential water resource solutions through collaboration with partners and stakeholders.

Business process efficiencies

Deliver innovative, resilient, sustainable solutions to the Armed Forces and the Nation.

Workforce development

Build and cultivate a competent, disciplined and resilient team equipped to deliver high quality solutions.



Portland District People

Jane Favors has worked for the Portland District for about eight years. She worked for the Corps in the 90s and returned to the Portland District in 2006.

Position: 2nd Mate, Yaquina

Describe your job.

My primary job on the dredge is split between operating the dredging gear and driving the ship. My collateral duty is as the medical officer. Fortunately, the crew is safe and we don't have many medical issues on the ship. *[Editor's note: the medical officer aboard Corps dredges provides basic medical treatment while the vessel is at sea. In an emergency the medical officer provides triage care until the patient can be taken to a hospital on land.]*

What challenges do you encounter when doing your job?

It's a challenge to be away from my family when we're at sea. It's challenging to work in an environment that is constantly changing; we have to be diligent about safety and remain aware of where we are in relation to shallow waters and rocky areas along the coast.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

I like seeing the progress we make during a project. You can see the changes in how the water surface appears in the areas where we dredge; the change in the depth causes it to behave differently.

How does your job fit into our District mission?

We maintain waterways. It's that simple. We make sure they are at the prescribed depth for safe navigation of the Nation's shipping channels.

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

I like the professional opportunities that come with serving aboard the Yaquina. This job comes with a good schedule that lets me balance my career with my family life, and lets me enjoy living in the Northwest.

What was your first job?

I went to Alaska with my first college roommate when I was 18 years old. I worked in a fish cannery and lived in a tent, then got a job as a deck hand on a fish processing ship. I was flown to a beach on a small airplane and got on a small skiff out to the boat. It wasn't as safe back then and after a couple months I realized I should take my parents' advice and return to college; that's when I went to the California Maritime Academy. I also realized it was better to be driving the boat instead of throwing fish around. 📺



Corps of Engineers photos

Readiness exercise improves response skills



By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

Portland District employees from a wide variety of offices participated in a local flood fight training and field response exercise in December to improve skills needed to help protect life and property during storms or other emergencies.

Along with tours of Columbia River levees, participants heard expert briefings on a variety of topics, from emergency support contracting to managing curious journalists. Hands-on exercises included wrestling large pump hoses into place for flood drainage and filling, moving and stacking sandbags.

The event emphasized team integration and communication as key to successful crisis response, and was hosted by Portland District's Readiness Team and the Multnomah County Drainage District. employees

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Portland District employees demonstrate the teamwork necessary to fill and pass sandbags during a flood response exercise at Multnomah County Drainage District facilities.

Corps of Engineers photos

READINESS EXERCISE



***VOLUNTEERS* keep Rogue River Basin Project's in visitors' sights**

By Justin Stegall, Rogue River Basin Projects

Faced with shrinking budgets and growing visitor demands, the Natural Resources Management staff at the Rogue River Basin Projects has been looking at new and innovative ways of keeping our facilities open to the public.

Thanks to the hard work of volunteers and partner agencies, McGregor Visitor Center at Lost Creek Lake – located just off the main highway from Medford, Ore., to Crater Lake National Park – was open seven days a week, rather than three like previous years, increasing visitation by more than 50 percent.

The idea to keep the visitor center open all week materialized after rangers and support staff compared notes on how often we'd opened the doors on days the building was usually closed. The numbers surprised us.

"I'd often let thankful visitors into the center during the week while performing routine maintenance," commented Dan Bladgley, NRM maintenance worker at Lost Creek.

We realized that these visitors represented lost opportunities to educate the public about the Corps and provide a top notch recreation experience.

McGregor Visitor Center was staffed three days a week by Outdoor Environmental Education Program staff from the Bureau of Land Management's Medford District under a memorandum of understanding. The Corps approached the Bureau of Land Management about increasing their staffing days. Although OEEP Coordinator Molly Allen said it would not be feasible for them to staff the center seven days a week, she agreed to support a one day increase.

That's when the idea of using volunteers to cover the remaining three weekdays hit us, and the rest just fell into place.

Across the country, volunteers contribute greatly to providing top notch services to the Corps, our visitors and the nation. In Portland District alone, volunteers contributed 17,349 hours in 2011 with a value of services reaching \$370,574, according to the Operations and Maintenance Business Information Link.

"We use volunteers to achieve many mission goals throughout Portland District, including environmental stewardship, parks and recreation, and staffing visitor centers," said Rogue River Basin Projects Natural Resource Manager Chad Stuart.

The first thing to do at Lost Creek Lake was find a place for

VOLUNTEERS IN THE ROGUE BASIN



McGregor Visitor Center is located just off the main highway from Medford, Ore., to Crater Lake National Park.



Lost Creek Lake

the volunteers to park their camper for the summer. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife quickly came through, offering one of their full hookup camp sites free of charge at Cole M. Rivers Fish Hatchery near the visitor center.

Next on the list was recruiting volunteers. Using the Corps' Volunteer Clearinghouse was an effortless process that returned great results. The project quickly received multiple requests for information regarding the volunteer opportunity.

Needing to get our paperwork in order, the Rogue NRM staff contacted Portland District

volunteer experts at the Willamette Valley and Bonneville Lock and Dam projects. Travis Chewning and Robin Norris were extremely helpful and a wealth of knowledge regarding the Corps' volunteer programs.

After we completed interviews and necessary background checks, our new volunteers arrived, eager and excited to start working. The results were immediate.

"A major increase over historic levels is the result of simple availability," said Lost Creek Lake Park Ranger Edward Amerson.

Heather Armstrong with the BLM OEEP agreed.

"I've heard from many first time visitors that they've always stopped by during the week, when the visitor center wasn't open," she said.

Incorporating volunteers into the daily visitor center operations has been both a learning experience and very rewarding. Through our volunteers, the Corps receives a wealth of knowledge and experience that is eagerly and thoughtfully relayed to our visitors. The volunteer program is alive and strong in the Rogue Valley. Thank you, volunteers – we couldn't have done it without you! 📷



Corps of Engineers photos

The team that helps keep McGregor Visitor Center open seven days a week includes (left to right) BLM Outdoor Environmental Education Program staff members Catherine "Bucky" Dennerlein, Molly Allen, Heather Armstrong, Derek Mauldin and Bridgette Cuffe; Corps park ranger Justin Stegall; and volunteers Margaret "Dee" DeBerry, Sharon Colt and Joe Colt.



John Day Mitigation:

The river runs through it

Finding the right place for the right fish

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

This is the second in a series of articles about the John Day Mitigation Program.

More than 100 years after the federal government signed four treaties in the spring of 1855 with the Columbia River tribes – Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla, The Yakama Indian Nation and the Nez Perce Tribe – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed John Day, the last Columbia River dam, near Rufus, Ore.

Although tribal leaders had worked for years to safeguard tribal fishing rights impacted by Bonneville and The Dalles dams, the Corps' mitigation for fish production losses at two of its Columbia River dam (The Dalles and John Day) became known as the John Day Mitigation Plan, after the last dam was designed and constructed.

"We need to emphasize that the John Day Mitigation Plan encompasses all fish mitigation efforts on the Columbia River above Bonneville Dam," said George Miller, Columbia River Fish Mitigation - John Day Mitigation Project manager. "When the John Day Dam was constructed, the authorization included fish mitigation for constructing The Dalles Dam, too. The question today is whether that mitigation level

is adequate, considering the treaty obligations of the United States, the Federal Courts recognition of the tribes as co-managers, and the tribes' exclusion from the original mitigation planning."

The scope of the mitigation — 30,000 fish returning to spawn each year — was based on historic spawning estimates included in the project authorization documents and various administrative records. Fish production rates under the current mitigation include a 50 percent production split between tule and upper river bright salmon. Tule salmon historically thrived in the Columbia River below Celilo Falls, which are now submerged about 10 miles east of The Dalles Dam; tules are identified by their dark color and pale flesh when they return to fresh water. Upper river brights typically thrived above Celilo Falls. Known for their chrome-bright color and red flesh when they return to the river, upper river brights are prized by tribal and sport fishers alike.

Now, 40 years after the John Day Dam's construction, the original 50-50 production plan does not comply with the 2008 Federal Columbia River Power System Biological Opinion; state and federal agencies and the tribes all agree the mitigation should be revised to 25 percent tule production and 75 percent upper river bright production. In addition, the parties agree that all John Day mitigation should be moved into or above

Zone 6. Zone 6 is the stretch of the Columbia River between Bonneville and McNary dams where most tribal members fish.

"Because we are mitigating for losses in fish production due to construction of The Dalles and John Day dams, everyone agrees we need to ensure the right fish are placed in the right location in the areas where they were impacted," Miller said. It is generally agreed that Celilo Falls was the general limiting factor for tule migration, while upper river brights occur above the falls, he added.

"Currently, more than 17 million smolts are hatched, raised and released in the Columbia River under the John Day Mitigation hatchery program. This release is comprised of a 50-50 split between tules and upper river brights," Miller said. "In addition to reaching the 25-75 production split, we need to embrace the concept of in-place, in-kind fish production, where right type of fish are hatched and reared in the right part of the river." Past production has shown that upriver brights do better in upriver locations and not as well when reared and released in lower river facilities.

"In-place, in-kind mitigation puts the right fish in the right locations and provides better equity of harvest for treaty fisheries," Miller said. "The next step is to ensure fish production occurs in the right places, meaning tule salmon are reared in Zone 6 between Bonneville and The Dalles dams, and upper river brights are reared at Ringold," he added.

The Corps initiated an alternatives study to determine how to increase the number of upriver bright fall Chinook salmon in and above Zone 6. "Ringold Springs Hatchery has returns of successfully acclimated upper river brights, and it appears to have capacity to support increased fish production," Miller said. Ringold stands



The Corps' John Day Mitigation Plan was developed to mitigate for fish production losses due to construction of The Dalles and John Day dams. About 1.7 million fish are produced; 25 percent of those are tule salmon that thrive farther downstream and 75 percent are upper river brights, which thrive above The Dalles Dam.

John Day Mitigation fish production

Hatchery name	Stock	Total released under John Day Mitigation
Spring Creek NFH	Tule	5,985,000
Little White Salmon	Tule	969,000
Bonneville	Tule	1,596,000
Total Tule Stock		8,550,000
Little White Salmon	URB	1,605,000
Bonneville	URB	900,000
Umatilla	URB	480,000
Ringold Springs	URB	3,500,000
Priest Rapids	URB	1,700,000
Prosser Tribal Hatchery	URB	398,480
Total Upper River Brights		13,880,000
Total 2011		17,655,000

out as a means of increasing production to meet the 25-75 production split, he added.

The John Day Mitigation Alternatives Report studied three types of juvenile fish ponds, comparing the strengths and weaknesses of earthen ponds, concrete raceways and round fiberglass containers. Analysis included how well each type of pond scored in cleaning and maintenance, bird predation (a big problem when hungry birds see smolts as dinner), disease protection and control, ease of use and future flexibility.

"We found these three alternatives to be our best choices and the report offered a way to review them quantitatively," Miller said. "Each alternative could help us increase fish production at Ringold Springs."

When the preferred alternative is selected, the Corps will prepare a design report, develop plans and specifications, and will improve Ringold Springs using the features recommended in the Alternatives Report. The report also will be used to analyze the environmental impacts associated with the project and to estimate the cost of the project.

The John Day Mitigation program is undergoing changes designed to address tribal fishing rights and better position tule and upper river bright salmon in the best place on the Columbia River to maximize the number of adults returning from the ocean to spawn. It has taken many discussions, and many issues need to be resolved, but the Corps and its federal, state and tribal partners are focused on locating the right fish in the right place for all the right reasons. ☒



Corps workers deliver donations to Kabul orphans

By Paul Giblin, Afghanistan Engineer District-North

Eight U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees distributed two dozen boxes of donated jackets, hats, gloves and other winter clothes to a large orphanage on Jan. 14, a day when heavy snow fell and the temperature reached 32 degrees in the Afghan capital.

The delivery, which was made using armored vehicles, was the first of several planned deliveries in a program the employees have dubbed Operation Warmth.

A group of civilian and military employees launched the program in November, said Raelene Hampton, the chairwoman of the volunteer group within the Corps of Engineers in northern Afghanistan.

The employees solicited donations from co-workers, family members, church groups and school groups and other charitable organizations from their hometowns across the United States and Europe, said Hampton. The donations included hand-made knitted caps, newly purchased jackets, as well as new clothes donated by several U.S. retailers, she said.

The group also collected toys, socks, shoes, blankets and other goods. The Afghanistan Engineer District-North group, headquartered in Kabul, separated and bundled the

donations by the recipients' genders and ages. In all, they collected about 100 boxes of goods.

The Corps of Engineers employees traveled with a well-armed security team and a translator to make the deliveries at Tahya-e-Maskan Orphanage, which is west of the city center.

The employees: Nesar Ahmad Asdaq, a senior program manager for administration and customs; Air Force Maj. Mike Brannon, who serves as deputy for training and transition for Afghan forces within the Operations and Maintenance Division; Eunice Ford, chief of project management for Operations and Maintenance; Hampton, who serves as an equal employment opportunity specialist; Marissa Smith, a program analyst; Jack Sztuk, a facility manager; Nicholette Yerkes, an administration support specialist; and Lt. Col. Terri Wise,

the District's senior intelligence officer.

They met with Ahaj Sayeed Abdullah Hashimi, the general director of government-run orphanages for Afghanistan's Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled. Hashimi is a well-known government reformer and an advocate for improving the country's orphanages.

Hashimi thanked the Corps of Engineers employees for the contributions, and said he hoped their visit would bring more awareness to Afghan orphans, many of whom lost parents during long wars against insurgent and Soviet forces.

The Afghan government oversees 35 orphanages throughout the country, he said. Combined, they house and educate 8,600 boys and girls up to 18 years old.

DONATIONS TO KABUL ORPHANS



North Afghan boys watch as Corps of Engineers employees unload donations at Tahya-e-Maskan Orphanage in Kabul, Afghanistan, on a snowy Jan. 14, 2012.

The Corps of Engineers employees visited two classes that were in session — English and math. They met both the instructors and students, and spoke with them in English. Brannon, who speaks Dari, also spoke with the administrators, instructors and children in their native language.

The classrooms were crowded, but well equipped with school desks and dry-erase boards. However, they were cold. As snow fell outdoors, the children wore jackets and hats indoors -- but wore just socks on their feet or went barefoot, because they leave their muddy shoes and boots outside the building's main entrance.

Corps employees also saw the children's living quarters, which as the director pointed out, needs new doors and windows, new flooring, and new heating and air conditioning systems. The lobby and stairways in the buildings were wintery cold, but the sleeping rooms were warm. Each room had a wood-burning stove with exhaust pipes that mostly channels thick black smoke outdoors. The rooms have ceiling fans for cooling during summer months.

Afterward, Ford said he was moved by the experience. "You really see the need for additional assistance," he said.

Smith said she was heartened to make a positive impact on the children, even if it was just a small impact.

"When I went into the bedrooms, I choked up. It was so poor and so simple, but it was clean. It was so empty, just the basics – mattresses, sheets, blankets," she said. "But their poverty as compared to our kids in the States, it was really hard for me. And I've seen poverty in Nicaragua, because I grew up there."

Hampton said the group of volunteers hopes to expand Operation Warmth to women's prisons, because in Afghanistan young children frequently serve sentences with their mothers because men typically don't raise children. 📷



Nicholette Yerkes, Afghanistan Engineer District-North, observes an English class during a tour of the Tahya-e-Maskan Orphanage in Kabul.



Marissa Smith, Afghanistan Engineer District-North, visits with young students during a tour of the Tahya-e-Maskan Orphanage in Kabul.



During class students leave their muddy shoes and boots outside the building's entrance.



Nicholette Yerkes, Marissa Smith and another volunteer help carry loads of donated winter clothes during a tour of the Tahya-e-Maskan Orphanage in Kabul.

All photos courtesy of Joe Marek, Afghanistan Engineer District-North



DONATIONS TO KABUL ORPHANS



Collaboration, ingenuity demonstrated at Coos Bay dredge site

District divers key to eliminating underwater hazard

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

A dredging job in a Coast Guard station boathouse in a channel off Coos Bay came to an abrupt halt Jan. 3 when the pipeline dredge Nehalem encountered two concrete blocks in her path, creating a potential hazard to the dredge and Coast Guard vessels.

The 3,500-pound underwater zinc anode sleds had slid out of place when the dredge removed material in the area. These rectangular concrete blocks with strips of zinc help minimize corrosion of the boathouse's steel pilings. Their displacement 20 feet below the surface could have delayed the completion of the job for weeks.

The dredge team wasted no time in finding a solution. With the Nehalem scheduled to move to another job and the Corps and the Coast Guard facing thousands of dollars per day in delay charges, everyone was motivated to move quickly. Within 72 hours, an alliance of three federal agencies and the contractor executed a plan to resume dredging and finish the job that night.

A team of five divers (one from the Navy and two each from the Portland and San Francisco districts), along with members of the dredging team, assembled plans to dive into the boathouse and remove the hazard. The divers rigged the sleds to the original lifting points and prepared them for hoisting out of the water.

Divers then passed the rigging to a team on the dredge contractor's tugboat, from which they picked up the blocks from the river bottom. The tugboat then hauled them to the Coast Guard's boathouse where a boat hoist lifted them to the docks.

John Cannon, from the District's Construction Branch, explained that using the equipment already on-site—the tugboat and the Coast Guard's boat hoist—helped expedite the removal of the anode sleds.

“This was an outstanding team effort with personnel from several districts and three federal agencies. They planned and executed this operation quickly, in a cost-efficient manner, using in-house and on-site resources,

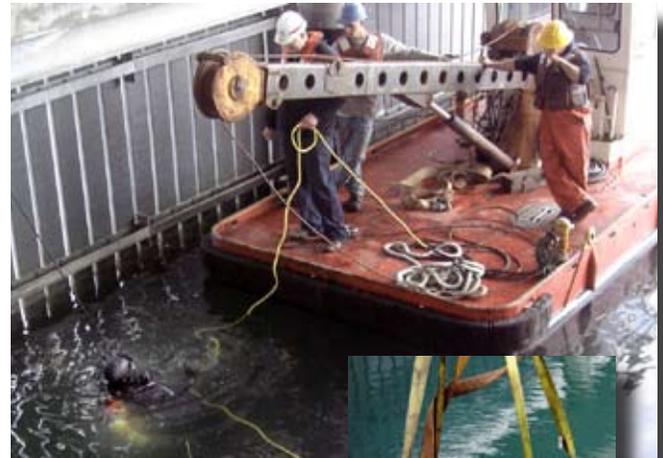


Photo by Kate Groth, Coos Bay Field Office

A diver on a tugboat communicates with John Cannon, Portland District, to coordinate the lift of a sled from the muddy river bottom.



Photo by Rick Benoit, Dive Safety Office

and allowed us to complete this dredging mission for our Coast Guard customer,” Cannon explained.

“This is a great example of what the Corps can do!” stated Karen Garmire, chief of Portland District's Construction Branch. 📷



Photo by John Cannon, Construction Branch

Dive supervisor Todd Manny, Portland District, (left) attends to diver Andrew Rapp from San Francisco District and Derrick Dunlap, also from SPN, assists diver Rick Benoit (far right) after the successful recovery of a 3,500-pound anode sled from the water in Coos Bay.

District's Mindy Simmons claims World Masters cycling title



By Amy Echols, Public Affairs office

Mindy Simmons is fast. So fast that she brought home a gold medal and the rainbow-striped jersey of a world cycling champion from Manchester, England last October. Across the pond, she won her age category in the women's 2-kilometer Individual Pursuit at the International Cycling Union Masters Track World Championships.

Simmons' times in preliminary trials earned her one of just two coveted positions to race for first place on the 250-meter banked, oval wooden track. With bikes held by a mechanical starting gate, the race started simultaneously on opposite sides of the track. Her Australian opponent rode the first 1,000 meters almost three seconds faster but nearly 18 hours of weekly training and a competitive streak paid off—Simmons pressed herself through the second half of the race to win by less than half a second.

Simmons, a program manager for Portland District, explains that it was all about proper pacing over the



Simmons demonstrates absolute concentration during her championship race and pure joy upon its completion.

8-lap race. She and her coach set a time goal and calculated lap splits, the time needed for each lap to keep from going too hard too soon. For each lap on her fixed-gear track bike (without brakes), her coach called out split times so she knew how to adjust her pace.

"Knowing the splits, I could gradually increase my speed over the last part of the race," Simmons said. "But the last few laps were incredibly painful. My coach

stopped calling times and starting yelling, "Just go faster!" I was trying so hard to relax and focus on breathing but my legs and lungs were on fire.

Once a competitive triathlete, Simmons found she loved the cycling portion of the event the most. Joining the Guinness Cycling Team in 2011 inspired Simmons to try track racing. Simmons commutes by bike, in rain, shine or cold and loves training and seeing new places from her bike.

This February, Simmons will spin her wheels on the roads around Washington, D.C. when she starts a four-month term as the Northwestern Division Endowed Chair of the Regional Integration Team at Corps Headquarters.

As for a title repeat at Masters' Worlds in Manchester next year, Simmons won't commit yet.

"I would go to improve my time. But it's a lot of work for a quick event and you don't go through that to come in second." 📷



All photos courtesy of Mike Gladu, Infinite Hangtime Photography

Simmons (center) stands tall on the awards podium with second and third place medalists.

WORLD MASTER CYCLING



The view from ancestral ground

A NWP archaeologist's hike across Ireland

Story and photos by Dan Mulligan, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division

"You're gonna do WHAT??!"

"What? Are you nuts??!"

These were the typical questions I got whenever I told someone that I was planning to hike across Ireland during my upcoming vacation.

I figured that by marching through the countryside and exposing myself to the elements, the people and surroundings, maybe I could get a better feel for what the place and culture is really like – to see how the natives live.

When I explained that my goal was to walk the 400-some miles from Ireland's northernmost tip at Malin Head down through the heart of the country to the southeastern tip at Mizen Head – and do it entirely on foot – alone – most folks just looked at me as if I had two heads.

But then again, I frequently get the same reaction from some of my co-workers whenever I suggest that their project might need an archaeological assessment.

I had the idea for a big Irish trek dancing in my head for several years, but the timing was never quite right.

I didn't think it was such a strange idea because I had already done a similar hike across Iceland in 2003. That 400-mile journey took 49 days and I finished with a broken foot and lost 12 pounds.

I was hoping I'd be able to eat a little more often on my next trans-country ramble and Ireland held the promise of Guinness o'plenty around nearly every corner.

Then last Spring, I suddenly found a freshly-signed leave slip and four weeks off staring me in the face. It was time to buy a plane ticket, pack my backpack and get to it.

I had a long road ahead.

It turned out to be a magnificent road with spectacular twists and turns that I could have never imagined

in my wildest – and admittedly, somewhat left-of-normal – dreams.

All said and done, it took 24 days to hike roughly 420 miles between the north and south ends of the Emerald Isle.

I spent the last part of April through mid-May, 2011, trekking way off the beaten path along little country roads that led through tiny villages, many with Gaelic names that almost hurt to pronounce. My route weaved past rocky ruins of saintly medieval churches and mystical, pre-Celtic standing stones; to little pubs and neighborhood watering holes frequented by good-natured, welcoming locals who always thought it was a good idea to buy me even more whiskey. I was stopped by the Garda (police)



The Drombeg Stone Circle (also known as "The Druid's Alter") in County Cork, Ireland, is thought to have been used as a ritual site repeatedly between 900 B.C. and 5th Century AD.



several times because I looked to be out-of-place, but that was the whole point; once they figured out why I was out there, they'd shake their head in bewilderment, write down my name and then enthusiastically encourage me onward.

I pitched my tent next to timeless rock walls in lush green pastures filled with herds of agitated sheep and cows that never seemed sure if I was there to feed or eat them. I watched hillside gorse fires glow in the night and newly-planted, state-of-the-art windmills twirl during the day. I basked in the rare Irish sunshine, got thrashed by oppressive head winds and lulled to sleep by midnight downpours lashing against my rain fly.

More than anything, I was time-and-again showered with selfless generosity by a hospitable people who went out of their way to share their houses and yards and food and stories with me. I was particularly taken by the woman who became so excited about my journey that she ran across the street, rummaged through her van and then returned with a computer printer and a handful of cough drops.

"You might need these for 'yar walk," she said gleefully.

I politely declined the printer but happily took the cough drops.

She said she thought I might want to print something out in my tent at night.

My jaunt across Ireland was partly intended to be a much-needed escape from my daily working life. But I found that, surprisingly, I ended up seeking out many of the same things that I do

when practicing my trade back home.

Archaeologists interact with many interesting, sometimes not-so-interesting, bizarre and (when you're lucky) inspirational people that can leave lasting impressions. And this is just during the course of a typical work day. When archaeologists go out into the field, they try to "see" things that might not normally be seen, or, hadn't really been noticed before. By paying attention to what people have to say, to the environment, and to the subtle, everyday things in it

that we tend to overlook, ignore or miss, we can learn a lot about what makes people and cultures – both contemporary and ancient – tick.

I took back many lessons from my trek across Ireland, and reinforced others that I have admittedly ignored for too long.

And the one that stands out the most was the one least expected:

Never be ashamed or discouraged if you get the urge to print out something in your tent – because – there may be someone out there looking to give you a printer. 🖨️



Abandoned stone house ruins, above, located in pasture near Malin Head, the northernmost tip of Ireland.



An old Irish cottage encountered along the road somewhere in central Ireland.



Typical farm pastures and fuzzy residents dotting the landscape in rural Ireland.



Life lessons from Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

A commentary by LaMar Williams, Equal Employment Opportunity Office

As a young boy in the early 1980s in Ohio, my local radio station would honor the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. every year on Jan. 15 by airing a biography about his life – complete with audio clips and other background sounds. I remember how passionate Dr. King sounded. His words inspired me about how I should live my life.

I remember walking around the house, “trying to do good.” Like the time I told my older brother he shouldn’t be so violent with us younger siblings – and quickly learned the consequences of standing up for injustice: It can hurt. The punch to my back was proof.

The radio shows motivated me to learn more about Dr. King. I remember being very moved by a news clip that showed him walking down a street, when suddenly he was hit in the face by a rock. I watched as he bent over for a while and stood upright again. For a few seconds, I saw an angry man, gnashing his teeth in anger. Then

he looked in the camera — almost as if he knew I was watching — composed himself and continued walking. Marching.

Another story of Dr. King’s growing influence also occurred during my peaceful movement in the 1980’s.

My mother had made a cake, telling us three boys that it was for later and that we were not to touch it. When she came home from work I remember her yelling our names. She was in the kitchen with the cake and a huge piece of it missing. For two hours, she made us stand there waiting for the cake thief to confess. When, no one did, she said that if



the guilty knucklehead didn’t admit it, we would all get corporal punishment.

In my head, I heard Dr. King’s voice, complete with cadence, saying, “Now, LaMar, you know that you and one of your brothers DID NOT eat that slice of lemon cake!” This voice of reason continued, saying the guilty one wasn’t going to confess and that it wasn’t right for two innocents to be penalized — so I told my mother I did it.

King’s messages that I used to listen to on the radio struck me; they have stayed with me through my life: My life tells a story and how I live matters.

More than a decade after first hearing his words, while working in the Seattle District, these memories returned when I had the opportunity to speak at a Dr. King event – a last-minute replacement when the invited speaker got stuck in traffic.



MLK REMEMBERED

Without a speech prepared, I told the group about my early days in Ohio and how the man we were honoring inspired me.

After my impromptu speech, a lady came into my office. We had rarely spoken before, so I assumed she was there to see my boss. Imagine my surprise when she said she was there to see me! She told me she liked my speech and was a big admirer of Dr. King.

Ms. Zydek liked Dr. King? In her hands was a huge book about him that she offered me, telling me to pass it on to someone else when I was done. I had read stuff about Dr. King before, but not adult reading like this. It was through this book that I learned WHY Dr. King had been hit with the rock those many years ago: He had been hit because he was trying to help desegregate an area of town in Chicago. Ms. Zydek had given me an amazing gift of knowledge.

A year or two later I accepted a job with the Portland District. While I was packing, Ms. Zydek gave me a portrait of the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. she had painted. Her painting hangs on my wall to this day. I keep it there not only because I admire the man, but it also reminds me of the stories in my life and what they have meant to me.

We are all products of our environment, but if we try, we can make a difference – and by changing our own environment for the better, maybe we can impact the lives of others.

Several years ago, I had a rare chance to hang out with one of my brothers and told him about how I had talked about the cake incident at work. He said, “Man, I ate that cake!” We laughed and then he asked me why I had confessed, and I told him my reasoning. If Dr. King could take a rock for me and, ultimately, give his life for his principles, I could return the favor: Each one, teach one. We both laughed some more, but I could tell my words had hit home.

Everyone has their own thoughts about Martin Luther King Jr. but no matter what impact he had on your life, it’s hard to dispute the righteousness he stood for, and what he accomplished as the good reverend-doctor.

When I think about some of the things he did – knowing they would eventually cost him his life – it is humbling. I’m not sure I could do what he did, but to honor his life and his sacrifice, I try to live righteously – as he did.

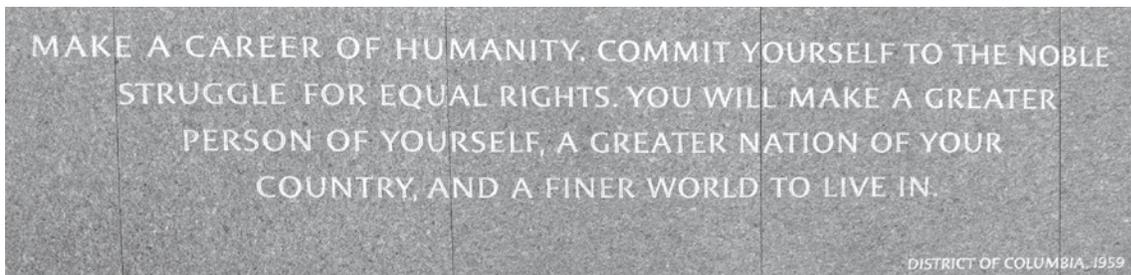
Thank you, Dr. King ... and thank you, Ms. Zydek. 📷



Photos by Erica Jensen, Public Affairs Office

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, West Potomac Park, Washington, D.C.

Covering four acres, the memorial opened to the public on Aug. 22, 2011, after more than two decades of planning, fund-raising and construction. Dr. King is the first African-American honored with a memorial on or near the National Mall and only the fourth non-President to be memorialized in such a way.



MILK REMEMBERED



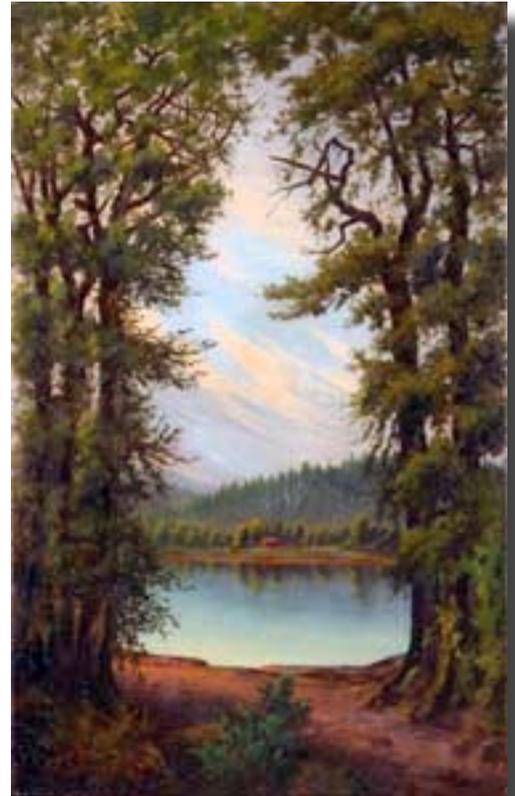
A noted African-American artist was once employed by the Corps of Engineers

Courtesy of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers historical archives

Grafton Tyler Brown, credited with being the first black artist to depict California and the Pacific Northwest, worked for the Corps of Engineers during part of his long and notable career. Brown was born in Harrisburg, Pa., Feb. 22, 1841. He moved to California in the 1860s and learned the art of lithography at the San Francisco firm of C. C. Kuchel, which he took over after Kuchel's death. At the age of 26, he established his own firm, G. T. Brown & Co.

At San Francisco, and elsewhere in California, Brown produced skillfully illustrated stock certificates for Wells Fargo, Levi Strauss and Co., and several mining companies. He also created bank notes, labels, maps, and bird's-eye views of urban areas. His most significant lithographic production was *The Illustrated History of San Mateo County* (1878), which featured seventy-two views of the county's communities and ranches. Brown traveled throughout Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada and British Columbia (where he settled in 1882), producing maps and illustrations, including many landscape paintings.

Making a living as a free-lance artist has always been a precarious existence, so Brown was fortunate to secure steady employment as a draftsman at the St. Paul Office of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers during the economically depressed 1890s. He began his duties in 1893, with an annual salary of \$1,440. Under the direction of Lt. Col. William A. Jones, he prepared maps, charts, and drawings in support of the engineers'



Collection of Painting Restoration Studio, Portland, Oregon.

Brown's "Across the Ferry/Columbia River at Kalama, Washington," 1900. Oil on artist's board.

principal duties in that area. These included the improvement of navigation on the Upper Mississippi River, its principal tributaries in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and the Red River of the North, as well as the construction of reservoirs at the headwaters of the Mississippi. Sometime during his St. Paul years he married Elberta Brown.

Brown's work with the Corps of Engineers ended in December 1897, after which time he worked in the civil engineering department of the city of St. Paul until 1910. He died on March 3, 1918, in Nicollet County, Minn., bringing to a close a rich and varied career as an artist and illustrator of the American West. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is fortunate to have had the benefit of his talents during part of that career.



Collection of California African American Foundation. Courtesy of California African American Museum

Well's Fargo mining company lithograph: One of Grafton Tyler Brown's lithographs. (His company's name is on the bottom left corner.) Wells Fargo Mining Co., (transaction date 1877). Lithographed stock certificate.