

CORPS' PONDENT

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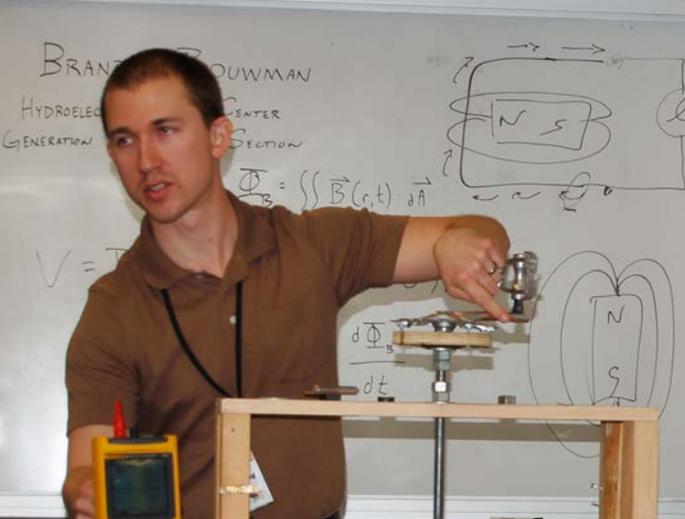
March - April 2014



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Portland District



Egrets are just one of the many
bird species that call Fern
Ridge Reservoir home.



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Cover photo: by Enrique Godinez, Real Estate Office

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Commander: Lt. Col. Glenn O. Pratt
 Chief, Public Affairs: Matt Rabe
 Editor: Erica Jensen





Commander's Column

Right-sizing for the future

As I started to address in my last column, I believe one of the greatest challenges Portland District faces today is the “right-sizing” of our workforce as we prepare for future workload requirements and for the fiscal realities of the years to come.

I know we received record funding levels in the Fiscal Year 2014 Presidential Budget and that the FY15 budget looks good, fiscally, as well. This will allow the District to continue to execute its missions at a very high level – a benchmark I am positive we will achieve.

Our budgets for FY16 though, will be challenging as we face a return to the same type of sequestration issues we dealt with last year.

Our FY14 and FY15 budgets, while exceptional, also may make it potentially more challenging for the Portland District to get to the right size it needs to be to continue to achieve success in FY16 and beyond.

Again, the outlook for the next year or two looks positive but, the truth as we know it, is that there is an increasing and continued uncertainty in our future funding levels – with most indicators pointing in the negative direction starting in FY16.

Debates between members of Congress and the White House about the federal deficit and future levels of funding (budget and appropriations), a five-year freeze on discretionary funding and continued restrictions on budgetary earmarks will significantly impact the number of Corps projects and studies that are funded.

So the question is “How will we execute our current, more substantial, budget now while also preparing for the lean budget years we know are only two years around the corner?”

One of the main ways we plan to tackle this “wicked problem” is through the Long-Term Programmatic Planning Process which is a part of Northwestern Division’s overall regional planning process.

In a nutshell, LTPP allows us to review and analyze our structure, workload requirements, and workforce capacities and capabilities at the District level. It helps us to set ourselves up to successfully continue our exceptional performance, be flexible to changing requirements while still maintaining our technical competencies, and at the same time, helps to get us to the staffing level we need to be to meet our future financial limitations.

Through the LTPP we have identified that workload reductions will be necessary and will come from the Operations and Maintenance and Columbia River Fish Mitigation Program funding areas – which will be partly mitigated through continued and steady BPA Expense and Large-Capital funding.

What does this mean for the District? Our challenge is how we will shape our workforce to retain staffing in our required disciplines as we align with our future funding realities in FY16.

A reduction of between 50 to 60 full time positions will be necessary by FY16. Again, the reduction of jobs will primarily come from O&M and CRFM funding lines with BPA-funded lines remaining at a near steady state.



Lt. Col. Glenn O. Pratt

We also need to restructure how we support the regional mission so we can continue to maintain our capabilities and flexibility as a District.

Right now, each division within the District is addressing how they will implement this planning.

The good news, however, is that the majority of the reductions will come through normal attrition as people retire or change employers. At this time no drastic reductions of our current workforce is required.

Thank you for your continued support and hard work as we march through the years together. I am proud to work along side you and serve with you. A special note of thank goes to Don Erickson, Planning, Programs and Project Management Division, for his leadership in the LTPP and his support as I wrote this column. 

Lt. Col. Glenn Pratt



Portland District People

Michelle Rhodes

Civil Engineer, Engineering and Construction Division



Corps of Engineers Photo

Michelle Rhodes is the technical lead on projects ranging from jetty repair to environmental restoration. Some of her projects include the Tillamook North Jetty repair in 2009, the Sandy River Delta Dam removal in 2013 and the current major rehabilitation of the jetty system at the Mouth of the Columbia River.

Describe your job.

I am a project technical lead, which means I work with many disciplines to coordinate legal actions such as permits and real estate. I help design a product, prepare and award a contract, and see the project through construction. I love organizing and coordinating, so being a technical lead is fun for me.

What do you find most rewarding about your job?

It's really rewarding to see construction on a project I helped design.

What are some of the challenges you encounter?

Each team is comprised of many disciplines and my job is to ensure the team members communicate effectively and work together to meet project deadlines. It can be very tricky at times.

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

I love civil works and I love that this District keeps a lot of work in-house. I feel like I can put my touch on a project.

What was your first job?

My first job was at Mrs. Field's cookies. Thank goodness I ran high school track at the same time!

What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

I went skydiving for my 30th birthday. That was crazy-awesome!

Who inspires you?

My dad inspires me. We think alike and he has always shared his wisdom with me. I could never have become who I am today without his support, insight and love. 



Photo courtesy of Michelle Rhodes, Engineering and Construction Division



2014 Engineering Day

By Erica Jensen, Public Affairs Office

A visit to the construction site for a new Portland high-rise building was the highlight of the Portland District's 2014 Engineering Day. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers partnered with TMT Development, KPFF and Hoffman Construction to give more than 100 area high school students a close up look at real-world application of engineering and construction at the Park Avenue West Tower construction in downtown Portland, Ore. At the site, students learned from design engineers how the building was designed and the project engineer explained how on-site work is managed.

The day began at 8 a.m. with a welcome by Portland District Commander Lt. Col. Glenn Pratt. Engineer-In-Training employees from Engineering and Construction and the Hydroelectric Design Center escorted students throughout the day, serving as their mentors answering questions and explaining what the students were experiencing.

Together, students and mentors rotated through a series of hands-on workshops and discussion panels which allowed them a closer look at distinct engineering disciplines and other career relevant issues.

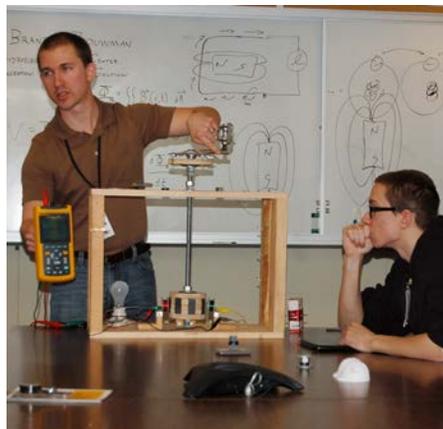
The Society of American Military Engineers provided a complimentary luncheon and sponsored a mini job fair staffed by local engineering firms and Oregon State University. Portland District staff also hosted a booth providing information on its EIT program and other student job opportunities.

The day was a huge success as summed up by Columbia River High School's Dave Bennett and his students, "I just wanted to thank you for all your work on the event. Both our students and myself thought the day was fantastic."

Thanks, Dave, the Portland District thought the day was fantastic too. 



During Portland District's Engineering Day, Feb. 18, students toured the Park Avenue West Tower construction site hosted by TMT Development, KPFF and Hoffman Construction then, back at District headquarters, rotated through a series of hands-on workshops and discussion panels.



Brandon Bouwman, chief of the Hydroelectric Design Center's Generation Equipment Section, shows students how electricity is made by spinning magnets past copper coils – simulating how a hydrogenerator works. By displaying a real-time graph of voltage on an oscilloscope, students can see what electricity "looks like" each time a magnet passes a copper coil.



Students get busy learning and building during one of Portland District's Engineering Day interactive workshops Feb. 18.

Photos by Amber Tilton, The Dalles Lock and Dam





Safe Kids Columbia Gorge recognized nationally for their support of the Corps of Engineers water safety efforts

By Amber Tilton, The Dalles Lock and Dam

The Safe Kids Columbia Gorge has partnered with park rangers from The Dalles Lock and Dam since 2008, helping to promote water safety to local communities throughout the Columbia Gorge – an area encompassing five counties in both Oregon and Washington along the Columbia River.

So, in 2013, it seemed only natural for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to recognize them for their commitment to water safety by nominating them for a Water Safety Award of Merit through the National Water Safety Congress.

“The partnership with Safe Kids has been a successful and productive one,” said Kelly Thomas, a natural resources manager at the dam. “Safe Kids has worked with us to staff educational booths at local outreach events, has included our information and resources about water safety on their website and has also provided the Corps with donated supplies and materials. Without them, our water safety program in the local community would not be as successful.”

Safe Kids actively contributes to the Corps’ Water Safety Program in a number of ways. They support an annual water safety poster contest held at The Dalles Middle School by supplying poster materials and

awarding the grand prize winners with free life jackets. The posters, made on brown paper bags, are distributed to the local farmers market and food bank, which in turn, helps spread the water safety message even further into the community.

One of their most significant contributions to the region, however, was their establishment and implementation of a Life Jacket Loaner Board Program in the Columbia Gorge. With guidance from the Corps they purchased and installed eight life jacket loaner stations at local swim beaches and boat launches in both Oregon and Washington.

Visitation estimates indicate that more than 700,000 people visited these eight locations from May through August – and were able to access and borrow a life jacket (if they didn’t already have one) while recreating on the Columbia River.

“The Corps’ nationwide life jacket loaner board program has proven to help reduce water-related fatalities,” said Melissa Rinehart, a natural resources manager in the Portland District’s Natural Resource Management Office. “If you provide the public with safe options for recreating, they’ll use them – and we’re lucky to have partners like

Safe Kids to help us implement these programs at the local level.”

The National Water Safety Congress agrees – they recently recognized the Safe Kids Columbia Gorge chapter for their outstanding efforts, accomplishments and contributions to the Corps of Engineers water safety mission – honoring them with an Award of Merit.

Safe Kids Columbia Gorge – on behalf of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Portland District and The Dalles Lock and Dam, we thank you. 



Corps of Engineers photo

Amber Tilton, a park ranger at The Dalles Lock and Dam, partnered with members from the Safe Kids Columbia Gorge to host a booth at Cherry Fest, an annual celebration held every summer in The Dalles, Ore. The Corps and Safe Kids Columbia Gorge urged visitors to ‘buckle up for safety’ by demonstrating the proper use and fit of life jackets and car seats.

More information about Safe Kids Columbia Gorge is available at <http://www.safekids.org/coalition/safe-kids-columbia-gorge>. For specific details about the Corps of Engineers’ Life Jacket Loaner Board Program in the Columbia Gorge, visit <http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/About/WaterSafety.aspx> under the module titled “Borrow a life jacket.”



CORPS FY14 WORK PLAN PROVIDES FUNDING FOR COASTAL DREDGING

By Michelle Helms, Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently released its Fiscal Year 2014 work plans for the Army Civil Works program. The Operation and Maintenance Plan includes nearly \$15 million for maintenance dredging of the federal navigation channels used by Oregon’s small coastal ports. The plan also includes \$1.2 million to dredge the Skipanon Channel, Ore., and \$1.8 million to dredge the Chinook channel and Baker Bay, Wash. (see funding breakdown at right).

“This is welcome news for the Portland District,” said Lt. Col. Glenn O. Pratt, Portland District Commander. “The FY14 maintenance dredging work plan allows us to accomplish the Corps’ critical life and safety dredging mission to maintain Oregon’s coastal navigation channels.”

The Portland District has worked with small ports along the Oregon coast for decades, dredging navigation channels, clearing the way for commercial fishermen and recreational mariners traveling between their harbors and the Pacific Ocean. The constrained budget environment over the past several years left many Corps navigation projects, including Oregon’s coastal ports, without federal funding.

On Sept. 17, 2013, Pratt, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber and Oregon Sen. Jeff Kruse signed a Declaration of Cooperation, publicly committing to work together to maintain safe, reliable navigation channels along Oregon’s coast. The Corps will continue to work with the state to utilize both federal and state funds as appropriate to accomplish the maintenance dredging required to support coastal communities. The Portland District will continue to seek appropriated funds to maintain Oregon’s low commercial use harbors.

The Corps understands that reliable navigation channels are vital to Oregon’s ports and communities and to the region.

The Portland District maintains more than 700 miles of navigation channels in the Northwest, providing safe and reliable transportation routes for commerce, support to national security and recreation.

FY 14 Portland District Maintenance Dredging

Location	Funding amount
Chetco (Brookings)	\$ 717,000
Coos Bay	\$ 6,069,000
Coquille (Bandon)	\$ 413,000
Depoe Bay.....	\$ 380,000
Port Orford.....	\$ 1,262,000
Rogue River (Gold Beach).....	\$ 638,000
Siuslaw	\$ 730,000
Tillamook Bay and Bar (Garibaldi) ...	\$ 659,000
Umpqua River.....	\$ 861,000
Yaquina Bay	\$ 2,948,000
Skipanon Channel.....	\$ 1,227,000
Chinook Channel, Wash.	\$ 930,000
Baker Bay, Wash.....	\$ 876,000

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Operations and Maintenance Work Plan for fiscal year 2014 includes \$1,262,000 to dredge the navigation channel used by mariners at the Port of Port Orford.



Photo by Lynda Charles, Corps of Engineers



Waterways experience advances Corps/Brazil partnership

By Amy Echols, Public Affairs Office

Dredging experience and a love for travel and other cultures took Portland District's Jon Gornick far from home last year. A civil engineer in the Waterways Maintenance Section, Gornick joined a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers team working in a unique partnership with the Brazilian government for a 120-day assignment. The team's goal: develop a dredging program for a navigable stretch of the 1,811-mile São Francisco River.

Rain, deforestation, excessive agricultural use and the construction of a dam create large variations in river depth, influence the river's flow and create sand banks that hinder navigation. Barges ply the river but inconsistent and incomplete maintenance dredging make the São Francisco too shallow during the dry season, forcing the movement of most goods by truck on poor quality two-lane highways. An adequate channel in the São Francisco would take a significant amount of the cargo off the highways while potentially reducing transportation costs for goods, such as soy and cotton grown on large farms along the waterway.



Photo courtesy of Calvin Creech, Mobile District

Jon Gornick (2nd from left) cruises the Rio São Francisco with Rafael Siqueira from CODEVASF (left), Calvin Creech, Corps project manager from Mobile District (right) and Waleska Echevarria, a hydraulic engineer from Buffalo District.

The partnership project between the Corps and CODEVASF, the government agency responsible for waterway development on the Rio São Francisco is in its second year and based in Brasilia, Brazil's capital. A 2012 Memorandum of Understanding between the two countries brought decades of Corps' waterways engineering knowledge to Brazil to assist in hydraulic modeling, dredging and other river engineering aspects on the fourth longest river in South America.

As in jobs and travel, flexibility comes in handy.

"My assignment was to visit an active dredging operation, make observations, identify navigation problems and make recommendations for a long term dredging plan to bring this river in central Brazil into a sustainable, navigable condition for barge traffic," Gornick describes. "This approach took an unexpected turn when the dredge sank before I could get out and see it working."

"My trip to see the dredge came later in my assignment. In the interim, I spent weeks pouring over documents, many in Portuguese, to learn about the river and how it's been maintained historically for navigation. Google Translate became a close friend."

Gornick made a number of site visits to the river to understand the river system before making recommendations. Along the way, he discovered that ground travel presents its own memorable challenges.

"During my first field trip to the river, as part of a fact-finding mission, the clutch in our truck gave out about an hour outside Brasilia," recalls Gornick. "Luckily, we could jam it into a lower gear while on a hill and the truck limped into a nearby small town where we waited for six hours for a replacement vehicle. Otherwise, we would likely have been robbed because that type of crime is quite common out on the open road."



Barges travel Brazil's Rio São Francisco only while the water remains deep and the channels stay clear. Trucks take on the movement of goods upon the arrival of the dry season.

Photo courtesy of Lucio Mauro, CODEVASF

and personally. They are warm people and they extended invitations to explore the city and socialize with their families, which allowed me to immerse myself in their culture,” Gornick states.

As an engineer, Gornick witnessed a huge commitment by CODEVASF to improve navigation and he believes that a Corps-like agency would serve the country well. Personally, he found transferring knowledge to help Brazil move forward was his greatest contribution.

Calvin Creech, the Corps’ project manager in Brazil, confirms Gornick’s value to the CODEVASF project. “Jon was a great asset to our Brazil program and we believe his dredging strategies and recommendations will have a long lasting benefit to commerce in the region.” 

Larger challenges on the project extend into geographic and political jurisdictions, diverse funding sources and competing and complex interests. Unlike the United States, Brazil does not have a single agency like the Corps that is responsible for maintenance dredging of the country’s waterways. Instead, several agencies are involved in maintenance of the São Francisco and, typically, funding for dredging is not timely. This makes planning a dredging program very difficult.

The Brazilian army and its boat took Gornick and others on the team to distinct river reaches where signs along the riverbanks indicate on which side of the river to navigate and where to cross to the other side. The team reviewed areas undergoing hydraulic modeling that could aid in locating structures to reduce shoaling in the navigation channel. These observations led Gornick to his primary recommendation that the river needs a defined channel alignment.

“Large questions face the country, however. For example, if they build a sustainable channel, will it be fully utilized? How will they maintain this system among competing national interests?” Gornick muses. “In addition, there are non-navigable dams on the lower São Francisco River, so it’s not just about adequate waterways; road and rail infrastructure need upgrading as well.”

“Over the months in Brasilia, I gained some proficiency in Portuguese, which is great because I love languages, and I love traveling and getting to know the world. The Brazilians showed great hospitality, both professionally



Photo courtesy of Jon Gornick, Channels and Harbors Project

Jon Gornick, Portland District waterways expert, explores the beaches of Brazil, smartly heeding the shark risk signs.



Finding purpose th

A commentary by Tegan Shermikas, The Dalles Lock and Dam

I'm new to my position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, where I work as an administrative assistant at The Dalles Lock and Dam. Of my many responsibilities; one is keeping track of timekeeping for 72 employees around the dam.

But that's not what I want to tell you about.

Prior to coming to the Portland District I worked for the Oregon Department of Forestry for more than four years as a wildland fire dispatcher and office specialist. While with ODF, I worked for five fire seasons in emergency response as a dispatcher as well as helping out with fire finance during incidents.

So what do I do now in my spare time? I still work in emergency response – but now, by volunteering with an amazing organization called Team Rubicon.

In 2012, after Hurricane Sandy hit the East Coast, Team Rubicon volunteers from across the nation used all modes of transportation to descend on the towns and communities hit hardest by the storm. Some, like me, found themselves in Union Beach, N.J. Others were deployed to help clean up The Rockaways, a peninsula that is part of New York City's borough of Queens.

During that physically and emotionally exhausting week, my team members and I bonded with each other and the communities we served.

Now, a year later, my deployment has left a lasting impression on me; my involvement with Team Rubicon has given me a purpose that I had lost when I left the U.S. Army after three years of service.

Team Rubicon has grown in leaps and bounds the past four years – growing from a small band of specialized volunteers to more than 14,000 members from across the nation – including me.

Last January, Team Rubicon gathered 105 of its regional and state leaders in Los Angeles, Calif., for the 2014



Photo by Tegan Shermikas, The Dalles Lock and Dam

Tegan Shermikas, an administrative assistant at The Dalles Lock and Dam, also volunteers with Team Rubicon, serving as finance and administrative manager for the team's Region X, an area which covers Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska.



Photo by Tegan Shermikas, The Dalles Lock and Dam

Volunteers survey the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy in 2012.



rough Team Rubicon



A warehouse in Brooklyn, N.Y., served as bunkhouse for Team Rubicon deployees, who descended on the area to help in disaster relief during Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Photo by Tegan Shermikas, The Dalles Lock and Dam

building activities. We also had the pleasure of listening to a number of incredible guest speakers.

Many ideas resulted from the discussions – one goal that sits close to my heart, is bringing more benefits to Team Rubicon volunteers. I would love to actively engage them more through team building activities and service projects – all of which I’m hoping will help create a community atmosphere for our volunteers.

One conference high note for me happened when Adam Miller, the founder and chief executive officer of Cornerstone OnDemand, moderated a group discussion about some of the growing pains that the team suffered through during 2013.

It was enlightening to see how other regions are growing and experiencing some of the same issues we are encountering in Region X, which encompasses Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Alaska. Throughout the conversation Miller provided insightful advice, fielded multiple questions and continually praised Team Rubicon for its accomplishments during the last four years. It was amazing to hear, firsthand, how outside resources view Team Rubicon.

National Leadership Conference. The overall goal of the conference was to target the question, “What would Team Rubicon like to accomplish in the next five years.”

I was one of the lucky participants who made the journey to the sunny coast of California for the gathering.

Over a four-day period, my team members and I participated in great discussions, break out groups and team



Photo courtesy of Team Rubicon

More than 100 state and regional leaders gathered last January for Team Rubicon’s 2014 annual conference in Los Angeles, Calif., where they addressed the disaster relief organization’s future growth and goals for the next five years. Shermikas is pictured in the third row, fourth from left.





Photo courtesy of Team Rubicon

Jacob Wood, a former Marine and one of the founders of Team Rubicon, addresses members during the disaster relief organization's 2014 annual conference in Los Angeles, Calif.

We also were lucky enough to Skype with Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Russell L. Honoré, who provided advice about how to help those affected by disasters – counsel that was exactly what our team leaders needed to hear. Honoré's firsthand experience in emergency response situations, such as Hurricane Katrina, gave me a better understanding on what we need to do to help those affected by a disaster.

Throughout the week I was continually taken aback by the dedication and motivation these volunteers give to this unique organization.

During it all, conference attendees beamed with enthusiasm and drive.

I went to this year's conference as an active volunteer and while there I accepted Region X's finance and administrative manager position.

Leaving California I was hit with the reality of what Team Rubicon can accomplish over the next five years.

I am humbled by the opportunity to help this young organization find its footing within the world of disaster relief and veterans' reintegration. It is an honor to have found my purpose and to serve them. 

What is Team Rubicon?

Team Rubicon is a non-profit disaster relief organization that helps veterans transition after leaving the military. It was created by Jacob Wood and William McNulty, two ex-marines.

After the 2010 earthquake ravaged Haiti, Wood and McNulty assembled a team of specialized volunteers to give 'boots on the ground' aid and support to the communities affected by the quake. While assessing the devastation and rendering aid to the injured in Haiti, Team Rubicon was born. The team was created to be able to rapidly deploy members both domestically and internationally to disaster areas.

The national volunteer network is comprised of civilians and veterans from all walks of life. Volunteers come together in communities across the nation to provide aid. Currently there are 10 regions that cover the United States; each with a volunteer leadership staff that helps to engage and deploy its region's volunteer forces.

A national headquarters leadership team also provides guidance and support to each region; they oversee Team Rubicon's day-to-day operations.

Team Rubicon's Board of Advisors consists of many remarkable individuals including Gen. (Ret.) David Petraeus and Duncan Niederauer who is the chief executive officer of the New York Stock Exchange. The team also has an exceptional Board of Directors with membership by Scot Chisholm, CEO of Stay Classy, Col. (Ret.) G.I. Wilson, U.S. Marine Corps and Adam Miller, the founder and CEO of Cornerstone OnDemand.

For more information or to join Team Rubicon, visit <http://teamrubiconusa.org/> or email Tegan Shermikas at shermikas@teamrubiconusa.org. And, remember, when on FaceBook, visit and 'like' Team Rubicon on their page.



Volunteering your skills in your local, national and global communities

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hires its employees for the specific set of skills (both hard and soft) they contribute to our mission and organization.

Our employees do great work – there’s no doubt about that! That’s why Portland District continues to successfully meet its mission in the Pacific Northwest and in the communities they serve.

But we know that a number of you extend your public service ethics beyond the workplace by volunteering your professional skills to benefit others – locally, nationally or globally. Some examples of this may include volunteering for organizations such as Engineers without Borders or Habitat for Humanity where you contribute your engineering or construction knowledge and skills. Or, you may volunteer with a school or other organization where you mentor others ... either children or adults, tutoring them in math or reading or helping them prepare for the workforce.

We want to learn about your efforts and share what you are doing with others. Why? Because what you are doing is encouraging and may possibly motivate others to look at their own skill sets and see how they can be used to benefit others.

If you volunteer your skills, please tell us about your efforts by responding to a few survey questions below.

Once we collect your responses, we want work with you to write your story then share it as part of a yearlong “Volunteers in Action” campaign which will be printed in the District’s Corps’pondent as well as posted online at <http://usaceportland.armylive.dodlive.mil/>.

Thank you for considering sharing your volunteer experience. What you do matters. 

Volunteers in Action

If your story is selected for an upcoming issue, a member of the Public Affairs Office will contact you for photos and additional questions

- Name:
- Email:
- Division/office/section:
- Job title/description:
- Volunteer organization and short summary of what they do:
- Where did you learn of this organization/volunteer opportunity and how did you get started with them?
- Describe your work for this organization:
- What professional skills are you using to benefit this organization?
- How much time do you spend volunteering with them?
- Is this volunteer effort short term or long term?
- Why did you volunteer for them?
- What is the biggest benefit you get from volunteering?

You can complete this survey and e-mail it to cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil or you can find it online at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NWPVolunteersInAction>.

Thank you for telling us about your volunteer efforts! If you have questions, e-mail cenwp-pa@usace.army.mil or call 503-808-4510.





Recycling the Corps' water safety message

By Amber Tilton, The Dalles Lock and Dam and Melissa Rinehart, Natural Resources Management Office

Portland District's Student Conservation Association summer intern, Avery Kool, worked diligently during the summer of 2013 to promote water safety ... and even though she is no longer working for the Columbia River projects ... she is still making waves!

A recent graduate from Oregon State University, Kool decided to gather up would-be trash and donate it to OSU for their annual Recycled Fashion show.

The 'trash' consisted of faded and torn life jackets removed from Life Jacket Loaner Stations at several Corps of Engineers swim beaches and boat ramps located around Oregon and southwest Washington. During the removal, the old jackets were exchanged for new ones so visitors could continue to borrow them while recreating on the water.

"One man's trash is another man's treasure," was the motto when the rescued life jackets were given to OSU's aspiring young fashion designers to be recycled into beautiful garments.

"We're hoping to expand our new partnership with OSU and find even more ways to continue promoting water safety with them, whether through the fashion show or other shared efforts," said Melissa Rinehart, a natural resources specialist for the Portland District. "Avery initiated this very creative idea and Portland District rangers in Willamette Valley and the Columbia River Gorge ensured its success after she left. This was a great way to reach our high risk target group of young people ages 18 to 35."

All of the recycled wearable's were on the catwalk in February during OSU's annual recycled fashion show, including a beautiful orange skirt made from the Corps' old life jackets – a fashion statement that water safety never goes out of style! 



Fashion designers from Oregon State University participated in the university's annual recycled fashion show last February. One designer entered a skirt made from old life jackets rescued from a number of Portland District life jacket loaner stations – a fashion statement that water safety never goes out of style!



Maureen Dorsett, a fashion design student at Oregon State University, models a skirt she designed using old life jackets that were rescued from life jacket loaner board stations by the Corps of Engineers.

Corps of Engineers photos

For more information on being safe in and around the water, or to borrow a life jacket from one of our Life Jacket Loaner Stations, check out our Portland District water safety web page at:
<http://www.nwp.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/Watersafety.aspx>

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Celebrating Women of Character, Courage, and



Jaida Im

Janet Yellen



Tammy Duckworth



Caroline Kennedy



VADM Michelle Howard

Commitment



SHARING THE CORPS MESSAGE:

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

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Operating Principles

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Environmental Operating Principles relate to the human environment and apply to all aspects of business and operations. They apply across Military Programs, Civil Works, Research and Development, and across the Corps.

The environmental operating principles require a recognition and acceptance of individual responsibility from senior leaders to the newest team members. Re-committing to these principles and environmental stewardship will lead to more efficient and effective solutions, and will enable the Corps to further leverage resources through collaboration.

This is essential for successful integrated resources management, restoration of the environment and sustainable and energy efficient approaches to all Corps mission areas.

It is also an essential component of the Corps' risk management approach in decision making, allowing the organization to offset uncertainty by building flexibility into the management and construction of infrastructure.

The re-energized Environmental Operating Principles are:

- Foster sustainability as a way of life throughout the organization.
- Proactively consider environmental consequences of all Corps activities and act accordingly.
- Create mutually supporting economic and environmentally sustainable solutions.
- Continue to meet our corporate responsibility and accountability under the law for activities undertaken by the Corps, which may impact human and natural environments.
- Consider the environment in employing a risk management and systems approach throughout the life cycles of projects and programs.
- Leverage scientific, economic and social knowledge to understand the environmental context and effects of Corps actions in a collaborative manner.
- Employ an open, transparent process that respects views of individuals and groups interested in Corps activities. 

Corps of Engineers Photo

**Get involved with
Earth Day, April 22!**

**Reduce
Recycle
Reuse**

Earth Day everyday