

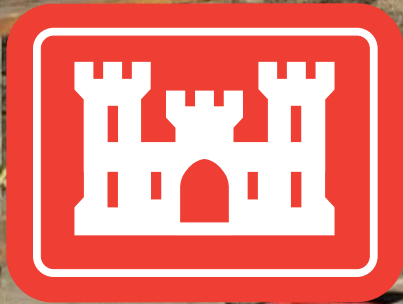
Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

Fall 2022 | Vol. 48, No. 4

St. Paul District makes progress in Fargo/Moorhead

-Page 5



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District



(cover) April Erickson, contracting officer representative, talks to the contractor superintendent on the Interstate-29 borrow ditch bridge in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 20. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



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Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson

Teammates,

It's been a few months since we last published *Crosscurrents* and what a few months it has been. If you remember back to the spring we had water everywhere, I mean, literally, everywhere.

The rivers in the north were full and the Mississippi was roaring. In a few months' time, the cross-currents that made boating dangerous dissipated and the river slowly dropped. Our sister districts in New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Memphis are now searching for water and hoping for rain. We could all use a little rain.

What does low water mean for us? Well, it means that our dedicated sand reclamation and survey crews have been extraordinarily busy. The mighty Dredge Goetz, under the steady hand of Captain Brian Krause, has been in and around Rock Island and St. Louis districts for months to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel. The maintenance and repair section, under the leadership of Chris Stai, chief of maintenance and repair, has been "bouncing" around the Upper Mississippi River trying to manage

hot spots (or low spots) so that we can keep commerce moving.

His teams have also done some outstanding work with both the programs and planning divisions. They continue to impress me with their work ethic and attention to detail (check out the big bird nest near Buffalo Slough Island if you want proof). Maintenance and Repair is also keeping our vintage locks and dams serviceable with the help of the lock equipment repairers.

All this river fuss has led to a decrease in commercial river traffic. For the barges that are still moving, they are being light loaded so as not to draw too much water (river speak for snag the bottom or just run aground).

The Coast Guard has been busy as well; low water and shifting sand makes for a wandering channel and the need to adjust navigational markers.

Fear not...just follow Dan Cottrell, channel maintenance manager, and his weekly channel guide. Not to be confused with the *TV Guide*. Both help navigate

channels, but one did not work well when wet.

Light river traffic also means that our lock and dam crews have not been as busy on the wall, but with the backlog of maintenance, Sam Mathiowetz, chief of locks and dams, is keeping his teams busy. Whether we lock one or 10 a day, our teams work around the clock. Low water also forced a river cruise line to stop short of the Twin Cities. If you missed the Viking or American Cruise Line ships this season, don't fret, they will be back next year. You can also check out our social media; Shannon Bauer, chief of public affairs, and her team captured the best moments of 2022 and even caught a glimpse of the newest Viking Cruise ship on its maiden voyage.

Though low water has impacted navigation on the Great River, it has had less of an effect on our flood control dams and recreation areas. That is a far cry from the spring when we were at capacity. Speaking of at capacity, this year was another record year for the recreation and natural resources branch.



Randy Urich, chief of recreation and natural resources, and his team of rangers and resource specialists used the mild temperatures and dry days to complete overdue maintenance, tidy up the lakes, entertain visitors with interpretive displays and educational demonstrations, and complete some ongoing construction.

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Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson

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The Lac qui Parle Dam (French for “the lake that speaks”) is nearing completion and the spillway renovation contract is moving forward.

Big Sandy Lake Dam is expecting visitors in the spring which will be infinitely more than they had last year. Now that the dam rehabilitation is almost done, springtime guests will again get to tour the oldest lock and dam on the Mississippi River. Want to stay with Randy and his team for the night? Check out www.recreation.gov. You can book 6 months in advance.

Another team that is benefitting from the dry weather is our Western Area Office in Fargo, North Dakota. The Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Area Diversion project is moving along on schedule. Terry Williams, our fearless Fargo program delivery team leader, has a great group of district employees working side by side to shepherd that project along. The diversion channel in the north is also underway. If we have a mild winter, we may be able to get ahead. Fingers crossed. Based

on the conditions outside my window, I think the cold is here to stay.

There is so much to talk about in our district right now, but I am running out of paper.

In closing, it has been a wonderful first six months in command, and I am truly honored to be your 67th commander. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season. I wish you good fortune, great health, and most importantly, the wisdom to always make great decisions. We have a big program ahead of us and each of you is critical in helping the team realize our full potential. Stay safe, stay healthy, and continue to look out for one another.

Respectfully,

Col. Eric R. Swenson

P.S. I almost forgot, our district recently awarded the first Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program ecosystem project contract. This is big news! Thanks to Kim Warshaw, project manager, and her team for the hard work in getting that done.



St. Paul District Commander Col. Eric Swenson and Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Robert Wilkins stand with a Veterans Day flag from kindergartners of Eagle Elementary, Fargo, North Dakota, Nov. 8. USACE St. Paul District photo by Barb Griffin

St. Paul District makes progress in Fargo/Moorhead

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District reached another milestone in its efforts to reduce flood risk to more than 235,000 people in the greater Fargo, North Dakota / Moorhead, Minnesota metro area.

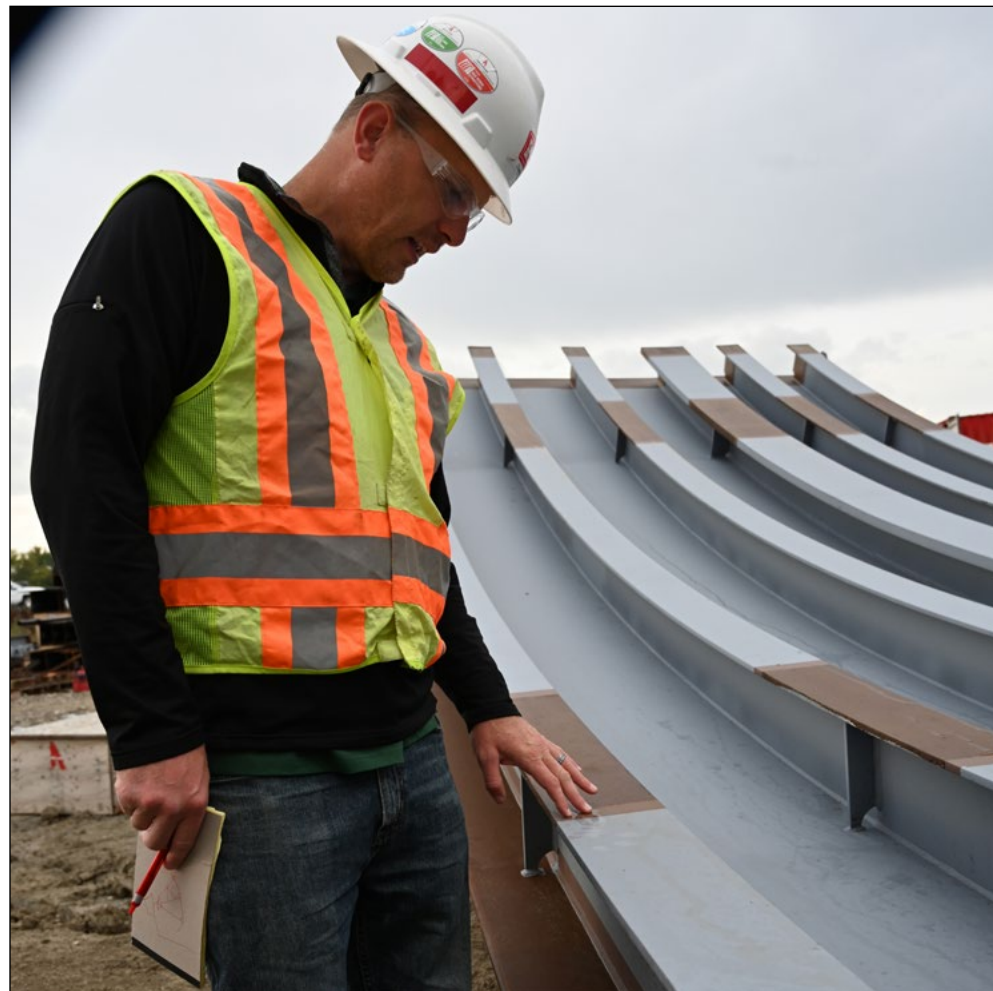
The Corps of Engineers contractor, Ames Construction from Burnsville, Minnesota, installed the first of two Tainter gates at the Wild Rice Structure near Horace, North Dakota, Sept. 19. The gate was hoisted by a crane and was welded to strut arms that anchor the gate to the concrete structure, said Duane Perkins, technical lead engineer for the project.

Perkins said the gates will be used during a flood event to reduce the amount of water that enter the cities of Fargo and Moorhead. He added that the excess flood water from the Wild Rice River, as well as the Red River of the North would then be diverted to a 30-mile-long channel the runs on the west side of the cities before reconnecting to the Red River of the North downstream of Fargo and Moorhead.

Speaking about the significance of the milestone at the site, Per-

kins said, "This is another piece of the bigger puzzle to reduce the flood risk to the community." He added that the Tainter gates were fabricated over the past two years in northwest Alabama and was excited to finally see that work come to fruition and see the gates get rotated into place. "We started the design on this project in 2017," Perkins said. After several challenges, he said it was an amazing experience to be able to see what was once just a drawing become something that is permanent and will ultimately help reduce flood risk to the community.

Richard Tollefson, contracting officer's representative for the Wild Rice Structure, said each Tainter gate weighs approximately 140,000 pounds. He said with the first of two Tainter gates being installed at the site, the team is essentially halfway through completing the Wild Rice Structure. Tollefson added that it was cool experience to tour the factory and see raw steel on a floor to now seeing that same steel fabricated into Tainter gates that are being installed on the structure. "I had a smile on my face watching the gates get raised," he said.



Duane Perkins, technical engineer lead for the Fargo/Moorhead Metro Area Diversion project examines a paint coating on a piece of a Tainter gate that was erected at the Wild Rice Structure near Horace, North Dakota, Sept. 19. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes

Navigation and restoration projects provide value

Story by Melanie Peterson

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, or NESP, is a long-term program of navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System. The program spans three Corps of Engineers districts: St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis.

History

In 1986, the Upper Mississippi River System was declared by Congress as a “nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system.” This led to a navigation study in 1990 that looked at the constraints of the navigation system and the effect of increasing locks to allow bigger locks and improve efficiencies in the navigation system, according to Terry Birkenstock, chief of regional planning and environment division north.

In 1993, The Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Feasibility Study was initiated to further study waterway improvements.

“During these studies, there was controversy from the environmental community,” Birkenstock said. “They wanted equal expenditure on ecosystem and navigation, so they agreed to collaborate and attend the public meetings.”

Coupled with recommendations from the National Research Council and based on input from a federal agency task force, the study was restructured in 2001 with the goal of an environmentally sustainable navigation system that ensured efficient transportation for the future. The report was finalized and signed in 2004.

In 2007, Congress authorized NESP in the Water Resources Development Act, Title VIII. The first dual-purpose program of its kind to enhance and improve the Upper Mississippi River System.

“After that, it was on the back burner,” Birkenstock said. “Industry and other organizations have been lobbying Congress for years to fund construction and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL, finally made it happen. The appropriations from the law,

signed in January, will propel projects to modernize navigation on the Upper Mississippi River System and restore the environment.

Implementation

With money coming in from the BIL there’s a lot of potential for future environmental projects said Kimberly Warshaw, project manager. The St. Paul District awarded the Pool 2 Wing Dam Modification project in December, which was the first ecosystem restoration program under NESP.

Warshaw said there are two more projects that could start construction as soon as 2025: the Pool 3 Northern Sturgeon Lake project and the Wacouta Bay project. Both these projects will also include collaboration with engaged partners, Prairie Island Indian Community and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for Sturgeon Lake and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for Wacouta Bay.

“It’s exciting to work with the Rock Island and St. Louis dis-

tricts to determine how this program will operate for the next 15 years,” Warshaw said. “If we’re able to execute NESP, it will lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in ecosystem restoration projects in the three districts, adding value to the Upper Midwest.”

The Pool 2 wing dam modification project includes notching 17 wing dams to improve habitat for fish outside of the main channel. A wing dam is a rock structure that diverts the water to the center of the river channel. Portions of the wing dam will be taken out of the rock structure to encourage depth and flow diversity for river habitat for fish.

Good things come in threes: Restoration program celebrates third project completion this year

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, celebrated the completion of the \$4.9 million Bass Ponds Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement project, with a ribbon cutting ceremony in Shakopee, Minnesota, Oct. 11.

This milestone project, marking the third Upper Mississippi River Restoration, or UMRR, project dedication in a single year for the district, is made possible through UMRR funding. The program ensures the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system with a primary emphasis on habitat restoration projects and resource monitoring.

The Corps celebrated the completion of two other UMRR projects, Harpers Slough and Conway Lake, with a ribbon cutting ceremony April 22, in Lansing, Iowa.

The Twin Cities restoration project built five new water level management structures so that refuge staff can lower, raise or maintain water levels to restore plant and bird habitat.

“The one thing that’s unique about this project is its location. The other UMRR projects are on the river and primarily only accessible by boat. Here, you can walk to the project, ride your bike or kayak through here. It’s more present to the public in this central location so they (the public) can truly appreciate it,” said Kevin Wilson, St. Paul District deputy district engineer.

Prior to the 1850s, this area was primarily wetlands and native prairie; however, land-use changes, trending toward agricultural usage, as well as climate change resulting in more frequent flood events, have significantly altered the hydrology of the area.

In the 36-year history of the UMRR program, more than 55 habitat projects benefiting approximately 100,000 acres on the Upper Mississippi River, from Minneapolis to St. Louis, have been completed.

“Over 35 years after its inception, the UMRR program endures. It’s now a highly effective federal program and the promise of the program’s early years is being met and exceeding expectations,” said Kirsten Wallace Upper Mississippi River Basin Association executive director.



(fourth from the right) Sabrina Chandler, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge manager, and (third from the right) Kevin Wilson, St. Paul District deputy district engineer, and other project representatives, cut a ceremonial ribbon at the Bass Ponds project dedication in Shakopee, Minnesota, Oct. 11. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

MEET

MARCUS PATTERSON

PROGRAM ANALYST



Q: What is your position with the Corps?

A: I'm a program analyst/project scheduler in programs and project management, which mean I'm resourcing funds for projects and tracking milestones

Q: How long have you been with the Corps?

A: Over 13 years

Q: What did you do before your current position?

A: I was in the U.S. Army where I served in different locations including Korea. Then, I joined the Corps as an admin in the Operations Division.

Q: What do you like about working for the Corps?

A: The relationships (personal and professional), there are a lot of good people that work for the Corps, also that the Corps is family-oriented. I also appreciate the growth opportunities and flexibility.

Q: What do you do outside of work?

A: Work out, drum and take care of my kids

Q: What's your favorite sports team?

A: The Dallas Cowboys

Q: What's your favorite movie?

A. Marvel movies

Koenig honored as 2022 Hall of Fame inductee

Story by David Elmstrom

Mark Koenig was inducted into the St. Paul District Hall of Fame at the St. Paul District's Corps Day, Oct. 3.

Koenig was honored for his exemplary service to the St. Paul District and the Corps of Engineers. Over the course of his 41-year career, Koenig served in various roles with significant responsibility and impact to include the chief of safety, emergency management and, most recently, construction. During his tenure as chief, he oversaw significant construction projects in Fargo, North Dakota, and on the Mississippi River.

He served as the district's emergency manager during the Global War on Terror and the 2011 Red River of the North and Souris River floods. He voluntarily deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and numerous hurricane and flood response and recovery efforts across the U.S.

"Mark enhanced the value of every organization in which he was involved, inspiring subordinates and challenging himself and others to do more in the service of this great nation," said St. Paul District Commander Col. Eric Swenson. "His selfless service and tireless championship of teamwork leave a lasting legacy on the St. Paul District."



(left) Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, presents Mark Koenig, former chief of construction, with the Bronze Order of the de Fleury medal at Wabun Park in Minneapolis, Oct. 3. USACE St. Paul District photo by Emily Chavolla

First Tribal Partnership Program for tribal government, division

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

A native island that was once heavily eroded and filled with invasive reed canary grass is now one of the first ecosystem restoration projects in full design and implementation phase for the Prairie Island Indian Community and the Mississippi Valley Division.

Nestled in Pool 3 of the Mississippi River, near Red Wing, Minnesota, the 8-acre Buffalo Slough Island is one of four ongoing Tribal Partnership Program projects, or TPPs. This program helps federally recognized tribes enter into cost-share agreements with the Corps of Engineers to help solve water-related planning activities with design and construction projects on their tribal lands.

"We are pleased with the progress on Buffalo Slough Island," said Kimberly Warshaw, project manager. "It's important to our partnership with the Prairie Island Indian Community that we successfully protect Buffalo Slough and restore floodplain forest habitat on culturally significant lands."

In addition to the negative environmental impacts caused by the erosion due to high flows and the overgrowth of canary grass, the damage to Sturgeon Lake makes the area inaccessible to the community to continue their cultural practices collecting plants for consumption and medicinal purposes and practices sacred to the community.

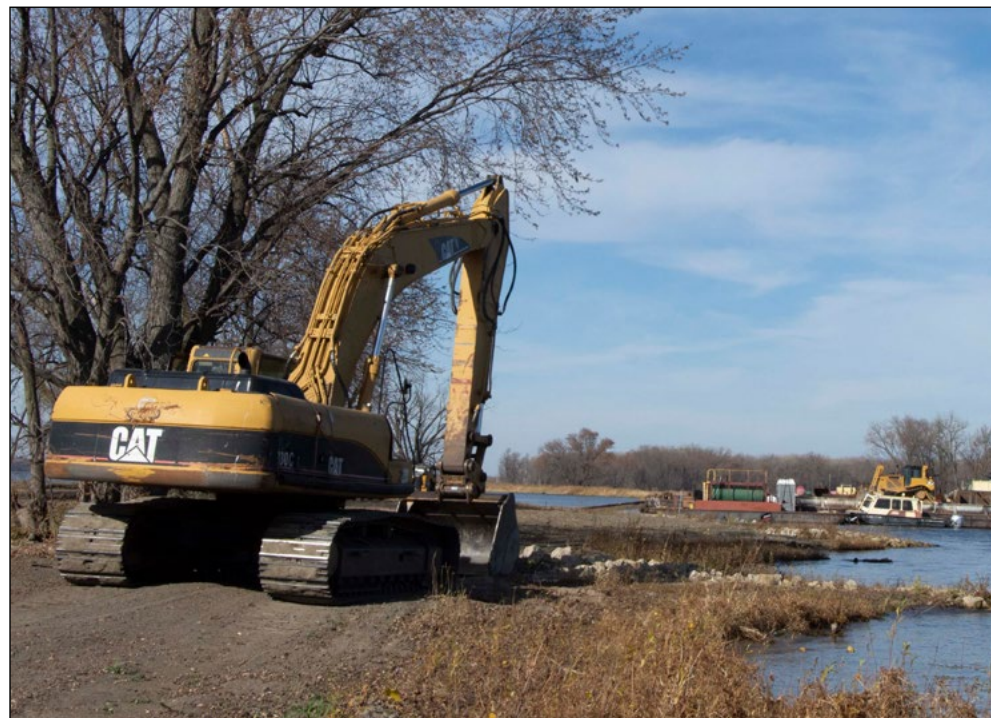
Since last fall, the district's maintenance and repair crew teams have been busy dredging and preparing the land with rock vanes, shoreline protection, granular fill and constructing a stone bullnose at the northern point of the island to counteract the impacts of the Mississippi River's force on the island.

By placing main channel dredged material on the island, crews were able to raise the island elevation as well as building a bench along the eastern side of the island towards the river. Now, this material serves as a topsoil for the new and natural regeneration of grass, trees and plants.

"Now the final step is getting forestry established on the island," explained Andy Meier, natural resources specialist based out of the La Crescent environmental office. "Contractors will start planting native herbaceous vegetation and tree seedlings, includ-

ing oak trees that produce acorns for wildlife. Natural regeneration is already occurring on the island from native species like cottonwood and willow which grow thick and fast to ensure an intact forest

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Construction equipment at the Buffalo Slough Island restoration project, near Red Wing, Minnesota, Nov. 2. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

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to prevent reed canary grass from growing and ultimately have a forest 75 years from now.”

Wildlife habitats rely on the island for survival and future generations.

Gabe Miller, Prairie Island Community environmental program manager, has been working with Corps officials to help restore the islands with natural forest habitats.

“Cottonwood trees are really important to the tribal community because it is the preferred nesting tree for the bald eagle, an iconic animal species of the tribe, so preserving those nesting areas for the species is really critical,” Miller said.

The Prairie Island Indian Community’s tribal members are descendants of the Mdewakanton Band of Eastern Dakota, or “those who were born of the waters,” and have lived in the region since before European contact.

TPPs provide Corps officials authority, in cooperation with Indian nations, to study and determine the feasibility of carrying out projects that will substantially benefit Native American nations.

Silver Jackets emphasizes teamwork and collaboration

Story by Melanie Peterson

Silver Jackets is a federal and state interagency collaboration program that promotes having a team in each state. The Corps of Engineers coordinates it, and states lead the team efforts and

set priorities, usually through their emergency management staff. Terry Zien, St. Paul District program manager, is the lead coordinator for Minnesota and Wisconsin and the assistant lead for

North Dakota. Silver Jackets is a planning program that promotes communication, collaboration and education. The program

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Terry Zien (red shirt) and the North Dakota Silver Jackets team at Fraine Barracks, Bismarck, North Dakota, November 2019. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

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works primarily to mitigate the consequences of floods but can address any hazards important to each state. Non-structural flood risk management methods are emphasized. This means that the teams seek to mitigate flood consequences rather than change the flood itself with structures like dams and levees.

The color “silver” was chosen to promote unity because no agency uses it in an official manner for symbology or clothing as part of their normal operations. During an emergency, the Corps wears red, the U. S. Geological Survey wears green, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, wears navy blue. “Those different colors can become confusing to the public. We don’t actually receive a silver jacket to wear, but everyone understands that we represent one team working together,” Zien said.

Perhaps the most important part though, is the relationships that are formed through the program.

“The biggest value of the program is team synergy. This teamwork has transformed how we plan for and respond to these events,”

Zien said. “The team in each state can leverage resources to address common issues, which is more powerful than any one agency alone.”

For example, in 2012, northeastern Minnesota and the Duluth area experienced historic flash flooding. None of the agencies had the resources to document the flash floods. Zien sent a request to Minnesota and Michigan Silver Jackets and within an hour they were able to pull together \$50,000 and were able to send member agency staff to 250 different locations to record high-water marks and other data on the flood events. Zien said that after the event, and learning of the extensive data collected, FEMA provided money to turn the data into a report.

“Collaboration is key during times of crisis,” Zien said. “Leveraging the expertise, programs and perspectives of partner agencies results in more comprehensive solutions.”

Zien emphasized the importance of relationship-building in the program and networking opportunities. “This isn’t traditionally what we used to do. We’re working with people we wouldn’t be working with otherwise, and that

extends to collaboration beyond Silver Jackets,” Zien said. “We tap into the entire team’s network of contacts across highly varied stakeholder groups.”

Another example is the June 2014 Mississippi and Minnesota rivers flooding event. Zien served as the Corps’ representative to the state of Minnesota emergency operations center and was able to take information that he learned from the center and share it back to the Corps’ readiness operations center to ensure the flow of information and quickly resolve emergency issues in the field. The interagency coordination that took place saved time and prevented problems from falling through the cracks.

Zien also serves as the program manager for the Flood Plain Management Services program, flood risk management business line, and works with the Planning Assistance to the States program. Zien has a Bachelor of Science degree in geology and a Master of Science degree in civil engineering in water resources from the University of Minnesota. He has worked for the St. Paul District for over 34 years.

Future projects include flood modeling of the Rainy River, the Baraboo River 2-dimensional hydraulic model, elevation-frequency analysis of the six Mississippi Headwaters reservoirs, and hydrologic analysis of the Upper St. Croix River between Solon springs and Gordon, Wisconsin.



Terry Zien, program manager, responds to flooding in Dawson, Minnesota, April 10, 2019. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Team reaches milestone on Pool 4 dredging plan

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District team responsible for developing a solution for managing Mississippi River dredged river sand removed from the water near Wabasha, Minnesota, reached a major milestone Nov. 11.

The team reached the finish line of the plan with the signing of the environmental assessment and planning document, also known as a finding of no significant impact, or FONSI, after more than 5 years of planning efforts with a few major challenges and obstacles along the way.

“The final approved plan was the culmination of hard work, compromise, and a willingness to remain focused on developing a solution that worked best for most,” said Bob Edstrom, project manager in charge of the Pool 4 plan.

Edstrom added that the completion of the Pool 4 plan, also known as a dredged material management plan, is not the end of the team’s work in the region but a major accomplishment, nonetheless. He said additional work remains to include working

with the city of Wabasha to develop a cost-share agreement to compensate the city for managing some of the material. Known as a Section 217 agreement, Edstrom said it’s one of the most important aspects of the Pool 4 plan. He added that the agreement, while non-binding, allows the Corps of Engineers to partner with the city of Wabasha to help manage river sand. “The coordination with the city in developing the revised plan may have taken longer than expected, but we believe the new version truly embodies the spirit of cooperation,” said Edstrom.

Paul Machajewski, dredged material manager, said the Pool 4 plan is focused on doing three things. “It ensures the required placement capacity for this part of the Mississippi River for the next 20 years; it provides a path forward for the city and the Corps of Engineers to develop solutions that effectively and safely manage river sand; and it improves the environment by reducing the carbon footprint needed by trains and semi-trucks to move the same commodities

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Paul Machajewski, left, dredged material manager, and Bob Edstrom, project manager, review a potential real estate location near Wabasha, Minnesota, Aug. 3, 2020. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes

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via navigation and avoids impacting adjacent wetlands or placing the material back in the river,” he said.

Machajewski said some of the obstacles encountered while developing the final plan included properties that the community didn’t want to be used to store the river sand. After listening to these concerns, the plan was changed to accommodate the community’s request. That said, Machajewski added that one of the biggest challenges the team consistently faces in finding suitable placement sites is ensuring they meet the federal standard. “The federal standard is the least costly alternative that is both environmentally acceptable and includes sound engineering practices,” he said. “Additionally, the plan must meet federal environmental requirements to include the Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act.”

While the new plan identifies solutions to managing river sand near Wabasha for the next 20 years, there are more plans to be developed for other areas along the Mississippi River within the St. Paul District boundaries. At the end of the day, Machajewski

said it’s all about ensuring the Mississippi River 9-foot Navigation Channel remains open and safe for commercial navigation. “We’re committed to maintaining the navigation channel to ensure it continues providing safe, reliable transportation for bulk commodities,” Machajewski said. “As neighbors within this community, we have a vested interest as both federal employees but also citizens that want the best for our communities and the environment.”



Corps and city of Wabasha officials discuss the navigation mission and dredged material management plans during a public meeting in Wabasha, Minnesota, Jan. 15, 2018. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes



The Dredge Goetz dredging river sand in Pool 4 , near Wabasha, Minnesota, June 5, 2018. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer

Wounded warriors gather for special hunt

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

It's a place of hope and connection for hunters who gather for the annual wounded warrior hunt at Orwell Dam, located on the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Nov. 15-16.

Hosted by the nonprofit Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, four wounded warriors and six volunteers don their blaze orange and gear to a designated hunting spot on the Orwell sanctuary.

"This is a huge win/win opportunity for veterans and our natural resources," said John Fromuth Orwell Dam dam tender. "We have a pretty big deer population in the sanctuary, mostly doe and then fawns in the spring, so hunters have a really easy chance of harvesting a deer and that really helps with over population."

Ron Welle started Midwest Outdoors Unlimited in 2008 to help physically disabled individuals go hunting. Now, he says the organization provides outdoor activities in a wide range from hunting to boat rides and fishing and even outings to a baseball game. Every outing is with a different group

of people, giving an opportunity to as many individuals as possible.

Sponsored on Corps-owned land, Orwell Dam officials have been

actively involved in the program for many years, except during the pandemic. The program that was originally designed for disabled veterans close to end of life has

evolved to host people with disabilities in general.

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Wounded warriors and volunteers gather for the annual wounded warrior hunt at Orwell Dam, located on the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Nov. 15. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.

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Fromuth works directly with Midwest Outdoors Unlimited in getting the required permissions and equipment ready for the hunters to participate.

"We stage ice houses with big windows, propane heaters and tanks for the hunters and their volunteer to sit in," Fromuth said. "We also set up a 50-yard target for hunters to zero their shotgun the morning of the hunt."

Upon arrival, Fromuth provides a safety brief and hunting information. Next, volunteers escort hunters to zero their shotgun and return to the indoor office for a hot meal. Then, they are taken to their hunting locations to get a deer.

Hunters are not usually local, so they are not always prepared with what they need for the day, he said.

"I'll borrow my own weapons and hunting gear (if needed) to those gentlemen because I will likely be living in a similar veteran home one day and pray someone (like myself) will help me and other veterans just the same," Fromuth said.

Next year, they are hoping to get more hunters from the local veteran homes with additional donations

"It's a humbling experience watching these veterans out here," he said. "I watched one of the hunters this year go right from the deer stand directly into a truck to the Mayo Clinic for surgery the following morning. This man literally spent what could have been his last day in a hunting blind at Orwell Dam. He didn't shoot a deer, but he was able to take six shots. He was in pretty rough condition and had a hard time keeping a steady aim."

The veteran said it was an amazing experience and that he hoped to live longer so he could tell his friends and family about the beautiful hunting experience he had at the dam.

"I support the event as needed while attending to day-to-day tasks," Fromuth explained. "This year we got a bit of snow during the hunt, so I was focused on clearing the snow and salting everything down so hunters were safe with their canes and wheel-chairs."

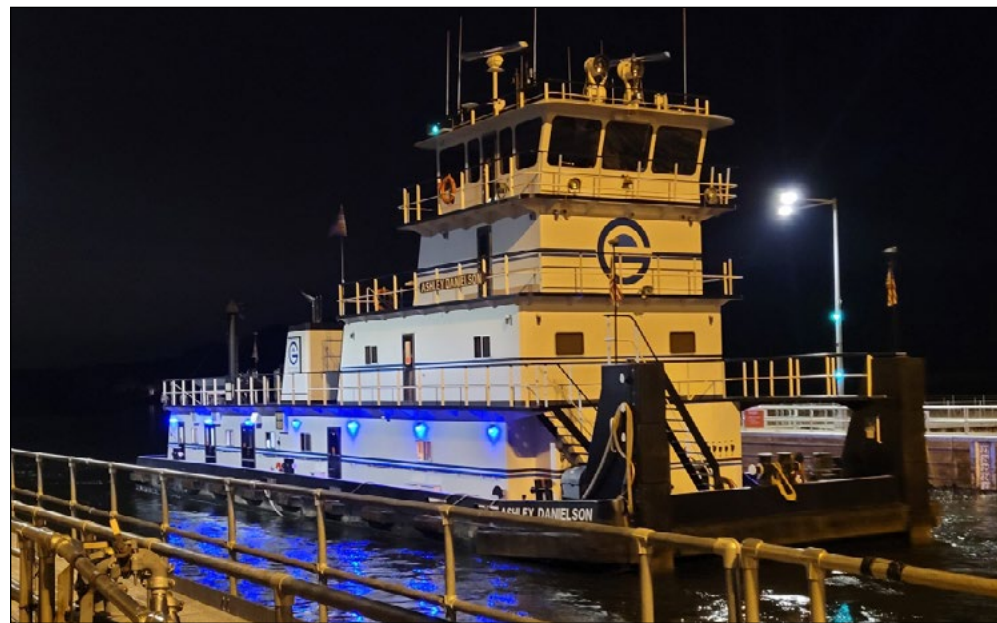
The event is made possible by the partnerships with the Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Corps of Engineers.

Tow marks the end of the navigation season

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

The St. Paul District, saw the last barge of the year, the Motor Vessel Ashley Danielson, depart Lock and Dam 2 Nov. 29 at 4:25 a.m., ending the 2022 navigation season on the Upper Mississippi River.

Traditionally, the last tow departing the capital city heading south of Lock and Dam 2, near Hastings, Minnesota, has marked the unofficial end of the navigation season. The last tow to leave St. Paul, Minnesota, usually occurs around the last week of November or the first week of December.



The last tow of the 2022 navigation season, the Motor Vessel Ashley Danielson, locks through Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minnesota. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Safety introduces the “Good Catch” program

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

GOOD CATCH

Formerly known as the “near miss reporting,” the Good Catch program is available to all employees to proactively prevent accidents in the workplace.

The purpose of the program is to demonstrate that close-call situations are strictly used to prevent future mishaps for the benefit of all and focus on the district’s safety culture.

“It is a resource we use to recognize our employees identifying hazards before something occurs and a way to share and distribute that information to applicable disciplines, areas or all hands depending on the hazard,” said Dustin Strand, St. Paul District safety and occupational health specialist.

By practicing the age-old “see something, say something,” employees are encouraged to share lessons learned with district personnel to prevent future accidents.

Details of the Good Catch program highlight proactive vs. reactive behaviors, identify trends and efficiencies in reducing workplace hazards and reinforce everyone’s responsible for workplace safety.

Since the inception of the program in 2020, the safety office has received more than 25 reports that have significantly impacted the safe operation of locks and dams, miter gate controls, equipment use, load handling equipment, slips, trips and falls, snow removal, government vehicle safety checks, etc., to name a few.

“A Good Catch was received from our Western Area Office, Fargo, North Dakota, in May that a crane that was improperly rigged for a critical lift of 120,000-pound concrete beams. The attention to detail in recognizing this was exceptional and could have been catastrophic. This Good Catch was recognized by our Corps load handling equipment high hazard work group – a team of subject matter experts across the Corps,” Strand explained.

All reports are extremely beneficial and prevent workplace accidents and injuries, he said.

How to get involved?

1. Identify the unsafe act, condition, hazard, or potential for mishap
2. Take appropriate immediate action to correct the situation and prevent property damage or injury
3. Ensure the situation is safe to proceed with the intended activity
4. Fill out the “Good Catch Reporting Form” [here](#) and submit it to your supervisor. The supervisor will review the form, add information and documentation as necessary and submit the packet to the district safety office as soon as reasonably possible, preferably within 10 days of the Good Catch occurring

“We will always have injuries, but our hope is to prevent as many as possible,” Strand said. “The Good Catch program helps communicate unsafe issues or

problems through the district. By sharing best practices in a safety-first culture, accidents are reduced and prevented, and everyone can go home safely.”



(left) Dustin Strand, safety and occupational health specialist, and John Dehnke, collateral duty safety officer, sample the ventilation system at Lock and Dam 5 near Minnesota City, Minnesota. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

GOOD CATCH

GOOD CATCH

St. Paul District celebrates Corps Day

St. Paul District employees celebrated Corps Day Oct. 3 at Wabun Park in Minneapolis. The day included recreational activities, food and an awards ceremony. USACE St. Paul District photos by Shannon Bauer, Melanie Peterson and Wendy Wells



Corps Day, continued



Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



September
**Samantha
Coungeris**
Regulatory



October
**Thomas
Rohrer**
Operations



November
**Elliott
Stefanik**
RPEDN





(top) The 2023 Leadership Development Program participants tour the Fargo-Moorhead diversion project in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 12. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

(bottom) In honor of Veterans Day, the Western Area Office stands in front of the Diversion Inlet Structure representing their service. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



(left) Kevin Wilson, deputy district engineers and (right) Col. Eric Swenson, meet with the St. Paul District emerging leaders at the Mississippi Valley Division regional governance meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Oct. 19. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.



(top) Angie Phipps, equal employment specialist, meets with Chaplain (Col.) Geoffrey Bailey to discuss the St. Paul District special emphasis program in St. Paul, Minnesota, Oct. 12. USACE St. Paul District photo by Emily Chavolla

(bottom) Jill Bathke, planner, and Angela Deen, program manager, prepare for the Reno Bottoms public meeting in New Albin, Iowa, Nov. 3. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



News and Notes

New Employees

Taylor Adams, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Shaheen Mokhtari, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Cole Atkinson, survey technician, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Jonathan Hotstream, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, Madison, Wisconsin
Benjamin Bejcek, regulatory specialist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Promotions

Daniel Burger, lock and dam operator supervisor, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota
Daniel Dzwonkowski, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota
Joseph Jandrich, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota
Dean Zwiefel, management and program analyst (human capital), public affairs, St. Paul, Minnesota
Steph Brunot, civil engineer (structural), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Andrew Chambers, biologist, regulatory, Duluth, Minnesota
Donald Strittmater Jr., lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota.

Retirements

Diyona Breitung-Schmillen, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Stanley Marg, welder, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Jon Hendrickson, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Congratulations

Re’Nisha Brown, engineering and construction, welcomed Greyson Brown on Sept. 7.

Taps



Ivette Garrett passed away Sept. 22. She served as an attorney in office of counsel from 1994 to her retirement January 2008.



Larry J. Sass passed away Nov. 27. He worked for the Corps of Engineers, dredging the Mississippi River, refurbishing the dams, and retired as a lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 5, in Minnesota City, Minnesota .



Ellen Scheppke passed away Oct. 4. She retired from the Corps in May 2020. She had 17 years of service with the Corps, all at the Eau Galle Dam and Recreation Area as an office clerk.

Length of Service

5 Years

Catherine Beatty
James Beers
Edward Bradley
John Carrell
Jerry Cudney
Daniel De Vaney
Kevin Denn
Patrick Dowd
Dalton Eide
John Henderson
Thanri Meyers
Daniel Mielke
Ellamay Mitchell
Christopher Olson
Bryce Pellock
Dustin Strand
Mitchell Weier

10 Years

Nicole Baker
Jonathan Bakken
Trevor Blake
Susan Funke
William Grinde
Cherie Law
Melissa Schultz

15 Years

Melissa Brossi
Jeffrey Hallam
Kristoffer Laman
Ryan Price
Monique Savage
Keith Schindler
Nicholas Stanton
Michael Vogt
Kimberly Warshaw

20 Years

Arlan Baukol
Rebecca Graser
Jeffrey Grow
Eric Hanson
Daniel Kelner
Lawrence Kjellberg
Jon Ledford
Melissa Murray
Aaron Pieplow
Eric Thiese
Richard Tollefson
Toni Wasgatt

25 Years

Brian Krause
Jimmy Rand

30 Years

Eric Carlson
Kathy Halverson
Kenneth Peterson

35 Years

Thomas Johnson
Denise Julson

40 Years

Stephanie Dupey
Theresa Thury



(left to right) Theresa Thury, project scheduler, and Ken Peterson, realty specialist, receive a length of service award from Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, at the Holiday Awards Ceremony in St. Paul, Minnesota, Dec. 8. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer