



Photo by Stephen Baack

Gary Jones, director of the Los Angeles County Department of Beaches and Harbors, left of center, talks with Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District deputy commander, during a Jan. 9 boat tour of dredging operations at Marina del Rey Harbor in LA County. Brooks spent most of the day visiting with LA District project-delivery team members and LA County project partners to better understand how he can best support those working on the project.

## New Year progress in action

### Deputy commander stresses value of onsite visits to better support employees

BY STEPHEN BAACK  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MARINA DEL REY, Calif. — Los Angeles District deputy commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks met Jan. 9 with the district's project-delivery team managing dredging operations at Marina del Rey Harbor and partners from LA County to see the work in action.

Since Brooks and LA District commander Col. Andrew Baker assumed their respective roles about six months ago, they have stressed the value of meeting with district employees in person at project sites throughout the 226,000 square miles in which the district carries out its civil works, military-engineering support, operations and maintenance, ecosystem-restoration

and emergency-response missions.

"Col. Baker and I understand how large our area of operations is, so we've made it a point to visit as many project sites as we can," Brooks said. "Active project sites are important to visit, but more important are the people. Visiting our employees

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## Safety is non-negotiable



Courtesy photos

Christopher Rainwater, Los Angeles District safety and occupational health specialist, awards safety coins to two LA District dam operators during hazard assessments at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dams in Arizona: Michael Moran (top photo) at Painted Rock Dam near Gila Bend, Arizona; and Matthew Ogden (bottom photo) at Alamo Dam in west-central Arizona.

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## New Year's resolutions, celebrating legacy of MLK

Hello, SPL Team!

I hope you had a great holiday season and an opportunity to spend time with loved ones and reset for 2024! I was lucky to get all of that in during nearly three weeks with my family in December/January. The highlight was a week at the beach with my wife Shannon's Southern California family. We got in some solid cousin time for our girls, bonded with my in-laws and were able to carve out a little bit of time for ourselves — a great success overall!

Many of us (myself included) are planning on, or have already started, New Year's resolutions. These goals might focus on improving your diet or fitness, finding ways to practice gratitude, making more time for family, learning new skills, saving money or limiting social media. This is the perfect time to tell you that planning is underway for our inaugural district 5K walk/run, which is a great excuse to get started on a fitness resolution, if that's your goal. You may have seen an email from Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks with some details on the run/walk. The main event is slated for Oct. 19 at Prado Dam, with options to complete the race virtually. Keep an eye out for more details! We are also looking for shirt designers; guidelines are listed below.

### MLK Jr. Day

Martin Luther King Jr. Day, which falls on Jan. 15 this year, is a day our country



COL. ANDREW BAKER  
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

sets aside time to celebrate the life and legacy of a significant man whose selfless service and work for the Civil Rights Movement was crucial in strengthening the very fabric of our nation.

Remembering and celebrating King's monumental contributions to equal rights and inclusivity in this country are two important elements of the com-

memoration, but it's important not to forget that King himself was known best for his tireless devotion to rolling up his sleeves and taking action. As he said, "Life's most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?"

That's why it's a tradition to celebrate his legacy by being of service to your community. In fact, the national theme of the holiday is officially, "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day on, Not a Day Off!" So, if you have the opportunity, I encourage you to roll up your own sleeves and take some action by performing some type of community service. This service can take many forms, such as volunteering at a food bank, joining others to clean a park or neighborhood or helping someone in need in whatever way you can. Whatever you decide to do, please avoid putting yourself at risk in the process. Keep safety at the forefront of your mind, be cognizant of your surroundings and wear personal protective gear if the job calls for it.

Don't forget the Corps is waiving day-use fees at Corps-operated recreation ar-

as in Arizona, California and Nevada in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day on Jan. 15. That said, please keep in mind that the LA District leases many of the recreational portions of Corps-owned land in our area of operations to different local governments and entities, so please verify before you visit. Learn more at [www.army.mil/article/272795](http://www.army.mil/article/272795) and [www.corpslakes.us](http://www.corpslakes.us).

### Danny Carrasco

Last, but certainly not least, I'd like to recognize Danny Carrasco, a member of the LA District family, who just retired after 40 years of service to SPL. Starting out as a summer hire while working on his college degree all the way to becoming chief of the Contracting Division, Danny is a testament to the opportunities the LA District can offer young professionals.

Danny said he attributes much of his success to the opportunities the Corps provides its employees through technical training, leader development and mentorship. In his farewell letter to all SPL employees, he said these opportunities — along with the close relationships he developed during his time here — were key to his decision to stay with the LA District for 40 years.

Thank you, Danny, and thank you to every member of the LA District for your service and dedication to the mission!

Proud to be SPL!

Col. Andrew Baker

## LA District 5K Run/Walk

### T-shirt guidelines:

The shirt must include:

- Front and back design
- Engineer Castle
- The words US Army Corps of Engineers
- The words Los Angeles District
- Colonel's Eagle

The examples to the right are simply for reference and illustration purposes. Other than the above requirements, have fun with it!



# Ensuring safe passage



Photos by Stephen Baack

The Seanna C, at right, a triple-screw-model bow tug, pulls a dump scow, called the Robert L, on the way to deposit dredged material near the shore of Dockweiler State Beach in Playa del Rey, California. The pair of vessels is slated to make four to five trips per day for the next five months.

## Maintenance dredging of Marina del Rey harbor underway

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MARINA DEL REY, Calif. — Maintenance dredging of the Marina del Rey Harbor entrance channel is underway and is scheduled to be complete in May.

The construction contract was awarded to HME Construction in late November, and work began Jan. 1.

The LA District is working alongside several project partners, including the U.S. Coast Guard and LA County's Department of Beaches and Harbors, Harbor Patrol and Department of Public Works.

The project removes built-up sediment from the entrance channel and ensures the waterway remains safe and navigable for the more than 4,200 recreational boats docked at the harbor, as well as first responders and Coast Guard vessels.

"We typically dredge this harbor every five to seven years for navigation safety," said Victor Andreas, project manager with the LA District. "There's shoaling that's occurring on the north side of the harbor, so we come in here and dredge it to open it up so vessels

can go in and out."

Andreas said shoaling happens when the buildup of underwater sediment reduces the depth and width of a waterway, making the passage or channel unnavigable and unsafe. Routine maintenance dredging prevents and mitigates this phenomenon.

The project is a 24-hour-a-day operation

and is expected to remove between 400,000 to 500,000 cubic yards of underwater material from the harbor's north jetty. The material is dredged from the harbor's entrance and sand traps, transported on a dump scow and deposited two miles away near the shore of Dockweiler State Beach in Playa del Rey.

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The Seanna C, a triple-screw-model bow tug, makes its way from Marina del Rey Harbor, California, while pulling a dump scow, called the Robert L, to a nearshore area of Dockweiler State Beach in nearby Playa del Rey. The vessels are slated to make four to five trips per day for the next five months to complete this cycle of maintenance dredging for the entrance channel of Marina del Rey Harbor.



Photos by Stephen Baack

The Seahorse, a utility vessel positioned near the north jetty of Marina del Rey Harbor in Los Angeles County, dredges material Jan. 9 from the harbor's entrance channel.

[‘DREDGING’ continued from Page 4](#)

The scow, called the Robert L, picks up the material from the dredging vessel, the Seahorse, and, with the help of the tugboat, the Seanna C, is slated to make four to five trips per day.

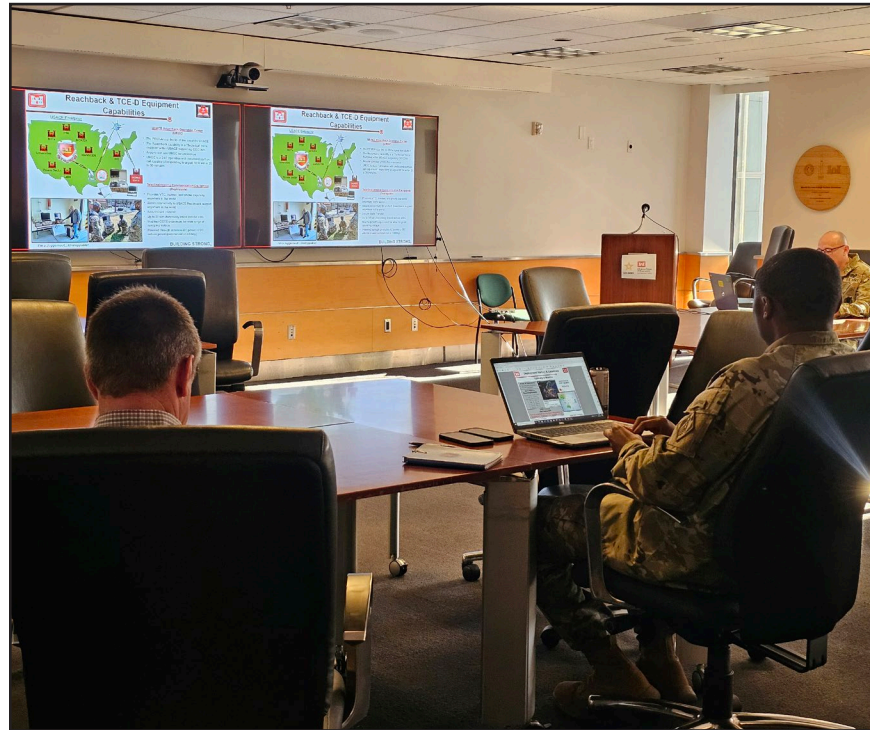
Aside from inclement weather that moved the start of operations from late December to Jan. 1, Andreas said the project is going well.

"There have been some weather delays, but now it's moving along," Andreas said. "The folks at LA County Beaches and Harbors have been great and very supportive to help us get this project going and keep moving forward."

Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District project-delivery team managing the ongoing Marina del Rey Harbor dredging project join partners with the LA County Department of Beaches and Harbors to see dredging operations in action Jan. 9 at the harbor's entrance channel in LA County, California.



## Looking for a few good engineers



Photos by Brooks O. Hubbard IV

Maj. Jose Santiago (left photo), commander of the 542nd Engineer Detachment, Forward Engineer Support Team-Advanced, and Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Colon (right photo, background right), noncommissioned officer in charge of the 542nd Engineer Detachment, FEST-A, provided a comprehensive online and in-person recruitment information briefing to LA District employees Jan. 10 at the district conference room in downtown LA. Santiago and Colon were there to recruit qualified civilian engineers for an upcoming deployment to the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command area of operations in fiscal year 2025.

The FEST-A provides engineering solutions to Army forces deployed to remote, forward locations. Once on site, they use their training, experience and cutting-edge technology to plan construction sites and base camps, conduct environmental reconnaissance and inform senior Army leaders who are commanding forces at forward-deployed locations.

The detachment is one of eight active-duty FEST-A teams in the country. The team consists of one officer-in-charge, one noncommissioned officer-in-charge and six U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civilian technical experts. The civilians include mechanical, environmental, electrical, civil and structural engineers, along with a geospatial information systems specialist.

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

U.S. ARMY  
US Army Corps of Engineers

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## Safety Tip

# New Year's resolutions that save lives

BY CHRISTOPHER RAINWATER  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT SAFETY OFFICE

As we welcome in the new year, many of us will make resolutions on things we'd like to improve in 2024. Some of us will resolve to exercise more, eat less, drink less, spend less money on eating out and many, many others. Perhaps this might also be a good time to take a look in the mirror and ask, "Why haven't I cleaned this mirror?" And then, after you ask that question, think about your personal approach to safety at work and ask yourself if there aren't maybe just a few behaviors you might like to improve. If so, and we hope so, then we'd like to give you a head start or at least some inspired ideas.

### Resolution Idea 1: "I resolve to understand CE-SOHMS better in 2024."

Let's face it: You've heard of the Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System — or CE-SOHMS for short — you've heard it's critical to our success in safety as a district, you've heard it's really not that complicated, and you know you need to understand it better. Great resolution! To get

started on your resolution, may we suggest you visit the Safety page on the SPL intranet? Everything you want to learn is there.

### Resolution Idea 2: "I resolve to look for safety issues at the office and on the project sites."

You've heard the expression, "We're all safety officers," and in 2024, you can make that a reality! The next time you walk by a fire extinguisher, pause 30 seconds to look at the tag. Is it signed on the back to show a monthly inspection occurred? Does the front of the tag show it was serviced in the last year? The next time you're on a project site, pay attention to personal protective equipment. Is everyone wearing it? Do you see other safety issues? Be sure to point them out to the Corps staff at the office and on the project site.

### Resolution Idea 3: "I resolve to do my part in 2024."

At the Corps, we serve as examples wherever we go. When we forget to wear safety glasses, blow off the requirement to wear safety-toed boots, ignore safety instructions from a contrac-

tor on their project site, etc., then we set a poor example. So, the next time you're on a project site, including Corps facilities, be sure you know what the safety requirements are, including personal protective equipment, and follow them proudly.

### Resolution Idea 4: "I resolve to bake cookies, pies, cakes and many other delicious but incredibly fattening desserts for the chief of safety in 2024."

Now, this is less a resolution and more of a solemn promise. The chief can't eat these items, so she will give them to her incredible team. I am diabetic, so this resolution may kill me. ... On second thought, perhaps you should just focus on resolution ideas 1-3! Happy New Year to you all!

*Christopher Rainwater serves as a safety and occupational health specialist for the LA District.*



**US Army Corps of Engineers®**  
Los Angeles District



Photo by Stephen Baack

Two Los Angeles District employees square off in a safety quiz at the 2023 Engineer Day celebration in South El Monte, California, while Christopher Rainwater, right, occupational health specialist for the LA District, tallies the score.

# What are your New Year's resolutions?

PHOTOS BY ROBERT DEDEAUX  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

**Taylor Brown,**  
*Department of the Army intern and civil engineer, wants to stay with gym attendance and continue learning from the great people in the office.*



**Danielle Lenox,** *district paralegal, sets a high bar with her New Year's resolutions of developing her meditation practices and spending more time with extended family.*



**Sean Murphy,** *assistant district counsel, wants to continue supporting the district legal process and increase his retirement investments.*



**Mindy Joseph,** *realty specialist, wants to continue professional development while improving time management during work assignments.*



**Garrett Kaspala,** *lead planner with Water Resources Planning Section A, said his New Year's resolution is to continue the great progress on his project and to walk at least once a day.*



Photos by Stephen Baack

Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, center, Los Angeles District deputy commander, joins project-delivery team members and LA County project partners for a photo during a boat tour of dredging operations Jan. 9 at Marina del Rey Harbor in LA County.

**‘WORK’ continued from Page 1**

on site is probably one of the best things that we can do to understand how we can support them.”

Discussions about successes, ideas, friction points and challenges are all on the table during these visits with PDTs, Brooks said, and doing so in person provides a marked enhancement over the alternative.

“It’s one thing to talk over email or on Microsoft Teams, or to see dredging on a slide, but it’s more personal when I can come out and talk with the actual project team to really understand what their issues are,” Brooks said. “It’s not even close to being the same. And it’s just been fun getting out of the office.”

During his Jan. 9 visit, Brooks and project-delivery team members joined partners with the LA County Harbor Patrol and the Department of Beaches and Harbors on a boat tour of the dredging sites, with no shortage of discussions along the way.

“This gives us a chance to exchange ideas and get a better understanding of what their priorities are,” Brooks said about meeting

with the LA County partners. “I can relay that back to Col. Baker and we can just continue that teamwork.”

“The project is going well,” said Victor Andreas, project manager with the LA District. “There have

been some weather delays, but now it’s moving along. The folks at LA County Beaches and Harbors have been great and very supportive to help us get this project going and keep moving forward.”



Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, second from right, LA District deputy commander, joins project-delivery team members and LA County project partners on a Jan. 9 boat tour of dredging operations at Marina del Rey Harbor in LA County.

# Corps waives day-use fees at recreation areas in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day

## U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced it will waive day-use fees at its more than 2,850 Corps-operated recreation areas nationwide Jan. 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

The waiver covers fees for boat launch ramps and swimming beaches. The waiver does not apply to camping and camping-related services, or fees for specialized facilities (group picnic shelters) and events. Other agencies that manage recreation areas on Corps lands are encouraged, but not required, to offer the waiver in the areas they manage.

Visitors are encouraged to contact Corps’ lake and river projects before visiting to ensure recreation areas are open. More information can be found at [www.corpslakes.us](http://www.corpslakes.us).

The MLK Day fee waiver began in 2023 to honor the life and legacy of King, a national leader of the 1950s-1960s Civil Rights Movement who continues to inspire the pursuit of civil rights today. MLK Day is the only federal holiday designated as a day of service to encourage all Americans to volunteer to improve their communities.

The Corps also offers other fee-free days throughout the year to mark days of celebra-



Courtesy photo

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has announced it will waive day-use fees at its more than 2,850 Corps-operated recreation areas nationwide Jan. 15 in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

tion and commemoration, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers birthday, June-teenth National Independence Day, Veterans Day and National Public Lands Day.

The Corps is one of the leading federal providers of outdoor and water-based recreation, hosting millions of visits annually to its more than 400 lake and river projects. It’s es-

timated that 90 percent of the Corps-operated recreation areas are within 50 miles of metropolitan areas, offering diverse outdoor activities for all ages close to home.

To discover a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recreation site near you, visit <https://corpslakes.ercd.dren.mil/visitors/visitors.cfm> or visit [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov).

## Around the District

*“I enjoy working for the Corps because I get to be involved in all stages of project development, from planning and design through construction and closeout. The cradle-to-grave aspect of work keeps the work challenging.”*

Doug is supporting programs at Vandenberg Space Force Base and Edwards Air Force Base via the Construction Division. He served six years as an active-duty Soldier, deploying to Iraq. Doug is from Southern California and has been with the Corps for seven years.



**Doug West**  
Engineering Technician



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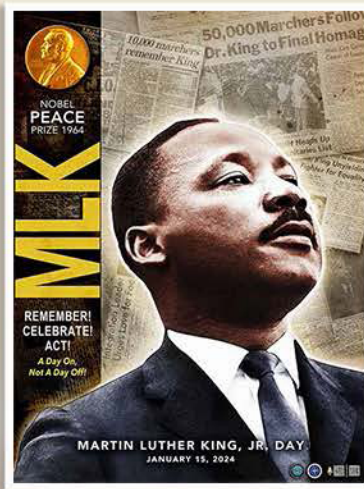
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**MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY**  
January 15th



Each year, on the third Monday in January, the Department of Defense (DoD) stands with the Nation in honoring the life and enduring influence of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dr. King is celebrated as a champion of nonviolence in America and as a prominent figure in the Civil Rights Movement.

In 1994, Congress passed the King Holiday and Service Act, designating the Martin Luther King, Jr., Federal Holiday (MLK Day) as a National Day of Service. All Americans are encouraged to volunteer to improve their communities.

This year holds particular significance as it marks the 60th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., being awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

At the age of 35, King became the youngest man to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his commitment to nonviolent methods during the Civil Rights Movement.

Gunnar Jahn, the chairman of the Nobel committee, stated King was *"the first person in the Western world to have shown us that a struggle can be waged without violence. He is the first to make the message of brotherly love a reality in the course of his struggle, and he has brought this message to all men, to all nations and races."*

In his Nobel acceptance speech, King pondered the contradiction that he would be given a prize to honor peace regarding a movement filled with much violence, oppression, and injustice toward people.

He concluded that nonviolence is in fact the answer by explaining, *"I conclude that this award, which I receive on behalf of that movement, is a profound recognition that nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral question of our time—the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to violence and oppression."*

King demonstrated his unwavering dedication to the Civil Rights Movement by donating the entirety of his Nobel Peace Prize award money.

Just 4 years after receiving the Nobel Prize, King was assassinated while standing on the balcony of his motel room on the evening of April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tennessee.

The Defense Department recognizes that freedom, equality, and inclusion are true force multipliers and imperative to the national defense and our Nation's strength.

King recognized the power of service. Observing MLK Day through service continues the DoD's mission of promoting change and building communities.

The men and women of the DoD honor King by living up to the standard he set. Together we safeguard his legacy and, as one DoD family, rise to meet today's challenges.

