crosscurrents

The district expands new capabilities: the Manitowoc 165 crane barge

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Contents

(cover) Luke Anderson, derrick boat operator, sits in the cab of the new Manitowoc 165 Crane Barge, during the set-up of the new equipment at Fountain City Service Base, Fountain City, Wisconsin, Sept. 9. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

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Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be 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,

Congratulations on your diligence as we celebrate the completion of another fiscal year. I look forward to seeing what we accomplish in fiscal year 2025.

As we wind down our navigation and recreation season, I want to thank all our operations employees for their commitment to providing a vital service to the public in as safe and efficient manner as possible. If you haven't had a chance to see the fall colors yet, you need to hurry as the fall season is ending.

Speaking of navigation, our maintenance and repair crew have been hard at work this summer with making sure everything is up and running. You can read about a couple of their projects in this issue. We have an exciting new piece of equipment, the Manitowoc 165 crane barge. We also have some new miter gates at Lock and Dam 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa, which replaces the original ones from the 1930s. These projects will lead us into the future and ensure that we keep the navigation channel open.

Also in these pages, learn about the essential work that our teammates accomplished with the Drayton Dam fish passage project. Not only does this project benefit aquatic species, it also enhances recreation at a vital fishing spot and improves safety on the river by removing a low-head dam.

You can read about two of our new faces in the district. Lt. Col. Josh Rud is a Minnesota native who has returned to his roots to serve as the deputy district commander. Trevor Popkin is our new chief of the regional planning and environment division north. He brings a wealth of experience and knowledge from around the country, and he's excited to work on the river.

Continue to read the Good Catch safety messages that come into your inbox. These are an important way that we highlight ongoing safety concerns around our construction sites and locks and dams and more important, steps we can take to be proactive. I appreciate everyone's vigilance, as we continue to accomplish our projects on time, within budget and SAFELY.

Safety has also been on my mind at the district office in downtown St. Paul. I have heard your concerns about the safety in the areas surrounding the buildings. One of our first initiatives was to host the St. Paul Police Department Crime Prevention unit here for an informational discussion. Some of my key take aways were: use the buddy system (find someone to walk with you in the skyway and to the parking ramps), be aware of your surroundings (resist the urge to wear headphones or use your phone while you are walking), and carry a personal safety device instead of pepper spray (you are likely to forget how to use pepper spray in an emergency situation and may end up hurting yourself).

If you have concerns or suggestions, I encourage you to utilize the Dear District comment section on the intranet home page or to come speak to me directly. As always, I have an open-door policy. You can also drop by to chat with Jinah Lockwood, our crime prevention officer. As always, thanks for all your effort and keep up the good work.

Respectfully,
Col. Eric Swenson

The district expands new capabilities with crane barge

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

In a significant leap forward for the St. Paul District's maintenance and repair mission, the new Manitowoc 165, also known as Crane Barge 3129, is set to enhance operational efficiency and safety in the field.

"This is the first time we have a barge custom tailored exactly for the maintenance and repair mission for today and into the future," said Aaron Pieplow, operations safety specialist and load handling equipment coordinator. "This opens the doors for mission capabilities that we were never able to do before."

[left] Aaron Pieplow, operations safety specialist and load handling equipment coordinator, and Luke Anderson, derrick boat operator, discuss the capabilities of the new Manitowoc 165 Crane Barge, in Fountain City, Wisconsin, Sept. 9. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Transitioning from Outdated Equipment

The Manitowoc crane barge replaces the aging Link Belt 218 and the outdated Hauser crane barge, both of which no longer meet the demands of modern operations, Pieplow explained. The transition to the light duty crane was a 5-year journey, he said, culminating in a state-of-the-art platform that aligns with industry standards and enhances public service.

The process began with securing funding and developing designs through Philadelphia District's Marine Design Center to tailor the barge to meet specific operational needs. Once the designs were approved, the barge was laid out and assembled at a shipyard in Texas before being transported upriver to the St. Paul District. The crane arrived shortly thereafter, transported in nine semi-trucks, and meticulously lifted onto the barge and assembled piece by piece with the assistance of the existing Fountain City Service Base yard crane. The final phase includes load testing and outfitting the barge before its first mission–anticipated for Lock and Dam 7's anchorage replacements this winter.

Enhanced Capabilities

"The Manitowoc 165 features a larger size, which significantly increases stability for the crane," said Luke Anderson, derrick boat operator. "The upgrade allows for greater lifting capacity and greater reach capabilities, essential for handling more substantial jobs such as lock and dam concrete repairs, bulkhead replacements, and, notably, assisting the Rock Island District with miter gate replacements over the next few years."

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The addition of two generators, office space, restrooms, climate controlled lower deck, mobile internet connectivity and increased storage throughout the vessel provides the crew of five to six members with the resources needed for various tasks.

"The additional storage allows maintenance and repair crew the ability to stock equipment and supplies needed for various repairs effectively turning the storage area into a floating hardware store tailored to lock repairs," Pieplow said.

Innovative Features for Safety and Efficiency

One of the features of the new crane is its innovative cab design. Unlike traditional stationary cabs that limit visibility, the Manitowoc's cab is affixed to an arm that extends the cab up to 10 feet in the air, allowing operators to have a better view of their surroundings. Additionally, a camera system mounted at the boom tip provides crucial visual information, enabling operators to see precisely where they are positioning the load, thereby improving safety and efficiency.

"Prior to the camera system, operators were 'in the blind' approximately 50% of the time and relied on others to give instructions on movements," Pieplow said. "Imagine putting a blindfold on and operating your car under the direction of your passenger. The camera system pulls the blindfold off and allows operators to see where they never could before."

Another significant improvement is the crane's mobility. Unlike stationary cranes, the Manitowoc's new track system allows the crane to move along three-quarters the length of the barge. This flexibility means the barge can remain stationary while the crane maneuvers, significantly enhancing operational capabilities.

Looking Ahead

"As the Manitowoc 165 prepares for its inaugural mission, it stands as a testament to the dedication and hard work put into modernizing the maintenance and repair fleet," Pieplow said. "With enhanced capabilities and a focus on safety, this crane barge not only marks a new chapter for operations but also promises to provide more effective service to the public."

The old Link Belt 218 will retire from its days on the water and find new life in the Fountain City Boat Yard where it is stationed next to the existing yard crane on one of three new crane pads designed into the straight-line mooring renovation that was completed last year. This allows for two of the three crane pads to be occupied at any given time and improve lifting capabilities of the Fountain City Service Base.

Crane support is vital for off-season maintenance of the Dredge Goetz, Mechanical Dredging Plant "Wade" and other support vessels that operate continuously during the navigation season to keep waterways open to navigation, Pieplow explained.

"The Manitowoc 165 is not just a replacement; it represents a significant advancement in technology and operational capacity, paving the way for a safer, more efficient future in the field," Pieplow said.

Auxiliary load test of the crane barge in Fountain City, Wisconsin, Sept. 18. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Corps of Engineers replaces miter gates from the 1930s

Story by Melanie Peterson

Originally constructed in the 1930s, Lock and Dam 10 recently received a face-lift. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, along with the Rock Island District, replaced the miter gates at Guttenberg, Iowa, after over 90 years of service.

The old gates were removed with the help of Rock Island District's 500-ton floating crane barge, the 'Quad Cities', and replaced with the new $3.3 million gates that were assembled at Newt Marine Services in Dubuque, Iowa. The work was completed over the course of five lock closures.

The work was performed by maintenance and repair crews from both the St. Paul and Rock Island districts.

The Lock and Dam 10 upstream gates weigh in at 246,000 pounds and are 25 feet tall and 60 feet wide. The downstream gates are 266,000 pounds and 30 feet tall and 60 feet wide.

"The successful installation of the new Lock and Dam 10 miter gates exemplifies the skill and professionalism of the Corps of Engineers' operators and engineers. With team members from both the St. Paul and Rock Island districts working together, we accomplished a complicated and dangerous task safely and efficiently," said Jim Cook, project manager.

As with previous new gate installs, these were preceded by upgrades to the miter gate anchorages. The Lock and Dam 10 anchorage upgrades happened during the winter of 2021-2022.

The new miter gate is lifted into place at Lock and Dam 10 near Guttenberg, Iowa, Aug. 22. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

(left) Brian Sipos, Lock and Dam 9 lockmaster, talks to (right) Jay Grimsled, Lock and Dam 10 lockmaster, at the miter gate replacement, near Guttenberg, Iowa, Aug. 22. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Partnerships propel a win-win solution at Drayton Dam

Story by Melanie Peterson

On a sunny fall day, with the aroma of sugar beet production lingering in the air, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, celebrated safety, the environment and partnerships within the region. With the rock rapids of Drayton Dam as a backdrop, speakers spoke to a strong testament to science and a commitment to the greater community on the Red River of the North.

The Drayton Dam fish passage mitigation project was a $7.7 million project that aimed to remove the last impediment to fish passage between the source of the Red River at Wahpeton, North Dakota/ Breckenridge, Minnesota, to the St. Andrews Lock and Dam in Lockport, Manitoba, north of Winnipeg. The new dam structure includes a sloping set of rapids with a rock passageway. Rocks and boulders were placed in patterns to create pools through which fish can pass.

In addition to environmental benefits, the removal of the low head dam also ensured better safety at the popular recreation area. Known for their dangerous hydraulic roller currents, low-head dams have been associated with several safety incidents.

The Corps of Engineers, along with its partners, celebrated the completion of the project Sept. 25 with a dedication ceremony that featured speakers from the North Dakota Department of Water Resources, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, and the city of Drayton, North Dakota, as well as congressional representatives.

"I'm proud to say that the Corps [of Engineers] with all of you collectively came together to deliver this project for the people of North Dakota and Minnesota along the Red River," said Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander.

John Paczkowski, North Dakota Department of Water Resources state engineer, touched on both the safety and environmental aspects.

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Drayton Dam fish mitigation project in Drayton, North Dakota, Aug. 29, 2023. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

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"For decades, Drayton Dam has been a popular fishing hole, as well as a reliable water supply intake location on the Red River for the city of Drayton," said Paczkowski. "Unfortunately, like many low-head dams, it has adversely affected river connectivity for fish and other aquatic species and, tragically, posed a public safety risk. However, today we celebrate the completion of the dam mitigation project. This is truly an important milestone and achievement for the Drayton community."

Barb Naramore, deputy commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, emphasized the important environmental impacts of the project. She said there has been extraordinary progress on reconnecting the Red River. In 2002, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources identified 72 impediments to fish passage in the basin and, 22 years later, 48 of those have been removed or modified so they no longer present a barrier to fish passage.

"We are seeing that response in the system," she said. "In 2022, we documented the first spawning of Lake Sturgeon in the Red River basin in over 100 years. We've seen spawning this year in multiple locations."

The Drayton Dam project was a mitigation element of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. This overall flood risk management project provides flood risk reduction for nearly 260,000 people and 70 square miles of infrastructure in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Horace and Harwood. Robert Wilson, co-executive director of the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, lauded the partnership of the project.

"This certainly is a celebration of partnerships," he said. "It's about local, state and federal entities working together with civilian contractors to accomplish something that will benefit people and aquatic life for generations to come."

Audience members listen to speakers at the Drayton Dam dedication ceremony in Drayton, North Dakota, Sept. 25. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer

A homecoming for new deputy district commander

Story by Renwick Martin

After 16 years in the U.S. Army, Minnesota native Lt. Col. Joshua Rud has served around the nation and the world. From his first assignment in Germany to his most recent position in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, Rud hasn't had many opportunities to come home. That all changed in July when he took over as the deputy district commander of the St. Paul District.

Lt. Col. Joshua Rud, deputy district commander. USACE St. Paul District photo by Wendy Wells

A graduate of Eastview High School in Apple Valley, Minnesota, Rud's first passion was football. He was a practice player for two years at North Dakota State University before turning his attention to the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, or ROTC, at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities. Service in the military was always something that interested him and he was drawn to the physicality, discipline and comradery. "I was always interested in being a public servant as a kid," he said.

A decorated military career

Rud was officially commissioned in the U.S. Army in 2008 after graduating with his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering.

Within three weeks of arriving to his first assignment in Germany, Rud deployed to Iraq, where he would begin his first of four deployments to active combat zones. Rud said his favorite aspect of deployment was working with partners from across the world. Having always had an interest in international cultures, he enjoyed developing relationships with soldiers from foreign countries, and he said still maintains contact with many of them today.

Rud cites the Second Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division's redeployment in Eastern Europe as one of his biggest accomplishments throughout his military service. He helped synchronize the efforts of the brigade staff with unit leaders, their higher headquarters, and numerous contractors to bring over 3,300 soldiers and hundreds of vehicles across six different European nations back to Fort Campbell. Rud recalls how enjoyable it was to work alongside such competent leaders to accomplish such a monumental task.

As his military career progressed, Rud began to realize the engineering component of the U.S. Army was much bigger than the tactical side to which he had experienced. He became

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interested in working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as he learned more about the mission and the work that USACE performed. He was eventually assigned as a project manager for the Omaha District.

Following his work in the Omaha District and a short stint in Kansas, Rud spent five years in the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell, starting as a division staff officer, then progressing through the ranks. “I was fortunate to work alongside incredible soldiers and leaders,” Rud said.

As the deputy district commander, Rud wears two hats. As chief of staff, he synchronizes the efforts of the support staff to enable the tremendous work of the district’s 700 employees. He focuses on tackling organizational problems and challenges that may inhibit technical experts and leaders from delivering the program and projects on time, under budget and safely. His second role is as the deputy district commander, in which he fills in for Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, when the commander is tackling district priorities. This often involves visiting one of the district’s 49 sites. He enjoys these opportunities the most as it allows him to talk with St. Paul District teammates and stakeholders. “These trips allow me to learn more about the amazing work our district does,” Rud said.

Leadership

When asked about his leadership philosophy he said, “it is continually adapting.” He deliberately avoids written philosophies on PowerPoint slides because, “they look pretty but collect dust in a drawer somewhere and aren’t practiced.” He describes leadership as a continuously evolving practice that should adjust to the organizational needs. “The two constants in any leadership approach that I take are to always be positive and engaged.” He said leaders should never be afraid to roll up their sleeves, dive into the details and accomplish the work alongside their teammates.

(right) Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, promotes (left) Lt. Col. Joshua Rud from major to lieutenant colonel, Aug. 15. USACE St. Paul District photo by Wendy Wells

Controlled Chaos

In addition to remaining fully engaged within the St. Paul District, Rud has a busy family and enjoys multiple hobbies. He recalls that he and his wife like to joke that they live in “controlled chaos.” With four kids in sports and two dogs, his house is continuously on the go. In the autumn, he enjoys hunting, coaching youth football and watching Wild hockey and Vikings football.

Despite only being with the district for a few months, Rud has high praise. “The technical competence of our staff has been incredibly impressive to me. It is fun for me to see people that are passionate about things and technically competent,” Rud said. As for the culture, he cites how much it feels like a family. “It has been awesome to feel a sense of belonging.”

Self-professed 'river rat' makes way to district

Story by Ren Martin

Trevor Popkin was recently selected as the chief of the regional planning and environmental division north, which covers the St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts.

Beginning his career in 2008 as a seasonal park ranger for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers while attending Western Illinois University, Popkin worked in the Rock Island District and the Mobile District before joining the St. Paul District.

Even though he grew up in Illinois, Popkin said coming to St. Paul was, in a way, a homecoming for him. "I've always lived within 10-15 minutes of the Mississippi River. The river's home," he said.

In his position, Popkin leads a team of interdisciplinary professionals. One of these teams consists of the plan formulators, who facilitate teams through the plan formulation process. One of their current projects is in Tangipahoa Parish, Louisiana, where they are focused on developing a plan that seeks to reduce future flood damages to residential and commercial properties. Popkin also leads the environmental planning and environmental compliance teams, who focus on the environmental compliance and environmental planning components of both new and existing civil works projects. The division has a cultural section, which ensures that the tribal trust responsibility is fulfilled. St. Paul District's geographic information system team is also located within the division.

An important piece to Popkin's success was his participation in the Strong Leaders Program, an enterprise-wide leadership development initiative where eight participants are selected from around the country to participate in a year-long multi-faceted leadership development program. The participants are focused on improving their leadership, team building and communication skills. Popkin would subsequently become the program facilitator.

One of the most rewarding experiences during Popkin's time in USACE was his deployment to Puerto Rico in response to Hurricane Maria. After seeing the devastation of the hurricane, Popkin had a new perspective of his work in USACE. "What we're basically trying to do is protect and enhance the infrastructure of the United States," Popkin said. "I

Trevor Popkin, regional planning and environment division north chief. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

realized after seeing the devastation of the hurricane that we need to make sure we keep taking care of our resources and appreciate what we have."

Within his short time in the district, Popkin has already been impressed. "I think our teams in St. Louis, Rock Island and St. Paul all exemplify the values, 'mission, value, people'. I've been impressed with everyone that I've met here," he said.

When he isn't working, Popkin likes to mountain bike, hike and camp. His wife, Bre, also works in the St. Paul District in the operations division. Together they have four-year-old twins, who are very excited to enjoy their first snowy Minnesota winter!

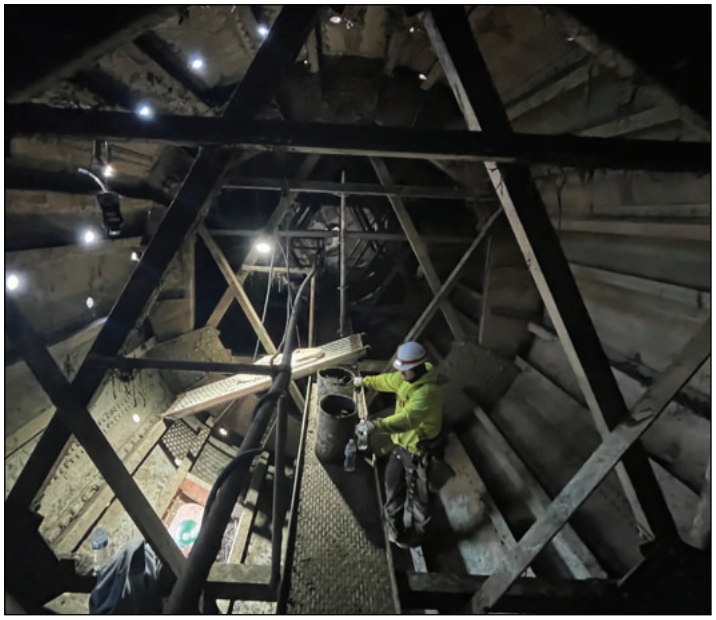
After nearly a half century, dams see rehabilitation

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

In a significant shift after 50 years, more than a $40 million rehabilitation effort is now focused on protecting both property and the people who rely on it at the locks and dams on the Upper Mississippi River.

Project work started at Lock and Dam 5 in Minnesota City, Minnesota, in March, marking a significant step in the rehabilitation efforts. Now, attention is also on Lock and Dam 5A in Fountain City, Wisconsin, where similar initiatives are set to begin. Both sites will undergo comparable rehabilitation work over the course of the next four construction seasons.

“By prioritizing safety and sustainability, the rehabilitation work not only seeks to mend the physical structures, but also provide intended benefits to the nation and protect the people who live near them,” said Billy Thomson, project manager.



Contractors work inside the roller gate at Lock and Dam 5, Minnesota City, Minnesota, as part of the routine gate maintenance project, Oct. 6. USACE St. Paul District photo by Gregory Hammons

The extensive projects involve sandblasting, painting, rehabilitation and other maintenance of the roller gates at each lock and dam. The roller gates will be repainted grey. Specifically at Lock and Dam 5A, the work includes rehabilitation of the roller gate bulkheads, Tainter gate bulkheads and bulkhead storage carts, as well as installing corrosion protection on the roller gates.

“One of the notable aesthetic changes that the public will see throughout the projects is changing in the roller gate paint color from red to grey. The coating system is critical in providing durability for the damming surface,” Thomson said.

The previous gates were painted with V-106 red paint due to availability and affordability. Trusted suppliers have recently started phasing out production due to manufacturing concerns with the formation containing hazardous characteristics and pass/fail rate issues with hydraulic steel structure application.

“A major project like this requires careful planning and coordination, encompassing essential elements such as thorough inspections, necessary repairs, fabrication of components, safe scaffolding design, debris removal and safety measures for abrasive blasting,” said Greg Hammons, contracting officer representative. “Each of these components is critical to ensuring the project’s success and the long-term integrity of the infrastructure.”

Lock and dam gate maintenance represents a significant undertaking, highlighting the importance of regular maintenance that prevents larger issues in the future.

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"The last extensive painting of dam gates and service bridges were completed at locks and dams 4 and 6, in 2006," said Mike Dahlquist, operations division, engineering support. "Since then, funding for similar projects has been scarce, although some routine gate maintenance was carried out through hired labor during lock dewatering projects, focusing on painting lock miter gates. This gap underscores the pressing need for investment in infrastructure maintenance, paving the way for the ongoing efforts to revitalize and protect these critical structures."

The St. Paul District is not alone on this effort on the Upper Mississippi River, Thomson explained. The district is part of a collaborative effort with the Rock Island and St. Louis districts.

"The district has leveraged the experiences of the Rock Island and St. Louis districts throughout design and construction, organizations who have also had recent gate maintenance, repair and replacement projects," Thomson said. "Learning from others can lead to improved outcomes and cost savings."

Navigation remains uninterrupted at Lock and Dam 5 as dam repair work focuses solely on the components of the dam. Contractors expect to work through Nov. 15, aiming to complete structural inspections and prepare a detailed repair plan for the second construction season. Season 2 is expected to begin in the spring of 2025, with an emphasis on essential structural repairs to ensure the long-term stability and safety of the dam.

"These two projects are the first in a portfolio of work that will be ongoing on the river for years to come. The team is committed to using this opportunity to not only address issues now, but also best inform operation and maintenance decision making for future decades," Thomson said.

Rehabilitated bulkheads are placed by the contractor at Lock and Dam 5 near Minnesota City, Minnesota, Aug. 30. USACE St. Paul District photo by Gregory Hammons

Bathymetric survey conducted on Red River of the North

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Engineer Research and Development Center survey crews have navigated through hundreds of river miles and woody debris gathering crucial data points along the river's course for future planning studies.

Through a cooperative effort with the North Dakota Department of Water Resources, the project, known as the Red River of the North Bathymetric Study, involved the St. Paul District team of ERDC gathering 444 river miles of bathymetry data on the main stem channel for the Bois de Sioux and Red River of the North from White Rock Dam to the Canadian border.

(left to right) Mike Hall, North Dakota Department of Water Resources and Silver Jackets coordinator; Tommy Kirklin, ERDC surveyor; and John Gaskin ERDC survey lead travel the Red River of the North, near Oakport, Minnesota, May 22. USACE St. Paul District photo by Terry Zien

"The Department of Water Resources and State Water Commission is proud to help sponsor the bathymetric data collection project in partnership with the Corps of Engineers," said the Department of Water Resources Director Andrea Travnicek. "The Red River of the North is a complicated system with a long history of flood-related challenges. With the availability of this data supporting future decision-making and prediction processes, we're improving on our resilience to future flood impacts."

In May, an amended partnership agreement was executed between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the DWR. The amended total project cost is $485,000, with the state of North Dakota and the federal government evenly splitting the amount.

The data collection started May 2024 and spanned 10 weeks. The information will be combined with existing Light Detection and Ranging data adjacent to the project to provide a seamless elevation data set. Multiple survey boats and crews were required to complete the work in a single field season, which was approximately 60 workdays (plus travel days).

"Gathering a large data set in these challenging conditions allows us to understand the river's current state with unprecedented detail, offering a stark comparison to conditions just a decade ago," said Karla Sparks, program manager with the St. Paul District. "This wealth

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of data not only enhances our ability to predict and manage future flood events but also underscores the evolving dynamics of our natural environments."

The bathymetry study, conducted under the Corps of Engineers' Planning Assistance to States program, helps provide consistent data along the mainstem of the Red River of the North, one of the most flood-prone basins in the state. The data collected through this effort is crucial for water managers to compare data from pre- and post-surveys to assess changes accurately and inform hydraulics and hydrology modeling, levee protection, and future flood risk reduction efforts.

Geographic information specialists will now evaluate the data and develop several products releasable to state and federal partners, as well as the public. The final product is targeted for release by December 2024 to ensure meticulous data collection and analysis within the specified timeframe.

"We were able to spend some time in the field and on the water with the Corps' team – seeing the challenging river conditions they had to work through," said Mike Hall, Silver Jackets Program Coordinator with the DWR. "Lots of floating debris and log jams presented a number of complications, including sometimes difficult navigation, but they got the job done. We're grateful for their efforts, and excited for the results."

Wilds Bend site benefits from bank stabilization project

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District recently completed a bank stabilization project at Wilds Bend, near Fountain City, Wisconsin, in Pool 5A of the Mississippi River. Wilds Bend is a dredged material, or river sand, temporary storage site.

This approximately $350,000 project was funded by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, commonly known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

The project included grading the slopes of the site and creating a sand berm and sand bench, as well as installing riprap vanes to mitigate further erosion. Vegetation establishment and willow planting is expected to occur in 2025. "The river side of the site loses sand into the river due to erosion. This project helps stabilize the bank to reduce that erosion," said Ben Nelson, project manager.

"The site is within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge and is managed by the Fish and Wildlife Service in coordination with the Corps of Engineers and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. Interagency coordination was essential to bringing this project to fruition, and it will provide navigation and environmental benefits for decades to come," said Anthony Levine, technical lead.

Each year, about 1 million cubic yards of sand is dredged from the Upper Mississippi River to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel. "That's enough sand to fill either Lambeau Field or U.S. Bank Stadium or a line of standard size dump trucks from Wabasha to Chicago" said Dan DeVaney, placement site manager. That material can be used for beneficial habitat restoration projects, beaches and highways.

Real estate office fosters partnerships to manage federal lands

Story by Melanie Peterson

The real estate office, working cooperatively with the district's La Crescent environmental stewardship section and the town of Onalaska, Wisconsin, conducted a compliance inspection to address known encroachments along the Brice Prairie Shoreline located in the Upper Mississippi River Pool 7, near Onalaska, in July.

The Brice Prairie Shoreline is government-owned property managed by the Corps of Engineers. The Town of Onalaska currently holds a 25-year public park and recreation lease for the operation and maintenance of the four mile stretch of shoreline.

An encroachment is the unauthorized use of federal property. Jeff Grow, chief of real estate's management and disposal branch said, "The intent of curtailing encroachments is to protect the authorized purpose of the land, including the natural resources."

Grow explained that the general consequences of not adequately conducting these types of comprehensive compliance inspections may result in: unauthorized or private exclusive use of federal lands and assets, which could lead to the degradation of those lands and assets.

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(left to right) Ashley Kiley, natural resources specialist; Mary Rinehart, Onalaska city administrator; Jeremy Webb, realty specialist; and Ray Marinan, realty specialist, conduct an inspection of Brice Prairie Shoreline near Onalaska, Wisconsin, July 17. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

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the inability to enforce retained federal property rights, potential for illegal activity occurring on federal lands, increased vulnerability to legal actions against the government, potential exposure to environmental violations on federal lands, public and/or personal health and safety concerns, and failure to ensure legal contractual terms and conditions are being met.

“This continued effort will take several years to obtain 100% compliance, but it is our intention to work with the Town of Onalaska to curtail the encroachments and ensure the terms and conditions of the lease are adhered to,” said Grow. “I commend the team’s hard work, dedication, persistence and continued effort to bring the Brice Prairie Shoreline back into a compliant status.”

Geographically, the St. Paul District is the largest of the districts in the Mississippi Valley Division (139,000 square miles or 38% of the division). St. Paul District real estate manages 76,500 acres of fee land, 286,200 acres of easement land, 42,000 acres of federal transfer land, 631 buildings and structures and 575 active outgrants.

The real estate division is responsible to the district commander for staff supervision, assistance, coordination, and review of all real estate activities of the district. These activities include the areas of real estate planning, real estate acquisition, appraisal, management of federal lands (outgrant issuance and renewal, compliance inspections and encroachment resolution), and real property disposal (the process by which federal agencies identify and transfer, donate, or sell facilities and land they no longer need and are no longer mission-critical to federal agencies).

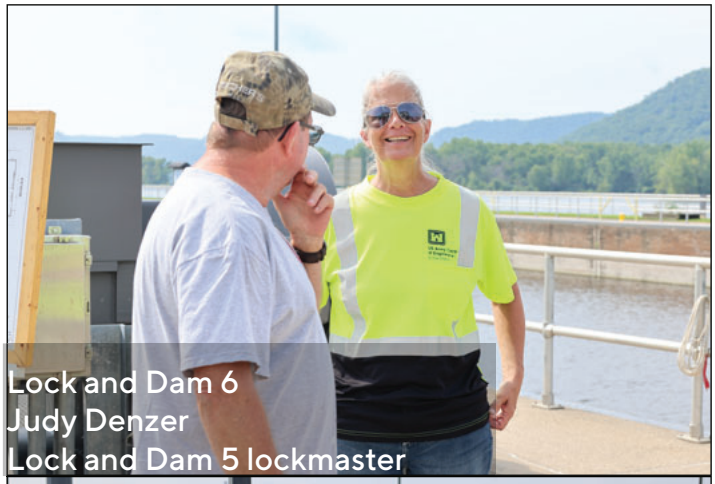
The real estate division is vital to supporting the Department of Defense and the Army mission (both civil and military). Real estate professionals manage over 25 million acres in real property assets for the Army and provide technical expertise and business analysis as it relates to acquisition, management, and disposal of real property. Real estate also provides support to U.S. forces during overseas contingency operations, disaster response and recovery support to the nation.

USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Army Reserve trains at Corps of Engineers Fountain City Service Base

The 652d Multi-Role Bridge Company held a training exercise at the Corps of Engineers’ Fountain City Service Base and adjoining properties, Aug. 6-11, in Fountain City, Wisconsin. The company conducted fast water bridging operations and a road improvement project which involved heavy construction equipment, bridge erection boats, rafts and common bridge transporters. The purpose of the project is to increase unity and the ability to provide freedom of movement to friendly forces whenever called.

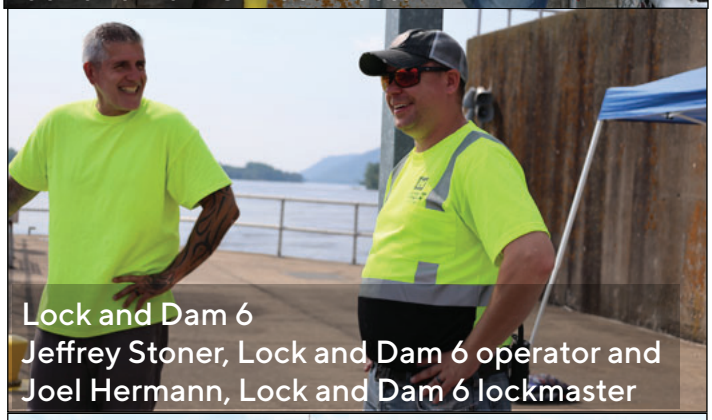
Corps of Engineers hosts LOCK AND DAM OPEN HOUSES



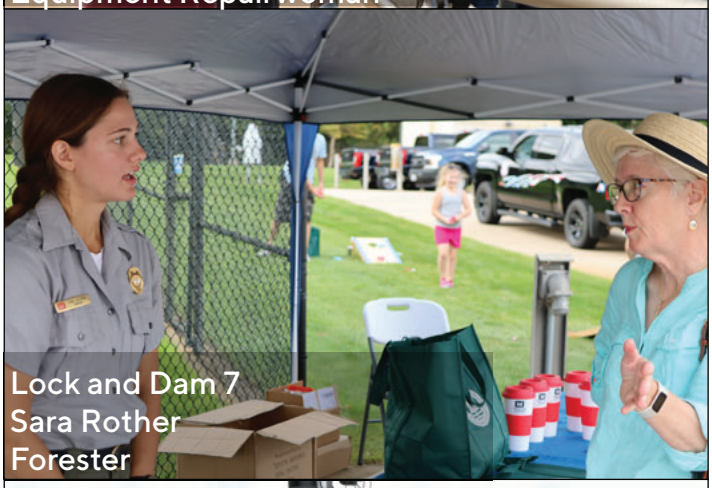
Lock and Dam 6
Judy Denzer
Lock and Dam 5 lockmaster

Lock and Dam 6
Joe Heffner
Lock and Dam 5A lockmaster

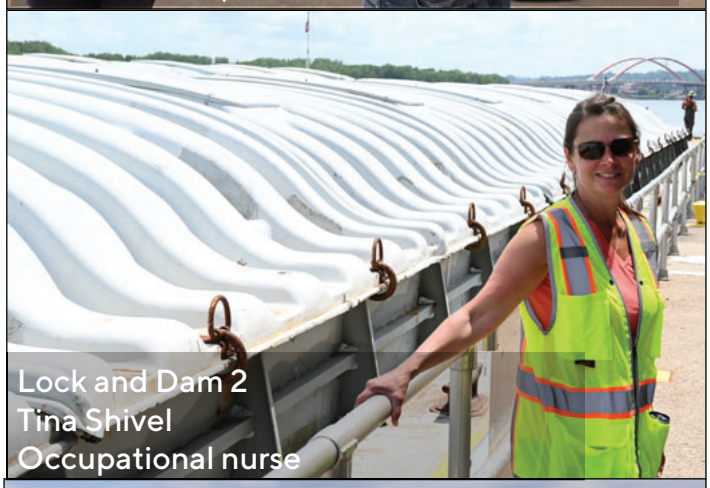
Lock and Dam 4
Bobbie Jo Roundy
Equipment Repairwoman



Lock and Dam 6
Jeffrey Stoner, Lock and Dam 6 operator and
Joel Hermann, Lock and Dam 6 lockmaster

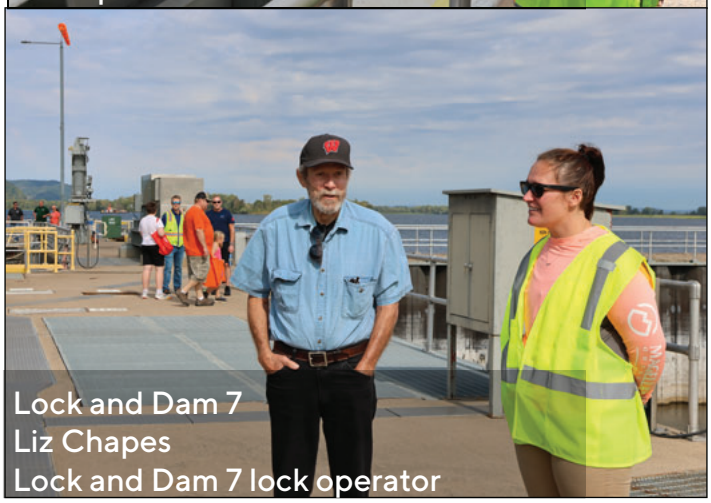


Lock and Dam 7
Sara Rother
Forester



Lock and Dam 2
Tina Shivel
Occupational nurse

Lock and Dam 2
Tim Tabery
Lock and Dam 3 lockmaster



Lock and Dam 7
Liz Chapes
Lock and Dam 7 lock operator

Fall colors at Eau Galle Recreation Area, near Spring Valley, Wisconsin, Oct. 2. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

(left) Karl Jansen, deputy district engineer, awards (right) Terry Birkenstock, chief of regional planning and environment division north, with the Bronze Order of the de Fleury Medal and the Superior Civilian Service Medal at the occasion of his retirement after 38 years of civilian federal service with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Aug. 29. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Landon Hill, natural resources specialist, talks to college freshmen about the St. Paul District, water safety, parks and recreation and job opportunities, in Valley City, North Dakota, Sept. 20. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

(left) Lt. Col. Josh Rud, deputy district commander, presents Rojean Heyer, Lock and Dam 6 lockmaster, with an award for her retirement after 40 years of service. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer

Command Sergeant Major Douglas Galick recognized employees on the Dredge Goetz for their hard work (left) 3rd Assistant Engineer Craig Bauer and (right)Marine Oiler Logan Skoug, Sept. 18. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photos

Sam Mathiowetz, chief of locks and dams, talks to Soldiers and their families pre-deployment overseas about career opportunities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the Beyond the Yellow Robbin event in Bloomington, Minnesota, Sept. 7. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP

July
Justin Bernau
Operations

August
Katie Opsahl
Regional Planning and Environment Division North

September
Stephanie Mann
Engineering and Construction

October
Samantha Fink
Operations

News & Notes

New hires

Brittany Benson, technical support assistant, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota
Sydney Case, geographer, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Charles Fimon, facility services assistant, operations, Watson, Minnesota
Benjamin Helwig, heavy mobile and marine equipment mechanic, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Gabriel Hermanson, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

Renwick Martin, public affairs specialist, public affairs, St. Paul, Minnesota
Maggie O'Neill, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Hannah Rasmussen, engineering technician, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Caleb Redick, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota
Jon Saunders, Jr., equipment specialist, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Alan Silas, geographer, regional planning and environment division north, Moline, Illinois
Joshua Stohr, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota
Denise Vanscoy, administrative project assistant, regional planning and environment division north, Moline, Illinois

Promotions

Cameron Ahola, lock and dam operator, operations, Welch, Minnesota
Jeremias Alcon, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Jill Bathke, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Benjamin Bejcek, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jeremy Caya, lock and dam operator, operations, Eastman, Wisconsin

Zachary Day, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri
Haley Djock, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Aimee Eberle, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota
Amanda Goldstein, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Rachel Gralnek, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Mason Huth, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin
Karl Just, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota
Benjamin Knutson, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota
Brian Lloyd, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota
Meghan McKinney, regulatory systems administrator, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Christopher Olson, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin
Lexi Ousky, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Marcus Patterson, program analyst, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota
Breann Popkin, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Trevor Popkin, supervisory biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Joel Porterfield, geographer, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota
Sara Rother, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota
Al-Aa Saleh, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

News & Notes

Dylan Schuth, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin
Zachary Sirinek, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota
David Sudol, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin
Cody Walter, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin
Lewis Wiechmann, forester, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota

Retirements

Terry Birkenstock, chief of regional planning and environment division north, retired with 38 years of civilian federal service
Rojean Heyer, the district's second female lockmaster, retired with 40 years of civilian federal service with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Steven Kocher, maintenance worker, operations, Wheaton, Minnesota

Congratulations

Capt. Jacob Cole, project engineer, passed the Professional Engineers exam
Clayton Corken, plan formulator, was the Rock Island District employee of the month last month.
Haley Djock, Army Fellow, passed the Professional Engineers exam
Sierra Keenan, plan formulator recently received her certificate as a Water Resources Certified Planner
Anne Wurtenberger, plan formulator, recently received her master's degree in Homeland Security with a concentration in Intelligence and Strategic Planning from the American Military University, College of Global and International Studies.

Taps

(not pictured) Donald Peterson passed away Sept. 22 He worked at the Corps in the design branch during the late 60s through the late 90s.

Gerald Leo Deering, passed away Oct. 14 in Rochester, Minnesota. He worked in operations at Lock and Dam 5, near Minnesota City, Minnesota.

Don Edward Schroeder, Sr., passed away Oct. 16. He retired from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers where he worked at the locks and dams in Minneapolis.

Robert Kupietz retired from the Dredge Thompson and Goetz. He passed away Sept.12. Kupietz spent 23 years with the St. Paul District as the marine oiler/striker

Kim Wenger passed away Oct. 18. He worked as a welder with the maintenance and repair section at Fountain City, Wisconsin. Wenger began his federal career in 1997 and left the Corps in 2018.