



Photo by Stephen Baack

Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, left, and Inglewood Mayor James Butts Jr., right, hold up signed Section 219 Program project agreement documents during a ceremony held June 13 at Inglewood City Hall.

USACE, Inglewood solidify water infrastructure partnership with Section 219 agreement signing

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

INGLEWOOD, Calif. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined the City of Inglewood June 13 to officially sign a project partnership agreement that will strengthen the city's emergency water storage capacity and spotlight more than two decades of inter-agency collaboration.

The agreement, supported by federal funding through Section 219 of the Water Resources Development Act, will assist in the design and construction of the Morningside Reservoir — the

first and highest-priority of four planned water infrastructure projects under the agreement. The overall program is expected to support up to \$20 million in improvements across Inglewood's aging water system.

"This is a very important project that will assure reliability, emergency and fire storage to the city's water distribution system," said Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the Los Angeles District, during his remarks at the ceremony. "We wouldn't be here without the hard work, dedication and strong partnership with the City of Inglewood — one that has continued to flourish

for more than 20 years."

Hosted at Inglewood City Hall and moderated by Mayor James T. Butts Jr., the event brought together city leadership and USACE officials for a formal signing, followed by a group photo and tour of the Morningside Reservoir site.

In his remarks, Butts emphasized the city's long-standing investment in water infrastructure and the importance of restoring capacity lost with the 2009 decommissioning of the original Morningside Reservoir. Built in 1954, the former 16-million-gallon reservoir was taken

[‘SECTION 219’ continued on Page 4](#)

Bring a Child to Work Day



Photos by Richard Rivera

Children of LA District employees pose for a picture with Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, LA District deputy commander, center, during Bring a Child to Work Day April 24 at the LA District headquarters building in downtown Los Angeles. The annual event coincides with April's Month of the Military Child.



LEFT: Children of LA District employees work on an Urban Flood-Fighting activity during Bring a Child to Work Day April 24 at the LA District headquarters building in downtown Los Angeles.



RIGHT: An LA District employee's child works on a Tornado in a Bottle activity during Bring a Child to Work Day April 24 at the LA District headquarters building in downtown Los Angeles.

Official publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District

Summer 2025
Volume 48, Issue 2

District Commander:
Col. Andrew Baker

Public Affairs Chief:
Dena M. O'Dell

Editor: Stephen Baack

Contributing Editors:
Robert DeDeaux, Dan Collins

Tel: 213-304-1181

The NewsCastle is published monthly under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the employees and extended engineer family of the Los Angeles District, USACE.

Views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the district or of the Department of Defense.

Address mail to the Los Angeles District Public Affairs Office
ATTN: NewsCastle Editor
Room 1105, 915 Wilshire Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90017-2325

Email the Public Affairs Office at:
publicaffairs.SPL@usace.army.mil



Team SPL shines in fire recovery, faces change with resolve

Team,

For those keeping track, you may recall that I devoted the majority of last quarter's commander's column to some personal experiences around Malibu and Pacific Palisades just before and immediately following the Eaton and Palisades Fires in early January. When our last newsletter came out in March, the Debris Removal Team was hitting its stride, starting to clear properties at a phenomenal rate and enabling the many people and communities affected by the fires to shift their focus to recovery and rebuilding.

Now as I write this, we are barreling in on the Fourth of July and the beginning of the final quarter of Fiscal Year 2026! The amazing team the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enterprise assembled, which included (and STILL includes) a great number of team SPL, is on the cusp of wrapping up this monumental mission. What that team has accomplished to this point is nothing short of historic in scope and pace compared to similar missions USACE and others have executed in the past. When we set out on this journey, most expected it would take a year to reach the finish line. As of last week, the Eaton team was sitting at about 98 percent complete, and Palisades slightly behind but at about 90 percent. AMAZING! To our great team who contributed so much to these efforts and to the affected communities — thank you.

Life goes on at SPL in parallel with the actions in Malibu, Pacific Palisades and Altadena. "Change" would be a good theme to describe the past few months. Two long-time and well-loved SPL division deputies have retired: Mark Cohen of the mighty Operations crew (Ops never stops!) and the great Jodi Clifford of our amazing planning team. We've also had about 10 percent of the greater SPL team move on from USACE since the beginning of the year — many through the Deferred Resignation Program and others who simply retired or transferred to other things. The list is long and includes many, MANY great folks. Change is hard, but I'm so proud of all that we have continued to accomplish during what have been tumultuous second and third quarters of FY25. I've



COL. ANDREW BAKER
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

collectively look to fill the gap!

I'll wrap up this quarter's edition of the commander's column with a moment of Zen. I've been so lucky to be able to get out and explore the SPL area of operations with my

also seen to it that we take an appetite suppressant regarding new work. The fact is, we can't "do more with less"; however, we must deliver on the commitments we have made, up to now. My biggest ask of you as we continue to work to deliver the SPL program in this current environment is that you come up on the net early if it looks like we might not be able to meet a commitment, so we can

family since they arrived last year. Our latest bucket list trip was to Yosemite a couple of weeks ago, right after my daughters wrapped up first and third grades. "Incredible" really doesn't do that place justice. We "camped" at Curry Village, hiked the Mist and Upper Yosemite Falls trails, saw Mirror Lake and Half Dome, and cooled off in Merced River, among many other things. The picture is of my two daughters at Mirror Lake on the day we left. We're already planning a return trip. Let me know if you need any tips!

Proud to be SPL!

Col. Andrew Baker



Photo by Col. Andrew Baker

Corporate Board offsite



Courtesy photo

Members of the LA District Corporate Board pose for a picture following the Corporate Board offsite June 4 at the LA District's Arcadia Office in Arcadia, California.

out of service after structural deterioration led to recurring roof leaks, floor cracks and compromised water quality. A 2015 water master plan called for a modern, smaller replacement reservoir designed to better match current water needs and improve circulation.

The new reservoir, to be constructed below grade on the existing site, is designed to hold approximately 4 million gallons of water. It will mix groundwater from Inglewood’s treatment plant with supply from the Metropolitan Water District and distribute it citywide. Plans also call for a new 8,000-square-foot pump station housing four pumps and about 3,000 feet of new connecting pipelines.

“We’re excited to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and move forward on the Morningside Reservoir and other critical water infrastructure projects that will serve Inglewood for decades to come,” said Butts.

Col. Baker also took the opportunity to highlight the broader mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and its historic legacy.

“This year, our organization celebrates its 250th birthday on June 16, so we’ve got a history of shaping the nation through vital public engineering, environmental stewardship and disaster response,” he said. “Our priorities are delivering today, innovating for tomorrow and people always.”

Under Section 219 authority, the federal government will fund 75 percent of the Morningside

Reservoir project’s cost, with the city contributing the remaining 25 percent. The project has already received \$2.3 million in federal funding, including allocations under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in both 2022 and 2024.

“This program sets the stage for critical projects like this to proceed,” Baker said. “With the federal government providing 75 percent of the total project cost, the city’s 25 percent cost share will go a lot further.”

The signing ceremony underscored USACE’s ongoing commitment to delivering responsive, reliable infrastructure support to communities throughout Southern California, which is a mission that aligns closely with Inglewood’s own efforts to invest in long-term public resilience.



Col. Andrew Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, right, delivers remarks during a Section 219 Program project agreement signing ceremony June 13 in Inglewood, California. Baker emphasized the importance of USACE’s long-standing partnership with the city and the shared commitment to resilient infrastructure. Baker is joined by Inglewood Mayor James Butts Jr., left, who signed the documents alongside Baker.



Darius Wallace, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District employee and an Eaton Wildfire survivor, center-right, is greeted by USACE teammates April 30 outside his property in Altadena, California.

SPL teammate receives unwavering support after devastating Eaton Fire destroys home

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

ALTADENA, Calif. — A longtime U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee lost his Altadena home in January when the Eaton Fire swept through the area, destroying thousands of structures in its path.

Darius Wallace, a 43-year veteran of the USACE Los Angeles District, returned to the property recently, joined by leaders from both USACE’s Southern California Wildfires Debris Recovery Mission – Task Force Phoenix and the LA District, who came to show their solidarity.

The visit became a moment of reflection and unity, as colleagues

stood with Wallace amid the charred remains of his home.

“It’s a little hard because it brings back memories of the house and what I used to see in the house,” Wallace said. “Now I’m looking through the debris and the rubble — what remains of the house.”

Among the hardest losses, he said, were irreplaceable personal items: family and military photos, and keepsakes from his years coaching youth baseball, football and basketball. These included photos, newspaper clippings and detailed records with scores, stats and player information — some of which documented the early careers of athletes, who would go on to play professionally.

“But now, all that’s gone,” he said.

Waiting at the site were Brig. Gen. William Hannan Jr., commander of Task Force Phoenix; Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander; Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, LA District deputy commander; and Col. Sonny Avichal, commander of USACE’s Emergency Field Office - Eaton. They were joined by fellow USACE teammates and contractors, all there to offer assistance.

“It’s important for us to be there to show empathy,” Brooks said. “We have to show up not only today, but we have to continue to follow up and provide assistance going forward.”

For Wallace, the outpouring of compassion was more than he expected.

“Oh, that was great — 100 percent,” he said. “I didn’t imagine something like this. I thought maybe it would be a few people, but then I saw the whole crew here. I’m just very appreciative. I’m just very grateful.”

While the wildfire claimed a lifetime of memories, the USACE community’s presence underscored a deeper message: No team member faces loss alone. Wallace’s experience also highlights USACE’s critical role, not just in rebuilding communities after disasters, but in offering unwavering support to its own members through the toughest times.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

Sam Law, a quality assurance specialist with the Los Angeles District, observes a barge carrying a bulkhead gate April 29 for installation at Alamo Dam near Wendon, Arizona. The bulkhead gate installation is required before inspection and maintenance can begin on the dam, operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

LA District completes gate installation at Alamo Dam

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

WENDON, Ariz. — The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District completed underwater gate installation May 4 at Alamo Dam in Alamo Lake State Park.

Installation of the bulkhead gate is the first phase of required maintenance at the dam, which is about 45 miles east of Lake Havasu City and the Bill Williams River National Wildlife Refuge.

“Although there will be an inspection of the upper conduit, which hasn’t happened in 30-plus years, it is unlikely that communities downstream will notice any water flow changes during the bulkhead gate installation and inspection process,” said Pam Kostka, a Los Angeles District operations project manager with

a focus on dam safety. “The inspection will provide information about maintenance needs of the dam.”

The new bulkhead gate was designed with a high degree of confidence in protecting inspectors and machines working behind it. The original bulkhead gate was not structurally adequate for the current safety standards needed for the inspection process.

“Philadelphia District designed the gate,” said Kostka, who holds a master’s degree in aquatic ecology from Baylor University. “They are also assisting in assessing the structural integrity of several service and emergency gates as well as the steel structures associated with the gates.”

In addition to support from the Philadelphia District, the Los Angeles District contracted divers to properly place the gate underwater and

coordinated with a Seattle District dive safety officer.

“Now that the gate is installed, I feel very relieved, and we can continue to keep everyone safe and secure downstream,” said Henry Wassinger, a structural engineer with the Philadelphia District. “The dive team, the contractors and the LA District team are doing a great job out here. It’s been great collaborating with them.”

The Alamo Dam, located at Alamo Lake State Park on the border of La Paz and Mohave counties in Arizona, is a USACE multipurpose project authorized under the Flood Control Act of 1944, Public Law 78-534.

The dam is one of three operated by USACE in Arizona.

[More photos on Page 7](#)



Photos by Robert DeDeaux

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District contractors prepare to install an underwater bulkhead gate May 4 at the Alamo Lake State Park near Wendon, Arizona.



The exterior of the new Flight Test Engineering Laboratory is pictured April 3 at Edwards Air Force Base, California. The LA District designed and constructed the two-story, 75,000-square-foot laboratory, engineering and office complex for the Air Force.

LA District brings big changes to Edwards Air Force Base

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. — The commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District visited two Air Force installations April 3 to meet with project partners and assess progress on key construction efforts.

Col. Andrew Baker met with members of the district's Edwards Resident Office team and toured the new Flight Test Engineering Laboratory at Edwards and the Building 531 Rehabilitation Project at nearby Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale.

Flight Test Engineering Laboratory
Officially opened in 2024, the Flight Test

Engineering Laboratory, or FTEL, is a two-story, 75,000-square-foot laboratory and office complex designed to support the Air Force in advancing and evaluating emerging warfighting technologies. Its mission includes improving sensor precision, enabling long-range data link communications and merging flight test data with advanced modeling and simulation tools.

Edwards and its surrounding installations offer ideal airspace for open-air testing, including bombing ranges, supersonic corridors and low-altitude, high-speed maneuver zones. The base itself has played a pivotal role in aviation history, most notably in 1947, when then-Capt. Chuck Yeager broke the sound barrier in

the Bell X-1. While these vast ranges support dynamic flight activities, the FTEL provides a more controlled testing environment. It helps minimize external factors, such as atmospheric conditions, dust and temperature fluctuations that might otherwise compromise data integrity.

The new facility replaces a building that was more than 70 years old. Jason Bostjancic, deputy director of the 412th Test Engineering Group, said the previous facility had shown clear signs of age and was due for replacement. Demolition of the old structure was included in the project's initial scope of work, as the Air Force works to reduce

[‘EDWARDS’ continued on Page 9](#)



Photos by Stephen Baack

Col. Andrew Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, second from left, meets with the district's Edwards Resident Office team April 3 at Edwards Air Force Base, California.

[‘EDWARDS’ continued from Page 8](#)

its infrastructure footprint across North America.

Bostjancic emphasized the importance of modernizing the workspace to ensure Air Force professionals have access to facilities that match their expertise and mission demands.

“Our technical experts are, in many cases, world-class experts,” Bostjancic said. “We’ve had instances in the past where we advised other nations on how to conduct tests. Certainly, we are the folks with the expertise for the Air Force at large, and Edwards Air Force Base is where developmental testing lives. Having a modern, professional space for our world-class experts to operate out of — I can’t express how much that changes the dynamic for us.”

Although the facility was designed with the latest technology in mind, rapid advancements since the design phase have already prompted updates to meet evolving standards. Sarah Coles, project engineer with the LA District, said these in-progress updates required a united effort with project partners and careful management of resources.

“Teamwork is huge, especially since this building is an engineering lab complex,” Coles said. “Having that close coordination between USACE, our contracting partners and the Air Force was critical in updating the design as best as possible, while still staying within the contin-

gency amount we were allotted, all while staying true to the original intent of the building.”

Building 531 Rehabilitation Project

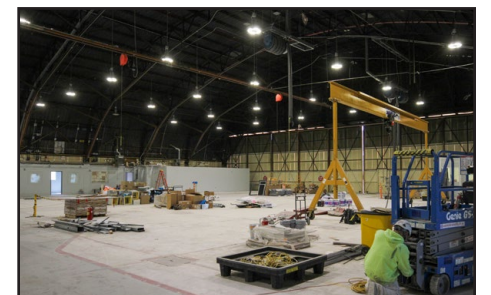
At Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, Baker also visited Building 531, where the LA District is overseeing a major rehabilitation project that is more than 80 percent complete.

The building — once a dedicated hangar used in aircraft testing going back to the 1940s — today supports vehicle maintenance for the fire department and other government vehicles. It also houses plumbing and carpentry shops. More than 3,000 square feet of the hangar space is being converted into office space.

“We have constructed, within the building, a brand-new mezzanine structure, which includes office spaces below, as well as storage up above,” said Brittany Sonier, LA District engineering technician and contracting officer’s representative. “We’ve rehabbed both sides of the building. All the office spaces have been gutted and rebuilt, and we’re also laying down new epoxy flooring inside the hangar bay.”

As a historic structure, the building’s exterior must remain intact.

“When we fixed the exterior windows, we had to maintain the original specifications — we could only scrape and repaint them,” Sonier said. “And the exterior siding had to be matched to the original pattern to preserve the historical look.”



The interior of Bldg. 531 at Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, California.

The LA District is working with Edwards Air Force Base and the 412th Civil Engineering Squadron to deliver the project in partnership with the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

Supporting the Mission

The LA District’s military construction program supports 15 military installations across three states, serving more than 185,000 military personnel. In fiscal year 2024 alone, the program includes more than \$326 million in active projects. In addition to military construction, the district delivers Civil Works, International and Interagency Services, Emergency Management, Regulatory, Small Business and Tribal Partnership Program missions.

End of an era

USACE, Air Force remove aging tower at Plant 42



A decommissioned air traffic control tower at Plant 42 falls April 29 during its demolition at the Air Force installation in Palmdale, California. Crews used an excavator and cable system to safely bring down the structure, which had its support beams cut in advance.

Photo by Stephen Baack

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PALMDALE, Calif. — A distinctive structure on the Palmdale horizon came down April 29 as the original air traffic control tower at U.S. Air Force Plant 42 was demolished, ending a chapter in the facility’s aviation history that dates back more than 60 years.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District oversaw the demolition of the tower in partnership with the Air Force and contracting partners TLI Construction and MEC Environmental. The effort was part of a broader modernization plan to replace aging infrastructure and ensure the safety and efficiency of ongoing aviation operations at the site.

Safety First: Abatement and Demolition

Before demolition could begin, the project was placed on hold until users of the original tower could

move into a newly constructed facility, which opened in November 2022. Work on the old tower officially started in early 2024.

“The first thing they did was abatement,” said Brittany Sonier, LA District engineering technician and contracting officer’s representative. “They started at the top floor and went floor by floor by floor and abated everything in the interior. Then, they went to the exterior and did all the abatement they needed to do on the exterior.”

Sonier pointed out white paint patches and strips still visible on the building’s exterior prior to demolition actually were measures designed to safely contain hazardous materials.

“Basically, they’re encapsulating lead,” she said. “They’re encapsulating any type of abatement that needed to keep it from becoming airborne.”

Common hazards addressed during abatement at older fa-

cilities like the Plant 42 tower include lead-based paint, asbestos and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. Sonier said these materials require careful containment and removal before any structure can be safely demolished.

Once the structure was pulled down, the contractors returned to confirm that no new hazardous materials were exposed. The next steps included separating materials, bulldozing debris and restoring the site.

“Once it’s completely done and they’ve removed all the debris, they’ll go back over it, remove all of the supports that go down about 10 or 15 feet and restore the site to how it was before it went down,” Sonier said.

Although relatively small in scope, the project required a tailored approach because of its atypical nature.

“It’s not a large project, and it’s not a complex project,” Sonier said, “but it’s an unusual one for us be-

cause we don’t normally fell something like this. Usually when we take something down, it’s piece by piece. The main thing USACE does here is just verify it’s safe and that it meets the parameters of the contract.”

The LA District is working with Edwards Air Force Base and the 412th Civil Engineering Squadron to deliver these projects in partnership with the Air Force Life Cycle Management Center at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio.

A Legacy of Innovation at Plant 42

For decades, Plant 42 has been synonymous with cutting-edge aviation and national defense. The facility played a critical role in the development and testing of some of the most advanced aircraft in U.S. history — including the SR-71 Blackbird, U-2 Dragon Lady, B-1B Lancer and B-2 Spirit. In

[‘TOWER’
continued on Page 11](#)

[‘TOWER’
continued from Page 10](#)

more recent years, the site supported elements of the next-generation B-21 Raider program.

David Maher, who worked in the tower during the 1980s as a flight operations officer, reflected on the flight tower’s legacy.

“Plant 42 has been the home of Air Force aircraft dating back to the Korean War,” Maher said. “Quietly, largely anonymously, and very efficiently, it has provided a production capability and a flight capability unmatched anywhere in the world.”

The original control tower stood watch during key eras of innovation, offering those inside a direct view of test flights, engineering trials and historic firsts.

“It was a front-row seat to history,” Maher said.

Completed in late 2022, the new air traffic control tower was designed with enhanced safety systems and upgraded technology to support the operational needs of the Air Force and its mission partners at Plant 42. The construction contract, valued at more than \$17 million, was awarded in fall 2020.

“The cost of a new and upgraded air traffic control tower is obviously high,” Maher said. “However, the impact of Plant 42, both historically and looking forward, is impossible to quantify. An investment now in keeping the facility thriving in the future is well worth it.”

A Tower Full of Memories

Maher remembers the building

as modest in size, but rich in character.

“It was a narrow tower, and the stairwell going up was a tight spiral staircase, so you had to be careful going up and down,” Maher said. “The controller cab at the top was small but functional.”

While it wasn’t the flashiest facility, Maher said it served its mission well, and so did the people in it.

“The people I worked with up there were top-notch,” he said. “It was a great group — the controllers, the maintenance crews and everyone.”

He also noted how much pride came with being part of the flight operations mission during a high-paced era in aerospace development.

“We knew the importance of what we were doing,” Maher said. “Everything was about safety, precision and supporting those flight crews.”

Overlooking the desert, the tower offered a panoramic view of an installation known for its role in pushing the boundaries of aviation.

“You could see everything,” he said. “We had a great view of the flightline and surrounding desert. Watching those aircraft take off and land — especially the experimental ones — was something special.”

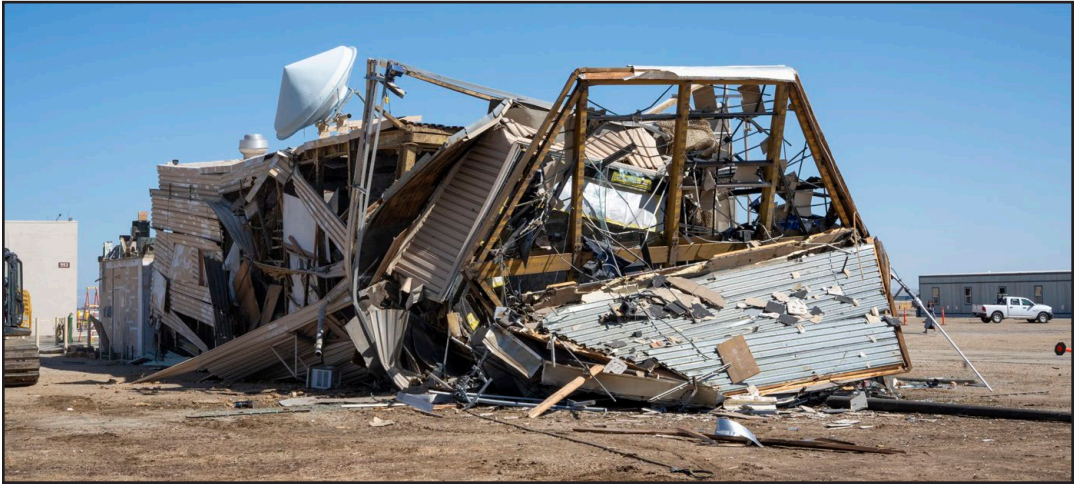
As Maher reflected on the tower’s removal, he acknowledged the mixed emotions that often accompany change.

“Sure, there’s some nostalgia there,” he said. “But it served its purpose, and it was time.”



Photos by Stephen Baack

A sequence of images shows the April 29 demolition of a former air traffic control tower at U.S. Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, California. The demolition marked the latest step in efforts to modernize infrastructure at the installation.



Debris from a recently demolished tower is visible April 29 at U.S. Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, California. Contractors conducted a follow-up inspection to ensure no hazardous materials were exposed before clearing debris and restoring the area.



Photos by Stephen Baack

An excavator smooths bedding material May 1 on the slope of a levee in Riverside, California, where the U.S. Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and contractors have started work again for the levee rehabilitation project.

LA District leads Riverside levee rehabilitation effort

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

RIVERSIDE, Calif. — Construction is underway on a major levee rehabilitation effort along the Santa Ana River.

Local and federal agencies are working together to restore a critical stretch of flood control infrastructure protecting thousands of homes and billions of dollars in property and infrastructure in Riverside.

Led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, in partnership with the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, the project is rehabilitating damaged portions of the Riverside levees — two parallel levees originally built in the 1950s to channel floodwaters safely through urban areas. Known formally as Riverside Levee 1 (west levee) and Riverside Levee 2 (east levee), the structures are part of the larger Santa Ana River levee system.

According to the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, about 9,000 feet of the west levee will be rehabilitated, stretching from Market Street to just past Capary Road. Meanwhile, about 4,000 feet of the east levee will be restored from the

county line to near Columbia Avenue, with additional work planned between Market Street and State Route 60.

The repairs involve reinforcing and extending the existing rock slope protection to address areas where erosion has gradually worn



An excavator smooths bedding material May 1 on the slope of a levee in Riverside, California, where the U.S. Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and contractors have started work again for the levee rehabilitation project.

down the levee, ensuring long-term stability and continued protection. Much of the observed damage stems from storms in late 2010 and early 2011, which brought substantial flows through the Santa Ana River and caused erosion to the riverbanks, including damage to several groins, which are rock structures designed to slow water and reduce impact on the levee slopes.

“These storm events resulted in some scour to both the right and left levees,” said Brandon Colvin, project manager with the LA District. “The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers went out to the site to do some investigations and identified the areas of concern. A project information report was generated to assess the specific areas that needed to be corrected and what type of design would be used as the best mechanism to make those repairs.”

[‘LEVEE’ continued on Page 13](#)

[‘LEVEE’ continued from Page 12](#)

In addition to restoring eroded areas, the project includes innovative features, such as the addition of “launchable stones” for dynamic scour protection. The stones are designed to activate during extreme storm events, providing levee protection when traditional revetments are not always viable.

“During a big storm event, these stones can ‘launch’ and fall into the scour position to act as a revetment from that storm,” said Jung Lee, civil engineer for the project. “These stones are designed to provide an effective means of levee scour protection when we can’t place these revetments underground for various reasons, like in our case, where we couldn’t excavate down below the groundwater.”

The levees range in height from 15 to 22 feet and were originally designed to carry flows of up to 195,000 cubic feet per second — well above the 100-year flood es-

timate of 140,000 cubic feet per second. Their performance is critical to protecting more than 4,300 structures in the Riverside and Jurupa Valley areas, including more than 4,000 homes and about \$1.5 billion in infrastructure.

Colvin emphasized that USACE is working closely with local agencies, including the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District, to ensure all necessary repairs are made to the levees. He noted that the project is federally funded under Public Law 84-99, which allows USACE to assist in the repair of both federal and nonfederal flood protection projects damaged by storms.

Colvin also highlighted the extensive coordination involved in the project, particularly in terms of environmental mitigation. The project includes robust environmental monitoring, he said, with a firm on-site daily to ensure best management practices are being followed and seasonal surveys of

bird habitats and fish populations are conducted to minimize impacts on local ecosystems.

“There’s been extensive coordination with other resource agencies — local, state and federal — through the life of the project, especially in the design leading up to the award of the contracting construction,” he said. “The contractor is currently working on the right levee. They’ve made some good progress there and are starting to make some of the repairs both to the rock, as well as getting the grouted portions placed.”

Colvin praised the collaboration with Riverside County, noting the project has received significant support at all levels of USACE.

“This project represents a significant amount of coordination with Riverside County,” Colvin said. “They’ve been amazing partners to work with here. This project has really been at the forefront, not only of the Los Angeles District, but also the South Pacific Division

and even at Headquarters USACE, where there’s been a significant amount of support thus far. The success and continuation of the project is a direct product of that collaboration and that support at all levels of the organization.”

Construction is ongoing and will continue in phases as weather and site conditions allow. According to Colvin, work on the right levee is expected to be completed by the summer of 2026, followed by a one-year establishment period to ensure the longevity of the levee’s structural integrity. The left levee is forecasted to begin construction in the fall of 2025.

“We have high confidence that the resulting project will provide a long-term solution to the community,” Colvin added. “If we think back to the original construction, which was in the late 1950s, that was intact for 50-plus years with minimal impact. We fully expect this project will continue for many decades to come.”

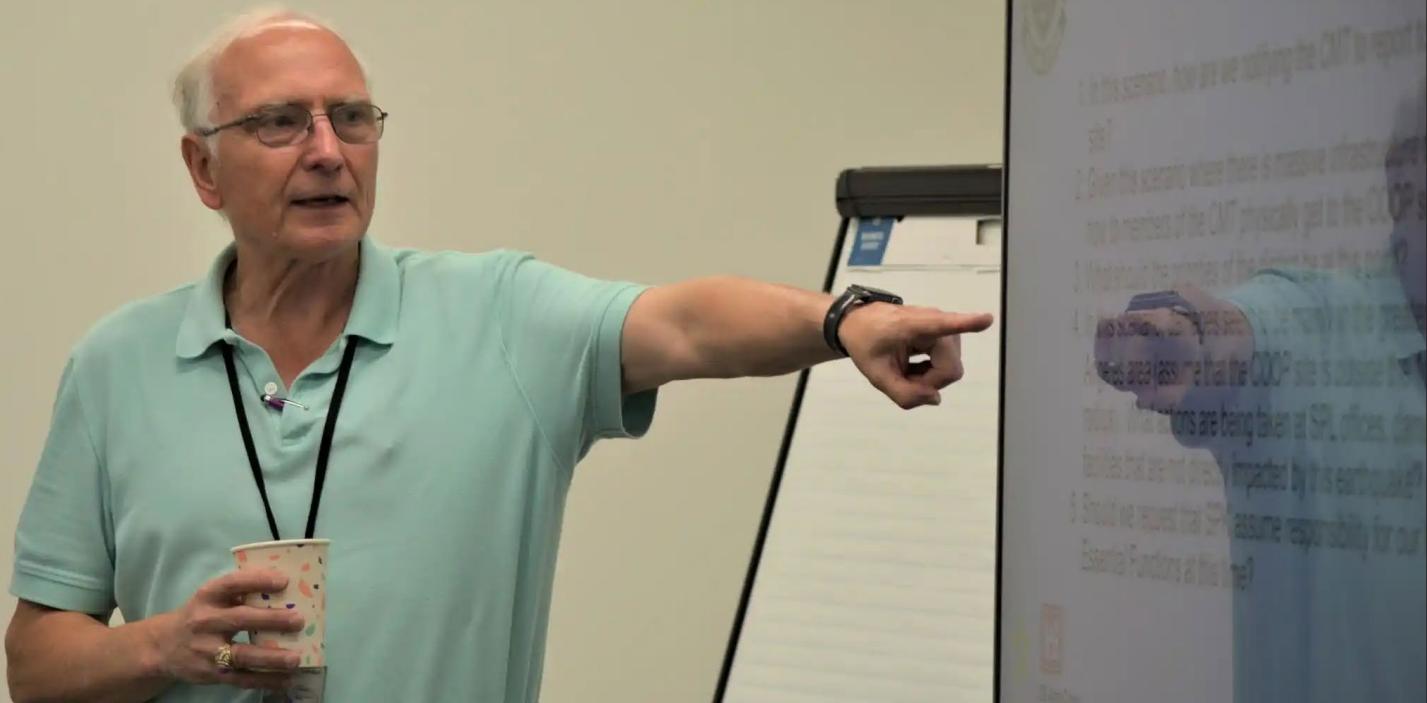


Photo by Stephen Baack

An excavator smooths bedding material May 1 on the slope of a levee in Riverside, California, where the U.S. Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District and contractors have started work again for the levee rehabilitation project.

Shaking Up Preparedness

LA District plans for quake scenario



Photos by Dena O'Dell

David Kingston, LA District Emergency Management Branch chief, answers a question about a mock earthquake scenario during a Continuity of Operations Exercise June 4 at the LA District's Arcadia office. The exercise, conducted annually, ensures the district can continue to perform essential functions and respond to emergencies, even if its primary command and control facilities are disrupted.

Members of the LA District's Crisis Management Team met in person and online for a Continuity of Operations Exercise June 4 at the LA District's Arcadia office. The exercise, conducted annually, ensures the district can continue to perform essential functions and respond to emergencies, even if its primary command and control facilities are disrupted.

A mock scenario during the exercise involved asking participants to divide into breakout groups to discuss their actions if a catastrophic earthquake struck Los Angeles.



Navajo Nation hosts USACE Silver Jackets

for flood response tabletop exercise

BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

BIRDSPRINGS, Ariz. — The Birdsprings Chapter of the Navajo Nation, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Silver Jackets program, hosted its inaugural virtual and in-person flood response tabletop exercise May 30 in Birdsprings, Arizona.

“This is the first tribal-led inter-agency team in the country,” said Chris Stanton, Los Angeles District lead planner and Silver Jackets’ program manager. “The purpose of the tabletop exercise was to test the emergency action plan the Silver Jackets’ team developed with the Birdsprings (Tsiidi To’ii) community of the Navajo Nation.”

The plan consists of emergency flood response, evacuation and sheltering procedures; assesses flood risk and community preparedness; and provides information on resource allocation and mitigation measures.

The exercise assisted the team with understanding strengths of the plan and addressing any improvements needed prior to the start of monsoon season,” said Stanton, a graduate of Indiana State University’s human and environmental systems, and sustainability programs.

Birdsprings’ last significant flood event was in March 2023, where US-ACE provided emergency flood-fighting support under Public Law 84-99.

“From my experience, we started this relationship with Chris Stanton, and he has been really good at providing updates, information, providing input and being the point person – really doing the work,” said Mitzi Begay, Birdsprings Chapter president. “I feel like they are using their knowledge and experience to push us in the right direction to help the community as a whole.”

The Silver Jackets Program brings local, tribal, state and federal agencies together to address flood risk and other natural hazards. It consists of state- and tribal-led interagency teams to develop and implement comprehensive

strategies for flood-risk management and enhancing community preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery efforts.

“This was the Navajo Nation Silver Jackets team’s first tabletop exercise and was the result of several years of collaboration and

trust-building with the Birdsprings community and the Navajo Nation,” Stanton said. “By leveraging the unique resources and expertise of each partner, the program aims to deliver cohesive, efficient and sustainable solutions tailored to state and tribal priorities.”



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

Chris Stanton, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District's Silver Jackets Program manager, prepares written scenarios for a flood-response tabletop exercise in the Navajo Nation's Birdsprings Chapter's meeting hall May 30 in Birdsprings, Arizona.

USACE commander tours Simulations Center at NTC

Visit highlights innovation, collaboration at construction site



LEFT: Deanna Winisko, intelligence specialist with the National Training Center headquarters, left, and Chad Utz, Operations, National Training Center, second from left, discuss updates of the construction of the Simulations Center April 10 with Lt. Gen. William “Butch” Graham, 56th chief of engineers and commanding general of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, right, at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

RIGHT: Lt. Gen. William “Butch” Graham, 56th chief of engineers and commanding general for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, center, meets with engineers, project managers and contractors during an April 10 visit to the new Simulations Center – currently under construction – at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.



Lt. Gen. William “Butch” Graham, 56th chief of engineers and commanding general for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, center, meets with engineers, project managers and contractors during an April 10 visit to the new Simulations Center – currently under construction – at the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

‘People always’: CSM Galick meets with LA District teams in the field



Photos by Dena O'Dell



ABOVE: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick, right, shakes a contractor's hand while visiting the construction of a new parking structure May 15 at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Long Beach, California.

LEFT: USACE Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick, right, meets with project manager Derek Walker, left, May 15 at Prado Dam in Corona, California. Galick met with Los Angeles District employees at Prado Dam in Corona, California, and the Veterans Affairs' Health Care System projects in Long Beach, California, to talk with employees and listen to and address their concerns. He discussed USACE Chief of Engineers' Lt. Gen. Butch Graham's top priorities: Delivering Today; Innovating for Tomorrow; and People Always. During his time at SPL, Galick also toured some of the projects at both locations and presented coins to district employees for exemplary work.

Mark Cohen closes the chapter on 25-year USACE journey



Photos by Richard Rivera

Mark Cohen, Operations Division chief, standing left, addresses those in attendance during his retirement ceremony June 12 at the Baseyard in South El Monte, California. Cohen retired from the district after more than 25 years of service. He began his career with the LA District in October 1999 in the Regulatory Division, later serving as the Regulatory Division's deputy chief, before being selected as the Operations Division chief in 2021. During his time with the district, he served as the lead Instructor for the Leadership Development Program tiers 1 and 2; he championed the transition of the 408 Program to the Operations Division and championed the Regional Categorical Permission for Environmental Reviews; and was instrumental in the district's Park Ranger Program.



LEFT: Mark Cohen, Operations Division chief, left, receives a Certificate of Appreciation for his retirement from Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, right, during Cohen's retirement ceremony June 12 at the Baseyard in South El Monte, California.



RIGHT: Mark Cohen, Operations Division chief, left, receives a hug from Mike Turanitza, Operations Division's deputy chief, right, during Cohen's retirement ceremony June 12 at the Baseyard in South El Monte, California.

Planning Division Chief Jodi Clifford celebrated for decades of service



Photos by Richard Rivera

ABOVE: Jodi Clifford, Planning Division chief, left, smiles as she is presented her letter of retirement from Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, right, during her retirement ceremony May 15 at the LA District headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. Clifford served for more than 36 years with the federal government and for more than 24 years with the LA District in a range of positions, from an Environmental and Study manager to chief of the Environmental Resources Branch and ending her career as the Planning Division chief.



LEFT: Jodi Clifford, Planning Division chief, center, smiles after walking the retirement finish line during a retirement ceremony in her honor May 15 at the LA District headquarters in downtown Los Angeles. Also pictured is Maricris "Chris" Lee, Planning Division deputy chief, and Jon Sweeten with the Reservoir Regulation Section.

Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention proclamation signing



LEFT: LA District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks speaks to employees after signing a proclamation April 28 in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month at the LA District headquarters in downtown LA. INSET: A proclamation in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, signed by LA District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, is displayed April 28 at the LA District headquarters in downtown LA. RIGHT: Employees with the Los Angeles District gathered while LA District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks signed a proclamation April 28 in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month, at the LA District headquarters in downtown LA. Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month is a time to educate, support and empower each other to fight against sexual harassment and sexual assault. “When we protect our people, we strengthen our Army.”

Photos by Richard Rivera

Denim Day



Photo by Richard Rivera

LA District employees pose for a picture during Denim Day and after signing a proclamation in honor of Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month April 30 at the LA District headquarters building in downtown Los Angeles.



Photo by Dan Collins

ABOVE: Addison Deboi, left, and Anh M. Nguyen, right, the most senior and junior U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employees currently deployed in support of the LA County Wildfire Debris Mission, cut the U.S. Army 250th birthday cake during a June 14 ceremony at the Wildfire Debris Mission’s Recovery Field Office in Pasadena, California.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

LEFT: Col. Calvin Kroeger, South Pacific Border Task Force commander, puts dental floss to creative use June 16, slicing into a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers cake celebrating the organization’s 250th anniversary at the Phoenix Area Office. The floss-cutting feat drew smiles from attendees representing the New York, Walla Walla and Sacramento districts, as well as the Engineer Research and Development Center.



Photos by Stephen Baack

Mike Padilla, project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District, center, talks with project partners and stakeholders during a May 12 site visit to Santiago Creek in Santa Ana, California, with Col. James Handura, South Pacific Division commander, right; Karen Berresford, SPD Civil Works chief; Col. Andrew Baker, Los Angeles District commander, fourth from left; and Congressman Lou Correa.

USACE, local leaders discuss Santiago Creek flood protection plans

Col. James Handura, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, joined Rep. Lou Correa, local officials and Corps staff May 12 in Santa Ana, California, to discuss proposed upgrades to Santiago Creek aimed at reducing flood risk for more than 74,000 residents. The plans include stabilizing local basins, enhancing the channel and protecting mature trees, with next steps hinging on a federal funding decision.



ABOVE: Congressman Lou Correa, second from right, engages in a discussion about proposed upgrades along Santa Ana Creek during a May 12 onsite meeting with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leaders, nonfederal project partners and community stakeholders in Santa Ana, California.

LEFT: Karen Berresford, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works chief, center, speaks with project partners and stakeholders during a May 12 site visit to Santiago Creek in Santa Ana, California. At left is Col. James Handura, South Pacific Division commander.

Oceanside, USACE leaders plan next steps for San Luis Rey River upgrades

Col. James Handura, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division, met with Rep. Mike Levin and city leaders May 12 in Oceanside, California, to review levee repair and sediment removal efforts along the San Luis Rey River. The team discussed ways to improve flood protection, restore river flow and prepare the City of Oceanside to assume full maintenance responsibilities.



Photos by Stephen Baack

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Rep. Mike Levin, third from left, talks with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and local project partners about the San Luis Rey River project during a May 12 onsite meeting in Oceanside, California.

Col. James Handura, commander of the South Pacific Division, third from right, and Rep. Mike Levin, third from left, meet with city and federal partners May 12 to review flood-risk management strategies along the San Luis Rey River.

During a May 12 visit to Oceanside, Rep. Mike Levin, right, meets with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representatives and city leaders to discuss levee repairs, sediment removal and next steps for the San Luis Rey River.

Leaders from the South Pacific Division and Los Angeles District join Rep. Mike Levin, third from left, in Oceanside May 12 to evaluate sediment and flood-risk challenges facing the San Luis Rey River.



SPL Town Hall award recipients, honorees



From left to right, Capt. Victoria Amato and Robert Moreno are recognized by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles for their outstanding dedication and service during the 2025 Southern California Wildfires Mission. Their efforts were instrumental in supporting wildfire recovery operations and protecting impacted communities.



Monica Eichler is presented the Civilian Service Commendation Medal by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at district headquarters in Los Angeles, in recognition of her distinguished performance as a lead project manager and for 27 years of federal service — including 23 with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — advancing critical missions with exceptional dedication.

Robert Klein is presented the Civilian Service Commendation Medal by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles, in recognition of his outstanding service and contributions to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Joaquin Torres Jr. is presented the Kevin Inada Employee of the Quarter Award by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles.



Maricris Lee is presented the Civilian Service Commendation Medal by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at district headquarters in Los Angeles, in recognition of her distinguished performance from January through March 2025. Lee successfully developed and managed a staffing and space allocation plan that enabled the successful completion of the return-to-office initiative for the district's Planning Division team.



Photos by Richard Rivera



Marlene Schmitt is honored with the Mike Cogan Safety Employee of the Quarter Award by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles.



Richard Fancher is presented the Hazard Identification and Reporting Award by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles.



Priyanka Wadhavan is recognized by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles for her exceptional service as a program manager and as the Headquarters Regional Integration Team Endowed Chair for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from April 2023 to May 2025.



Members of the Riverside Levees 1 & 2 Rehabilitation Project Delivery Team receive the Outstanding PDT Award from Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles.

Photos by Richard Rivera



Ali Pulido is presented the Civilian Service Achievement Medal by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, May 19 at the district headquarters in Los Angeles, in recognition of her exceptional service as an budget and administrative specialist for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers from April 2023 to May 2025.



Length of Service awards

Five Years

Margaret Patricia Marks
Jeremy Ryan Buraglia
Kymberly L. Lyons
Grace Rabonza Parnell
Corrina Beltran
Marissa Camile McGowan
Alyssa Monique Ziranda
Justin E. Lester
Kaire Netherland Morrissey
Ahmed Abdulzahra Madhkoor
John Roy Greenheck
Joel Brambila
Gabrielle Zaidee Dodson
Niccolas Adam Peralta
Jacqueline Michiko Oehler
Misa Anne Zane
Michelle Dhedrie Allen
Christopher Lance Chabot

Hiliary Erin Anne Innerbichler
Ashley S. Powell
Lenard Le Tran
John David Amlie
John Russell Quackenbush
Amanda Julia Zhang Wagner
Nicholas Riley Olsen
Nicole Seiko Matsuda
Jaime Estif Orozco
Jennifer Carter Roberts
Nikki De La Rosa-Delos Santos
Samantha Marie Andrade
Gilbert Arzate
Emily L. Hibbard
Jesus Armando Alvarez-Rojo
Jason Steven Padilla
McKenzie Brown Krochmalny
Bruce F. Beyers
Alexandra R. Ryan



10 Years

Kenneth Larry Miller
Yolanda Denise Novak
Adina Sanchez Ortiz
Florin Nistor
Sylvester Willis Jr.
James B. DePoorter
Eric Richard Sweeney
Aelna J. Sakamoto
Courtney Nicole Rohrer
Hector Omar Herrera
Jose M. Paredes

Megan Anne Whalen
Matthew Patrick Yacubic
Glen Tucker
Alexander E. Constant
Areca Toni Wilson
Michael Alphonso Husted
Carlos Matthew Camacho
Allan C. DeLeon
Vincent M. Karkau
Minsok Mark Kim
Monica Fabiola Martinez
Jaran Tachana Panichkul



15 Years

Mark D. Cooke
Kay W. Chang-Minami
Craig A. McCarthy
Robby G. Smith
Thang Quoc Ma
April N. Patterson
Andrew Aaron Rios
Ryan E. Rivas
Chadi Wahby
Arturo Orozco
Richard N. Lee
Sonia Valdivia
Brenna Lynette Smith
Noemi Rodriguez

Johnny Inthirath
Juan C. Zuniga
Michael Lee Curtis Jr.
Julio Ruben Cuadra
Kelly Boyd
Vincent G. Andrada
Jonathon William Thorpe
Mayra Ivette Bosque
Janice Shuk-Jing Opperman
Tyler T. Overmire
Julio E. Ramos
Jason Yu Lee
Marilyn T. Sheehan
Edward J. Mitchell



20 Years

Willie E. Starks
Araceli Duran
Harlan V. Jefferson
Maria L. Randolph

Kalamele Tusa-Clark
Edwin R. Rackley
Daniel M. Jennings
Suneeta R. Sahgal
Mylene M. Guron



25 Years
Jaime S. Pastrana Jr.
Santiago Munoz
Laura A. Whitney
Otse A. Adikhai
Mark D. Cohen
Brandon D. Durham
Kristen M. Steinmann
Philip Andrada Benedicto
David A. Jorgenson



30 Years
Stephen G. Chickey
James M. Miller
Dina Aman
Viet Quoc Tran
Julia P. Yang
Darrell Wayne Buxton
Cynthia M. Wong
Huma M. Nisar
David M. Vandorpe
Richard K. Hayworth
Moon Kim Gilbert



35 Years
Moses A. Torres
Fany C. Anderson
Rubyann S. Prout
Hayley Jeannine Lovan
John Q. Lei
William J. Prout



40 Years
Fernando B. Cano
Craig Y. Baba
Vicki K. Stephens-Allen
Lisa A. Lugar
Imelda Garcia

45 Years
Anita M. Zapata
Darius B. Wallace
Roy Ruff Jr.

50 Years
Patricia B. Bonilla

SPL awards, milestones and recognition



Los Angeles District administrative assistants stand together for a picture during Administrative Professionals' Day April 23 at the LA District headquarters in downtown Los Angeles.

Photo by Richard Rivera



LEFT: Brittany Sonier, left, is presented a commander's coin by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, April 3 during his visit to the Edwards Air Force Resident Office at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Sonier was recognized for her exceptional support of OMA projects and her key role as the sole contracting officer's representative for the Plant 42 program.



RIGHT: Nereida Olivares, left, receives a commander's coin from Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, April 3 during his visit to the Edwards Air Force Resident Office at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Olivares was recognized for her extraordinary efforts in supporting military and civil projects as a civil engineering technician.

Photos by Stephen Baack



In these photos, Kathleen Rabet, left, holds up her Certificate of Appreciation, Civilian Service Achievement Medal and Certificate of Retirement after being presented them by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, right, during the 2025 Engineer Day celebration June 26 at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, California. Rabet was recognized for her exemplary service as an administrative support assistant at the Santa Ana Dams Resident Office, Construction Division, from March 2007 to July 2025, and for her dedication to the Los Angeles District throughout her federal career.

Photos by Richard Rivera



David Castanon, left, is recognized by Col. Andrew Baker, LA District commander, right, June 26 during the 2025 Engineer Day celebration at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, California, for being selected to the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees in honor of his distinguished and exceptional service to the Los Angeles District. Also selected this year were Danny Carrasco and Jon Keever.

Photo by Richard Rivera



Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick, right, awards a USACE coin to Julian Cesneros, a construction quality control representative at VA Long Beach, left, during a visit with employees working at the VA Long Beach Medical Center in Long Beach, California.

Photo by Dena O'Dell



Leaders with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District and Task Force Phoenix march in the 63rd annual Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade May 17 in Torrance, California.

USACE joins military partners for 63rd annual Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District participated in the 63rd annual Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade on May 17, continuing its tradition of honoring service members alongside fellow military branches.

This year's parade featured representation from USACE's South Pacific Division and Task Force Phoenix, including Brig. Gen. Wil-

liam Hannan Jr., then-commander of Task Force Phoenix, which is supporting Southern California wildfire recovery efforts in coordination with Los Angeles County, Cal OES, FEMA and other partners.

Also marching were LA District park rangers from the Operations Division and Bobber the Water Safety Dog, who greeted families and

promoted summer water safety.

Torrance is one of the few cities in the country designated by the Department of Defense to host an Armed Forces Day celebration, with the parade being the longest-running city-sponsored military parade in the nation.

Planning for the 64th annual parade will begin in January 2026.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel take part in the nation's longest-running city-sponsored military parade conducted annually in Torrance, California.



Photos by Stephen Baack

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Operations Division personnel participate in the Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade with two of their official vehicles — a utility task vehicle, driven by a park ranger and accompanied by Bobber the Water Safety Dog, left, and a work truck used for daily operations throughout the LA District area of operations, right.



(Left) Col. Andrew Baker, commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District; Brig. Gen. William Hannan Jr., Task Force Phoenix commander; and Lt. Col. Stephen Brooks, LA District deputy commander, march past the reviewing stand during the 63rd annual Torrance Armed Forces Day Parade. (Right) Uniformed USACE personnel gather for a group photo before the parade, with an M1 Abrams tank in the background.



Photo by David Myles

Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Family gather for a day of fellowship, recognition, food and fun during the 2025 Engineer Day celebration June 26 at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, California.

ENGINEER DAY 2025

Honoring people, service and legacy

The Los Angeles District turned its focus to its people, accomplishments and history June 26 as the organization celebrated Engineer Day at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, California — the first time in several years the event was held at this location.

The event featured remarks from the commander, team-building activities and formal recognition of this year's length-of-service award recipients. Although not all could be present to be honored in person, more than 130 employees were recognized for their service milestones — ranging from five to 50

years — representing more than 2,000 cumulative years of public service to the nation.

The ceremony also paid tribute to longtime Construction Division employee Kathie Rabet, who is retiring after 46.5 years of federal service, including more than 32 years with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Additionally, three retired employees — David Castanon, John Keever and Daniel Carrasco — were honored with induction into the district's Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees, with a certificate presentation and a commemorative display at

the district headquarters in downtown LA.

A moment of silence was also observed to honor members of the team we've lost since the last Engineer Day gathering. SPL remembers Jennie Ayala and Kenneth Larry Miller, as well as retirees Nick Adelmeyer, Matthews Turner and Christopher Sands.

The event took place just days after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers marked its 250th anniversary on June 16, celebrating a legacy of engineering excellence and public service that dates back to 1775.



Photo by Stephen Baack

ALL PHOTOS: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District marks its 2025 Engineer Day with a full day of camaraderie, games, awards and family-friendly fun June 26 at Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area in Irwindale, California. The event featured everything from a cornhole tournament and tug-of-war to face-painting, barbecues and a celebration of USACE's 250th birthday — all in the spirit of honoring the team's hard work and shared mission.



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Richard Rivera



Photo by Richard Rivera



Photo by Stephen Baack



Photo by Richard Rivera



Photo by David Myles



Photo by David Myles

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

WILDFIRES

DEBRIS RECOVERY 2025

RESPONSE DAY

163

as of
21 JUNE 2025

PALISADES
+23K ACRES AFFECTED



EATON
+14K ACRES AFFECTED

3983
RIGHT OF ENTRIES



5507
RIGHT OF ENTRIES

3396
FINAL SIGN OFFS



5255
FINAL SIGN OFFS



1835
PERSONNEL



+2.6M
TONS OF
DEBRIS CLEARED



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District is working in partnership with local, state and federal agencies in response to the Southern California wildfires. The information above provides a status update on the USACE Debris Removal Mission across Southern California.



CALIFORNIA



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

