

Water, Water Everywhere,  
How Do I get a Drink?

Peck's Rex debuts as  
Montana's T.rex.

Levee Completion Marks  
New Era of Flood Risk  
Reduction for Schuyler.



# Omaha Outlook





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### Civil Works

**Water, water everywher - how do I get a drink?** Spring rains can be destructive, but they also supply a bounty of water that each and every one of us relies upon. To be specific: We drink water from the Missouri River.



**On the Cover: John Remus, respected Missouri River expert, shares information with the large gathering on board the Omaha District Float Trip in June. (Photo by Harry E. Weddington.)**



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District  
1616 Capitol Ave., Suite 9000  
Omaha Neb. 68102

Toll free:

(888) 835-5971

Email:

dll-cenwo-pao@usace.army.mil

Phone:

(402) 995-2417

Fax:

(402) 995-2421

Commander:

Col. Joel Cross

Deputy Commander:

Lt. Col. Michael D. Sexton

Public Affairs Chief:

Maggie Oldham

Managing Editor:

Kevin Quinn

Contributors:

Al Barrus Writer/Photographer  
Cheryl Moore - Writer/Photographer  
Harry Weddington - Photographer  
Eileen Williamson Writer/Photographer  
Jennie Wilson - Design, Graphics, Layout

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# MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

## *Thank you and farewell*



**COL. Joel R. Cross**  
Omaha District Commander

Team,

Words don't well express the gratitude I feel for being able to re-join the District and serve the remainder of my military service with you these last three years. For me, it's been an honor serving alongside a team of such good people, friends and professionals. I truly appreciate your patience, your willingness to provide candid feedback and your ability to get the job done regardless of situation or challenge.

You have made it a rewarding three years for my Family and me. As I move on to the next stage of my life, please know there is a special place in my heart for all of you. I treasure what you shared with me and taught me.

Replacing me this summer is a great American, Col. John Henderson and his Family. He has solid USACE experience and will be a superb member of the District. As part of the transition, I want to leave you with a few thoughts for consideration.

Leaders in our organization have many responsibilities. I believe a couple of the most important responsibilities are hiring, inspiring, retaining and developing employees and instilling discipline, accountability and ownership for our work products and organizational/professional standards. Achieving these goals is what makes the District a great place to work and sustains our reputation for high quality.

My charge to you as I depart is to work hard to improve both our accountability for achieving standards and for inspiring our employees. We have made strides in our training and coaching but I still see improvement needed in the way our leaders engage the people who work for them.

Leaders have a responsibility to sit down with their employees and have a two-way discussion to clearly communicate expectations, identify training needs and determine professional development requirements. These discussions should happen on a recurring basis. We know this is not being done universally across our organization by leaders, and it should be.

I also encourage leaders to step up and not away from instilling standards and discipline in our organization. As former Sergeant Major of the Army Glen Morrell shared, "...standards are created to be met, not waived. The road to mediocrity begins with the first compromise of standards, the next is easier and the end result is mediocrity becomes the standard."

We need standards and the discipline to adhere to them because they ensure we are doing the right things all the time.

In closing, thank you for your friendship, courage, and overall amazing work ethic across the entire District. You are truly amazing in all that you do accomplishing the work of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. See you on the high ground! ESSAYONS



**“Worst flooding in years,”  
but not the most destructive**



# Flooding, with record flood stages in the Salt Creek basin, struck Lincoln, Neb. in early May.

Workers scurry to prepare for and repair flood damages. (Photos by Eileen Williamson.)



Heavy, unpredicted rain fell overnight on May 6, with rainfall totals at nearly 7 inches in Lincoln and up to nearly 10.5 inches in Fairbury, Neb. near the Little Blue River 70 miles southwest of Lincoln.

Runoff from the torrential storms set modern stage records along the Salt Creek as well as at several of the Salt Creek Dams built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The high stages also reached the top of levees at three locations in and around Lincoln.

The historic record crest for Salt Creek, where it crosses 27th Street, was July 6, 1908 at 33.6 feet. At its peak on May 7, Salt Creek reached 28.67 feet around 2:15 p.m. However, with all the runoff and broken water level records, reported damages were significantly lower than similar previous events in the area.

“The Antelope Valley and Salt Creek projects, constructed in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District and Lower Platte South Natural Resources District, helped keep central Lincoln from experiencing significant flooding damages,” said Kim Thomas, Chief of Emergency Management for the Omaha District.

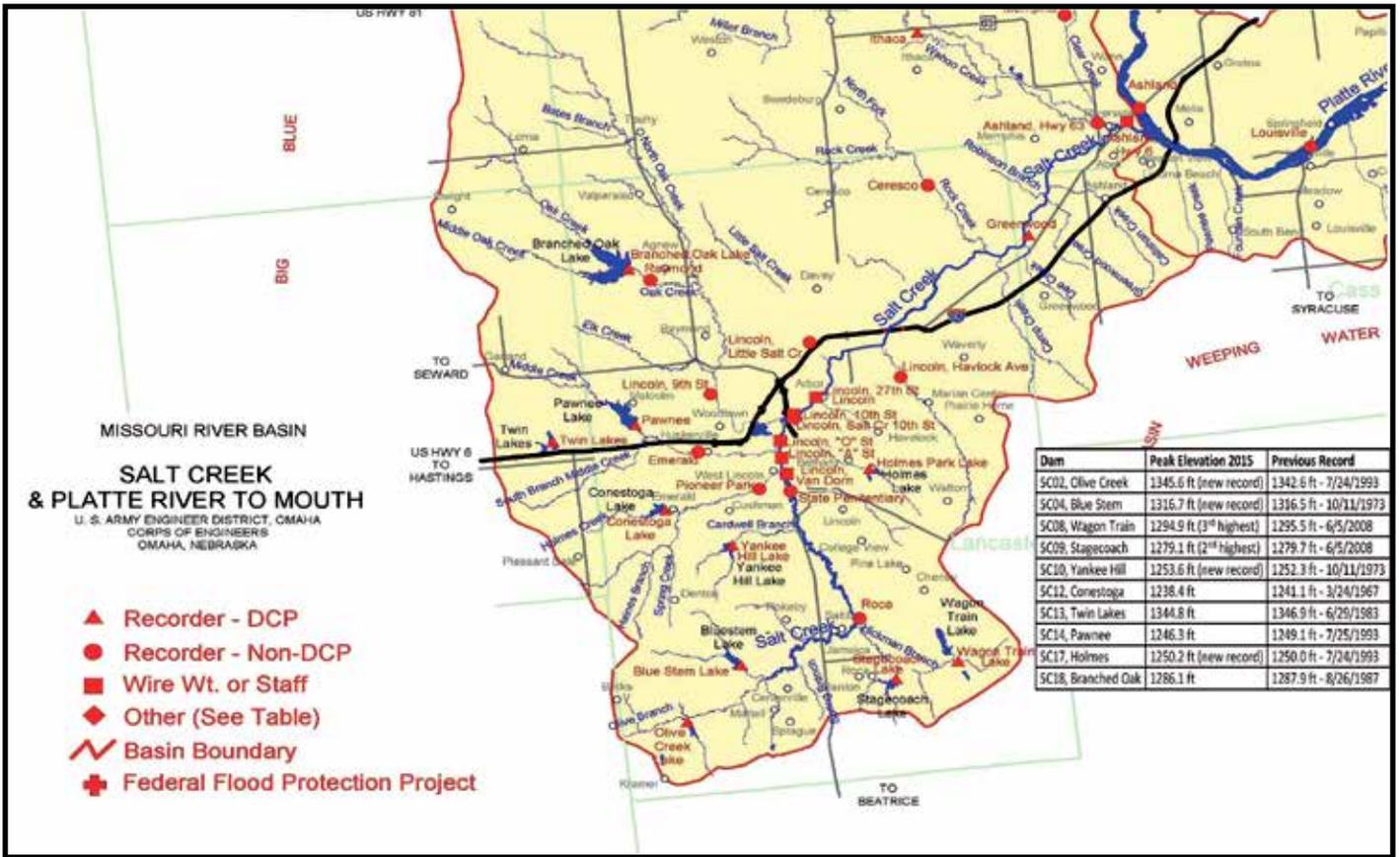
Although roads were closed and driving around Lincoln became difficult, the Salt Creek Levee System and Antelope Valley Projects performed as designed.

***“In some places, the water came very close to the top of the levee,” said Lowell Blankers, a USACE engineer who assisted with levee surveillance.***

The City of Lincoln encouraged residents in the North and South Bottoms neighborhoods to consider a voluntary evacuation as water levels rose along the nearby levee. These neighborhoods, constructed primarily in the late 1800s and early 1900s, have a history of flooding with some of the homes’ foundations elevated following previous floods. While many residents evacuated, most had returned to their homes by the evening.

The series of Salt Creek dams, upstream from Lincoln, saw record or near-record elevations from the runoff performing as designed with no significant issues. The water captured at these dams would otherwise have entered Salt Creek resulting in even higher crests in downtown Lincoln. As levels decline along Salt Creek, the captured flood waters in the Salt Creek Dams are gradually released to prevent contributing to downstream flooding.

As the Salt Creek and nearby tributaries reached flood stage, the state of Nebraska and Lower Platte



South NRD requested technical assistance from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under Public Law 84-99, which authorizes USACE to provide assistance when waterways are in or forecast to be in or above flood stage.

Eleven teams were dispatched to Lincoln to conduct surveillance of the levee system, along with the Lower Platte South NRD, and the dams around Lincoln.

The flooding closed walking and biking paths, and trees and recreation areas were under water, but this was expected. Nearby structures experienced few issues, which prior to the Antelope Valley Project, would have been at significant risk from a similar event.

“There were no concerns with any of the Salt Creek levees and any issues we investigated were not significant and promptly addressed,” said Bryan Flere, a USACE engineer who assisted with levee surveillance.

Contractors working for the Lower Platte South NRD ringed a cluster of boils along the Salt Creek left bank and Oak Creek left bank levee in Lincoln and another near Haymarket Park.

May 8, water through the ringed boil was flowing clearly indicating there were no significant issues with erosion.

As water receded, the city of Lincoln, Lower Platte South NRD and USACE watched weather forecasts and remained prepared to respond to another significant rain event impacting an already saturated system.

The next steps are to assess the post-flood conditions of the flood control structures and repair any damages to ensure the system is to pre-flood conditions.



Opposite page: Contract workers for the Lower Platte South NRD ringed a cluster of boils on the Salt Creek left bank, on the Oak Creek left bank and another near Haymarket Park. Above: Workers pounded stakes to set the high water mark.



Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Raymond Odierno, power plant electrician and Warrant Officer Kenneth Podzimek, and Col. William J. Davis, (Retired) executive director of the General Douglas MacArthur Foundation, all gathered for the Awards ceremony. (U.S. Army photo.)

## Omaha District Power Plant Electrician Honored by Army Chief of Staff for Leadership

During a standing-room-only ceremony at the Pentagon auditorium on May 29, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Raymond T. Odierno recognized 28 company-grade commissioned and warrant officers for embodying the ideals of the Gen. Douglas MacArthur Leadership Award – Duty, Honor, Country.

From the National Guard component, there was just one warrant-officer recipient.

“Only one warrant officer for the entire National Guard; I thought there was no way in heck that it was me,” said Kenneth Podzimek, a Power Plant Electrician Trainee at the Fort Randall Dam Project in Pickstown, S.D. and a member of the South Dakota National Guard.

Podzimek, 32, has 14 years of military service under his belt, which included a year-long deployment to Iraq in 2004. His tenure with the Omaha District has been relatively short by comparison.

“I was involved in the interview process when he came aboard almost two years ago,” said Fort Randall’s Maintenance and Operations Manager, Mike Schenkel. “Even then he seemed to have a good attitude and a good head on his shoulders.”

Podzimek’s expertise isn’t limited to his work as a Soldier and civilian employee in the Army. He’s certified in Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning from Mitchell Technical Institute and has operated his own HVAC business, K-Pod’s Heating and Cooling, for nearly a decade in Wagner, S.D., Podzimek also volunteers his time and expertise to improve the facilities of his local fire department and VFW hall.

“For his business he does a lot of geothermal heating and cooling; it’s kind of his specialty,” said Bill Reiser, the Senior Electrician at Fort Randall. “He’s been a real asset to us trying to maintain the heat pumps and different refrigerants systems here at the project.

# SPOTLIGHT

He helps to get things fixed here without us having to bring in a contractor.”

Podzimek originally joined the South Dakota Army National Guard as an enlistee, joining the 155th Engineer Company as a combat engineer junior enlisted soldier. He now plays a different role as a warrant officer.

“It is our technical expertise that pigeon holes us into our warrant officer spot,” said Power Plant Electrician Tyler Vogt, who not only works with Podzimek at the Fort Randall electrical shop, but also as a warrant officer in the 155th Engineer Company. Vogt is a chief warrant officer, one pay-grade higher than Podzimek.

“As a warrant officer in this unit, when you get to a job site you are basically the foreman of the site. You’re lining up who’s doing what task, and the logistics of where specific materials need to go,” Vogt explained. “In mine and Kenny’s case, we worked in the civilian construction world for long enough that we know how the technical processes are supposed to work. In the Guard you get a lot of full-time office workers who don’t normally work in construction, and they need that extra technical guidance.”

Not only has Podzimek been excellent with technical guidance to his troops, he’s also proved himself as a capable leader during the most trying circumstances; specifically when the 155th suffered the loss of a soldier.

“He led from the front, took the time to talk to his Soldiers individually and mentored them through a very difficult time,” said Lt. Col. David Dailey, commander of the SDARNG’s 153rd Engineer Battalion (the parent battalion to the 155th Engineer Company), who nominated Podzimek for the MacArthur Leadership Award. “He has been an instrumental leader, using his abilities to mentor his subordinates to become a cohesive and resilient platoon.”

Podzimek is for now back at work in South Dakota, with a new 15-pound bronze bust of General MacArthur to adorn upon a shelf of his choosing. “I’m going to try to keep my kids from knocking it over. My wife and I haven’t decided where we’re going to put it yet.”

True to the spirit of the Minuteman, amidst the build up to this award, his work at the Fort Randall Dam, and running his own business, Podzimek must always be ready. Along with the rest of the South Dakota Army National Guard’s 155th Engineer Company, these combat engineers must stand trained and ready



Podzimek is back at work in South Dakota. (Photo by Laura Hubert.)

to deploy for either natural disasters or in support of the regular Army in overseas operations.

“The 155th is a vertical engineering company,” Vogt explained. “We are carpenters, plumbers, electricians. A lot of what we do here electrically in the power plant complements the skills that we use in the military. But in the Guard we can apply those skills to more of a leadership role as warrant officers.”

And indeed, the leadership skills have been put to the test. When natural disasters occur, the National Guard is often activated to contain emergency situations. Podzimek’s technical knowledge shined while he managed several construction projects at once, and his team responded to the flood operations in southeast South Dakota and the tornado clean up for the Wessington Springs community, according to Dailey.

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# Information---good vibrations---collaboration

## *So many ways to reach out to folks with information.*

***The Omaha District dusted off an old friend--a Missouri River boat -- filled with stakeholders with strong interests in the river.***



The “Float Trip” gave the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers an opportunity to shed light on the vital need of collaboration between the Corps and numerous river stakeholders and the public as a whole.

“We want to know what is on your minds,” said Omaha District Commander, Col. Joel R. Cross to the excited, rapt audience. “I don’t expect that everyone will agree with everything said here today, but I know I can rely on everyone to be respectful of each other’s view points. What you tell us will give us more opportunities to serve as an able steward of the river and surrounding lands.”

The trip provided a platform and venue for valuable input from stakeholders. “Good, candid, respectful conversations are what we need. Without these opportunities to have an ongoing dialogue we will

never be able to truly collaborate. And collaboration is the key to the future,” said Cross.

Besides several presentations and Q & A sessions, the real treat might have been the chance to play “The Balancer Game,” a computerized river basin operations simulation game designed to illustrate the challenge and difficulty of balancing all eight authorized purposes of the Missouri River.

“It’s important that we are all together,” said Cross, in one of his last official public appearances as Commander of the district. “Be sure to enjoy this marvelous national and regional natural resource - the beautiful and unparalleled Missouri River.”

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Kim Thomas, new Deputy for Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division, addresses stakeholders on river operation.

# SPOTLIGHT



A day of messages - several corps speakers shared information and answered questions from fellow maritime stakeholders. In top photo, Laurie Farmer, Missouri River Recovery Program Communications Lead from Kansas City District, responds to a question. At lower right, Matt Krajewski, Missouri River Project Operations Project Manager, shares his thoughts, and Omaha District Commander Col. Joel Cross bids farewell and renews the call for collaboration. (Photos by Harry Weddington.)

# Levee completion marks new era of flood risk reduction for Schuyler



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, in partnership with the city of Schuyler and the Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, completed construction of a 2.2-mile levee along Shell Creek north and east of Schuyler, Neb.

Schuyler, the county seat for Colfax County, was subject to flooding from Shell Creek, a tributary to the Platte River that lies north and east of Schuyler. In May 2008, a major flood from Shell Creek caused extensive property damage in the northeastern part of the city. Just as residents were finishing repairs to their homes, they were hit again in 2010 with flooding in the north from Shell Creek and in the south from Lost Creek.

In 2011, the Omaha District completed a flood risk management feasibility study which identified an economically feasible project consisting of a levee system along Shell Creek. A construction contract for the Shell Creek levee was awarded in September 2013 to TJC Engineering, Inc. of Louisville, Ky. for \$3 million with ground breaking on the project in March 2014.

A public ribbon-cutting ceremony took place at the site of the new levee on May 21. Dignitaries included Mayor of Schuyler Dave Reinecke, State of Nebraska's Lower Platte-North Natural Resources District Board Member Clint Johannes, and Omaha District Commander Col. Joel R. Cross.

In above photo, representatives from all over the region banded together with Col. Joel Cross to cut the ribbon on the new flood risk reduction project in Schuyler. Below, Col. Cross reflects on history of the project. (Photos by Al Barrus)



The Omaha District thanked the project sponsors (the City of Schuyler and Nebraska's Lower Platte-North Natural Resources District) and Schuyler residents for their continued support and cooperation on this project.

Collaboration was the story of the day at the levee-completion get-together. Project sponsors and Schuyler residents celebrated the opportunity to feel safer in the future.



# Peck's Rex debuts as Montana's T.rex

On April 11, exactly one year after the Wankel T.rex specimen departed for the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C., Montana State University's Museum of the Rockies opened a new permanent exhibit called "The Tyrant Kings." At the center of the exhibit is a nearly 12-foot-tall, 40-foot-long fossilized *Tyrannosaurus rex* skeleton.

The fossil formally known as "Peck's Rex" was found near Montana's Fort Peck Dam and Reservoir in 1997. Its assigned specimen number is "MOR 980" after the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers entrusted it to the Museum of the Rockies in 1998. With the opening of the exhibit, it will be known as Montana's T.rex.

"The exhibit not only fulfills a promise made by [the Museum of the Rockies] to all of Montana, but also the mission of [the museum] to inspire life-long learning and advance knowledge through collections, research and discovery," said Shelley McKamey, Executive Director for the museum.

When discoveries such as Montana's T.rex and the Nation's T.rex are found on federal lands, federal repository agreements allow museums to house fossils and historical and archeological relics and specimens within collections where they can be shared with the public and studied, evaluated, protected and preserved.

Through these agreements, "Montana's T.rex" has been the subject of considerable research and part of several exhibitions on dinosaurs. Research on this and other T.rex specimens in the exhibit was accomplished and published in scientific journals by the students, staff and faculty from Montana State University.



Facing the home crowd Fort Peck's T.rex. (Photo by Eileen Williamson.)

"The Montana's T.rex exhibit exemplifies an approach for presenting research results from seven different projects dealing with *Tyrannosaurus rex*," said Jack Horner, Regent's Professor and Curator of Paleontology for the Museum of the Rockies and Montana State University.

While Montana's T.rex is not the largest or the most complete, it has some interesting features that have been part of this research.

# CULTURAL RESOURCES

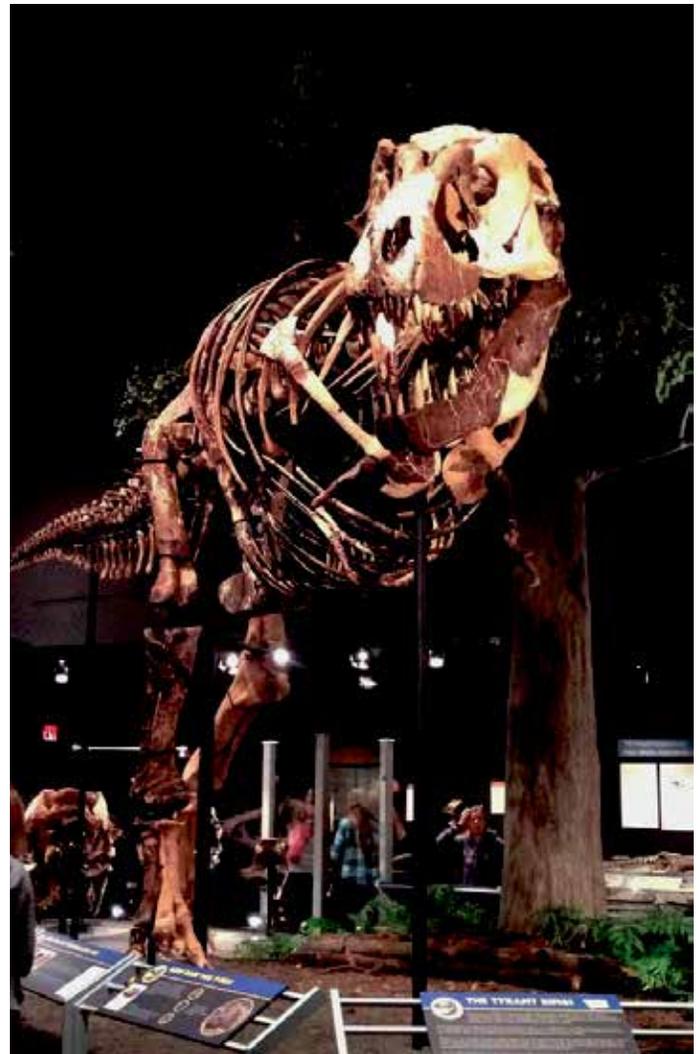
It is the only T.rex specimen found with gastralia, or floating belly ribs. It is also the first of its species to have the metacarpal III, the third finger, preserved. This discovery proved the existence of a third finger on the T.rex.

Different researchers have formed opinions on the metacarpal III ranging from it being vestigial and useless to a part of powerful forelimbs that possibly served a function such as tearing flesh. Their evidence is based on the varying conditions of the third finger, including that of Montana's T.rex, as well as repeated fractures in the furcula, or "wishbone".

The specimen has also been the subject of studies on parasitic infections in dinosaurs. Possible bite injuries to the jawbone or diseases caused by eating rotten flesh infected the jawbone leading to decay and starvation.

Since 1906, Congress has passed numerous laws and regulations recognizing the importance of preserving and showcasing the nation's heritage and paleontological resources for the benefit of the American public. These laws and regulations identify nonrenewable heritage resources as significant components of the nation's history requiring their preservation for future generations. USACE is proud to participate in this effort by maintaining state-of-the-art expertise in natural resource and heritage asset stewardship in support of U.S. government agencies.

Montana's T.rex and the Nation's T.rex only become available for study and public viewing when discoveries such as these that are made on federal lands are placed within the public trust. The value of protecting these scientifically important specimens



Each of the Montana's T.rex bones may be removed for study. (Photo by Eileen Williamson.)



Darin McMurry, deputy operations project manager at Fort Peck, MG Richard Stevens, Deputy Chief of Engineers, John Daggett, operations project manager at Fort Peck visits the "Tyrant Kings Exhibit". (U.S. Army photo.)

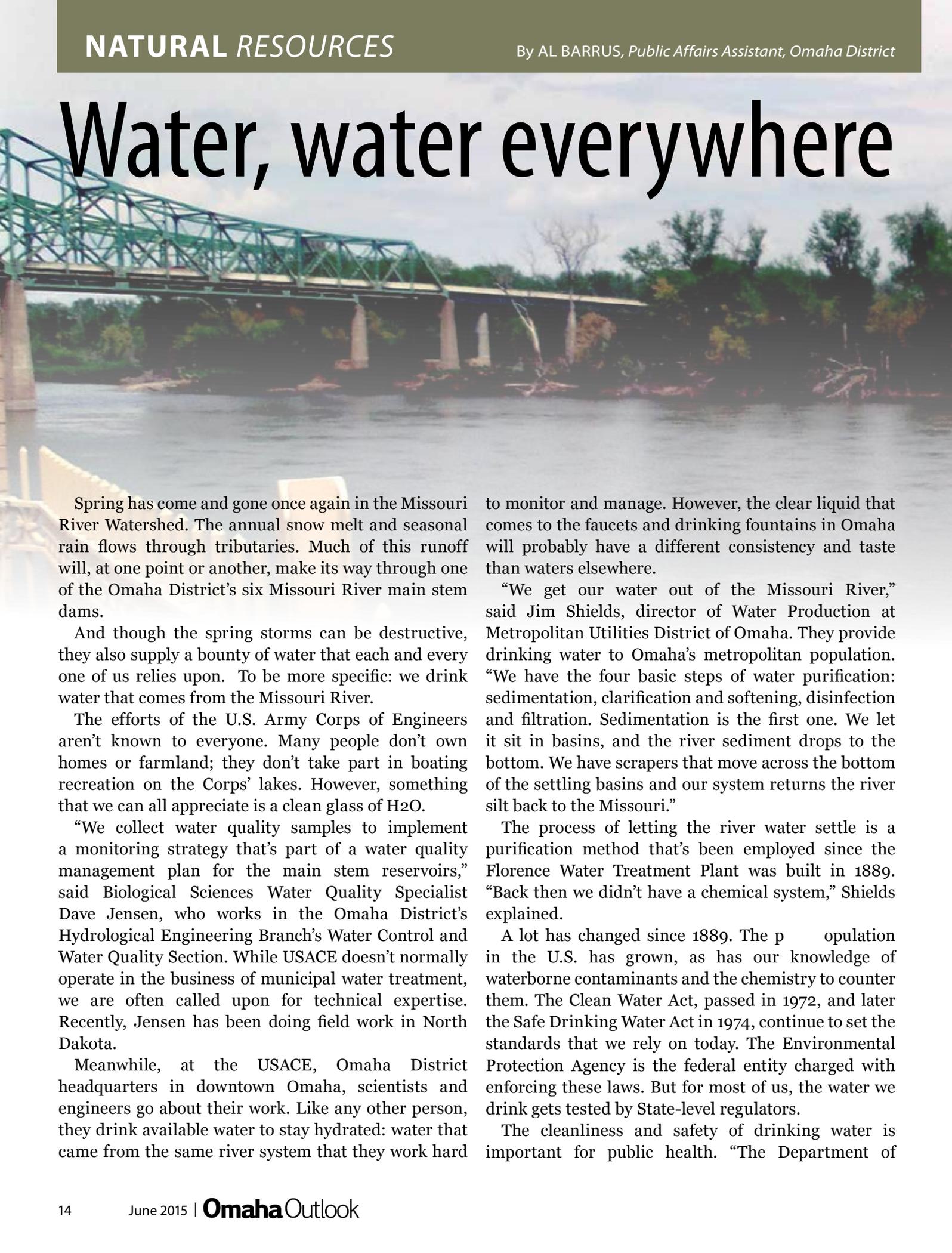
and the need to place these discoveries in federal repositories are vital to helping preserve and protect items of historical significance.

Montana's T.rex has become the first T.rex specimen in the public trust, because it is owned by USACE, to be displayed to the public.

"The Tyrant Kings" exhibit makes the Museum of the Rockies one of few museums displaying a real fossilized skeleton, which is about 60 percent complete, instead of a replica or a cast.

The 40-foot-long Montana's T.rex is mounted on a steel frame that allows each individual bone to be removed for study. A cast of the skull is on the mount and the real skull is in a case beneath the tail for up-close viewing.

# Water, water everywhere



Spring has come and gone once again in the Missouri River Watershed. The annual snow melt and seasonal rain flows through tributaries. Much of this runoff will, at one point or another, make its way through one of the Omaha District's six Missouri River main stem dams.

And though the spring storms can be destructive, they also supply a bounty of water that each and every one of us relies upon. To be more specific: we drink water that comes from the Missouri River.

The efforts of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers aren't known to everyone. Many people don't own homes or farmland; they don't take part in boating recreation on the Corps' lakes. However, something that we can all appreciate is a clean glass of H<sub>2</sub>O.

"We collect water quality samples to implement a monitoring strategy that's part of a water quality management plan for the main stem reservoirs," said Biological Sciences Water Quality Specialist Dave Jensen, who works in the Omaha District's Hydrological Engineering Branch's Water Control and Water Quality Section. While USACE doesn't normally operate in the business of municipal water treatment, we are often called upon for technical expertise. Recently, Jensen has been doing field work in North Dakota.

Meanwhile, at the USACE, Omaha District headquarters in downtown Omaha, scientists and engineers go about their work. Like any other person, they drink available water to stay hydrated: water that came from the same river system that they work hard

to monitor and manage. However, the clear liquid that comes to the faucets and drinking fountains in Omaha will probably have a different consistency and taste than waters elsewhere.

"We get our water out of the Missouri River," said Jim Shields, director of Water Production at Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha. They provide drinking water to Omaha's metropolitan population. "We have the four basic steps of water purification: sedimentation, clarification and softening, disinfection and filtration. Sedimentation is the first one. We let it sit in basins, and the river sediment drops to the bottom. We have scrapers that move across the bottom of the settling basins and our system returns the river silt back to the Missouri."

The process of letting the river water settle is a purification method that's been employed since the Florence Water Treatment Plant was built in 1889. "Back then we didn't have a chemical system," Shields explained.

A lot has changed since 1889. The population in the U.S. has grown, as has our knowledge of waterborne contaminants and the chemistry to counter them. The Clean Water Act, passed in 1972, and later the Safe Drinking Water Act in 1974, continue to set the standards that we rely on today. The Environmental Protection Agency is the federal entity charged with enforcing these laws. But for most of us, the water we drink gets tested by State-level regulators.

The cleanliness and safety of drinking water is important for public health. "The Department of

# how do I get a drink?



Health and Human Services Public Drinking Water Program establishes monitoring schedules for all primary contaminants,” said Marla Augustine, Public Information Officer for Nebraska DHHS. “Schedules are determined primarily from vulnerability of the well source and detections of a contaminant. The DHHS Public Health Environmental Laboratory must adhere to approved EPA methodology for any required testing under the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act.”

Joe Detwiler, Instrument and Control Technician for the Metropolitan Utilities District, takes his routine maintenance recordings at the Florence Water Treatment Plant pump house in North Omaha. (Below) These intake pipes, sitting just above the Missouri River in North Omaha, pump river water to treatment facilities, where it will eventually serve customers throughout Omaha, Bellevue, La Vista, Waterloo, Bennington, Carter Lake, and Fort Calhoun.



It's the USACE's responsibility to provide adequate volume for water supply and water quality as defined in the Missouri River Master Manual. Local water works and power plants are then responsible for gaining access to that water through intake works, groundwater wells or other methods.

During certain parts of the year, there is more sediment and more algae in the water. This is especially true during the spring run-off season. The influx of organic material in the river is balanced out by letting the water settle for a longer period, and by treating it with chemicals in order to meet public health standards. After disinfection, the water goes through the Florence Filter Plant to remove any remaining traces of suspended matter before it is sent into the distribution system.

The Florence Water Quality staff performs more than 500 tests a day throughout the treatment process to ensure safety and quality. At the end of the day, we can rest assured that the drinking water we get from our local water works will adhere to public health standards.

The precipitation that falls from the sky and flows down the street is a different story. What can we do to keep our watershed clean?

"Don't add contaminants to our streams or groundwater. Be supportive of good farming and other practices," says Joel Christensen, Vice President of Water Operations for the Metropolitan Utilities District of Omaha.

The EPA has a treasure trove of information for those who want to take action. Some simple things anyone can do: help keep pollution out of storm drains; fertilize your lawn and garden sparingly and carefully; carefully store and dispose of household cleaners, chemicals, and oil; try installing a rain barrel to collect roof runoff; clean up after your pet; practice good car care, and wash it on the lawn rather than on concrete; choose earth-friendly landscaping; save water; never dump, wash, or rake anything into the path of storm drains; sweep, don't hose, your driveway or other paved surfaces. Composting, according to the EPA, is also a great way for households to do their part in keeping their watershed healthy.

For more ideas, tools or to get involved and take action in your own local watershed, visit <http://water.epa.gov/action/adopt/index.cfm>

## PODZIMEK HONORED BY ARMY



Whitney Podzimek attended her husband's award ceremony at the Pentagon. (U.S. Army Photo)

**continued from page 7**

"He always makes an extraordinary effort to ensure his company is able to accomplish any mission," said Dailey. "His integrity and dedication to the mission first epitomizes the ideals for which this award stands.

"His willingness to give back to his community through volunteering his time to local organizations directly reflects his values," Dailey said. "He is a top notch leader with unlimited potential that, without a doubt, has earned him the distinction of being recognized as the Gen. MacArthur Leadership Award recipient."

## Back Cover

All Corps Day photos on back page taken by Harry Weddington, except bean bag toss photo by Al Barrus.



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