

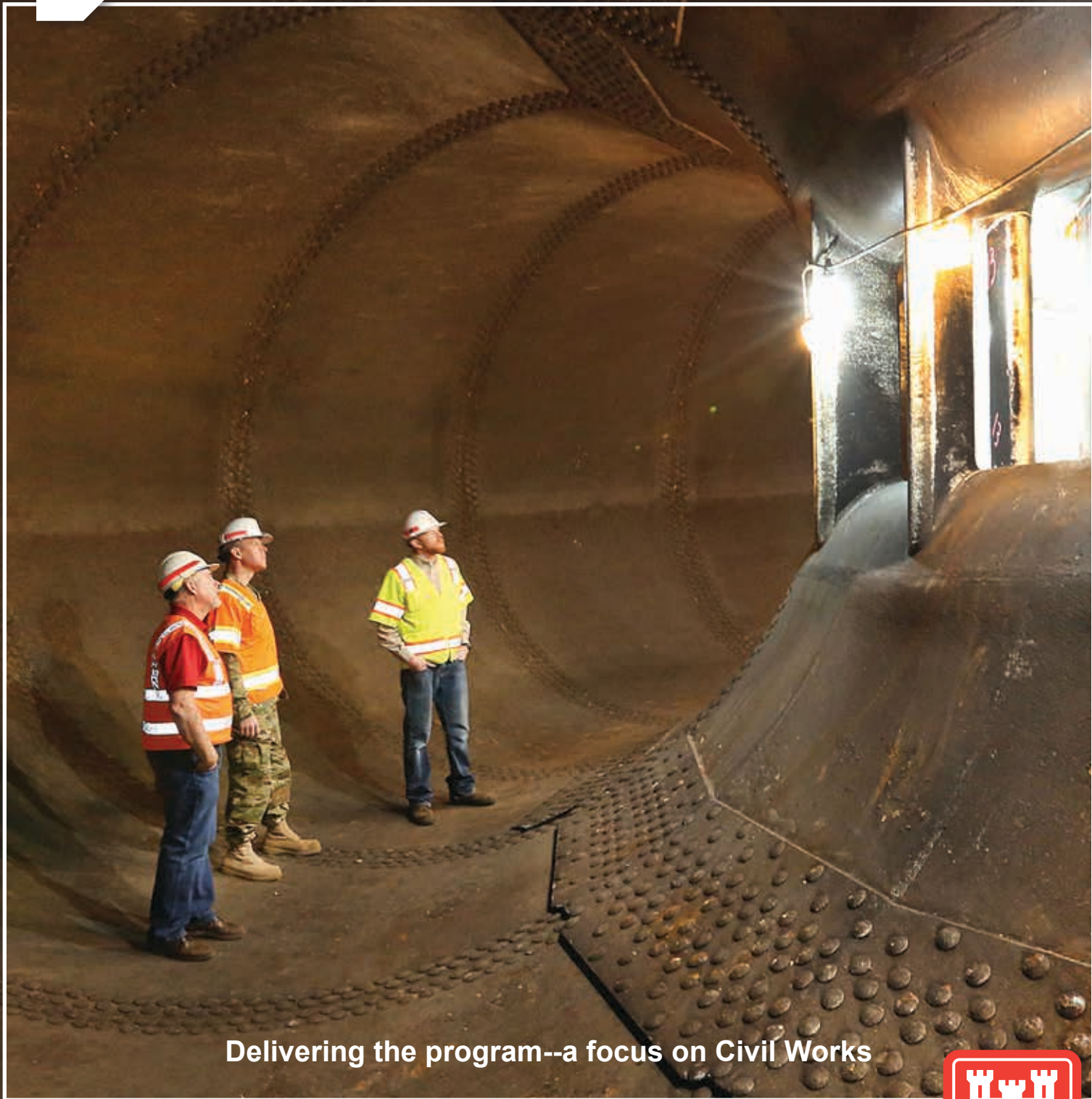
Commander visit to project
offices eye-opening

She's what?
Katie Ops is going where?

Looking for a dirty job?
We have some.



Omaha Outlook



Delivering the program--a focus on Civil Works



IN THIS ISSUE. . .



2

Commander Visit

His message - "It's our day-to-day relationships that are so critical to our long-term success as a District. To the people of South Dakota, you are the face of the Corps – the Army's other Rangers. The consistent success of our projects combined with the high quality delivery of new projects translates into the enduring strategic success of the District and USACE . . . and it all begins and ends with us working as a team."

Preparing for the Future

4

Preserving knowledge - When District Commander Col. John W. Henderson visited the South Dakota main stem dams in March, he asked the operations and maintenance managers at each project very realistic questions: What happens to the project when the subject-matter expert for one highly specialized area retires? How will we know how to keep this facility running, supporting the eight authorized purposes?

Science Program

6

Science program still making a splash - It's been about a quarter century now, since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Rangers went splashing across the pages of *USA Today*. They had quite the compelling story to tell—they were saving the eggs of birds on the threatened and endangered species list. They were the heroes of Gavins Point.

Oil and Gas Extraction

8

Beyond the campgrounds - Over the last 10 years, oil and gas extraction from North Dakota's Bakken shale formation has created an oil boom. With the boom came a huge demand for land and water increasing requests for outgrants to use federal water and land.

Preparing for the Future

10

Katie Schenk is always there . . . - She barely winces anymore when you call her "Lady of the lakes" or "Queen of the whole dammed river". Katie Schenk has heard it all in her 31 years in the Omaha District. Her brains, strength and sense of humor—all honed as a female leader in a male-heavy organization—allow good-natured jibes and spears alike to roll off her back. She chuckles and gives you that look . . .



On the cover: Photographer Harry Weddington roamed down deep beneath the power plant to capture this photo of Fort Randall Operations Project Manager, Tom Curran; Omaha District Commander, Col. John Henderson and Fort Randall Power Plant Maintenance and Operations Manager, Mike Schenkel. They inspected wicket gates from inside of one of the plant's eight scroll cases. During normal operations this colossal tube carries water from Lake Francis Case through a hydropower turbine. This unit has been dewatered so that the power house mechanics can perform cavitation repairs.



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

Toll free: (888) 835-5971
E-mail: dll-cenwo-pao@usace.army.mil
Phone: (402) 995-2417
Fax: (402) 995-2421
Commander: Col. John W. Henderson
Deputy Commander: Maj.(P) Arlo Reese
Public Affairs Chief: Thomas O'Hara
Managing Editor: Kevin Quinn
Contributors: Al Barrus - Writer/Photographer
Cheryl Moore - Writer/Photographer
Eileen Williamson - Writer/Photographer
Harry Weddington - Photographer
Jeremy Bell - Design/Layout/Photographer

Omaha Outlook is a quarterly publication produced by the Public Affairs Office for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District, in accordance with AR 360-1. This publication is produced for the Omaha District workforce and external audiences including other Corps' districts and stakeholders within the Omaha District's area of responsibility. Content is aimed at highlighting what, why and how the district fulfills its mission.

This publication is available on the district's public website (www.nwo.usace.army.mil) and has a limited print circulation of approximately 500 with distribution in district offices and via U.S. Mail.

Content is prepared in accordance with the Associated Press Stylebook and the Omaha Outlook Style Guide. Contributions are welcomed and highly encouraged. However, the editor reserves the right to make editorial changes to any submitted material as deemed necessary.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Army or the U.S. Department of Defense.

Serving the Nation is a team sport

Team,

Summer is here and the Omaha District is busy. Our construction sites are benefiting from great weather; our recreation areas are packed; our hydropower plants are working to meet higher summer demands; and we are working to deliver a FY16 program that will be around \$1.6 billion in newly procured projects. Off duty, we are all busy recreating with Family and friends, enjoying summer vacations, supporting youth athletic programs, and so on. Since we are so busy right now, it is important for us all to take a few extra minutes to ensure we are being safe to ensure that our well-intended actions to get our mission done or create great memories for our Families do not result in injuries to ourselves or those near us.

Omaha District has a proven culture of safety as evidenced by receipt of the National Safety Council's "2016 Double Platinum Award for Superior Achievement in Injury Prevention and Safety Performance;" this is the 25th consecutive year the District has received this recognition. This is no accident. An achievement like this takes continual effort by everyone on our team paying extra attention to detail and respecting our fellow teammates enough to watch their backs also. Please accept my congratulations on this truly exceptional accomplishment, and keep up the great work.

In the last issue, we rolled out the Omaha District OPLAN as it supports the USACE Campaign Plan (UCP). A few of you noticed, that in support of the Chief's #2 Goal of "Transforming Civil Works", we modified the language in our OPLAN to "Delivering the Program." That was intentional since UCP Goal #2 was really focused on delivering the best possible products and services to the Nation. As our Civil Works program continues to transform nationally, we want to ensure we are focused on delivering quality in all that we do across the entirety of our program, in addition to civil works.

Civil works for the Omaha District is literally what we were born to do. The District was created in 1934 with the purpose of building the Fort Peck Dam in Montana and eventually the other dams along the main stem of the Missouri River. Today, it means collaborating with our partners within the basin to find solutions to our Nation's most complex challenges through public meetings, the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, public information, outreach, and STEM activities, and special events like our annual Missouri River Inspection trip, which you can read about in this issue.

In spite of many challenges and endless resource constraints, we are successful due to your creativity, ingenuity, technical competence, and absolute commitment to the success of our mission. I invite you to read the articles in this issue that demonstrate how the heroes in the Omaha District successfully strike this balance between operational requirements and limited resources.

"Serving the Nation is a Team Sport!" It was a great honor earlier this month to celebrate Corps Day and recognize some of the award-winning accomplishments by our Family. It allowed us time to pause and reflect on those retirees who helped get us here, those family members at home who support us in what we do, and those no longer with us. Special thanks for the team who put this event together.

Lastly, please join me in congratulating our many team mates who will finish their federal careers with us this year as well as those who have been competitively selected to carry on their legacy of excellence. This passing of the mantle continues, one team member at a time, and we all have a role to play to ensure that these transitions are done purposefully to ensure the transference of knowledge and experience to the next generation who will ensure our enduring legacy of excellence. Thank you again for working as a team to get our mission accomplished.



John W. Henderson
Colonel
Omaha District Commander

Essayons.

John W. Henderson

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Henderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Opening lines of communication

Pointing the team toward the future

“It’s our day-to-day relationships that are so critical to our long-term success as a District. To the people of South Dakota, you are the face of the Corps – the Army’s other Rangers. The consistent success of our projects combined with the high quality delivery of new projects translates into the enduring strategic success of the District and USACE... and it all begins and ends with us working as a team.”

—Col. John W. Henderson

“First let’s dispel the myths and talk about the ‘R’ word. There aren’t going to be any RIFs (reductions in force).”

Four rapt audiences in three days exhaled as if cued. The speaker—Omaha District Commander Col. John W. Henderson—had their full attention. In order, he visited and addressed the employees at Oahe, Fort Randall, Big Bend and Gavins Point, touring each project along the way. Henderson noted how well each project was performing and marveled at some of the “mechanic’s magic” that occurs when 50-plus year old dams and power plants need parts and you can’t get those anymore.

“My primary reasons for the visits were to listen to the concerns of our team in the field, learn more about the great work that we are doing at our dams and hydropower projects, and provide some information

on our updated District Operations Plan and where we all fit into it.”

Those employees questioned agreed it was a full, fulfilling and successful presentation and a much needed visit.

“He’s a great communicator and he’s open to what the workforce has to say,” said one project operations manager. “He brought the OPLAN [operations plan] to a new level, where it’s easier to understand and implement. He said we have lots of work coming down the pipeline -- he obviously put a lot of work into his presentation.”

Dug right in

With seeming full understanding of the tough life and rugged challenges faced by those working at the Omaha District’s main stem project offices, the Commander dug right in and got directly to the heart of the matter.

“We have 2,350 projects underway and a \$1.5 billion dollar program. Every single person here is a big deal. So get as good at your job as possible. Continuity is important. Our program will no doubt change in the next ten years but it won’t change our need for the kind of effort you put out every day on the job.”

Outlining the new Omaha District OPLAN 2016-18, the commander stressed the need for a stability and world class technical expertise in order to meet or exceed the four OPLAN goals --

- Support National Security
- Deliver the Program
- Reduce Disaster Risks
- And Prepare for Tomorrow.

He laid out the district’s need to improve delivery of Civil Works solutions in close collaboration with stakeholders to develop a 30-year plan to rehabilitate our aging hydropower infrastructure, develop a



“There is always going to be a lot of work at our projects. Get good at your jobs.”—Col. Henderson (Photo by Al Barrus)

COMMANDER VISIT

comprehensive Missouri River Management Plan, and enhance Continuing Authorities Program opportunities.

“It’s our day-to-day relationships that are so critical to our success. To the people of South Dakota, you are the face of the Corps – the Army’s other Rangers. The consistent success of our projects combined with the high quality delivery of new projects translates into the enduring strategic success of the District and USACE... and it all begins and ends with us working as a team.”

The commander outlined how Omaha District opportunities for the future, to include projected increases in work in our fuels program, FSRM (facilities sustainment restoration and modernization), and hydropower would allow our team to continue to do their jobs without worrying about workforce cuts.

Repair and replace

“As you know, we have a lot of work to do on our aging infrastructure to ensure that it is available to serve future generations. That means repairing and replacing a lot of old equipment. There is an exceptional amount of work right here at Fort Randall; we started here where it is needed most,” said Henderson.

“We sure have a lot on our plate,” said Tom Curran. Driving by the electrical towers at Fort Randall one can see hundreds of new parts waiting to be installed. “These dams are 50, 60 years old...we’re happy when we can just get parts these days.”

“What I got out of the Commander’s trip was that the Corps is going to be challenged with reduced budgets but must continue to accomplish crucial missions. We have been very successful taking on huge new projects, like the VA Hospital in Colorado and continuing to work on the STRATCOM Complex,” says Ranger Gary Ledbetter of Gavins Point Dam.



Col. Henderson visited four projects and did a lot of listening (Photo by Al Barrus)

“What impressed me most was the confidence the Commander had in the workforce -- he gave the credit due to dedicated employees.”

Public needs

“The challenges of working at a Corps project in my field are to satisfy the public’s needs for a quality recreational experience with reduced budgets and ever changing priorities,” said Ledbetter. “I have 35 years total service, 30 of those with Corps. The one thing I believe the Corps needs to improve on to do its job better, from my standpoint in the field, is for headquarters to better communicate the priorities to the field.”

“The Commander’s visit was a super way to open communications up. We are all grateful and enlightened,” said Dave Becker of Gavins Point.



“He has a way about him—he commands attention but his delivery is not over our heads. You feel a certain expectation.” -- Steve Naylor, South Dakota Regulatory Program Manager Oahe Project Office.



“He’s straightforward and understandable. He deals with issues.” --Shannon Lodge, Budget Tech, Oahe Project Office.

“He’s personable and down to earth. He has a good handle on what’s happening up and down the river.” -- Kris Cleveland, Chief Technical Support, Oahe Project Office.

“He’s got a lot of common sense. He cuts through the politics and gets right down to problems that need fixing.” -- Rick Spiger, Operations & Maintenance Manager, Oahe Project Office.

Preserving Past Knowledge for Future Generations

When District Commander Col. John W. Henderson visited the South Dakota main stem dams in March, he asked the operations and maintenance managers at each project very realistic questions: what happens to the project when the subject-matter expert for one highly specialized area retires? How will we know how to keep this facility running, supporting the eight authorized purposes?

For powerhouse mechanics and electricians, the technical expertise for each of Omaha District's main stem dam projects is highly specialized. The know-how of maintaining the facilities isn't something anyone can read from a manual and pick up day one. It comes to workers over years of performing routine maintenance. How exactly do we pass this knowledge down to the next generation?

"That's a realistic concern," said Gavins Point Mechanic-Crew Foreman Steve Neumann during the commander's visit. "Often senior crewmembers don't do a whole lot of formal documentation: they keep the knowledge between their ears. As they get closer to retirement, management asks them to share some of that knowledge, and it goes from staying in between their ears and it comes out the mouth, then we write it down."

Mike Erikson, Gavins Point's senior electrician pointed to a worn ledger, filled with handwritten notes and color tabs. "Institutional knowledge of every single aspect is difficult to maintain. The endless details that only our most experienced people know about each part of this dam: no one else in the world knows those things," Erikson said.

While some of the work details are stored in the Facilities and Equipment Maintenance system or FEM, a great deal of it is stored digitally on a server as drawings, charts and photographs, and that's backed up on servers, according to Erikson, which is much more convenient and practical than the analog systems of decades past.

"Our network drive has folders filled with thousands of photos. You can learn a whole lot by just looking at a picture," Erikson said as he went through a local drive that's backed up onto an off-site Omaha District server.

"FEM works great for tracking repairs made, making trouble reports, and for



organizing the schedule for regular maintenance on project assets. However, FEM work-orders generally contain checklists of routines that need to be performed, but the more in-depth instructions for each routine are stored in this drive" Erikson explained. "This drive is our go-to for photos and other reference materials. It started with electricians taking pictures and downloading them along with Word documents and spreadsheets of outage plans and storing them on this shared drive. It's not tied to FEM yet. It's a ton of knowledge: the mechanic crew has their own set of folders."

While the mechanical and electrical crews for each dam have mountains of knowledge to manage, the plot thickens when looking at each project from the engineers' perspective.

"I work at the Fort Peck project and we started scanning, digitizing and data-

basing design drawings and manuals about 10 years ago,” said Shelby Whitmer, electrical engineer and power plant superintendent for Fort Peck: he’s been working at Fort Peck Dam in Montana for nearly 12 years. “We have cataloged over 6,000 drawings and have at least three times that remaining.”

The schematics and manuals specific to each dam are often stored in a single location inside the original drafting room of each dam: the same room that was used by the architects and engineers during the dam’s construction. At many USACE dams, especially those built more than a century ago, some of these drawings have been lost to fire or flood, which leaves future generations in the darkness when it comes to performing upgrades and maintenance.

“That’s happened at Fort Peck too: we had some redlines done on some schematics. There was a water leak and it was ruined, which means we had to redo work,” said Whitmer. “We have drawers upon drawers of original drawings and they are extremely fragile.”

Fort Peck engineers are leading the way for the District when it comes to digitizing their drawings, and they have less than one quarter of their schematics digitized.

“We had a short meeting in March at Fort Peck with representatives from the District to discuss keeping this work moving ahead. Fort Peck is further along than the rest of the projects but from my perspective, we are far from the end,” said Whitmer.

As the processes of preserving institutional knowledge gains momentum,

Omaha District engineers are standardizing the databases, increasing the efficiency of knowledge sharing. However, they’ve got their work cut out for them.

“When these plans are digitized, it doesn’t only preserve them, but that makes it much easier to share,” said Whitmer. “It was so difficult to share knowledge when everything was still on paper. When I came here I introduced some software I used with a previous employer and started digitizing Fort Peck’s records a decade ago. Now the district is beginning to use new systems that incorporate the work we’ve already done at Fort Peck. Still, we’ve been doing this already for 10 years, and we’re nowhere close to finishing.”

Top: Col. John W. Henderson talks with Dave Becker in a drafting room at Gavins Point Dam. As the District commander visited South Dakota’s main stem dams he toured the operational areas of the facilities. While visiting the rooms that house the schematics, he asked the project managers a vital question: how do we pass on institutional knowledge?

Right: Col. John W. Henderson speaks with Big Bend Dam Operations Project Manager Keith Fink in a battery room in the powerhouse. This network of batteries and a companion generator is housed and maintained as a back-up power source in case of a power-grid failure, the autonomous system can excite and jump-start the dam’s turbines. These systems are redundancies preserved in case of an emergency: the real challenge is training and passing on knowledge to keep the powerhouse staff proficient in this and the many other unique procedures that make each dam exceptional. (Photos by Al Barrus)



Threatened & endangered species program a big deal nationally

It's been about a quarter century since the Omaha District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers rangers went splashing across the front page of *USA Today*. They had quite the compelling story to tell—they were saving the eggs of birds on the threatened and endangered species list. They were the heroes of Gavins Point.

It was focused on the nests of the interior least terns and piping plovers, and the heroes would race into the rising tide and grab the nests off sandbars to relocate the eggs to a safer place.

Dr. Joe Bonneau

The Threatened and Endangered Species Section of the Omaha District continues its work today under the direction of Section Chief Dr. Joe Bonneau.

The spotlight's not so bright today, but Bonneau, his staff, and other partner agencies work diligently to monitor threatened and endangered species, like the tern, plover and pallid sturgeon, a fish that looks like it's from another era.

"We monitor trends in numbers and reproductive success of these species throughout the Missouri River. Results from these efforts are reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which compares the numbers to goals set to see if the conditions set by a 2003 Biological Opinion are met. Today, the science program is increasingly focused on providing information useful to adaptive management efforts.

"We are working to ensure that our monitoring efforts are designed to efficiently evaluate our management actions, assess progress toward meeting objectives, and provide critical information useful to future decision making."

Although not overseen by Gavins Point Project, the T&E and Project staff nevertheless work together well.

"The T&E group is located right here, and their folks, along with the Gavins Point workers, have always worked together as a team, from day one," said David Becker, operations manager at Gavins Point. "Whether it is coordinating boats and equipment or helping with various tasks during the 2011 flood, our efforts dovetail...which is exactly what the American public expects of federal workers," said Becker. "I think highly of the T&E team--I can't think of a finer bunch of professionals anywhere," he added.

Collaboration

The T&E group also works in collaboration with the other USACE projects on the Missouri River. In addition to USACE project staff and personnel from other agencies, the team is helped by up to 30 seasonal staffers including some hired hands from nearby colleges. "Utilizing seasonal staff, largely students, to assist with our work allows us to get a lot of work done efficiently while providing a great opportunity for those folks to learn about the Missouri River, T&E species, and the Corps' mission," said Bonneau.

It's not just a local phenomenon....it's a big national deal.

And it's priority to District Commander Col. John Henderson.

"First of all, at the national level, we are the nation's environmental engineer, creating engineering solutions for the nation's environmental challenges. USACE has one of the largest environmental restoration and environmental sustainability roles in the federal government," said Henderson. "Last year alone, USACE provided \$1.6 billion worth of environmental program/project management and technical and contract to DOD and non-DOD agencies.



Piping plover

Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst

SCIENCE PROGRAM



Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst

This represents about two-thirds of the Army's Environmental Program work," said Henderson.

"As a district, we are totally committed to protecting our environment and any threatened or endangered species impacted by our projects. We have been working for years to manage the water resources in the Missouri River basin in accordance with the eight authorized purposes in the Flood Control Act of 1944 while also complying with the many laws and policy that has been implemented since 1944," said Henderson.

"Our Commander certainly knows a lot about what we do up here, the challenges we face, and the national piece as well," said Bonneau. "It's reaffirming that he is so attuned and able to speak well about the program and he appreciates our efforts, Col. Henderson often speaks about getting better at what we do."

"As we learn more about underlying science behind the long-term impacts of our work, we are making a concerted effort to better manage the river in compliance with these eight authorized purposes. In addition, we must be balanced with the many more recent laws regarding environmental protection, fish and wildlife, endangered species and clean water."



Interior least tern

USACE Courtesy Photo

"We evaluate habitat we create and species responses to keep learning how to do this better and more efficiently," said Joe. "We get help and scrutiny from some of those most interested in the river—like the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, an Independent Science Advisory Panel and Independent Socioeconomic Panel, not to mention various environmental groups, staff from other agencies, and stakeholders with ongoing interest in the river. Broad scientific input, scrutiny and review of the underlying science, and extreme transparency are essential in building trust in the science and updating the management approach for the Missouri River" said Bonneau.



Pallid Sturgeon

USACE Courtesy Photo

"This updated Missouri River Management Plan is essential so that we can continue receiving authorization and funding for projects that allow us to better comply with the many laws that govern our business of watershed management" said Henderson

"At the strategic level, if we are successful in developing a new management plan, which is based on the best science available, it balances the eight authorized purposes, complies with all environmental and endangered species laws, and uses an adaptive management framework to incorporate future scientific advances."

"If it can build consensus among the 72 stakeholders on the MRRIC, it may be precedence-setting on a national level for how we manage watersheds in the future as a Nation," said Henderson.

When applications for proposed projects request an easement to perform work on USACE-managed properties, the non-recreation rangers at the Garrison Project evaluate whether other alternatives are viable. If they are not, they evaluate the potential impacts of construction and operation before an easement is granted. (USACE Photo)

Beyond the campgrounds



Non-standard Rangers for Non-standard projects

Over the last 10 years, oil and gas extraction from North Dakota's Bakken shale formation has created an oil boom that has increased requests for outgrants to use federal water and land.

The region, now home to 13,000 wells producing over 1 million barrels of oil daily, is also home to the Garrison Dam forming Lake Sakakawea, the third-largest reservoir in the United States and the largest U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir.

The Bakken formation extends below Lake Sakakawea and in many cases, building the infrastructure required to support the oil fields requires access to federal properties through non-recreation outgrants.

"If it isn't a boat ramp, a dock, or a fishing pier, it's considered non-recreational," said Jeremy Thury, who leads a team of Natural Resource Specialists (Rangers) developed to assist with the high demand of Non-Recreation applications and requests fielded by the Garrison Project. This team was brought together to focus its efforts on processing non-recreation outgrants at the Garrison project.

Non-recreation outgrants may be issued for projects that have a direct benefit the government, such as improvements to project infrastructure or for projects where there is no viable alternative other than to use federal lands. Example projects include highway construction and maintenance, power lines, railroads, water intakes, oil and gas pipelines, pipeline inspections, surveys, spill response exercises, and more. In either case an application requesting an easement to perform work on USACE-managed properties is required.

Thury came to the Garrison Project as the NRO coordinator and his first task was to develop a system for tracking and coordinating the large volume of NRO queries and requests.



Natural Resource Specialist, Jeremy Thury conducts an on-site inspection for a proposed project. Inspections may include evaluating potential impacts to fish and wildlife, water quality, known cultural resource discoveries and other potential impacts that USACE is authorized to evaluate. (USACE Photo)



Close to the shoreline of Lake Sakakawea, the United States' third largest reservoir, are several well pads where oil is pumped from Bakken shale deposits nearly two miles beneath the Earth's surface. (USACE Photo)

“The system provides a single point for tracking queries, technical assistance, applications, application documents, and for logging activity through an easement being granted,” said Casey Buechler a natural resource specialist who monitors oil and gas projects to ensure they comply with oil and gas management plans and policies.

Once the tracking system was developed, Thury became the non-recreation outgrant team leader with Mike Morris as co-lead, Jason Nelson as NRO coordinator tracking all outgrants and processes, and Andrew Lillejord assisting with mitigation and outgrant conditions.

Together, Thury and Morris address queries that usually start with a phone call.

“We get 15-20 calls a month from people about gaining access to use federal land,” said Thury.

“We’d rather provide assistance to a potential applicant than have them try to start the process without talking to us,” said Morris.

“The NRO team does a great job staying on top of the myriad of projects,” said Buechler.

Tracker

Nelson tracks all the requests received, enters them into the tracker, ensures the projects receive complete reviews and organizes all of the projects so that review of the large number of projects goes smoothly.

Most NRO projects are on land. However, Lake Sakakawea’s size makes alternatives, such as going around the lake, less viable. Non-recreation outgrants may require water crossings such as attaching cables to a bridge or constructing power lines with towers on land and lines over the water.

The NRO team collaborates with other Riverdale Garrison Project office, to include the Cultural Resources, Recreation, and Oil and Gas teams, to ensure proposed projects comply with federal regulations aimed at protecting the environment, cultural resources, and threatened and endangered species. Requests that don’t impact or disturb Garrison Project resources such as surveys, pipeline inspections, or spill response exercises still require review and, if approved, receive a Letter of Permission to access property. Despite the diverse mix of projects, the development of a streamlined process and system for tracking access requests and NRO applications has helped the team manage the volume of work.

If there is history or evidence of activity for threatened and endangered species or cultural resources in a proposed project area, the applicant will be required to hire a third-party biologist or archaeologist to recommend the best course of action, or alternatives for proceeding with the project. “Our goal is to avoid cultural sites, to avoid, minimize, and mitigate for threatened and endangered species and minimize potential environmental impacts,” said Morris.

This might mean scheduling work to avoid nesting or spawning periods or changing a project’s alignment to avoid impacting a site of cultural significance.

After the Garrison Project office reviews and approves the project, it is sent to the District office in Omaha. The District-level review team evaluates the NRO team’s efforts providing feedback and supplementing the review with disciplines not available at the project office. The evaluation and approval process requires nearly 30 different signatures before an easement can be granted.

Once an easement is granted and project work begins, the NRO team follows the project’s progress to ensure mitigation and restoration efforts are accomplished.

Verification

“There are several projects and each one requires field verification to ensure the conditions outlined in the easement are being met,” said Thury.

Andrew Lillejord assists with the on-site inspections at projects to ensure projects meet mitigation and condition requirements. Lillejord is also tasked with enhancing wildlife habitats through pollinator and food plots for wildlife. He aims to balance the two roles by encouraging mitigation projects that will enhance wildlife habitats.

Nelson tracks the mitigation and conditional requirements on a tracking system he designed to simplify the monitoring of these tasks required by the company. “It’s a challenging job and we have a tremendous responsibility but ultimately, we are guiding each applicant through the process to ensure any impacts are minimized to federal land and waters,” said Thury.

At Garrison there are 55 Non-Recreation Outgrant projects:

- 10 intakes
- 1 Oil pad
- 7 Highway projects
- 12 Utility projects
- 2 Railroad projects
- 15 Land use requests
- 8 Oil or Gas pipelines

ALL IN FOR EMPOWERMENT OF HER PEOPLE

EVERYTIME WE NEED HELP, THERE SHE IS...

She barely winces anymore when you call her “Lady of the lakes” or “Queen of the whole dammed river”. Katie Schenk has heard it all in her 31 years in the Omaha District. Her brains, strength and sense of humor—all honed as a woman leader in a male-heavy organization—allow good-natured jibes and spears alike to roll off her back. She chuckles and gives you that look...

The Chief of Operations Division for the Omaha District retires this month and when she walks out that door, enough knowledge to fill Lake Sakakawea goes with her.

Integrity, honor

Her incredible store of experiences and the diversity of positions held while in Omaha accumulated through the years imbued in her the power of knowledge, the knowledge of power and a ferocious grip on what is important—integrity, honor, service, trust.

“And the empowerment of her people,” says Dave Becker, Operations Project Manager at Gavins Point Dam. “She’s done a fabulous job for the district. She empowers people, trusts them and then supports them as they accomplish their mission.

“If we need help, there she is...She has made us a far more efficient and effective operation. Her ability to learn is the neatest piece of her institutional knowledge. Her leaving is a great, great loss,” he said.

So true—for a treasure trove of organizational literacy is she...

Becker’s sentiments are echoed in offices to warehouses to project work sites throughout the district. Schenk’s people know they are trusted and supported by the quick-thinking, quick-acting Chief of Operations.

Katie looks ahead

But like any winning organization and any winning employee, Schenk is focused not on where she’s been but where she—and the USACE -- are going.

“I see this for the Corps...change is coming... you hear of Civil Works transformation everywhere you turn. Everything needs to be done faster and cheaper.

“Our programs have grown and we have not kept pace with the required staff. There are many who are nearing retirement. We need to hire additional staff and provide training and

grow experience. We are too focused on process and not enough on quality of product. We are hesitant to take risks and we cannot be innovative unless we take those risks.”

“I believe we need to work as a team to find a yes answer. We need the support organizations to feel part of the team and understand their importance to the execution of the mission. Unless we are all working for the same goal, it won’t happen.”

Growing up

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Schenk moved to South Dakota at age 10 where she graduated from high school. She attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee and received a Bachelor of Engineering degree in Environmental and Water Resources Engineering. She attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas to

“Katie is a gifted, natural leader in the way that she brings out the best in the entire team. Humble, competent, trustworthy, and totally committed to her team and the mission, Katie has consistently displayed a high-level of executive leadership truly worthy of our emulation.

Katie will be missed by all, but her legacy will be with Omaha District for generations to come. We wish her all the best in her well-earned retirement.”
-- Omaha District Commander Col. John Henderson

obtain her Masters Degree in Civil Engineering. She became a registered professional engineer in the State of Nebraska in 1989.

What was it like growing up in South Dakota?

“Quite a change from the big city. Kind of Green Acres-like for my mom. My dad was from there. They bought the farm as a summer home and then my dad was diagnosed with MS and they decided to move to the country permanently. Yankton was a fun place to grow up. We recreated at the lake during my teenage years never thinking that one day I would oversee the project as part of my job responsibilities. Lots of parties at the lake... but you can't write that part...”

Bar set high

“Katie Schenk is a very special and exceptional person to know and work for,” said Mary Ann Jordan, Schenk's long-time assistant. “She touches your heart so you want to do the very best job for her. Operations Division's personnel have been blessed to have her as our leader and chief all these years. Our ‘professional bar’ has been set high because of her.”

In Omaha, with so many changes and retirements, something crucially important will depart with Schenk—her penchant for genuinely showing respect for the men and women with whom, and for whom, she serves. Her ability to trust is in direct proportion to her ability to draw consistent production as well as great things from her employees.

And like a fast, full river, the loyalty toward her flows.

As Chief of Operations Division, Schenk's responsibilities were mammoth, execution was impeccable and her reputation for



Photo by Harry Weddington

working with others legendary by most accounts.

She oversaw execution of an annual Operations and Maintenance Program of more than \$70 million and 400-plus employees, supporting federal water resources, including operation and maintenance, water quality and supply, hydropower, flood damage reduction, recreation and navigation in the upper Missouri River Basin. The Operations Division also includes a \$6 million plus Regulatory Program, as well as the District's Emergency Operations.

She's been just about everywhere and done just about everything.

Prior to becoming Operations Chief in October 2005, Schenk was the chief of Regulatory Branch, assistant chief of Engineering Division, chief of Hazardous, Toxic and Radiological Waste Branch, and a project manager in Omaha District. She has served as deputy for River Operations, reorganization coordinator and chief of Superfund Program Management Branch at Missouri River Division (before it became NWD.) She began her

(Continued on pg 24)

Greatly impacting our Nation



1



2



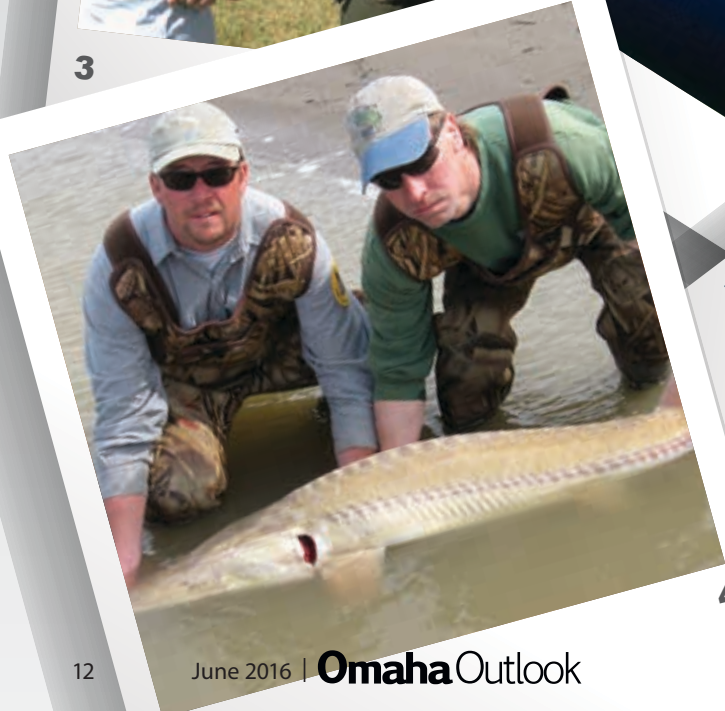
3



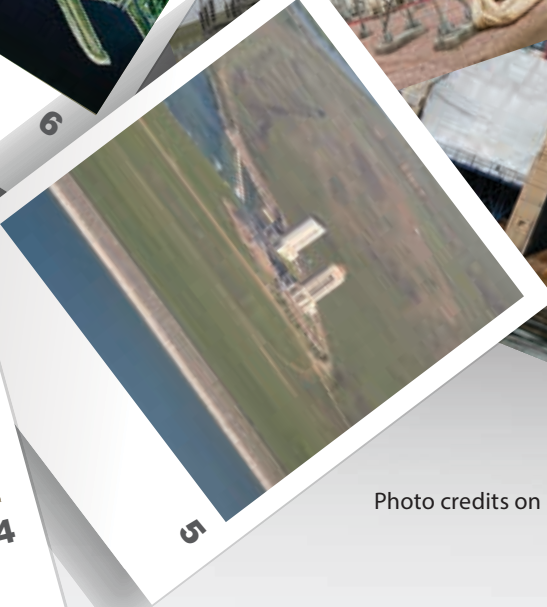
6



7



4



5



Photo credits on back cover



15



14



13



12



11



8



9



10

Omaha District

DIRTY JOBS

Cavitation Repair at Fort Randall Dam



Left: Tony Blaha, power house mechanic takes a rest from welding while sitting inside the cramped space of a dewatered wicket gate. Midway through repair, parts of corroded steel have been removed with an air arc, and await an alloy filling.



Above: Sparks of liquid steel spray as a Fort Randall mechanic cuts away at cavitation with an air arc tool, which uses a copper electrode that creates an arc flash to melt steel, as well as a hose that supplies 100 pounds-per-square-inch of air pressure to flow behind the arc.

When it comes to work conditions for Omaha District employees, few have it grittier than powerhouse mechanics. A routine maintenance task for the mechanics at the Fort Randall Project in Pickstown, South Dakota, is repairing cavitation damage that slowly eats away at the gargantuan Francis turbines inside the belly of the dam's powerhouse.

"Cavitation will destroy the unit if you don't take care of it: the efficiency of the unit decreases if you don't fix this regularly," said Rod Bergin, Senior Mechanic at Fort Randall Dam. Cavitation damage in a hydropower turbine happens over years of runtime: it also occurs on boat propellers. When water enters a low pressure area, it flows across the turbine blades, forming gas bubbles, which increases pressure causing the gas bubbles to collapse, and the reaction slowly eats away at the metal blade creating a cavity.

Corrosion and cavities on a hydropower unit lower efficiency, power production and can cause problems to other power plant components if left unrepaired. Once a hydropower unit has been set aside for cavitation repair, it's dewatered, and work scaffolding is set up.

"The mechanics put on fall protection and they set up a cat walk inside the draft tube below the turbine. Then they install the beams and the deck plates from the catwalk below," said Mike Schenkel, power plant maintenance and operations manager at Fort Randall Dam. "It's a special platform built by powerhouse mechanics many years ago."

Once the unit's been dewatered and the platform is in place, the mechanics prepare to weld away cavitation damage: like dentists working on a colossal steel tooth deep underground, the mechanics have to cut away all the corroded steel around the cavities until

they hit a good solid steel base on which they can weld filler.

“When they do that work, there are fumes they need to protect themselves from, specifically hexavalent chromium fumes,” said Jeff Skrivanik, the chief of the Omaha District’s safety office. “They control this exposure through respiratory protection, ventilation, protective clothing, and hygiene practices.”



Power house mechanics at Fort Randall fill in the cavities with stainless steel alloy. While welding, a pressurized welding hood must be worn at all times to prevent the mechanics from breathing chromium particles.

A duct system is set up to keep fresh air moving through the work area, because melting away steel in a confined space can be hazardous.

“To cut away the corroded steel, we use an air arc tool, which has a copper electrode that creates an arc flash to melt steel, as well as a hose that supplies 100 pounds-per-square-inch of air pressure to flow behind the arc. The electric arc turns the steel into liquid and the air pressure sprays away the material,” said powerhouse mechanic Mark Nelson. “It’s a down and dirty way of removing a lot of metal very quickly. Cutting

with an air arc is like taking a hot knife into butter.”

With steel turning to liquid in close quarters, there’s naturally a great amount protective equipment that needs to be donned before going about this task: leather coveralls, gloves, boots and hood, personal protective equipment alone weighs in at 70 pounds.

“When we’re welding, the smoke and fumes produced contain hexavalent chromium,” said Power House Mechanic Bryce Stasch. “The hood we wear connects to an air pump that creates a positive pressure in the hood.”

When the mechanics begin cutting away at corroded metal, a cavity which appears to be the size of a pinhole from the surface is usually larger than meets the eye. Like on a bad tooth, a pinhole of corrosion may open into a cavity as wide as a baseball. The corroded metal must be melted away, to non-corroded steel to make a base for fresh alloy filling.

“As filling, we use welding wire,” says Power House Mechanic Bryce Eggers. “When you pull the trigger on this welding tool the electrode melts off fresh strips of steel, and it’s constantly feeding 17-gauge wire from a 45-pound spool of stainless alloy.” Mechanics replace the rough, air-arc’d cavities with wire filling, one line at a time laying a grid pattern of the corrosion resistant alloy until what was carved jagged is restored to the original shape of the Francis turbine.

After sufficient filling has been welded into the jagged cavity, mechanics grind the surfaces smooth to match the original contour of the Francis turbine’s runner blades.

“The most physical aspect of cavitation repairs is grinding the weld to a smooth surface,” said Stasch. “We use a pneumatic air grinder with a very thick disc; that weighs about 15 pounds. The sheer awkwardness when working between two runner blades, holding that weight overhead for long periods while wearing the protective gear; it’s physically demanding.”

It’s all in a day’s work for a powerhouse mechanic: doing the dirty work that keeps the mission moving forward at the Fort Randall Project.

“They perform cavitation work eight weeks each year. During that time, they spend six to eight hours per day suited up in the welding gear,” said Bergin. “After the cavitation work is done, we replace cooling coils on the units, which is like dismantling an automobile engine, except the parts are a lot bigger and heavier.”

TAKING STOCK

By AL BARRUS, *Public Affairs Assistant*

Left & below: Contract workers continue to repairs on the spillway at Big Bend Dam, five years after they were used for a record flood event. While the gates are functional, the record releases put great strain on the structures, and leaks have persisted years after the flooding ended.

Bottom: Five years after the 2011 flood, work continues at Fort Peck, Montana, on the dam's spillway plunge pool. The ongoing contact is to repair flood damage, to improve the stability of the existing cutoff structure by filling a significant portion of the scour hole with Roller Compacted Concrete. The crew will install tieback anchors through the existing cutoff wall. (Photos by Harry Weddington)



Looking
back 5 years
after the
2011 flood



Five years have passed since the 2011 flood on the Missouri River. The majority of repairs to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers six main stem dams are complete, with roughly 10 percent restoration work left. Although the dams remained operational throughout the flood and continue to fulfill their mission today, certain aspects of the projects will never be the same.

“Can you see the water marks on all those tree trunks?” asked Jackie Bultsma, the chief of natural resources at Big Bend Dam in Fort Thompson, South Dakota, surveying the campground downstream from the dam’s power plant and spillway. All the trees that remain standing have the tell-tale fading below a uniform elevation, exposed to inundation in 2011.

“Just by seeing that, you can imagine what happened to these camping facilities,” Bultsma continued. “Almost everything in the downstream campground had to be replaced: from the camping pads, to the electrical hookups, even the sewage system had to be rebuilt.”

Unforeseen

The banks just downstream from Big Bend Dam were exposed to unforeseen flow during the flood. Most of the proposed repairs have been made. Banks have been stabilized with new rock, or riprap, from erosion that occurred during the unprecedented flood event. The case is similar at each of the Missouri River’s main stem dams.

After the flood, engineers conducted inspections to address damages, and congress authorized funding to repair the dams through the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act. The lion’s share of the work has been completed and the dams remain prepared to fulfill their authorized purposes.

Some of the dams still have construction visible, continuing to restore the operational aspects that were damaged by the flood. Many of the trees downstream from the dams died after their root structures were destroyed from inundation, but not all were lost.

“Some trees died and many were removed, but a majority did survive,” said Oahe Dam Natural Resources Chief Phil Sheffield, about the Oahe Downstream Campgrounds. “That was a good lesson on how Mother Nature tends to survive.”

“Things were very intense during the flood,” said Greg Mellema, chief of the maintenance engineering and management support branch for the Operations Division of the Omaha District. “Situations were changing every day; there were a lot of late nights for

us, especially when we began using our spillways and flood tunnels, many of which had never been used during a flood event.”

North of Big Bend at Oahe Dam in Pierre, South Dakota, there were other stories of damage control during the record flood.

Surveillance

“All the news trucks were out there: a lot of people visited wanting to see where the water was coming out,” said Phil Sheffield, the natural resources chief at Oahe Dam. “We kept a 24/7 watch doing damage surveillance. It was a very busy summer. Repairs were underway all the time, and we had to make sure the public stayed safe.”

Further down river at Fort Randall Dam in Pickstown, South Dakota, Cody Wilson, chief of natural resources there, remembered the summer of 2011 well.

“There had been flooding in 1997 as well, but the releases were less than half of what we saw in 2011,” said Wilson. “There was a recreation area we had primarily for fishing with some stairs to the river bank that got washed out by high flows that made big cuts in the bank and washed it away. Many repairs are ongoing and we still need funding to reestablish many recreation facilities. Most of the funds have gone toward repairing the dam.”

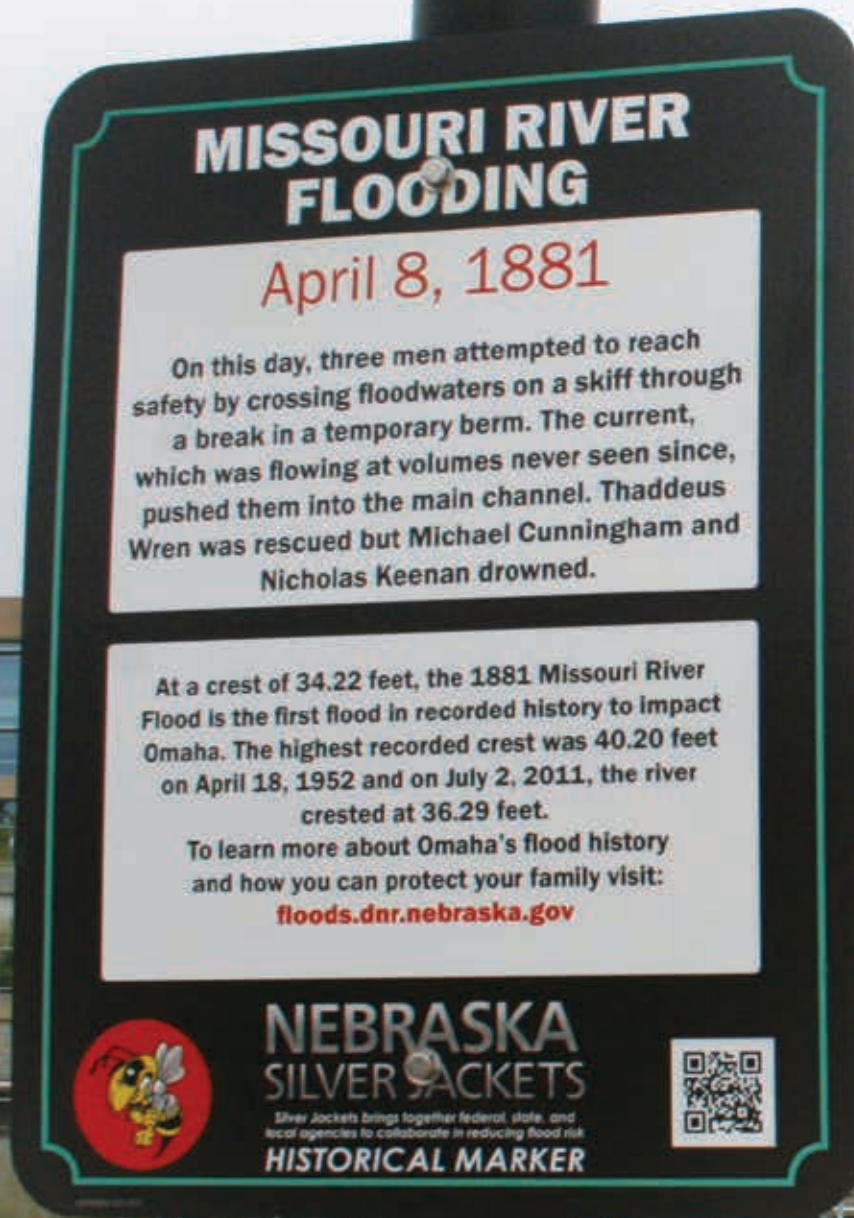
Repairs ongoing

While the dams are operationally functional, repairs are still ongoing nearly five years later.

“Operationally, the dams will be repaired to address damages due to the flood,” explained Mellema. “Do they look different? Definitely. At the Garrison Dam in North Dakota, the spillway had never been used. Downstream from the spillway gates, there was only a vegetated pilot channel which eventually makes its way into the Missouri River. When high flows passed through the spillway, the flow scoured the pilot channel into what now resembles a new river channel. It wasn’t damaging to the dam, but things look totally different.”



PAST FLOODS REINFORCE FUTURE THREAT



Top: Tanna Wirtz, Washington County planning and zoning administrator and floodplain manager, stands next to the newly erected sign and reference bars in the Cottonwood neighborhood documenting the flood height levels of the 2011 Missouri River flood. (Photo courtesy Katie Rohman, Washington County Enterprise)

Left: The Nebraska Silver Jackets historical marker sign tells the story of two men who drowned attempting to cross floodwaters to reach safety in April 1881 near the "Monument to Labor" sculpture on the Missouri River in Omaha. (Photo by Eileen Williamson)

The Nebraska Silver Jackets team is spotlighting past flood events with its latest flood risk communication effort.

The team has provided 22 historical marker signs with high-water and base-level flood reference bars to participating Nebraska communities. Each sign offers a historical glimpse of past flood events aimed

at educating the public and increasing flood risk awareness throughout the state.

The Silver Jackets program is comprised of state and federal agencies working together to develop strategies for reducing the risks of flooding and other natural disasters.

“Memory can be short and it’s easy to forget the last flood. We want the signs to call attention to past flood events. We encourage those who spot one of our signs to learn about the flood history in the area and learn how to prepare their families for natural hazards,” said Tony Krause, flood risk manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Omaha District. Krause is also the USACE Silver Jackets liaison for the state of Nebraska.

The first signs will be installed in several locations in Nebraska including: Dannebrog, Hickman, Hooper, Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha, Papillion, Schuyler, Scottsbluff, and others.

The signs point visitors to a website launched by the Nebraska Silver Jackets in 2013 to help educate the public on flood risk and what they can do to improve their safety.

Mitch Paine, the national flood insurance program coordinator for the state of Nebraska with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, is also part of the Nebraska Silver Jackets program. Paine says, “In floodplain management, we constantly struggle with helping people understand the true risk of flooding. So many people, particularly those who haven’t seen it, simply don’t believe it. We of course can’t recreate the flooding for them, but showing high water marks can help remind them of the risk that flooding poses in their communities. We at NeDNR hope people start to take flood risk more seriously and take action in their own lives to keep their families safe.”

The high water mark signs are interactive and encourage people to put themselves back in the days of the historical flood to better understand what it was like during the flood.

Lines marking record high water are not new. The “Monument to Labor” sculpture on the Missouri River in Omaha marks the crest of the 1952 flood at 40.20 feet and the crest of the 2011 flood at 36.29 feet. The Nebraska Silver Jackets historical marker sign tells the story of two men who drowned attempting to cross floodwaters to reach safety in April 1881 at the same location.

Each sign tells the story of a real flood event in that location and the impacts the flooding had on the people and community. High-water and base flood elevation marks are aimed at connecting the potential impacts should flooding occur now or in the future.

The reminders of “the highest the water has ever been” are significant. As time passes, people may forget that in Omaha it was 1952, or in Lincoln 1908. They may remember 2008’s record flooding in Schuyler for now, but with signs to remind the community of significant historical events, we hope to ensure fewer people are harmed during the next flood.

A story map on the Silver Jackets website links the high water marks signs to more detailed stories.

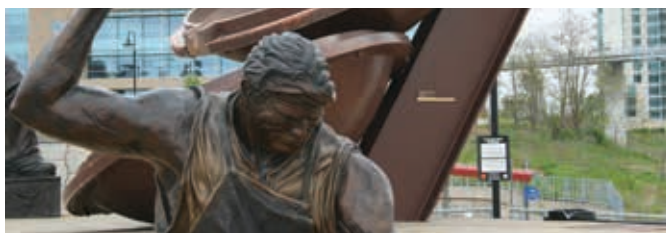
“It has been a great opportunity to work with local historical societies in Nebraska to learn about past flooding and its impacts on local communities,” said Krause.

In late April 2015, the draft write-ups for the signs that would go up along Antelope Creek and Salt Creek in Lincoln had just been completed and then the heavy rain fell in early May.

In 1908, flooding along Salt Creek destroyed homes, left people homeless and claimed seven lives. On May 7, Haymarket Park, home to the Nebraska Cornhuskers baseball team, was flooded and several roads were closed. Salt Creek came close to overtopping the levee in Lincoln but most people were back in their homes that evening.

“It was an interesting comparison to see how much rain fell in 1908 compared to 2015 and how projects such as the Salt Creek dams, Salt Creek levee system, and Antelope Creek project helped to capture that runoff. Of course it also meant we had to update our signs, but it was worth it,” said Krause.

“I envision a family walking from Lincoln’s Haymarket to Memorial Stadium for a Husker football game and seeing a sign that encourages the older generation to share a family story or first-hand memory of past floods. The signs can start conversations and someone who didn’t experience the flood may learn about it on a more personal meaningful level,” he added.



“Monument to Labor” sculpture on the Missouri River in Omaha became a symbol during the 2011 flood. Today, it marks the crest of the 1952 flood and the crest of the 2011 flood. The Nebraska Silver Jackets historical marker sign is in the background. (Photo by Eileen Williamson)



2016
INSPECTION
TRIP

Photo by Jeremy Bell

Inspection trip timing is appropriate

Requests for fair winds and following seas were granted Tuesday, May 31, as the Missouri River Inspection Trip got underway for the second annual event. The goal of the Omaha District leadership was to listen to partners' and stakeholders' perspectives on the eight authorized purposes for Missouri River Management (flood control/flood risk reduction, navigation, fish and wildlife, irrigation, power, recreation, water supply, and water quality) and to share the Corps' accomplishments and current activities on those purposes, said Kayla Eckert Uptmor, chief of Omaha District's Civil Works Branch.

Lessons learned

Col. John W. Henderson, Omaha District commander, reflected on the fifth anniversary of the 2011 flood and emphasized the importance of two-way communication between the Corps and stakeholders. "I think the timing of this trip is appropriate since we are only five years removed from the single most significant hydrological event to occur in this basin in the last 100-plus years. One of the key lessons learned following that event was the need for an ongoing commitment to open and frank dialogue throughout the basin. This inspection trip is an example of our efforts to maintain that dialogue," he said.

Approximately 50 people representing the states of Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri; Congressional staffers; members of the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee; the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers boarded the River City Star at Deer Island, Iowa. Stakeholders got up close and personal with Corps equipment as they boarded the boat – the crew and barges that helped transfer passengers from the shore to the boat were the same ones who maintain the navigation channel, said Missouri River Recovery Program Omaha District

Implementation Project Manager Randy Sellers.

As the boat headed downstream to Blair, Nebraska, Luke Wallace, chief of the Omaha District Natural Resources Section, discussed Corps projects along the route including the top width widening project at Deer Island and the Little Sioux Chute, both part of the MRRP. Missouri River Recovery Program focuses on creating habitat for species in and along the river listed in the Endangered Species Act. More barges loaded with stone were also visible along the route. The stone is used to slow erosion and stabilize the banks to maintain the navigation channels, Sellers said.

After passing the Little Sioux Chute, stakeholders had time to interact with each other and USACE staff. They also had an opportunity to visit with Corps subject matter experts one-on-one on the boat's lower deck where staff had set up posters highlighting the District's execution of the eight authorized purposes.

The main event of the trip was when the stakeholders took the floor and had a chance to share their perspectives on the river management with Corps staff and other stakeholders. Gerald Mestl, Missouri River program manager, Nebraska Game & Parks Department; Bill Drummond, executive director, Mid-West Electric Consumers Association; and Chuck Gipp, director, Iowa Department of Natural Resources all addressed assembled passengers.

Philip A. Jackman, environmental engineer with Omaha District, attended the event as part of his Leadership Development Program activities. He was with the district during the 2011 flood and was happy to see the positive relationships that have developed over the past five years. "I thought it was a very productive meeting and was grateful to be invited. I hope it's something future LDP participants will be able to take advantage of," he said.

CELEBRATING SUCCESS & SERVICE

By CHERYL MOORE, Public Affairs Specialist



The Eugene T. Mahoney State Park on June 3rd with Omaha District employees was the perfect place to share the day's scheduled events for Corps Day 2016. (Photo by Jeremy Bell)



Above: From being presented the 2016 National Safety Council Award of Honor with Distinction, a Double Platinum Award for the 25th Consecutive Year (Left), to children enjoying a friendly race and not the political kind) across the lawn, Omaha District employees shared a well-deserved break from the daily routine (Right). (Photos by Harry Weddington)



Gabriella Linbrunner, grand-daughter of Dezso Linbrunner, entertained us with her rendition of the National Anthem (Left), while Length of Service recipient Bret Budd, not only gets his baseball nametag from the 30-year display, but ends up winning the donated gift basket full of sports goodies (Right). (Photos by Jeremy Bell)

ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST!

Corps Day 2016 is in the history books

Serving the Nation is a team sport was the theme for this year's annual Corps Day event June 3. Most of the Omaha District personnel spent the afternoon out at the Eugene Mahoney State park reflecting on the wonderful projects, people and places that make working at the Corps so unique and diverse.

The afternoon kicked off with hot dogs, chips, and soda and whatever items individuals chose to have on their lunch menu. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and singing of the National Anthem by Gabriella Linbrunner, granddaughter of Dezso Linbrunner, Col. John W. Henderson, Omaha District Commander addressed the crowd.

A moment of silence was held in remembrance of our active duty employees who passed away this year. Many employees returned from overseas and were acknowledged. About 40 District employees retired this past year, while others continued to rack up their total length of service.

The largest group of length of service recipients was those with 5 years, totaling 58, while 10-year length of service was 38, 15-year length of service was 28, 20-year length of service was 21, 25-year length of service was 24, 30-year length of service was 21, 35-year Length of Service was 26 and the 40-year length of

service had only 9 recipients, that was also the group where not one person was able to attend and be recognized.

The Omaha District honored Chris Rogers with the Norma I. Kolbe Memorial Award, Jesse Otterson with the Gen. William M. Hoge Award, while former employees Debra K. Brey and Joseph G. Councill, Jr. received the Gallery of Distinguished Civilian Employees awards.

Along with the annual awards being honored at the 2016 Corps Day ceremony, the Quarterly award recipients for the third Quarter were recognized at this time too. A couple awards that didn't make the Corps Day Booklet nor the annual recognition included the 2015 USACE Herbert A. Kassner Journalism Awards for Story Series to Eileen Williamson, and the 2015 NWD Planning Excellence Planner of the Year-Kara Reeves, along with the 2015 NWD Planning Achievement Planning Team of the Year, the Yellowstone River Corridor Study Planning Team, which includes Tiffany Vanosdall, Greg Johnson, Eric Laux, Laurel Hamilton, Kelly Baxter, Roger Kay, Leslie Jaramillo, Lee McCormick, Wayne Weidenhamer, and Rebecca Podkowka.

Congratulations to all award recipients and to the Omaha District for being THAT team who serves OUR nation.

PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

(Continued from pg 11)

career working for Ecology and Environment, Inc. in Dallas, Texas.

What's it like to have managed such a myriad of offices, programs and projects? "If I don't think about it, it's not so overwhelming. I have had great staff members to make my job much easier. In Ops, The field does an outstanding job of handling nearly all issues. The district staff provides the best technical support possible to the field staff.



On flood duty with Brig. Gen. John McMahon in 2011 (USACE Photo)

"I loved the variety, the different programs and the people. No day was the same as last. There were new issues every day. I've loved every day at my job and enjoyed being able to assist the staff to get their jobs and needs met."

Energy. Persistence. Motivation. Where'd she get such large quantities of those?

"I had a very strong mother who always told me you can do whatever you set your mind to. She highly encouraged us to go away to college, which both my sister and I did. My father was the most positive person I've ever known. He had progressive MS and without complaint, enjoyed each day for what he had knowing the next day he'd have less ability to navigate. I lost my Dad at age 65 and my mother at 82. They were different, but both were strong influences in my life.

Her citation for Meritorious Civilian Service Medal says a lot about this country girl who likes the music—and everything else—from the 60's:

"Katie is sincere, well respected, and trusted by those internally and externally. She worked tirelessly on a short term solution using recruitment and retention incentives for personnel in the Bakken region to address the issue of pay inequities due to the oil and gas expansion in the region. ...

She sought special salary rates for those most impacted. As Operations representative to agencies such as Western Area Power Administration, Association of Government Contractors, and the Bakken Federal Executive Group, she promoted the knowledge, skills and abilities of the Corps while actively listening

to others concerns and needs. ... She developed a new multimillion dollar power customer funding program that has allowed much needed repairs to occur at many of the operating projects. Katie is quick to recognize the team for her successes. Katie takes care of her people and has built a Division where people love to come to work, work hard, and work together to successfully reach common goals. Katie's hard work will ensure the long term viability of Operations Division/Omaha District while sustaining excellence in technical competencies, project execution, and customer satisfaction. She is a true American who selflessly looks after the resources entrusted to her and takes tremendous pride in performing those tasks."

Many mentors

Who influenced her most in her life?

"Personally -- my father taught me to enjoy every day and to be happy for what you have. Professionally -- I have so many mentors (and I didn't even know it) who took an interest in me and my career, advised me, encouraged me and pushed me to take on more," she said.

Aside from work, Schenk's family is of great concern, especially her "wonderful daughter Sara," she smiles.

"Sara is the love of my life. She recently graduated from University of Nebraska Medical Center and will start her residency at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles. She leaves Monday starting real work July 1. She has grown into a beautiful, smart and happy adult. I will miss her most of all and now have a credit card to gain points so I can visit her often."

PREPARING FOR TOMORROW

Schenk also talks of her “wonderful sister” who is also her best friend. She, her husband and six kids live in Charlotte, North Carolina. “She is the one person who really ‘gets me’ and can finish my sentences. That’s not an area most people want to venture into.”

“What will I do in retirement? I don’t know. I plan to get done all those things I didn’t have time for while I was working. Maybe find an author or a TV show I like...I also want to try things I have never tried before...like woodworking. Culinary school is a possibility. I will travel to see Sara, visit friends and see the world with Thom.

Legacy

“I will sleep in! Volunteer and give back...”

The inevitable “legacy” question comes up. She winces. She’s not really about her.

“I hope the work I have done leaves a recognition that the Omaha District exists to support the field on our Civil Works Projects. We have absolutely outstanding employees and supervisors that quietly do their jobs each day. We need to do whatever we can to serve them and assist them. That effort can never die.”

One of her long-time employees, Kim Thomas of Programs, Planning and Project Management sums it up:

“Katie is not only a mission-focused, results-oriented leader, she also cares for her people. She encourages growth in a learning environment and is committed to looking at lessons learned and best practices to improve the organization.

“She is often called upon by leadership at all levels for her opinion and advice. She provided technical



Katie and Mary Ann Jordan will depart the Corps on the same day. (Photo by Jeremy Bell)

oversight and support to four Operations Division branch chiefs, 22 section chiefs, eight field operations project managers and 400+ operations Division employees in multiple personnel systems (GS, WG and WB).

She responsibly directed, managed and executed the operations division’s eight business line programs. Her professionalism, integrity and compassion have been paramount to the success of operations division.”

The bar set high, Schenk will walk out the door on the last day of June piled high with something she gave every day to all.

Respect.

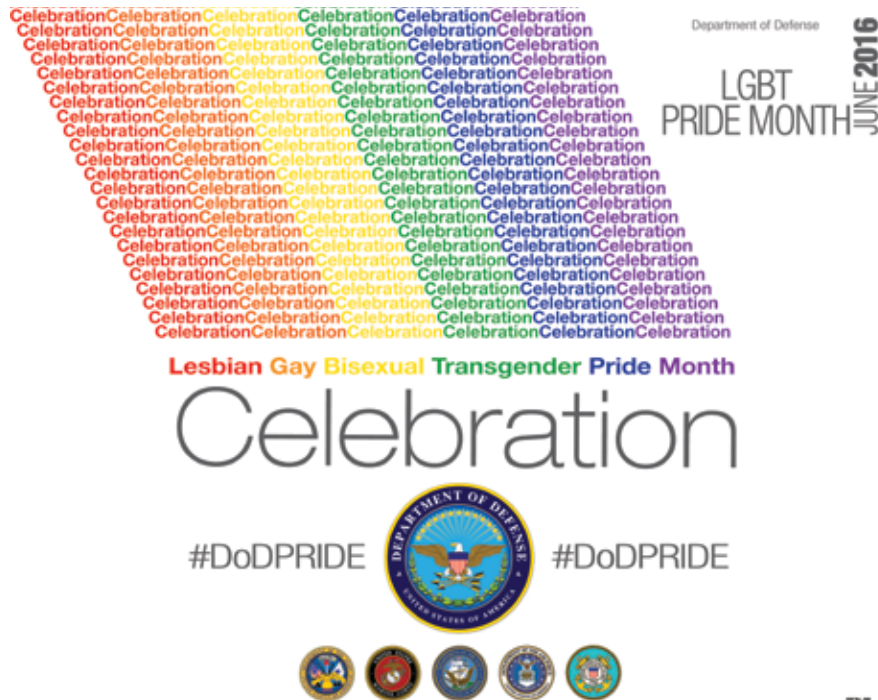
“Her departure leaves a huge void in the organization. Katie was “all in” as leader of her organization. Her vision was well articulated, and her staff repaid her with unswerving loyalty. She tirelessly slogged through the bureaucracy to ensure Operations was provided the opportunity to execute the mission. Katie was passionate – she believes the purpose of the District Office was to provide support for the field. Her good spirit, integrity, and desire for organizational greatness will be sorely missed. Her sense of caring and compassion was infectious. Her willingness to tackle difficult issues on behalf of Operations was legendary. She was wildly successful as the chief of the largest Division in Omaha District. Her departure will take time to process and reconcile, in my mind. – Ted Streckfuss



1616 Capitol Ave., Ste. 9000
Omaha, NE 68102

BUILDING STRONG®

**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
Omaha District



Center spread cutlines

EDITOR'S NOTE: Our center spread was the result of many good photographers depicting the many ways the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers works and the many reasons our work is important.

From upper left, counterclockwise:

- 1)** Harry Weddington captured the innovative Big Bend Mechanic crew, comprised of Ryan Baumgart, Steve Sawhill, Gregg Jankord, Troy Lorensen, John Mills (Senior Mech). Check out their ingenuity and handiwork—when parts are not available for the dam, they invent them. And they are darned good at it, said boss Keith Fink. “When ya can’t get parts, ya gotta do something,” said Sawhill.” (Photo by Harry Weddington)
- 2)** Old Glory flies at each project, naturally. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst)

- 3)** Corps Rangers meet the press all the time; Gary Ledbetter of Gavins Point Dam does a radio interview on the upcoming holiday camping scene. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst)
- 4)** Our Science Program at work—monitoring a pallid sturgeon. (USACE photo)
- 5)** Aerial shot of historic Fort Peck. (Photo by Harry Weddington)
- 6)** Above Fort Peck picture: A clear view of scenic Big Bend Dam and Lake Francis Case. (Photo by Harry Weddington.)
- 7)** Next photo to right : Garrison switchyard, due for heavy repairs (Photo by Harry Weddington.)
- 8)** Last one on p. 12: Repair work ongoing on the gates of Garrison Dam. (Photo by Harry Weddington.)
- 9)** To the right, across the small space on p.

- 13)** Rip Rap repair has taken place at most of our main stem dams. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst)
- 10)** Sailing beyond the tall grass and into the blue—like an impressionist painted it, almost. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst.)
- 11)** Col. Henderson and Keith Fink inspect a valve at Big Bend Dam. (Photo by Al Barrus.)
- 12)** To the left: Fishing at sunset on Lewis and Clark Lake. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst)
- 13)** To the upper right: A young fisherlady reeling it in. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst)
- 14)** Left: John Remus, man of the river, inspecting Garrison Dam. (Photo by Harry Weddington.)
- 15)** Bald Eagle surveys all below-a natural national symbol. (Photo by Karla Zeutenhorst.)