

Crosscurrents

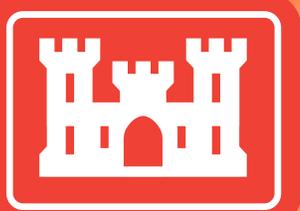
Serving the State
October / November

Two districts
unite for one mission

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Wasps released
to save trees

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District



Jordon Johnson, operations, helps install a miter gate at Lock and Dam 5A, Oct. 17. Crews from the Rock Island and St. Paul districts worked together to replace the gate that was damaged during a tow boat accident in May.
Photo by Patrick Moes



Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. Views and opinions expressed in **Crosscurrents** are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Articles and photography submissions are welcome and must arrive by the 15th day of the publishing month for consideration. Submissions can be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format for all written copy and photos should be no smaller than a 5 x 7 at 300 dpi. All photographs appearing herein are by the St. Paul District Public Affairs Office unless otherwise accredited. The mission of **Crosscurrents** is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. **Crosscurrents** also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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Crosscurrents is read by enterprising engineers like Eric Wittine, engineering and construction.

Photo by Patrick Moes



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Comments from the top

Hello and Happy Thanksgiving! As we approach the end of the calendar year, I thought it appropriate to address a few of the lingering concerns that I hear in my travels.

By far the most frequent questions I get surround the ongoing fiscal uncertainty we're all faced with right now. I wish I had some good answers for you on this, but I don't. As you know, we're once again operating under a continuing resolution, and Congress will have to re-address this by Jan. 15, 2014. If they don't, we may see another shutdown like the one we experienced in October. While that's a possibility, I remain hopeful it will not come to pass. I was on Capitol Hill when the last shutdown occurred, and most of the people I spoke with considered it a disaster. Hopefully, the process was painful enough the first time that our elected representatives will act before it can happen again.

The larger issue we face is the continuing impact of sequestration.

Leaders of both the Corps and the Department of the Army have publicly stated they see this as a multi-year problem, and the law was passed with a 10-year timeline. We've seen in the news what this means to the Department of Defense – rapid and dramatic defense budget cuts, troop level reductions, etc. Tens of thousands of Soldiers will be separated – most involuntarily – over the next few years. Our piece of that will likely be somewhat muted by the fact that we are largely project funded. We will not be entirely protected, however. Greater scrutiny on travel and temporary duty assignments, contracting, etc., is likely here to stay. Money will continue to be tight across the board. Additionally, DOD has directed general officer-level headquarters reduce staff by 25 percent. This will immediately impact headquarters at the Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C., as well as the Mississippi Valley Division; so we will see some changes in their operations, with a trickle-down effect on us in our dealings

with them.

The most challenging fallout from either the shutdown or sequester is the potential requirement to furlough our employees. I am often asked whether there will be another furlough in fiscal year 2014. I simply don't know. Nobody does, at this point. We all fervently hope it doesn't come to that. If we have to furlough, I assure you that, just like last time, we will do our best to meet our missions and take care of our people, within whatever parameters we're given, and to keep you as informed as possible. Keep in mind that budgetary problems are cyclical. We have weathered difficulties before, and we will do so this time.

While next year will probably bring more of the same in many respects, there is some light at the end of the tunnel. For the first time in several years, the new year will bring a 1 percent pay raise for federal employees. That's not much, but it's a step in the right direction, and it suggests Congress



Col. Daniel C. Koprowski

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District Commander

recognizes the sacrifice you all have made to continue in government service. That's not much, but it's progress. Hopefully more good news is on the way!

Finally, I want to wish everyone a very happy holiday season. I hope you all take the opportunity to relax, recharge and spend some quality time with loved ones. I also ask that you keep those who can't be home for the holidays, especially those deployed in harm's way, in your thoughts and prayers. My family and I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy, healthy New Year!

Districts unite to accomplish the mission

Story by Patrick Moes

Maintenance and repair crews from the St. Paul and Rock Island districts worked as one team to install a miter gate along the Mississippi River Oct. 17

The team reinstalled the gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., that was damaged by a tow boat May 17. Following the accident, district engineers determined the gate was too damaged to continue operating it during the Mississippi River navigation season. Scott Uhl, maintenance and repair section chief, said, it was decided the gate had to be repaired and a phone call was made to staff at the Rock Island District requesting their assistance.

Aaron Dunlop, Rock Island District maintenance and repair section supervisor for the Mississippi River project, was on the receiving end of that request. Dunlop said, his team mobilized and departed upriver within a few days of the request to assist the St. Paul District team. “We came up with the Quad Cities Heavy Lift Crane – the largest and only heavy lift crane on the Mississippi River,” said Dunlop. “We arrived up here [May 23], removed the gate, installed the spare gate and took back the damaged one to our service base.”

Dunlop said, the miter gate damage was extensive. Throughout the summer,

a crew comprised of people from both districts repaired or replaced much of the damaged gate at Rock Island District’s service base in Pleasant Valley, Iowa. In all, Dunlop said, “We installed nine new I-beams and new girders. Most of the center section of the gate was pulled apart and rebuilt with all new steel components and new stress bars before putting it all back together.”

Dunlop added, the refurbished gate weighs approximately 100 tons, which is a relatively easy lift for a crane that can hoist 350 tons. “It’s capable of picking up all of the miter gates on the Mississippi River,” he said. “It’s the crane to service the entire region.”

Uhl said, the regionalization approach was the goal from the beginning of the project. “This is how [Rock Island District does] all of their repairs. They change out gates, and they are definitely the experts in this field,” he said. “We are more the experts in the dewatering field. When we work on miter gates, they are still in place, but in a dewatered state.” Both crews were able to share their knowledge about repairing miter gates, which Uhl said, improves the teams’ ability to maintain the infrastructure along the Mississippi River.

“I think this project was an awesome example of what the Corps as a whole has in terms of resourcefulness and



 VIDEO

 PHOTOS

Maintenance and repair crews with the St. Paul and Rock Island districts reinstall a repaired miter gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., Oct. 17.

[Click on the photo and video links to see more content.](#)

Photo by Patrick Moes



Andrew Barnett, Rock Island District crane operator supervisor for the Mississippi River Project, monitors the miter gate installation at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., Oct. 17. The Rock Island District team repaired the gate, damaged during the tow accident, throughout the summer.
Photo by Patrick Moes



Randy Piel, center, operations, helps a diver get ready to go under water during a miter gate installation at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., Oct. 17.
Photo by Patrick Moes



Kim Wenger, operations, finishes welding a brace on a miter gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., Oct. 17.
Photo by Patrick Moes

talent within the districts,” said Uhl.

Dunlop echoed those comments and said, “There has been a long history of partnership between the two districts on similar maintenance activities.” Those activities and partnerships will continue as both districts prepare for lock and dam dewaterings this winter.

The Rock Island District is planning to dewater Lock and Dam 22, near Saverton, Mo., and Dunlop said, he plans to bring some of the St. Paul

District team down to assist his staff. The St. Paul District will dewater Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wis., this winter, too. “It really is a regional effort,” said Dunlop. “The partnership is not something that we do only on a rare occasion. We do it every year, and we’ve done it every year since I started working for the Rock Island District. The more that we can work together and share assets regionally, I think the better off we are.”



Crew members from the St. Paul and Rock Island districts work together to reinstall a repaired miter gate at Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wis., Oct. 17.
Photo by Patrick Moes



Renee McGarvey, engineering and construction, reviews landscape designs at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 13. McGarvey was recently selected as the recipient of the Corps of Engineers' 2013 Landscape Architect of the Year Award.

Photo by Allison Fairbanks

Landscape architect selected as the best in the Corps of Engineers

Story by Allison Fairbanks

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Headquarters in Washington, D.C., recently announced its selection of Renee McGarvey, engineering and construction, as the recipient of its 2013 Landscape Architect of the Year.

McGarvey received this top honor for her design, communication and coordination skills that enabled her to perform many roles within the district's design branch. In recent years, McGarvey provided technical leadership on two of the largest and highest profile projects in the district – the Devils Lake, N.D., Flood Damage Reduction Project and the Fargo, N.D. / Moorhead, Minn., Flood Damage Reduction Project.

"We are very proud that Renee received this recognition; she is truly deserving of it," said Jim Mosner, engineering and construction and McGarvey's supervisor. "As any of her peers in engineering, project management and construction will attest – her helpfulness, the quality of her products and her dedication to satisfying her customers is superb." He added that McGarvey's professionalism is demonstrated by her commitment to providing superior-quality products while always taking care of the customer.

That superior work ethic starts with an interest in nature and the outdoors.

McGarvey said, "I have always been interested in nature. In particular, biology and ecology. That is part of the reason of why I looked to the Corps for a career. I love how there is opportunity to not only help the public, but to enhance projects by working with technical experts so the project takes into consideration the local environment, ecology and how it works within a watershed."

While she tries to incorporate designs that positively impact the environment, McGarvey said it is difficult to be creative at times because of budgets and short-suspense timelines. Despite the challenges, she said, she has looked for opportunities where she can to incorporate landscape architecture early on in the design process. "This facilitates more opportunities and discussion for recreation, aesthetic consideration and site layout," she said. Landscape architects are often just thought of as the go-to-person for plants or recreation, but what I have been trying to show through my projects is that they also know storm water management, site grading, site layout, ecology, planning, etc."

McGarvey said she was very honored to have been considered for the award.



Tom Mings, regulatory, examines plants along the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 21.

Photo by Tammy Wick



Tom Mings, regulatory, examines plants along the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 21.

Photo by Tammy Wick



Water drips off the beak of a female mallard duck. Tom Mings, regulatory, volunteers at a camp that teaches kids about ducks, wildlife and biology.

Photo by Tammy Wick

Regulator promotes STEM by teaching youth about wetlands and wildlife

Story by Tammy Wick

Thomas Mings, regulatory, is used to exploring water and plant materials as a part of his job as a biologist and regulator; but for one week each year, he volunteers his knowledge and time to educate young people on the subject of wetlands and ecology.

Nestled amid cattails, streams and wildlife, in Fergus Falls, Minn., Woodie Camp is a place for teenagers to learn about the outdoors and wildlife. Mings said being a part of the camp is a great experience for both him and the kids. "It

makes my day to see the excitement in their eyes, when they see a bug or plant and they make a connection," he said.

Organized by the Minnesota Waterfowl Association, Woodie Camp was started as a way to get young people outdoors and teach them how to enjoy the environment while treating it with respect. Mings said the camp staff educates the kids on the subject of biology through fieldwork, labs and classroom activities.

One of the best ways for a person to

learn is through a hands-on education experience, and the camp takes them right into the heart of being outdoors, said Mings.

On an average day at the camp, the kids will go out to a wetland and look at plants and bugs. They collect samples in buckets and bring them back to a lab where they discuss what was found. Mings said, he teaches them the names of each sample and the biological role each plays within the ecosystem. "A number of campers have gone on to

science careers in natural resources fields, and now some of those young professionals are at a point in their careers where they are able to share their time and expertise with a new generation of students," he said.

Mings said, as a volunteer at this camp, he's not concerned about the role he plays in making STEM a critical part of education. He said, he knows that he enjoys science and wants to share that experience as an instructor at the camp.

Old technology is a gift to area schools

Story by Vanessa Hamer

The St. Paul District's logistics team is working with area schools to provide surplus computer technology, while at the same time, changing the excess equipment approach within the Mississippi Valley Division.

The district's logistics team has taught division staff about the Computers for Learning program, or CFL, since 2004.

The program, initiated by the Stevenson-Wydler Technology Innovation Act of 1980 and sponsored by the General Services Administration, is focused on integrating modern technology into classrooms by making it easier for federal entities, like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to transfer technology directly to schools and non-profit organizations.

"When we first started utilizing the program, we focused on computers," said Mike McGarvey, logistics chief. "Now we know more about the program and are transferring all our technological equipment, such as monitors and cameras, to local schools. We are taking the experience gained in navigating the program and sharing it with other districts, so they can expand their use of the CFL program."

The logistics team transferred more than \$800,000 worth of equipment to six Minnesota schools and three

Wisconsin schools during the past year. Travis England, supply technician and CFL program lead said, they did things a little different this year than in previous years. He said that during the last refresh, they pushed to get the word out about the CFL program and had schools call and pick up the equipment. This year, he continued, "We went to the schools. I picked up the phone and started dialing numbers, because most schools think it is too good to be true."

McGarvey said the process is simple. Once a school is identified, the Army Corps of Engineers Information Technology team removes the hard drives and uses stickers to identify equipment as secure, he said. Then the schools come in and sign for the equipment. "Not only does it speed up the transfer process by going directly to the schools, but it is the easiest and most rewarding way to give back to the communities," he added.

England said the program is a partnership between the district and the schools. "It is a team effort and everyone on the [district's] logistics team has a hand in the success of the program," he said. As a result of the program's success, the district is instigating changes that allow more schools and communities to be reached throughout division, he added.



Christian DeJesus, Karl Hunt, and Patrick Harding, all with logistics, inventory excess computer technology at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 22.

Photo by Vanessa Hamer



Christian DeJesus, logistics, identifies the serial numbers for excess computer equipment at the district's headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., Nov. 22.

Photo by Vanessa Hamer



Raymond Marinan, operations, measures an ash tree trunk near Reno Bottoms along the Mississippi River, near Genoa, Wis. The Corps and its partners are releasing stingless wasps in the area to help control the spread of the emerald ash borer, an invasive species.

Photo by George Stringham

District uses stingless wasps to combat Emerald Ash Borer

Story by George Stringham

Since their discovery in Michigan in 2002, the emerald ash borer, or EAB, has spread to at least 13 states in the United States and the insect poses a serious threat to the Upper Midwest.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are partnering with Minnesota Department of Agriculture to develop a way to combat the insect.

With ash trees prevalent in bottomland hardwood floodplains along the Mississippi River, as well as in Minnesota and Wisconsin, the Corps's land makes for a great battleground location to develop ways to fight the invasive species. Following research and criteria developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture released stingless wasps this fall. The wasps attacks EAB larvae.

The agencies designated an area on Corps land along the Mississippi River as a control site and a release site, too. Prior to releasing the wasps, scientists took an inventory of ash trees in both sites. They noted the existing conditions of the trees and the presence of the emerald ash borer.

The wasps, when released on ash trees, are in larval and adult form. As the wasps mature, they search the ash

trees, using their sensitive antennas to detect the EAB larvae's feeding vibrations under the bark. While the wasps don't feed solely on EAB larvae; if it is present, they will seek them out.

"The whole goal is to get [stingless wasps] established with EAB populations so [the wasps] can spread with the EAB and keep some of the population in check," said Jon Osthus, Minnesota Department of Agriculture EAB biocontrol coordinator.

Following the introduction of the wasps into the release site, the agencies will begin collecting data annually to determine the wasps' effectiveness to curtail the spread of the EAB. At the control site, where no wasps were released, tree trunks are measured and their canopies are observed to determine whether it is thinning. Osthus said, the bark, one of the more obvious tell-tale signs of EAB infestation, is inspected for larvae exit holes or discoloration caused by woodpeckers.

"Working with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture on this has been a great experience," said Raymond Marinan, operations. "As stewards of our natural resources, it is important that we do what we can to stop the spread of the EAB, just like we try to do with other invasive species."



Gwen Davis, is the new small business contracting specialist.
Photo by Allison Fairbanks



Gwen Davis, small business, reviews federal small business guidelines.
Photo by Allison Fairbanks



Gwen Davis, small business contracting specialist, organizes contractor business cards she received during a recent event.
Photo by Allison Fairbanks

Davis takes helm as small business officer

Story by Allison Fairbanks

Gwendolyn Davis is not new when it comes to working with contracting and small businesses.

Starting when she was just 19, Davis joined the Air Force and was placed in the contracting office. Among the long list of jobs in the contracting arena, to include the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Defense Contract Management Agency, General Electric and now the Corps of Engineers, Davis said she has grown to appreciate small businesses.

In 2012, Davis joined the district as a procurement specialist in the contracting division. When Tom Koopmeiners, former small business officer, retired about a year ago, Davis started taking on some of the roles the job entailed. After becoming familiar with the work and how it suited her, she became the new small business program manager in October. She said, the position falls under the district's executive office due to the potential for a conflict of interest between contracting office and the

small business office. "It's a balancing act," she said. "Being competitive and then still getting those socio-economic factors in there can be challenging."

Davis said, she has high hopes for building the small business program at the district. She added that one of her goals includes putting together a database of all the businesses she communicates with and then sharing their information with other agencies.

"I want to work with our local agencies and their small business people,"

Davis said, "We already work with [the Small Business Administration], but I would like to do something that is more multiagency and accomplish more outreach."

Davis said, her goals and aspirations are not only to help better the district's small business program, but she also hopes to create a great deal of networking in order to build a robust environment for all small businesses in the region to achieve their goals and objectives.

Mississippi River Headwaters park rangers earn environmental award

Story by George Stringham

The Crosslake Recreation Area staff and their partners were recently recognized for developing an environmentally sustainable lake shore project along the shores of Big Trout Lake.

The group, consisting of the Soil Water Conservation District, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Whitefish Area Property Owners Association and the district, received the Lake Friendly Protection Strategy Award Oct. 17 for a project to develop

a series of rain gardens and shoreline buffers to treat and filter polluted runoff from County Road 66 before going into the lake.

"This was a really great project to work on with the area communities and our partners," said Corrine Hodapp, operations. "The water up here is so beautiful that we need to do what we can to preserve or improve the quality that currently exists."

While simple in nature, the project included several components. Native

plants of varying types, to include wildflowers, grasses and shrubs were planted along 300 feet of shoreline adjacent to County Road 66. Two rain gardens, consisting of more than 2,000 plants were also constructed. The boat ramp and parking lot were reconfigured for proper drainage, improved parking and safe use. Finally, a contractor's training workshop was conducted with 18 contractors completing on-site work. Hodapp said, they learned site preparation and assessment, strategic

planting and seeding, how to prevent failures and permitting.

The Lake Friendly Development Awards began in 2003 when a home built in the Brainerd, Minn., lakes area won a national award. While the home itself was worthy of the award, little was done to meld the house in with lake's natural features. Concerned about preserving the environmental integrity of development, several organizations began recognizing projects that are ecologically sustainable.



Crosslake Recreation Area staff and their partners volunteered to plan environmentally sustainable native plants along the shores of Big Trout Lake near Crosslake, Minn. The group received the Lake Friendly Protection Strategy Award for their efforts.

Courtesy photo



Darren Mayers, left, Crow Wing Soil Water Conservation District; Heather Baird, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources shore land habitat specialist; Corrine Hodapp, operations; and Tom Watson Whitefish Area Property Owners Association president, celebrate the Lake Friendly Protection Strategy Award during the Lake Friendly Protection Strategy Awards Oct. 17.

Courtesy photo



Crosslake Recreation Area staff and their partners placed native plants along the shores of Big Trout Lake near Crosslake, Minn. this summer.

Courtesy photo



Editor's Note

Do you have news you want to share with the district? Send your announcements of births, weddings, graduations, etc., to *Crosscurrents*.
cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil.

Congratulations

•Congratulations **Jason Foss**, engineering and construction, and his wife, **Kjerstin**, as they welcome **Isabella Grace Foss** into their family Oct. 20. She was 7 lbs., 9 oz., and 20 inches.

Retirements

Terry Boland, lock and dam operator, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
Steve Sing, survey technician, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
Russ Arneson, auditor, internal review office, district office

Seasonal/New Hires

Christopher Burgdorf, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wis.
Todd Decosse, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minn.

Save the date

The St. Paul District Holiday Awards Ceremony is Dec. 6 at the DoubleTree Inn in St. Paul, Minn., from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will include a traditional holiday buffet, entertainment, awards presentations and the commander's message.

The buffet menu includes champagne chicken, roast beet with pot roast sauce, vegetable du jour, garlic mashed potatoes, rustic bread and dessert.

Taps

Leo Grabowski, regulatory, passed away Oct. 10. Services were held at the First Congregational Church in Brainerd, Minn., Oct. 15.
Frederick 'Fritz' Schneider, operations, passed away Nov. 7. Services were held at St. Paul and St. Luke's United Church of Christ in Alma, Wis., Nov. 13.
George Tropple, operations, and father to Lock and Dam 5 Lock Master Dave Tropple, passed away Oct. 3. Services were held at the Basilica of St. Stanislaus Kostka in Winona, Minn., Oct. 7.
Tim Peterson, operations, passed away Oct. 19. Services were held at the Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Two Harbors, Minn., Oct. 25.

District food donations help local charity

Exactly 319 pounds and \$90 were collected at the district headquarters in St. Paul, Minn., for the Emergency Foodshelf Network as part of the Combined Federal Campaign. The generosity of everyone who contributed ensures the Emergency Foodshelf Network is able to continue serving the hunger needs plaguing all of our local communities. Every donation, both large and small, helps bridge hunger gaps in families and individuals.

