

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

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St. Paul District team supports Hurricane Ida recovery efforts -Page 5



**US Army Corps
of Engineers** ®

St. Paul District



In alignment with Department of Defense Instruction 5400.17 and recent Executive Orders issued by the President and orders from the U.S. Army, this content has been redacted.

(Cover) Amy Heffernan, Northern Headwaters administrative assistant, supports Hurricane Ida recovery efforts as a housing monitor in LaPlace, Louisiana, Oct. 10. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published quarterly for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Karl Jansen

Helping others win...it's what we do best!

In the Army, winning matters. Our nation depends on us to win, whether it be victory on battlefields overseas or in the civil works "backyards" here at home. Chief of Engineers Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon defines winning in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as "Finishing quality projects on time, within budget...SAFELY." This definition is clear about the what, but not the why.

We seek to win in the Corps, because we are passionate about using our expertise to serve others – to solve tough problems and to make life better for our fellow citizens and our environment. This is a noble purpose and it's the 'V' in MVP...Value.

Helping others win is a win-win proposition, and it's the path to exceptional results and a feeling of fulfillment. The philosophy of "helping others win" connotes the attributes of humility, teamwork and optimism and our Army values – Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, Respect, and Personal Courage. These attributes and values are

cornerstones of our district's culture.

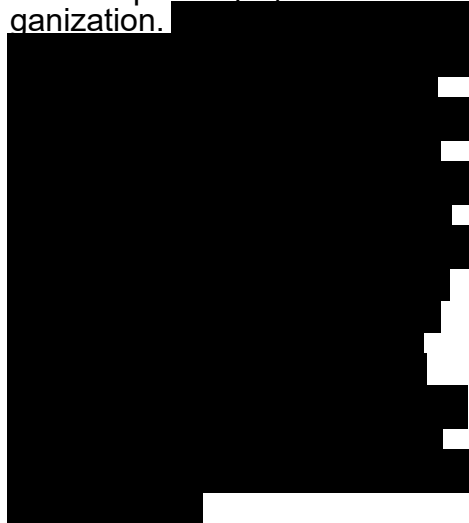
Each feature in this issue of *Crosscurrents* exemplifies how we are oriented toward helping others win. Here are just a few examples:

- Resettling displaced families in the aftermath of Hurricane Ida;
- A dedicated multi-disciplinary / multi-agency team celebrating 35 years of restoring the Upper Mississippi River;
- Delivering flood risk reduction to the community of Arcadia, Wisconsin;
- Bolstering our economy by supporting small business;
- Our Dredge Goetz enabling safe and efficient navigation on the Missouri River;
- Fast-tracking key steps in the regulatory permitting process;
- Supporting Department of Veterans Affairs facility upgrades in Minneapolis and St. Cloud, Minnesota

There are many other district program and project examples that embody this winning theme, such as our tribal partnership, Silver Jackets, environmental infrastructure, Recreation and natural re-

sources and planning assistance to states programs, as well as our portfolio of disaster supplemental work assisting Sacramento, Rock Island, Vicksburg and New Orleans districts.

We also apply our 'Helping Others Win' philosophy within our organization.



We anticipate the future will present St. Paul District many more opportunities to help others win. With the recent passage of an infrastructure bill along with the Hurricane Ida supplemental and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs act, the Corps expects tremendous growth in our civil works program. Increasing staff and streamlining processes will only



go so far to accomplish the work. In some cases, assigned workload will overwhelm the capacity of a district or region, especially those in disaster prone areas.

The Mississippi Valley Division and our sister districts across the Corps will soon look to the St. Paul District to help assist during this critical time. Helping them win is our call to action, and I have no doubt we are up to the challenge. It's what we do best!

St. Paul District team supports Hurricane Ida recovery efforts

Story by Patrick Moes

Teamwork has taken on a special meaning for a group of employees from the St. Paul District that deployed in support of Hurricane Ida recovery efforts in Louisiana. Following Hurricane Ida's landfall

Aug. 29 and after area emergency officials had a chance to understand the size and scale of the Category 4 hurricane, the district's housing project recovery team, or PRT, received a call to support the ongoing Louisiana recovery efforts. The team departed the district, Sept. 21. Andrew Huffman, St. Paul District quality manager and the team's leader, said the 16-person team's office is different from their normal conditions, but they adapted to the change.

Huffman said temporary housing missions can be wide ranging, requiring the team to be flexible and ready to change course at a moment's notice. The team's primary mission is to gather the technical information needed to ensure a prefabricated unit can safely be placed on private property or at an existing commercial mobile home park.

Under the National Response Framework, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Temporary Housing teams assist the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, by providing

technical assistance, engineering expertise, and construction management to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and/or recover from domestic incidents.

Huffman said the district's team is currently performing site assessment reports in several parishes in Southeast Louisiana. Once created, the reports are sent to

FEMA to help them determine whether a location is feasible for the placement of a temporary housing unit. From there, he said a determination is made whether eligible survivors can receive a temporary housing unit on either their private property or if they are eligible for shelter within a qualified commercial park.



Eric Dykman, Lock and Dam 8 head operator, monitors housing site inspections near New Orleans, Oct. 10. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



Megan Severson, park ranger, and Amy Heffernan, Northern Headwaters administrative assistant, conduct a housing inspection in LaPlace, Louisiana, Oct. 10. USACE photo by Patrick Moes. [WATCH: USACE Housing Teammates Work Together at Home, While Deployed](#)

New engineer learns on the job while supporting Hurricane Ida recovery efforts

Story by Patrick Moes

A little more than a year ago, Helen Walz was sitting in a classroom at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, as a soon-to-be graduate doing what most college seniors do, cramming for final exams while filling out resumes for a life after school.

For Walz, a Minneapolis native, that future would end up with a career just across the Mississippi River in St. Paul, Minnesota, where she now works as a civil engineer with the St. Paul District. Starting her job in March 2021, Walz said she has done and learned a lot of new things—all while in a virtual world due to COVID-19—but nothing could have prepared her for her current role.

Walz is currently deployed to Louisiana in support of the Corps' Hurricane Ida response team where she is working as a housing team technical monitor. In this capacity, Walz and a small team from the St. Paul and Huntington districts are responsible for gathering critical infrastructure information needed to determine if a location is feasible for placing temporary housing units. Walz

said her role is all about collecting the information the Federal Emergency Management Agency needs to make an informed decision as to whether a temporary home would fit on a property or not.

As an entry-level engineer, Walz said she's been continually learning on the job and emphasized the need to remain flexible and focus on the importance of helping people recover from the storm. "You need to be willing to learn new things, learn them quickly and then get in a pattern and get a rhythm going," she said. "I think the biggest learning experience [so far] has been learning about adaptability and flexibility. Things are changing every day, but the focus is all about gathering the information needed to help survivors get into a home as quickly as possible."

While the learning curve is a new one for Walz, she said it's been made a little easier because of the team she is working with in Louisiana. The team, to include an economist, park ranger, project scheduler, lock and dam operator and more, may have

unique backgrounds and a wide range of work experience within their day-to-day jobs, but they all are starting from the same place. "I'm learning but everyone else is learning too," Walz said. "What we are doing is new to everyone. This is a new goal, and the entire team is eager to learn, so that encourages me to also learn what I need to know."

Andy Huffman, St. Paul District quality manager currently deployed to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, as the housing team mission manager, said he agreed with Walz on the uniqueness of the housing team and their willingness to do whatever is necessary to get the job done. "On a daily basis our teams are faced with

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Helen Walz, civil engineer, looks at infrastructure during a site inspection in Edgard, Louisiana, Oct. 3. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

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many challenges,” Huffman said. “The unique backgrounds and experiences of the team members bring a flexibility of thought and openness, resulting in innovative solutions to complex issues. Our team is comprised of Corps employees committed to doing what they can to help.”

Walz said that at the end of the day, it’s all about people taking care of people. “We are

bringing folks together for something that’s unique to everyone,” she concluded. “This is not what people are used to doing, but we are working together to make this mission happen. I think the mission is something that’s really neat and has allowed me to meet a lot of different people and think about things in a lot of different ways which is valuable. I’ll certainly take that back and remember it for whatever I do next.”



Matt Clark, project scheduler, and Helen Walz, civil engineer, review data following a housing site assessment in support of Hurricane Ida recover efforts in New Orleans, Oct. 3. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

“It’s humbling to meet with the people who live out here. The more people we talk with, the more meaning this type of work gives me.”

-Matt Clark

St. Paul District project scheduler



Watch Matt Clark talk about his experience [here](#).



District attorney selected for national award

Story by Melanie Peterson

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers headquarters, in Washington, D.C., selected St. Paul District deputy district counsel, Vinai Vinlander, as the recipient of the Joseph W. Kimbel award. This national award recognizes the Corps of Engineers attorney who demonstrates the highest professional potential for future legal achievement.

Vinlander joined the St. Paul District in 2018. He serves as part of the office of counsel leadership team and regularly provides advice in the areas of civil works, interagency support agreements and regulatory. Prior to joining the district, he was an assistant division counsel at the Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division and previously served as a legal extern in the Corps' North-western Division.

Prior to entering federal service, Vinlander practiced with a private law firm in New York from 2004 to 2013. He received his Juris Doctor from the University of Wisconsin Law School, Madison, Wisconsin, and a Master of Law in environmental and natural resources law from Lewis and

Clark Law School, in Portland, Oregon.

"Mr. Vinlander is truly an outstanding attorney and a very deserving recipient of this distinguished award. Since joining the St. Paul District in 2018 he has demonstrated superb leadership and unlimited potential," said John Carrell, district counsel. "He is an expert in environmental law and the civil works program. He is a dedicated and selfless employee, and he brings a positive atmosphere to work every single day. As a graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, Vinai always cheers for the Badgers which sometimes clashes with the Minnesota Gopher fans in the office of counsel, but it makes for a fun rivalry within the office."

Vinlander said, "I am honored to be a recipient of the Kimbel award. I could not have earned it without the support of outstanding district teammates and the Corps' legal team. I am proud to be serving with the Corps and in the St. Paul District."



John Carrell, district counsel, presents Vinai Vinlander, deputy district counsel, the Joseph W. Kimbel award. USACE courtesy photo

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration program celebrates 35 years

Story by Melanie Peterson

Reflecting on the past

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration program, or UMR, is celebrating 35 years since it was first authorized by the Water Resources Development Act of 1986.

The UMR program, previously called the Environmental Management Program, or EMP, was the first environmental restoration and monitoring program undertaken on a large river system in the United States. The program consists of habitat rehabilitation projects and monitoring and research and is authorized under the Continuing Authorities Program.

Tom Novak, program manager, started with the Corps in 1988 and has worked on the UMR program since 1999. The program has seen a lot of changes over the years, Novak explained. For example, islands are built lower and with more dynamic edges – compared to 30 years ago.

“We’re using those lessons learned over the past 35 years,

and we’re getting better at it,” Novak said. He said there are also a lot of changes, for instance with increased sedimentation in the river and the introduction of invasive species like zebra mussels. Policy and implementation guidance also changed. A report is due to Congress every six years regarding what has been learned and how the program can improve.

Novak recalled working on the Spring Lake Islands habitat rehabilitation enhancement project, near Buffalo City, Wisconsin, when he first began. The district celebrated the completion of the project with a ribbon cutting in October 2007. He also worked on the Pool 8 Islands project near Brownsville, Wisconsin, completed in 2012, and the Capoli Slough Islands restoration project, near Ferryville, Wisconsin, completed in 2016.

Although Novak retired in February 2020, he came back part time as a rehired annuitant to mentor other project managers and program managers. “The people come and go, but the program endures,” Novak said. “People



Work being completed on Capoli Slough Islands restoration project, near Ferryville, Wisconsin, Aug. 23, 2013. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

will build off of what I’ve done, and the program will keep accelerating and getting better and we will learn new things.”

Novak, who studied architecture, said he enjoys building something from nothing. “On the island building side, you have some flexibility and creativity. There’s more than one way to do it,” Novak said. He also enjoys building relationships with partner agencies like the U.S. Geological Survey and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and state resource agencies.

Celebrating the present

“For 35 years, the Upper Mississippi River system has provided cultural, recreational, ecological and economic value to communities and tribal nations who reside in the river’s watershed. The UMR program and partnerships improve and support these values for present and future generations,” said Jill Bathke, planner.

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Community outreach programs are in place for the 35th UMRR anniversary celebration that include four short, themed, videos about the history of the UMRR, the science and the partnerships; a 35th anniversary flyer; and consistent talking points for partners to communicate unifying themes to the public.

“We’re really excited to share the program’s success with the public and highlight the strong partnerships established through the years, as well as the wide-reach-

ing benefits and value of the program to the public,” Bathke said.

Looking to the future

Since 1986, the UMRR program has completed 56 habitat projects that improved critical fish and wildlife habitat on 106,000 acres in Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri and Wisconsin. From 2005 to 2015, UMRR projects benefited nearly 35,000 acres of habitat – nearly 50% of all habitat reported by the Corps nationally.

“It’s an exciting program to work on. This is the largest river restoration project in the nation,” said Angela Deen, UMRR St. Paul District program manager. “We are working hard to restore habitat that was lost and keep habitat that’s existing in place, for the climate that we are forecasting.”

The UMRR program has 22 projects in various stages of construction and design. These projects will benefit another 65,000 acres



Corps employees complete construction on Capoli Slough Islands restoration project, near Ferryville, Wisconsin, Sept. 20, 2012. USACE courtesy photo



An excerpt for the 35th anniversary UMMR program flyer. USACE courtesy graphic

of habitat when implemented. The program encapsulates three Corps districts – St. Paul, St. Louis and Rock Island, with Rock Island serving as the program lead. In the St. Paul District, there are four projects in construction and two in the planning phase.

Reno Bottoms

The Reno Bottoms project is a forest-focused habitat restoration project to improve floodplain forest habitat and covers 14,000 acres in the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge in Houston County, Minnesota, and Allamakee County, Iowa. The project is currently in its second year of planning.

[WATCH:](#) Reno Bottoms video

Lower Pool 10

The Lower Pool 10 project is also in its planning phase and is currently out for public review with a draft feasibility report. This is a \$30 million habitat restoration project near Guttenberg, Iowa. The proposed project would result in the protection and restoration of about 630 acres of riverine, backwater and floodplain habitat.

Harpers Slough

Construction of the Harpers Slough project was completed in 2017; however, high water in 2018 and 2019 prevented plantings from becoming established

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and caused significant breaches in three islands. The project is located in Pool 9 of the Mississippi River and within the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge. A \$2.4 million contract was awarded in May to complete repairs and the work is expected to be completed by December 2022.

McGregor Lake

McGregor Lake is a 200-acre backwater lake located on the Wisconsin side of the Upper Mississippi River near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The project, which is about halfway through construction, will improve lake habitat for backwater fish species, increase emergent and submergent vegetation growth, increase age and species diversity of self-sustaining floodplain forest and protect aquatic and terrestrial habitat by reducing erosion.

[WATCH:](#) McGregor Lake video

Bass Ponds

The Bass Ponds project, near Shakopee, Minnesota, and Savage, Minnesota, is almost complete, with a groundbreaking ceremony planned for spring 2022. Bass Ponds is a water level management project, which aims

to improve habitat for aquatic vegetation and migratory waterfowl by providing water level management capabilities that target management goals of the Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge. When completed, it will facilitate water level drawdowns on three lakes and one marsh.

Conway Lake

The island building and habitat dredging have been completed at the Conway Lake project, immediately upstream of Lansing, Iowa, and tree planting has begun and will continue into next year. The project will enhance and create 215 acres of floodplain forest and 93 acres of off-channel, backwater fisheries habitat.



A rock log structure connecting two islands at the Pool 8 Islands project near Brownsville, Wisconsin, June 22, 2010. USACE courtesy photo

McGregor Lake is a beneficial use of dredged material project. Material that is dredged from the Upper Mississippi River to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel is reused for the habitat at McGregor Lake to restore the fragile ecosystem.

Partnerships on the Upper Mississippi River advance soil research

Story by *Melanie Peterson*

“We’ve dug a lot of holes,” said Aaron McFarlane, Corps biologist, “and that’s just the beginning.”

Upper Mississippi River Restoration program

The Corps is moving dirt near Conway Lake, a habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project immediately upstream of Lansing, Iowa. Conway Lake is one of the ongoing restoration projects under the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program, or UMRR.

“We’ve dug a lot of holes.”

—Aaron McFarlane

One component of the UMRR program is island building to restore lost habitat. Over the 35 years of the program, this has included a granular, or sand, base that is topped with fine-grained sediments consisting of silt and clay typically dredged from backwater areas. This approach mimics natural conditions in

which fine sediments are deposited in floodplain soils during flood events and natural conditions throughout the Mississippi River Valley. While restoration sites are successfully planted with grass species, many sites have exhibited slow growth, low survival and at times substantial tree mortality. Now, spurred on by the efforts of McFarlane, researchers are beginning to change that narrative.

New research and development at Conway Lake, in partnership with the Engineer and Research Development Center, or ERDC, is looking at different baseline soil characterizations. Three different experiment test areas have been established as part of the Conway Lake project. Each test plot has a different depth of fine material placed over the sand base. The ultimate goal, said McFarlane, is to better understand the science of soil conditions and how it relates to vegetative response.

The work on research and development started this field season at Conway Lake, and that work will be leveraged for additional work at the McGregor Lake res-



Aaron McFarlane, biologist, and Eric Hanson, ecologist, both in regional planning and environment division north, examine soils in Pool 8 of the Upper Mississippi River, near La Crosse, Wisconsin, July 22, 2020. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

toration project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. If funding can be secured, this will be a long-term research project that will inform future restoration projects. “This collective effort will help inform multi-million-dollar decisions for the UMRR program and help us maximize the ecosystem restoration benefit throughout the district,” said Zach Kimmel, program and project manager.

Ultimately, the UMRR program will have to weigh the benefits of the more expensive soil blending to see if the results are worthwhile. The blended soil can currently cost up to three times as much as a sand base, but the team also expects that costs may be reduced as new techniques are explored and implemented.

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"These studies will show what the soil looks like just after being constructed, and then we can watch them develop and observe how they change. I hope we can learn along the way, implement small improvements over time, and in the end greatly increase the likelihood of successfully establishing the prime habitat we are aiming for. This is a great example of adaptive management," McFarlane said.

While there are no results from Conway Lake yet, ERDC has concluded its testing from soil samples that were taken from natural islands in Pool 5, near Fountain City, Wisconsin, and Pool 10, near Guttenberg, Iowa, and man-made islands in Pool 8, near La Crosse, Wisconsin, and Pool 9, near Eastman, Wisconsin.

This research showed that in natural sites, there are looser, less dense, less compacted soils with higher amounts of

sand in them in general, and they are mixed with fine soil or organic matter. This supports the idea that a blended soil base more closely mimics a natural island setting.

RELATED:
Comparing natural and man-made islands on the Mississippi River

The ERDC Partnership

The St. Paul District is conducting experimental soil studies in partnership with ERDC, leveraging existing programs to inform the future of island building in the Upper Mississippi River.

McFarlane completed a six-month detail with ERDC University, which has been instrumental in kickstarting this research and creating those additional connections, Kimmel said.



Andy Meier, Corps forester, and Dr. Chuck Theiling, ERDC aquatic research ecologist, examine soil data at the Conway Lake restoration project upstream of Lansing, Iowa, Sept. 24. USACE photo by Aaron McFarlane

"This soil data? It was a concern of a lot of other biologists, but it's difficult to complete that research at a project level. With the ERDC University detail, I was able to start that initial research and establish a partnership with a lab that had an expertise in soil. Then, I was able to bring that back to the district and continue that partnership," McFarlane said.

Programs being leveraged for the soil testing includes the Regional Sediment Management Program, Engineering with Nature, Dredging Operations Technical Support, and Dredging Operations and Environmental Research Program.



Marissa Kneer and Nia Hurst, ERDC research biologists, consult a Munsell chart to characterize soils, at the Conway Lake restoration project upstream of Lansing, Iowa, Sept. 24. USACE photo by Aaron McFarlane

Geologists and Geotechnical engineers dig deep to provide flood risk management

Story by Melanie Peterson

At the Arcadia flood risk management project, in Arcadia, Wisconsin, geotechnical staff are gathering data using a unique method of subsurface exploration. The Cone Penetrometer Test, or CPT, is one method used to identify and characterize soils. The CPTs were conducted with assistance from the Savannah District



Greg Wachman, senior geotechnical engineer in engineering and construction division, holds the cone for a cone penetrometer test, in Arcadia, Wisconsin, Nov. 12. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

geotechnical and geology branch. “We benefited from their expertise and cooperation,” said Greg Wachman, senior geotechnical engineer.

In CPTs, a device with a conical tip and metal sleeve measure penetration resistance as it’s pushed into the ground. Those measurements are used to characterize the soils’ engineering properties. For example, the forces on the device as it’s pushed through a soft clay are very different from those as it’s pushed through a dense sand, Wachman said. The device also records pore water pressure, which aids in understanding soil permeability and groundwater characteristics.

CPTs vs. soil borings

A CPT is most useful when used together with standard soil borings, Wachman explained. A soil boring drills into the ground to retrieve physical samples. In contrast, with a CPT, the soil is never seen. CPTs are significantly faster than standard borings and provide continuous test data with depth. With a soil boring, samples are collected about every 5 feet, or change in material, so it’s possible to miss important infor-

mation. One limitation of the CPT, due to excessive friction, is that it may not be extended to the same depth as a soil boring. The CPTs at Arcadia are being pushed to approximately 60-70 feet, whereas a soil boring can be performed in excess of 100 feet.

“By doing some CPTs next to soil borings – where we know what the soils are – we can increase the likelihood that we are correctly interpreting the CPT data at locations where we don’t have any borings,” Wachman said. “Ultimately, by combining the test data from soil borings and CPTs, we assign engineering properties to the soils and analyze the foundations for things like seepage, stability and settlement.”

Seepage, stability and settlement

Wachman’s job is to ensure that the levees and floodwalls for the Arcadia project have a stable foundation that can withstand the forces produced by a flood that reaches the top of protection. Soil can behave in unexpected ways when it is subject to water forces, he explained.

Three soil mechanisms that the geotechnical engineers are concerned with are seepage, global stability and settlement. With seepage, the concern is that the forces produced by water flowing through soil beneath a levee or floodwall could start to erode the soil and undermine the foundation, leading to failure.

When global stability is analyzed, they are interested in ensuring that stresses produced by construction of the levee or floodwall or by flood loading do not exceed the foundation soil strength. If the soil strength is exceeded, the structure could experience a collapse, Wachman said.

Settlement of the foundation, which can happen over a period of years, needs to be considered to ensure the structure is tall enough to provide the designed level of protection, he added.

Arcadia, Wisconsin

“We’re getting a lot of useful data out here, and we have a lot of really good tools to help us construct something that will help the city of Arcadia,” Wachman said.

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The city of Arcadia has a population of about 3,000 people and is home to Ashley Furniture. The city is in the driftless area in Wisconsin – one of the few regions in the upper Midwest that was not covered in ice during the last ice age – which is reflected in the topography of the region. Part of the city is located in the flood plain of the Trempealeau River and is vulnerable to flooding.

Under the Continuing Authorities Program, the Corps is working with the city of Arcadia to design and construct a system of levees and floodwalls that will provide flood protection to the city. The project is estimated at approximately \$37 million and is currently in the design phase.



[WATCH](#): Greg Wachman talks about CPT



Ken Diediker, Savannah District geologist, monitors the data collected from the cone penetrometer test in Arcadia, Wisconsin, Nov. 12. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

Small business office hosts monthly matchmaking events

Story by Melanie Peterson



The St. Paul District small business office, spearheaded by Christine Davis, small business programs deputy, recently began hosting monthly matchmaking events where small business owners or contractors can be matched with St. Paul District offices that have upcoming solicitations.

The small business program logo. USACE courtesy graphic

“If a contractor reaches out and would like a matchmaking event, I speak with them about what the St. Paul District buys and the fiscal year projection, to see if that aligns with the services they provide. If it doesn’t, I have the list of all Corps awards, and can help them identify which districts buy the types of services they provide,” Davis said.

For example, a contractor recently reached out about environmental consulting, while the St. Paul District projection does not provide many opportunities, Davis was able to provide the contractor with six different Corps districts where environmental consulting is a top purchase.

The St. Paul District small business program is in place to ensure that small businesses have the maximum practicable opportunity to participate in St. Paul District acquisitions through contracts or sub-contracts. The district’s program provides outreach to inform small businesses of our opportunities, as well as information on how to do business with the agency.

St. Paul District assists Kansas City District with Dredge Goetz on Missouri River

Story by James F. Lowe and Reagan Zimmerman

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, collaborated with the St. Paul District, to bring the Dredge Goetz onto the Missouri River from late October through early November to participate in a pilot project to dredge sediment that created shallow areas in the shipping channel.

"The Goetz has provided critical assistance to the Kansas City District through this pilot program, and we thank them," said Maj. John Chambers, deputy commander of the Kansas City District.

Chambers noted that as a learning organization, the district was able to assess the dredging effectiveness of the larger dredge normally used on the Mississippi River for its deeper channels and higher volume of commercial traffic.

Chambers said that while the Missouri River can self-maintain the shipping channel by a series of engineered structures, damage to those structures from flooding can prevent them from performing their intended job.

When this happens, shallow areas form and prevent large barges from transporting their goods through these areas. By coordinating with the St. Paul District, they are assessing the effectiveness of dredging as another tool to maintain the Missouri River navigation channel.

The district coordinated the dredging with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and took steps to minimize disturbances to sensitive areas due to fish and other habitat factors.

Dane Morris, program manager for repairing the structures of the Missouri River bank stabilization and navigation project, accompanied the deputy commander on a site visit in early November to bring the operations of the Goetz into full focus.

"Our challenge is that compared with the Mississippi River, the Missouri River has a rapidly changing river bed and by the time we move an asset there to disperse the materials, the channel has self-scoured the material already. By focusing the Goetz on the most difficult build

ups on the lower Missouri River, we have been able to assess how effective it is in solving the trouble spots and how we can incorporate this type of work into our long-term maintenance of the channel. So far it works well, and we're looking forward to evaluating the long-term success at these sites," Morris said.

The Goetz looks like a built-up barge with its own control tower

and a detachable discharge tube or tail that allows for dredged material to be released an adjustable distance away from the downstream edge of the boat. In its use on the Missouri, that tail was assembled to be about 500 meters. The work crew covers a 24-hour schedule with a quarter boat having beds and a dining facility to support the staff of about 25.



Jake Bernhardt, St. Paul District chief of physical support for the Dredge Goetz, explains the operations of the dredge to Maj. John Chambers, deputy commander for the Kansas City District, on the bow of the Dredge Goetz near St. Charles, Missouri, Nov. 3. USACE photo by James Lowe

Restructuring in engineering and construction poses challenges and opportunities

Story by Shannon Bauer

Things are moving and shaking in engineering and construction. The division has seen both growth and restructuring in the last year or two, due to an increased workload and a desire to limit the supervisory span of control to a more manageable number.

Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch added a third section in 2020; Geotechnical and Geology Branch added two sections this past year; the Western Area

Office in Fargo, North Dakota, expanded; and the Eastern Area Office in Winona, Minnesota, divided into a resident office in Winona and a resident office in Hastings, Minnesota.

Design Branch will arguably undergo the biggest change with the addition of three new sections, said Mike Knoff, chief of Engineering and Construction Division. Under their reorganization, mechanical and electrical engineers and the cost and speci-

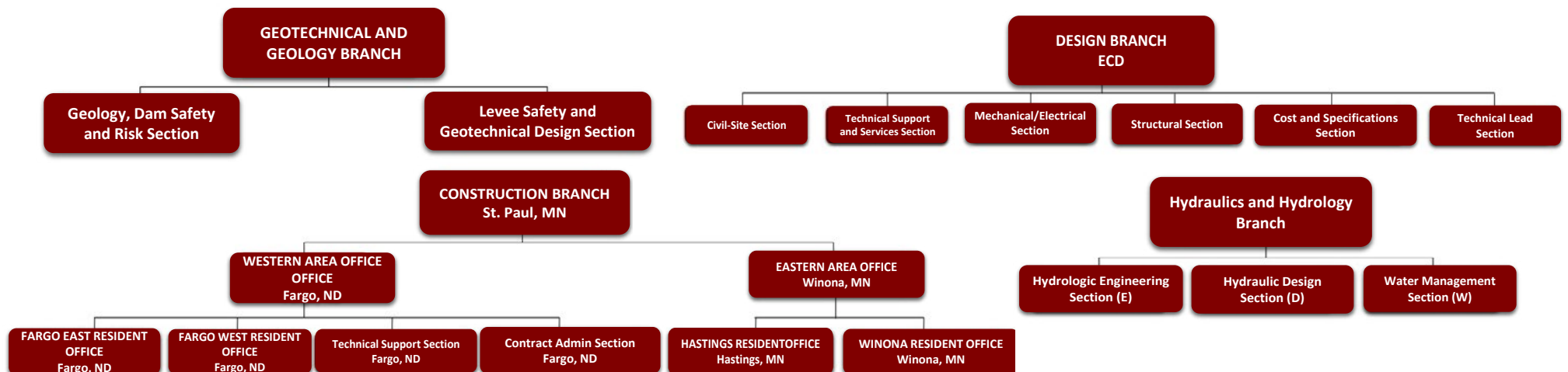
fications section will now each be a stand-alone section. A technical services and support section was established that will cover computer-aided drafting and design technicians and surveyors. Additionally, a technical lead section was added, with the intent of improving engineering quality and performance.

“The Fargo-Moorhead project is a big factor behind the growth, particularly in the Construction Branch. If you look at construc-

tion placement, which is an indicator of staffing needs, it’s risen steadily from \$26.8 million in fiscal year 2018 to \$114 million in fiscal year 2021,” Knoff said. “On the engineering side of the house, Fargo-Moorhead is a major factor, but the growth is also reflective of work we are doing for others inside and outside of the Mississippi Valley Division, or MVD. Additionally, we support all of MVD through Engineering

Story continued on Page 17

Engineering and Construction regorganization



Story continued from Page 16

without Borders; the Inland Navigation Design Center; the Risk Management Center; the Modeling, Mapping, and Consequences Center; and various other enterprise activities, such as developing guidance and tools.”

Knoff said he anticipates this upward trend to continue. “The work we already have underway or planned for the current and next two fiscal years surpasses our current capability and does not include new opportunities, such as an expanded mission with the Veterans Administration, possible continued support to Sacramento and other districts, the Navigation and Environmental Sustainability Program, unplanned work such as response to natural disasters or any projects that would be part of an infrastructure bill,” he said.

Knoff said that restructuring the division was also required because, even with the current staff size, there were section chiefs and resident engineers supervising too many employees, sometimes as many as 20. “This is far too great a span of control for an individual supervisor and puts them in a situation where they are responding only to immediate needs and priorities and have little time to focus on mentoring,

employee development, technical guidance, quality assurance or strategic actions to improve section performance,” he explained.

Expansion and reorganization do not come without some challenges. Knoff said the biggest and probably only growing pain was that most of the new positions were filled from within. “Since January four high level technical leads, four section chiefs, the division deputy, a branch chief and two resident engineers were hired,” he said. “All but two of those were filled with internal candidates, meaning that we had almost no net gain in staff. It also means that employees that were doing technical work on projects are no longer available to do that work, and supervisors must rearrange assignments, while they simultaneously work to recruit and fill behind the promoted employees.”

At the end of fiscal year 2021, the division had around 144 out of 187 positions filled on the district’s Integrated Manning Document. This, combined with the normal attrition that takes place every year between retirements and resignations, means the division will be doing a lot of hiring next year.



Mike Knoff, chief of engineering and construction. USACE photo by Emily Chavolla

Knoff selected to lead engineering and construction

Story by Melanie Peterson

Mike Knoff was recently selected as the new chief of the engineering and construction division. His responsibilities include overseeing the overall execution of the division’s mission. This includes supervising and directing the activities of the division staff; monitoring work progress and project quality to ensure budget, schedule and customer needs are met; and conducting long range planning for the organization.

Knoff has worked for the Corps of Engineers since 1985 and in the St. Paul District since 1999. He was previously the chief of the district’s hydraulics and hydrology branch and most recently the deputy chief of the engineering and construction division.

“My vision is to have a high performing workforce that’s highly motivated, produces high quality products and meets the needs of the district’s customers,” Knoff said. “We are in the middle of many changes in the division as we respond to a large and growing workload. This is a challenging and exciting time in engineering and construction, and I’m fortunate to be able to lead an organization of outstanding, dedicated professionals that are up to meeting these challenges.”

Knoff holds a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering and a Master of Science in engineering from South Dakota State University. He is also a registered professional engineer in the state of Nebraska and a member of the Society of American Military Engineers and the American Society of Civil Engineers. He enjoys biking, spending time with his children and grandchildren and spending time at the lake.

Lean Six Sigma green belt improves regulatory permitting process

Story by Melanie Peterson

For Marie Kopka her journey to become a Lean Six Sigma green belt was about improving the customer experience. Kopka is a biologist with regional planning and environment division north and was formerly a lead project manager in the regulatory division.

Lean Six Sigma, or LSS, is a process improvement program to help eliminate waste within an organization, said Andrew Huffman, district quality manager and LSS coordinator. "It's very valuable

to get people certified, because it identifies people that have the skillset to look at a process and determine where value is added and to identify non-value-added tasks within the process and eliminate those tasks," Huffman added.

Kopka's certification journey began with identifying an opportunity for improvement in the regulatory permitting process. The average time required to determine the need for a federal permit is 30 minutes, and the goal of the project was to reduce that time by 80%.

Meghan McKinney, environmental protection technician, served as the subject matter expert for the project. "I'm hopeful that when we're able to implement this, it'll be time saving in the intake process, for the project managers and ultimately the public," McKinney said.

Implementation of the project will be in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources since the Corps receives joint online permit applications through their website.

Kopka's project was identified in the LSS national newsletter as a Corps best practice, and the project form is being used as a template for the continuous improvement community of practice.

"I wanted to do a project that would have an impact on regulatory and that would also benefit the public. I really wanted to understand how to go through this process so that I could apply Lean Six Sigma concepts in other areas," Kopka said. "The most valuable part of that were the discussions we had as a team and working through that process, challenging ourselves of our own assumptions."

[RELATED:](#) Huffman continues his quest for process improvement



Marie Kopka, biologist. USACE courtesy photo.

St. Paul District provides support to the Department of Veterans Affairs

Story by Melanie Peterson

According to Clay Tallman, project manager, the demand for St. Paul District's expertise is growing. Under the Economy Act of 1933, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is authorized to provide interagency and international services in support of projects, missions and interests of other agencies or nations. In the St. Paul District, that includes the International Joint Commission and support to other federal agencies such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, or VA.

The St. Paul District has provided support to the Minneapolis VA Medical Center since 2015 and recently began arrangements to provide support to the VA Medical Center in St. Cloud, Minnesota.

"From the enterprise level, we are the federal government's construction agent," Tallman said. "By supporting our sibling agencies, we can allow them to focus on their true duties. For the VA that means caring for our veterans. As a disabled veteran, it's important because by helping them, it serves the greater veteran community."

Current work for the Minneapolis VA Medical Center includes window replacements with a \$5 million contract awarded at the end of fiscal year 2021 to finish the work. Previous support has included design for hospital ward renovations, construction support, roads and



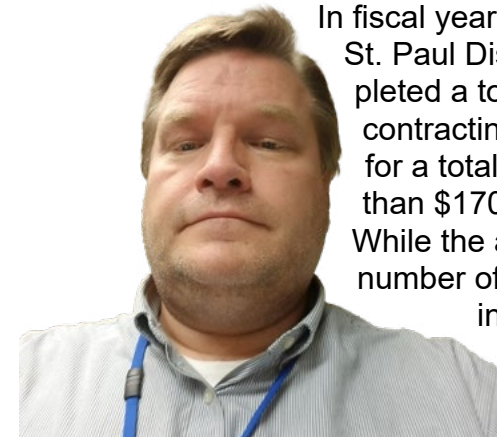
Todd Decosse (middle), St. Paul District construction representative, and two contractors, work on the Minneapolis VA Medical Center in Minneapolis, June 23, 2020. USACE courtesy photo

grounds projects and building base refreshment.

Support to the St. Cloud VA Medical Center will begin with direct construction support – which entails sending engineering and construction division staff to help full time until the medical center is able to be fully staffed. That agreement is expected to be in place by the end of the calendar year.

Corps awards record amount of money in contracting actions

Story by Melanie Peterson



Kevin Henricks, chief of contracting. USACE courtesy photo

chief of contracting, that's the most dollar value he's ever seen awarded in his almost 20 years with the St. Paul District.

"About \$69 million of that is in awards for the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Risk Management Project," Henricks said. He anticipates that the higher dollar amount in contracts will continue with more awards for the Fargo-Moorhead project.

"My staff have a great wealth of contracting knowledge and are dedicated to completing the mission," Henricks said.

In fiscal year 2021, the St. Paul District completed a total of 603 contracting actions for a total of more than \$170 million. While the average number of contracting actions is usually right around 600, said Kevin Henricks,

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



September
Ellie Tabako,
Operations



November
Calvin Halverson,
*Engineering and
Construction*



Around the District



Tom Lyons, Minnesota Military Radio talk show host, interviews Kristen Moe, Mississippi River project operations manager, and Brian Gray, lockmaster at Lock and Dam 2, in Hastings, Minnesota, Nov. 9, for a special segment on navigation. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson



St. Paul District staff and partners conduct a site visit at Sturgeon Lake near Red Wing, Minnesota, Oct. 19. USACE courtesy photo

The tier 2 leadership development program participants visit the Detroit District in Duluth, Minnesota, Oct. 26. USACE courtesy photo



(Below) Rangers Tony Kilian, Ellie Tabako, Melissa Phelps and Javy Bermudez at Cross Lake Recreation Area, near Crosslake, Minnesota, Sept. 30. USACE courtesy photo



Gull Lake volunteers logged almost 5,000 hours this recreation season at Gull Lake Recreation Area, near Brainerd, Minnesota. USACE photo by Randy Urlich



Byron Williams, cartographer, captures points of interest along the existing levee in Arcadia, Wisconsin, Nov. 3. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

News and Notes

New Hires

Adele Braun, technical lead section chief, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Twain Cacek, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Benjamin Faughnan, clerk, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jordan Fluekiger, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Lindsey Gatzow, accounting technician, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jacob Jandl, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Jesse Kramer, lock and dam equipment mechanic, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Thomas Loechler, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Eric McCann, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

Benjamin Nelson, project manager, programs and project management, Sacramento, California
Zachery Rislove, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Rebecca Smith, construction support assistant, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota
Andrea Sterling, secretary, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Promotions

Brian Alberto, hydraulics section chief, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Steph Brunot, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Rebecca Graser, deputy division chief, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin
Austin Hegenbarth, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota
Steve Heidbrider, lockmaster, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota
Channing Helgeson, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin
Bethany Hoster, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

Michael Hvidhyld, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Michael Knoff, chief of engineering and construction division, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Kristin Moe, Mississippi River project operations manager, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Kelsey Myers, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

Christine Nycz, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois
William Odell, hydrologic technician, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Kacie Opat, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Dawn Polensky, program manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Monique Savage, plan formulator, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Joseph Shoemaker, supervisory biologist, regulatory, Green Bay, Wisconsin
Chad Simon, heavy mobile and marine equipment mechanic, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Alex Wallingford, lock and dam operator, operations, Minnesota City, Minnesota
Sean Wentworth, mechanical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Retirements

Scott Barr, heavy mobile and marine equipment mechanic, retired Sept. 28
Michael Dahlquist, supervisory civil engineer (structural), retired Sept. 30
Bryan Peterson, Mississippi River project operations manager, retired Oct. 30

News and Notes, continued

Congratulations

The Dredge Goetz was recognized at the national level by the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety for their outstanding safety culture and impeccable safety record.

The St. Paul District received the Mississippi Valley Division Fiscal Year 2021 P2 Data Quality Award for being the most improved. P2 is the project management information system.

Mat Anderson, engineering and construction, received his Administrative Contracting Officer, or ACO, warrant.



Calvin Aulwes, operations, and his wife Kayla, welcomed their son Cooper Kenneth on Sept. 16. He weighed 7 pounds, 15 ounces and was 21.5 inches long.

Pat Dowd, engineering and construction, is now a registered Professional Engineer.

Chris Erickson, programs and project management, received the Minnesota Federation of Engineering, Science, and Technology Society's "Charles W. Britzius Distinguished Engineer Award!" Chris was nominated in recognition of significant contributions made over his more than 30 year career as a researcher, project manager, and leader with the Corps of Engineers.



Jilliane Jaeger, office of counsel, and Steve welcomed Lily Suzanne Jaeger on July 19. She weighed 9 pounds, 1 ounce and was 21.5 inches long.

Michelle Larson, engineering and construction, **Vanessa Alberto**, regional planning and environment division north, and **Monique Savage**, regional planning and environment division north, graduated from the Mississippi Valley Division Emerging Leaders program.



Kelsey Myers, regional planning and environment division north, and Jason welcomed Bodhi Arthur Myers on August 30. He weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces and was 19.5 inches long.



Michael Snyder, engineering and construction, and Emily welcomed Wendell Lawrence Snyder, on Sept. 11. He weighed 8 pounds, 13 ounces and was 20.5 inches long.



Dustin Strand, safety and occupational health, married Melissa Samuelson on Oct. 10, in Belle Plaine, Minnesota.



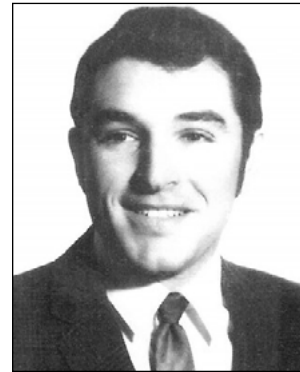
Vinai Vinlander, office of counsel, and his wife Anne, welcomed Jasmine Elise Vinlander on Sept. 30. She weighed 7 pounds, 5 ounces.

News and Notes, continued

Congratulations, continued



The Summer 2020 issue of **Our Mississippi**, was selected for the 2021 APEX Awards for Publication Excellence. Read it [here](#).



Lester Rathjen passed away Oct. 11. He worked at Lake Ashtabula as the lead park ranger.

Taps



LuAnne Bearbower passed away Sept. 29. She worked at Lock and Dam 9 in Ferryville, Wisconsin, for 30 years and retired in 2009.



Eula Jean Schriever passed away June 29. She [REDACTED] worked at Upper St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis.

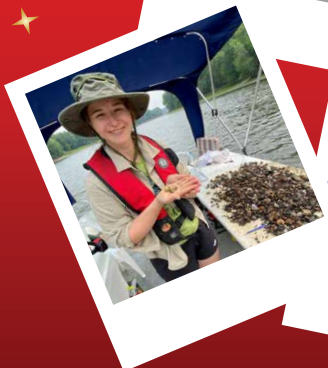


George Thomas LaBlonde, Jr., passed away Oct. 29. He was the deputy district engineer for the St. Paul District in the 1970s and retired as a colonel in 1990.

2021



HOLIDAY AWARDS





Dear Santa,
MVP should be at the
top of your list this
year! What a year!



Team MVP,

Congratulations for another extraordinary year of achievements in service to our fellow citizens and watersheds within the St. Paul District and beyond!

Through teamwork, ingenuity and perseverance, each of your efforts contributed to countless positive outcomes across all our important mission areas.

This holiday awards booklet showcases dozens of examples of individual and collective excellence rooted in our Army values and MVP guiding principles, illustrating that how we get our results matters!

Above all else, I'm grateful for the positive culture in MVP – one that puts the safety and wellness of our teammates first. Everyone contributed to an extraordinary safety record in all settings this year, especially considering the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency.

I appreciate everyone who invested their time and energy to recognize many high performers and, as always, a huge thank you to our talented visual information and public affairs team for designing and assembling this terrific booklet.

Best to all of you and your families for a safe and enjoyable holiday season. It is an honor to serve with you, and I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the coming year.

Thanks for staying M-V-P!

~ COL J



From U.S. Army Maj. Robert Wilkins -

Team MVP, it is difficult to find the words to convey what an impressive organization this is. Having traveled across this country with different military assignments for the past 15 years this is truly one of the most cohesive, positive and welcoming groups I've been privileged to join. During one of the most trying periods for our nation, including work restrictions, natural disasters, and disruptions to our normal lives, this team has continued to deliver the program, keep our waterways open and provide much needed recreation opportunities to our community. Not only do you deliver on all that the nation asks of you, but it is done in a positive and resilient manner that others should aspire to. I am thoroughly impressed by every aspect of this organization and could not have found a better place to spend the next several years. The designation of MVP for our district is absolutely appropriate and I appreciate everything each of you do to contribute to our mission.

From Kevin Wilson -

Team MVP: Thank You! I continue to be amazed at your dedication and hard work. Last year, we struggled with adjusting to working in a new environment and dealing with the pandemic. This year we have excelled at working in a new environment. We have met the challenges of last year and moved beyond them. We have been innovative in the way we conduct business and have demonstrated a high degree of resourcefulness. This is a great team. I wish you all the best – the future is bright!



From Terry Birkenstock -

Team MVP:

A hearty thanks to ALL of you for ALL you did to keep projects on track in spite of all the distractions with COVID-19, support to Hurricane Ida, staff turnover, parental leave [congratulations to all the new parents!], virtual training that should have been F2F, F2F meetings that should have been virtual, technology challenges, Skype transition to TEAMS, a Continuing Resolution [again], a heavy workload shortly thereafter [again], home schooling [not this week but maybe next], floods?, not here but maybe drought, retirements, on-boarding, mandatory training, work from home [when do I stop working], work from the office [where is everyone?], but ultimately, we added great people to our team, we trained new staff to take our place, we executed at a very high level, navigation continued, citizens had reduced flood risk, ecosystems were restored, we demonstrated continuous process improvements, and we followed our MVP Guiding Principles when we had doubts about what was important. Well done [again!].



From Tamara Cameron -

When I look back at this past year, I can think of so many occasions when the people in our district came together as a team to overcome the many challenges that came their way. From the very first month, we were well into the Lock and Dam 4 dewatering project, under extreme cold weather conditions, and with support from so many we completed the job in time for the navigation season. In the spring, as we moved into the recreation season, we were able to upgrade and modernize several of our recreation areas, reducing the risk of COVID-19 exposure, and completing urgent repair work at Homme Dam and our Lac qui Parle site, to name a few. As we rolled into summer, we replaced the miter gates at Lock 2, which was an exciting time for all of us, with almost every organization within the district having a role in taking this important project from planning to implementation. It was also a banner year for our Dredge Goetz crew, who, with significant support from our district safety professionals, were recognized nationally for the safe accomplishment of their work on our inland waterways, then went on to new and challenging work this fall on the Missouri River, and have safely returned to start critical winter maintenance. Together, we delivered important public services despite the many challenges we encountered. I am grateful for the dedication to duty displayed by our entire district team and look forward to another successful year in 2022. Thank you MVP.

From John Carrell -

MVP teammates, Congratulations on a very successful year of delivering the program with excellence under the ongoing difficult circumstances of the COVID 19 pandemic. The success of MVP is a testament to the resiliency and high professionalism of our team. I hope all of you will have an opportunity for well-deserved time off and the opportunity to spend time with family and friends over the holiday period. For those teammates retiring, I thank you for your selfless service. I am so proud to be part of such an outstanding team.



From Michael Knoff -

It's hard to believe we are coming to an end of another calendar year, and what a year it has been. It started with the promise of a hopeful return to normalcy and is ending with the same challenges we've endured since March 2020. Yet through it all you have persevered, overcoming every technical and logistical obstacle thrown at you to continue to execute the mission. We now stand poised to take on a once-in-a-career, if not historic, workload in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This will be a tremendous challenge for us with tens of billions of dollars coming to the Corps. More importantly, this challenge will be an opportunity for each of us to play an important role in improving our nation's infrastructure and investing in its future. You have demonstrated that you are more than up to this challenge and I have no doubt that we will succeed, just as we have overcome all the challenges that came before this one. I am proud to be a member of the St. Paul District and continue to be amazed every day at the dedication and skill of its employees. Thank you for all that you do.



From Chad Konickson -

Team MVP: Congratulations on yet another extraordinary year. There is so much to be thankful for despite the very real challenges we've continued to face related to the pandemic. As usual, you've risen to meet those challenges head on. The resilience demonstrated by this dedicated team is extraordinary. All our collective success is a direct result of your commitment and can-do attitude and your willingness to support one another through tough times. It is such a privilege to serve this inspiring team. You've made it easy to look forward to the new year with optimism. I wish you all a happy and healthy holiday season and new year!

From Amy Rothstein -

Team MVP: Congratulations on another outstanding year in accomplishing the mission. I am fortunate to be part of this great organization with exceptional employees. Your commitment and dedication to the success of our programs and to each other is commendable. This past year we faced challenges and overcame them through your determination, attention to detail and resiliency. Thank you for your hard work and service.



From Kevin Sommerland -

Team MVP - thank you all for the commitment and resiliency you've shown in 2021. As we look back and recall our successes, do not forget about all the innovation, application and sheer hard work you put into making it possible. Our combined strength is what makes us successful, so stand tall and appreciate how excellent you are. It is an honor to be a member of this team.



Headquarters Level Award

7



Vinai Vinlander

Joseph W. Kimbel Award for Excellence in Legal Services

Vinai, deputy district counsel, was selected as a recipient of the Joseph W. Kimbel award. This national award recognizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers attorney who demonstrates the highest professional potential for future legal achievement. Vinai joined the St. Paul District in 2018. As the deputy district counsel, he serves as part of the office of counsel leadership team and regularly provides advice in the areas of civil works, interagency support agreements and regulatory. He is an expert in environmental law and the civil works program. Vinai is truly an outstanding attorney and a very deserving recipient of this distinguished award. He continues to demonstrate superb leadership, selfless service, and unlimited potential.

Industry Level Award



Dredge Safety Award

Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety

The Dredge Goetz was recognized at the national level by the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety for their outstanding safety culture and impeccable safety record.





Teri Allen **Civilian Service Achievement Medal**

Teri was recognized for her efforts as the lead biologist on the Mark Twain Lake Inadvertent Discovery Island Protection and Preservation Delivery team. Teri and the team were recognized for their efforts to quickly develop and deliver a long-term preservation solution at a highly significant and sensitive cultural resource site.

Alison Anderson **Civilian Service Commendation Medal**

Alison was recognized for her efforts on the Dogtooth Bend Emergency Repairs Project Delivery team. The project had an ultra-aggressive schedule due to real concerns about the formation of a Mississippi River channel cutoff. As lead biologist, Alison's swift efforts helped ensure all-natural resource partners were coordinated well ahead of the action and all environmental compliance reports were completed prior to construction.



U.S. Army 1st Lt. Sophia M. Gray **Army Commendation Medal**

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Sophia Gray is recognized for exceptional service as an operations officer to the temporary roofing mission for the Memphis District forward emergency operations center. She demonstrated incredible leadership and selfless service as she helped coordinate the Corps of Engineers' response to Hurricane Ida. 1st Lt. Gray's commitment to excellence and mission accomplishment were integral to the district's success.





St. Paul District's Resume and Interviews Mentorship Program Civilian Service Commendation Medal

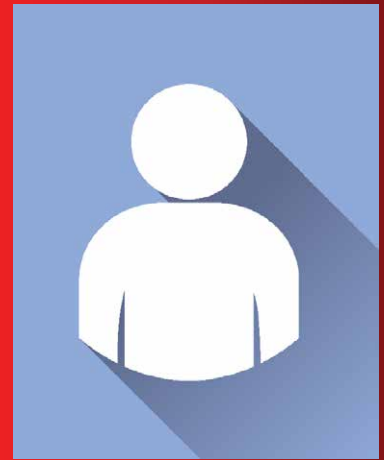
Each individual is commended for her invaluable leadership of the St. Paul District's Resume and Interviews Mentorship Program for fiscal years 2020 and 2021. They worked in partnership with each other to develop and lead the mentoring program for resumes and interviews. They tirelessly promoted the program. Numerous resumes were reviewed and commented upon, mock interviews were held with feedback provided, and RED talks were held. Additionally, they served as an ad hoc advisors to the Professional Development Committee to assure the program is in alignment with the district goals and priorities.



Kari Hauck



Jane Mathison



Desiree Morningstar



Steven Taylor Civilian Service Commendation Medal

Steven is recognized for his outstanding service from January to September 2021 as a structural engineer for the 542nd Engineer Detachment [Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance] of the Savannah District. Steven's professionalism, expertise and technical knowledge in Structural Engineering ensured the 542nd FEST-A successfully executed all thirty-one assigned projects effectively and efficiently. Steven's accomplishments and devoted civilian service reflect great credit on him, the Savannah District, the South Atlantic Division and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Jennie Tyrrell Civilian Service Commendation Medal

Jennie is recognized for her outstanding service from January to September 2021 as a civil engineer for the 542nd Engineer Detachment [Forward Engineer Support Team-Advance] of the Savannah District. Jennie's professionalism, expertise and technical knowledge in civil engineering, cost and specifications ensured the 542nd FEST-A successfully executed all thirty-one assigned projects effectively and efficiently. Jennie's accomplishments and devoted civilian service reflect great credit on her, the Savannah District, the South Atlantic Division and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.





Hurricane Ida Response Southern Louisiana 2021 Certificate of Appreciation

For their selfless service in support of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' response to Hurricane Ida. Their hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and technical expertise were vital for recovery operations in support of the state of Louisiana. Their professionalism and competence greatly contributed to the mission, and their compassion and willingness to serve.



John Bostrack



Matthew Clark



Todd DeCosse



Patrick Dowd



Eric Dykman



Sophia Gray



Nayelli Guerrero



Amy Heffernan



Andy Huffman



Knute Knutson



Emily Kostner



Alex Le



Eric Lockington



Patrick Moes



Jesse Onkka



Eric Rain



Daniel Reburn



John Reiderer



Chad Rethwisch

Megan
Severson

Jordan Skoug



Colin Tyrrell



Jennie Tyrrell



Helen Walz

St. Paul District Employee of the Month



11

Individuals are nominated by their coworkers for the work/tasks they complete while at work. The nominations are gathered and verified by EEO, CPAC and their supervisor. All nominations that are cleared by EEO, CPAC and supervisor are sent to the Employee of the Month selection committee and the committee selects one individual for the month. If an individual is not selected, their nomination is forwarded to the following month because the nomination is valid for a total of six months.



Douglas Blexrud
July



Ellen Tabako
September



Christina Vasseur
October



Calvin Halverson
November



Dan Adams
December



New Employee of the Year

Sanjay Bimali

Sanjay joined the Western Area Office over the last year. Upon arrival, Sanjay was assigned as an assistant project engineer on the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Diversion Inlet Structure Project, where he quickly demonstrated his talents circulating contractor submittals and requests for information among reviewers and processing their review comments for contracting officer's representative approval. He also demonstrated his communication skills drafting pre-negotiation objective memoranda and price negotiation memoranda. These documents are extremely important, and their production often dictates the pace of the processing of construction modifications. The documents that Sanjay produces require little or no revision prior to approval by the administrative contracting officer. After the reorganization of the office into two resident offices and the

departure of the project engineer for the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Wild Rice River Structure, Sanjay embraced change and worked as the project engineer for both the Diversion Inlet Structure and the Wild Rice River Structure projects simultaneously. Sanjay performs well above grade expectation on both projects. In June, Sanjay accepted an offer to join the Department of the Army Intern Program, embracing opportunities for self-development and training that would not be open to him otherwise.

Administrative Professional Employee of the Year

Barb Griffin

Barb continues to demonstrate how essential she is to the efficiency and thoroughness of the executive office. She embodies excellence within the administrative profession, ensuring that official documents are properly routed and correct, both impact and retirement awards are processed and prepared for presentation, she prepares travel orders and vouchers and assists with general purchasing card actions both within and outside the executive office. Going above and beyond her normal duties, Barb is a mentor, assisting our newest administrative assistant in programs and project management to learn the Corps' systems as well as answering the endless series of questions from two new military deputies. She regularly volunteers for special events including the open house on the Motor Vessel Mississippi, numerous holiday events and many others. Barb leads and supports the work across the district every day and has been absolutely essential to the success of our mission over the last year.



Innovator of the Year

Adam Howard

Adam has become an expert in scour (ex: event-based and stochastic-based) specifically related to vertical, lateral and long-term scour. Corps guidance on scour is not as prescriptive or clear as many would like. Recognizing this gap, Adam coordinated with enterprise-leading River Analysis Systems and experts at the Hydrologic Engineer Center, or HEC, and the Engineer Research and Development Center, or ERDC, to develop a robust peer-reviewed methodology to add clarity and definition to this type of analysis. This methodology was published in an ERDC Technical Note and was so well received that its logic was programmed into the latest official release of Hydrologic Engineer Center-River Analysis System (ver. 6.1), which already has already benefited MVP-led work and will continue to add value and advance the Hydraulics and Hydrology community

of practice throughout the enterprise. Through this work, Adam has become a recognized expert in this topic within the district, region, and from our Hydraulics and Hydrology centers of expertise (HEC & ERDC).



MVP's CE-SOHMS Working Group

After a 19-month pause due to the COVID-19 pandemic the CESOHMS Work Group hosted the district's Stage II closeout and Stage III baseline assessment. Through the assessment, the team visited numerous sites as well as the district office. The district saw a significant effort and progress in both stages. We now are at 98% completion for Stage II and 35% complete 65% in progress for Stage III. The MVP CESOHMS Work Group has been recognized as a "best practice" by USACE. Our unique approach to incorporating a multi-discipline and multi-divisional group reflects our commitment to changing the culture across the district. The work group continues to carry MVP forward along in the CESOHMS journey.



Jake Bernhardt



Chris Bowen



Matt Breza



Chris Erickson



Rebecca Graser



Jeff Kirkey



Nick Lorenz



Aaron McFarlane



Jason Mothershed



Kelly Obermiller



Melanie Peterson



Aaron Pieplow



Dustin Strand



Robyn Yliniemi





Public Affairs Supporter of the Year

Brad LaBadie

Brad has worked at more St. Paul District community relations events planned by the public affairs office than any other volunteer. He has even willingly worn the Bobber suit. Throughout the year, he sent numerous pieces of information and photos to be used on district social media platforms. He starred in numerous district propaganda videos without complaint. Brad is an excellent representative of the Corps of Engineers and always shines a positive light out in the public.



Outstanding Quality Contributor of the Year

Gary Wolf

Gary led the development of the district's technical lead checklist, bringing together the knowledge of eight subject matter experts from across the district. Furthermore, he worked with project management and engineering and construction leaders to secure the funds to provide over 100 team members training on the use of the checklist. His leadership and knowledge were critical to the development of the district project delivery portal, a one-stop shop for team members to assist with project delivery. His collaborative style was instrumental in bringing out the best in every team member by showing support and providing guidance while valuing all input and viewpoints.





Outstanding Support for the District Security Mission Award

Nicole Baker

Ranger Nicole Baker is nominated for her exceptional presentation of a textbook perfect U.S. Army Physical Security Key & Lock Control Program for Gull Lake Dam RNR project. Ranger Baker clearly demonstrated an outstanding comprehension of U.S. Army security procedures to such an extent that she is now recognized as a St. Paul District security subject matter expert capable of training other employees in security program functions and procedures.

Outstanding Leadership in Advancing the District Security Mission Award

Tamryn Frauenshuh

Lead Ranger Tamryn Frauenshuh is nominated for her exceptional initiative and leadership in advancing the district security mission through the creation of an innovative "Sandy Lake Recreation Area RANGER MANUAL" that provides comprehensive, concise instructions to her ranger staff on every aspect of their job duties to include the security functions of ranger patrols, vehicle SOP, and a daily ranger checklist among numerous other requirements. Lead Ranger Frauenshuh's exemplary initiative, innovation and leadership in advancing district security programs has resulted in her project receiving the highest score to date in the District's Physical Security Inspection program. Lead Ranger Frauenshuh clearly understands that great leadership involves providing her staff with the clearest possible direction and training to perform their mission to the highest standards possible



Outstanding Leadership in Advancing the District Security Mission Award

Samuel Mathiowetz

Sam is nominated for his exceptional initiative, innovation and leadership in advancing the district security mission through his ability to problem solving and innovating a critical solution to the locks & dams electronic security systems [ESS] which eliminated a potential gap in the security posture utilizing a low cost, low technology solution that ultimately saved the operations division and the district tens of thousands of dollars. In addition, Sam has shown outstanding leadership in creating detailed examples of required security documentation, law enforcement and community coordination and continues to work with lock & dam leaders to build and develop a solid program of best practices available to all sites.



EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

The employee within each EC Branch who consistently displays the following qualities:

- a. Dedicated and dependable
- b. Helpful, cooperative and displays positive attitude towards fellow employees
- c. Performs duties at a high level, goes the extra mile to help us execute
- d. Freely shares knowledge to assist others
- e. Accomplished a significant task that would not have been possible without their efforts



Mission Possible Award
Design Branch
Employee of the Year
Mark Angelo



Steward of the Waters Award
Hydraulics & Hydrology
Branches Employee of the Year
Aaron Buesing



Critical Lift Award
Construction Branch
Employee of the Year
Michelle Butler



Never Take You for Granite Award
Geotech and Geology
Branch Employee of the Year
Nate Meisgeier



Steward of the Waters Award
Hydraulics & Hydrology
Branches Employee of the Year
Kacie Opat



Critical Lift Award
Construction Branch
Employee of the Year
Christina Vasseur



Calmer of Storms



Renee McGarvey

Description: Someone who remains level-headed and helps teammates get through tough situations.



Bucket Filler

Rebecca Seal-Soileau

Description: Someone who brightens our connections, community, and lives.

✦ Unsung Heroes

Description: Someone who is behind the scenes accomplishing mission-critical work.



Sanjay Bimali



Amy Dessner



Priscilla Dimbo



Jacob Fall



Paul Fleming



Bonnie Meyerhoff



✦ Luke Schmidt



Becky Smith



Molly Wezel-Peterson ✦



LOCK AND DAM EMERGENCY RESPONSE READINESS EFFORTS

The operations division navigation team is recognized for their contributions to improving emergency response readiness at the locks and dams. The team successfully executed a strategic effort to strengthen partnerships with local first responders, other agencies and community members for the purpose of increasing emergency response efficiencies in the future.

Over the past year, the team hosted first responder events and training opportunities at each of the locks and dams to familiarize first responders with lock staff, site conditions and on-site procedures to respond to an emergency safely and effectively. These events were highlighted in messages about lock and dam safety and our emergency response partners in news releases and other news media.



Matt Breza



Jarrod Brown



Dan Burger



Judy Denzer



Brian Gray



Jason Hager



Joe Heffner



Joel Hermann



Rojean Heyer



Eric Lockington



Jane Mathison



Joe Minnis



Patrick Moes



Aaron Pieplow



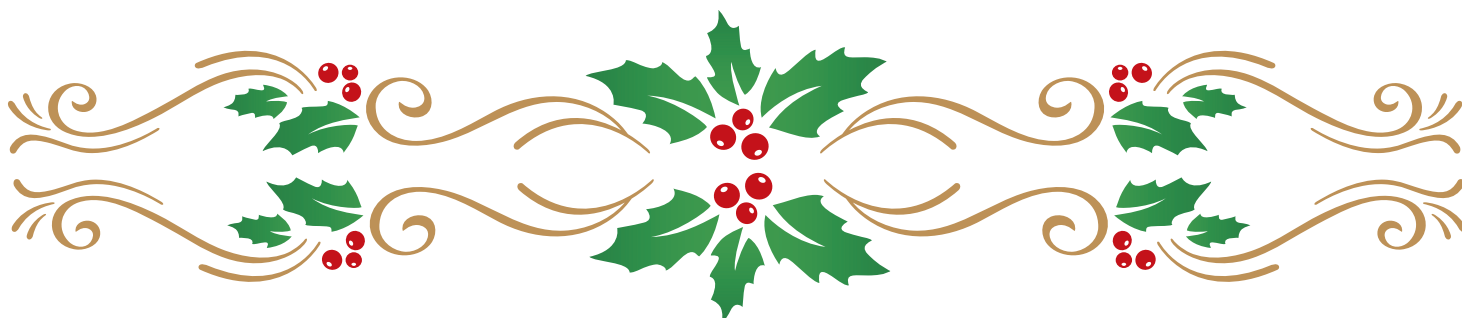
Brian Sipos



Tim Tabery



Eric Thiese





LOCK 2 MITER GATE INSTALLATION

This multidisciplinary team is recognized for their contributions to the Lock 2 miter gate installation project. The team played a crucial role in the successful execution of this project, working seamlessly across district lines, to ensure success and minimize impacts to navigation. From the start the team collaboratively worked to effectively accomplish critical tasks even within tight time frames.

Over the course of the year, the team supported every step of the project including planning, miter gate delivery, mobilization, site preparations, installation, diving inspections, site clean-up, and demobilization. Team members are worthy representatives of the values and ethics of the Corps of Engineers, and it is because of their continued and consistent hard work that they are recognized as an operations division navigation team of the year.



Lucas Anderson



Devon Bemis



Kraig Berberich



Joseph Bernaix



John Bostrack



Wade Carr



Nick Castellane



David Diamond



Dallas Ebersold



Brian Gray



Michael
Gunderson



Mike Holzer



Eric Johnson,
[MVR]



Denise Julson



Keith Kirkey



Knute Knutson



Erin Krug



Stanley Marg



Operations Honorary Awards

20



LOCK 2 MITER GATE INSTALLATION



Ryan Markey



Lexi Ousky



Angelo Pedretti



Jonathan Peters



Aaron Pieplow



Scott Rolbiecki



Mitchell Serjogins



Jordan Skoug



Loren Soma



Christopher Stai



Matthew Stanton



Nicholas Stanton



George Stringham



Timothy Tabery



Chris Thennes
(MVR)



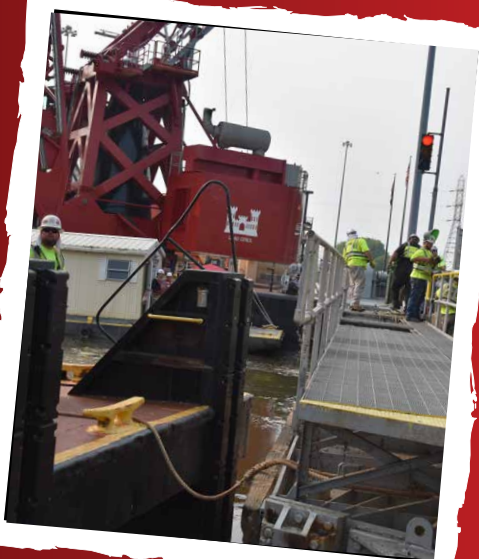
Matt Thurman
(MVR)



Nate Van Loon



Dexter Yoon





MISSOURI RIVER DREDGING

The operations division navigation team is recognized for their contributions to channel maintenance on the Missouri River. The Missouri River typically requires minimal dredging as it is a self-scouring river by a series of engineered structures. Damage to the structures, due to recent flooding, resulted in shallow areas requiring additional dredging to maintain the navigational channel. The Kansas City District coordinated with the St. Paul District to assist with this dredging. The team played a crucial role in the success of this project.

As this was the first time the team had navigated the Missouri River, additional collaboration between the districts was required to ensure a safe and effective project. The team collaboratively worked with members of the dredge, survey crews and Kansas City District teammates to monitor and adjust the dredge cut and dredging operations to optimize the production and safety of the crew. The experience acquired during this project will benefit future Missouri River projects.



Noah Andow



Craig Bauer



Jake Bernhardt



Matthew Boberg



Diyona
Breitung-
Schmillen



Tony Broxson



Thomas Burrow



Eric Carlson



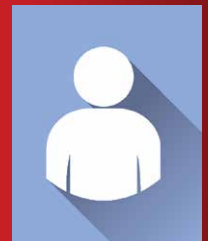
Bill Chelmowski



Ryan Danielson



Brady Dehnke



Kaleb Doerr



Cody Fairey



Thomas Fetting



Jordan Fluekiger



Susan Funke



Forrest
Gunderson



Ricky Hager



Daniel Hentges



Chris Hill



Jamie Hill



Logan Hoffman



Jacob Jandl



David Johnson



MISSOURI RIVER DREDGING



Chad Klein



Micheal Kouba



Brian Krause



Jesse Kupietz



Jon Ledford



Kaden Lisowski



Thomas Loechler



Adrian
Loewenhagen



Andrew Lorenz



Matthew McFarlin



Jon Miller



Joel Miller-
Oates



Ellamay Mitchell



Mathew
Mohlike



Matthew
Pletteter



Joshua
Przybylla



Jeffery Rindal



Zachery
Rislove



Matthew
Rolbiecki



Dale Rud



Jason Schieffer



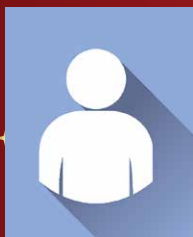
Michael Seibel



Chad Simon



Logan Skoug



Langston
Spencer



Kristopher
Taverna



Daniel Teigen



Susanna
Tsolakov



Al Vanguilder



Jake Zanon



Recreation and Natural Resources & Real Estate Team Award

Boundary Resurvey and Encroachment Resolution Project at River of Lakes, Mississippi River Pool 10

These individuals were critical to the successful resolution of multiple encroachments on Corps-owned property along the Mississippi River near Bagley, Wisconsin. After completion of a land survey, the team inspected the boundary line, identified encroachments, met with adjacent landowners responsible for the encroachments, established a strategy and timeline (i.e. removal of encroachment or initiation of a real estate outgrant), processed new outgrants, then conducted follow-up inspections to ensure timely settlement of the issues.



Kevin Berg



Jeff Grow



Eric Hammer



Ray Marinan



Ken Peterson



Jon Schultz

Recreation and Natural Resources Team Award

Acquisition and installation of New Recreation Fee Machines at 7 Sites

These individuals were critical to the successful transition to a new process of collecting recreation fees by overseeing the installation of fee machines at seven recreation areas within the St. Paul District. The result has been a reduction of processing costs for remitting the funds and a significant increase in fees collected.



Nicole Baker



Kevin Berg



Matt Buchacker



Andrew Buell



Tamryn
Frauenshuh



Eric Hammer



Jason Hauser



Amy Heffernan



Corrine Hodapp



Ashley Kiley



Brad Labadie



Les McCoy



Melissa Phelps



Bill Schmitt



Hunter
Simonson



Jeff Steere



Brian Turner



Shawn
Weissenfluh



Recreation and Natural Resources Team Award Homme Dam Gate Frame and Joint Seal Repairs

These individuals were critical to the successful maintenance of joint seals on the Homme Dam spillway and repair of a leaking frame of the low flow gate structure.



Ben Baasch



Chris Botz



Maria Schneider



Rich Schueneman



Scott Tichy



Joel Zietz

Recreation and Natural Resources Team Award Lac qui Parle Stuck Gate Release to Ensure Continuation of Contract Gate Replacement

These individuals were critical to successfully releasing a stuck gate on the Lac qui Parle dam that was temporarily out of operation due to accumulation of debris. Restoring gate operations was a high priority task due to potential impacts on the current gate replacement contract. The team accomplished the work in a safe and timely manner that prevented disruption of the contract schedule.



Brian Jorgenson



Jason
Mothershed



Zach Santjer



Steve Sulflow





Program Manager of the Year

Nathan Campbell

In fiscal year 2021, Nate was nominated for the USACE Program Manager of the Year. This is a national level award within the project/program Management community of practice. Nate was nominated for his outstanding leadership and unwavering dedication to the St. Paul District's Continuing Authorities Program, or CAP, and Tribal Partnership Program. Currently, the district has the largest Tribal Partnership Program in the Corps with seven active projects with only the second project that has made it into construction throughout the Corps and the largest CAP program within the Mississippi Valley Division. Additionally, Nate was selected by the Headquarters USACE Revolutionize Civil Works team to be a district representative on the streamline CAP process team. Nate provided an important district perspective so leadership could make an informed decision on what items could be delegated to the district to help reduce the time it takes to execute CAP studies. Nate was also instrumental in developing the Director's Policy Memorandum and roll out the program to the major subordinate commands and districts. Nate's leadership, initiative and ingenuity are significant reasons for the St. Paul District's success in executing these programs. Please congratulate Nate as the St. Paul District's nominee for the USACE Program Manager of the Year Award.

Employee of the Year

Denise Julson

For the second year in a row, Denise is recognized by her peers as the Programs and Project Management Division Employee of the Year. Denise manages project financing, budgeting, resourcing and accounting information for multiple projects. As described by her peers, "... she responds quickly..., has a good rapport with everyone..., don't know how I would survive without her..., time and time again Denise takes the time, energy, and effort to ensure Programs and Project Management is successful..., continuously supports her coworkers and routinely demonstrates knowledge above her pay grade..., she allows our multidisciplinary teams to succeed." Clearly endorsed by her peers, Denise is a heroic leader for the entire division and project delivery team. Congratulations on being the Programs and Project Management Division peer-nominated "Employee of Year" for the second consecutive year.



Telework Connector Award

Michelle Prosser

With the advent of virtual work, Microsoft Teams, WebEx, hundreds of emails, two-dimensional meetings have been the new business culture to ensure district and work force success. The Programs and Project Management Division recognizes Michelle as our peer nominated Teleworking Connector Award recipient. Michelle goes above and beyond to ensure she and others stay connected in the remote work environment. With her personable energy, she reaches out to help her fellow teammates in an effort to unite team members and maintain a sense of social and professional normalcy in these abnormal times. She is in constant communication with colleagues with a positive and cheerful attitude. Michelle is not only a colleague, but a friend to all and brings an extra bit of "life" to the division. She is recognized with this award for her extra effort to support and encourage everyone.



Project Delivery Team (PDT) of the Year Fountain City Service Base

The Fountain City Service Base project delivery team is recognized for their efforts in awarding two critical base modernization / improvement contracts in fiscal year 2021 to improve safety and increase operational efficiency. Phase I entailed administering an architect engineering design contract for the project and awarding a construction contract for replacement of deteriorating mooring dolphins. In Phase II, the team worked through a consultant to develop a preliminary design for the project and create the request for qualifications and request for proposal documents which resulted in awarding a design-build contract for major site improvements. It was imperative that both phases were awarded in fiscal year 2021, or potentially lose these necessary resources. The team worked many long hours and conducted numerous reviews. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the team, the \$10.2 million mooring dolphin and the \$18.6 million design build contracts were awarded in fiscal year 2021.



Chris Afdahl



Scott Baker



Jake Bernhardt



Wade Carr



Matt Clark



Trevor Cyphers



Michael Davis



Norm Gartner



Jeff Grow



Tim Grundhoffer



Nayelli Guerrero



Jeff Gulan



Kevin Henricks



Jessica Hicks



Brett Hultgren



Molly Hunt



Denise Julson



Robert Latzke



Alex Le



Nicholas Lorenz



Adam Loven



Rob Maroney



Elizabeth Moriarty



James Noren



Project Delivery Team (PDT) of the Year Fountain City Service Base



Jesse Onkka



Katie Opsahl



Brad Perkl



Simon
Rutherford



Chris Settles



Jamie Simmons



Amanda
St. George



Chris Stai



Steven Taylor



Colin Tyrrell



Jim Ulrick



Vinai Vinlander



Tammy Wick



David Wivinus



Shua Xiong



Dexter Yoon





Project Delivery Team Recognition

Red River structure project plans and specifications Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Risk Management Project

The Red River structure team successfully completed the most complex plans and specifications package the district has been involved within the last 50 years. The package involved more than 400 plan sheets and more than 1,500 pages of specifications. Success of the overall Fargo-Moorhead Metro Flood Risk Management Project is based on the successful delivery of the Red River structure, the project's critical path feature. The team worked tirelessly to ensure that the design stayed on schedule to support the overall mission resulting in no schedule slippage or delays. The team worked with numerous other districts and divisions across the Corps to assemble an expert team. The team included more than 200 people in six divisions and 11 districts, working tirelessly together to complete a quality design on time. The team also worked closely with Engineering Research and Design Center [ERDC] to develop and test a physical model to ensure that the proposed design would be capable of supporting the required flows to include the upstream and downstream impacts. Most impressively, the team overcame challenges related to the pandemic resulting in a completely remote virtual design environment and maintaining the ability to complete the complex and difficult design process. Once awarded, this will be the largest construction contract undertaken by the St. Paul District in its history.



Aaron Buesing



Kevin Denn



Amy Dessner



Jacob Fall



Tony Feilzer



Paul Fleming



Jason Foss



Molly Hunt



Derek Ingvalson



Tom Lytle



Susan
Malin-Boyce



Renee
McGarvey



Aaron
Mikonowicz



Kacie Opat



Leon Opatz



Duane Perkins



Virginia
Regorrah



Darold
Sanderson



Luke Schmidt



U.S. Army Maj.
Friend Solberg



Loren Soma



Theresa Thury



Eduardo
Torrens



Toni Wasgatt



Denita Wesley



Unsung Hero LeeAnn Glomski

LeeAnn is widely known in RPEDN as a person who gets things done. She has an uncanny ability to work through a variety of different types of projects while executing them at a blazing speed. She takes on new and unique projects as they are assigned with no complaints and with a can-do attitude. She has recently taken on the role as a mentor to one of our new staff at our Rock Island location, has been happy to develop a 404 [b]1 template for the team to use, and has successfully supported headquarters by preparing an environmental assessment for the Corps Waters Infrastructure Financing Program. She has done those things all while keeping up with all of her other projects. LeeAnn is being recognized as an unsung hero because she manages to do all that is asked of her while keeping her head down and never looking for any accolades or special recognition.

Planning Mentor of the Year

Joe Jordan

Joe is recognized for his significant mentoring contributions to RPEDN and beyond. As an RTS and Certified ATR reviewer, Joe is well known across Rock Island District, RPEDN, Mississippi Valley Division, and the nation for his friendly but honest feedback, command of environmental laws and regulations, sense of humor, and willingness to mentor others. Joe is the "go to" mentor within RPEDN, spending countless hours helping less seasoned staff interpret laws and regulations and how it applies to projects. Rather than simply give an answer, Joe approaches mentoring by giving honest feedback that encourages critical thinking, growth and learning. Joe never passes up an opportunity to help, teach or mentor others, and is always willing to incorporate others' experiences. Through his mentoring of others, Joe has made a positive impact on nearly every Rock Island District and RPEDN project. In addition to RPEDN, Joe goes above and beyond to mentor everyone he meets, such as maintaining relationships with those he meets through ATR reviews and inviting them to participate in RPEDN focused webinars to help expand their learning and networks. Joe's selfless commitment to passing on institutional knowledge and helping others be their best will leave a lasting legacy on RPEDN, and the Corps as a whole, for decades to come.



Unsung Hero Christine Nycz

Chris is recognized for her high rate of project execution, dedication to workforce development and knowledge management, and humility in all aforementioned achievements. Since the onset of the pandemic, Chris guided countless new employees, both within RPEDN and all of Rock Island District, through onboarding with virtual introductions to key personnel. Since April 2020, Chris hosted weekly sessions to provide a platform for RPEDN Rock Island staff to virtually interact, give one another project-related help and advice and build rapport. She also shows great dedication to knowledge management, file organization and leaving things better than she found them. Additionally, Chris maintains a heavy workload and has a reputation

for getting work done quickly and accurately. Chris worked on more than 120 individual projects in 2021, serving as lead archaeologist for the Omaha District Missouri River Recovery Program Chute Repair Project, Steamboat Island Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, Pool 12 Forestry Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, and many PL84-99, channel maintenance, lock and dam repair, real estate and section 408 projects. She also wrote and sent coordination letters to state historic preservation officers and tribes for 28 projects. Self-proclaimed "aggressively helpful," Chris is always willing to help others and has a true teamwork mentality, regardless of how much work is on her plate. Chris' project work, teamwork, and dedication to RPEDN, Rock Island District, and the Corps speak for itself. Although Chris' work may not always be in the spotlight, especially due to her humbleness, Chris is the Unsung Hero for being the glue that keeps many aspects of RPEDN together.



Co-Rookie of the Year

Katie Leslie

Katie has distinguished herself by immersing herself in the work of her colleagues in order to speed her assimilation into the district, by volunteering to organize and oversee the transfer of cultural resources documents for the upcoming office move, and with her enthusiasm that translates to action. Her willingness to jump in and help where needed while working on several projects has really stood out to all of her RPEDN colleagues.



RPEDN Innovator of the Year

Aaron McFarlane

Aaron has demonstrated interest in forest microbial ecology that has led to his personal professional development in ERDC-U participation and the RPEDN development of better floodplain forest restoration techniques. Aaron's initial examination of restored forest projects and natural reference soils identified differences that may explain the poor performance of some of the restoration plantings. Aaron also identified opportunities to incorporate soil science into ongoing adaptive management experiments at several restoration projects. For example, response to different soil depths will be tested at one site and blended soils will be tested at another. Regional Sediment Management program funding anticipated for FY22 will also expand soil investigations to Rock Island and St. Louis District restoration sites. Aaron's research has introduced important soil biology considerations into Upper Mississippi River forestry projects. He has attracted ERDC wetland soil science and environmental microbiology experts to participate in his work which has been funded by several Civil Works R&D programs. The new science collaborations and abundance of other sites to evaluate will continue to add value to MVD ecosystem restoration programs for many years as projects age and soil development is tracked. Future work will include designing better restoration soils through expanded reference site evaluations and microbial inoculations.



Co-Rookie of the Year

Rachel Steiger

Rachel is recognized for her significant contributions to RPEDN mission delivery in 2021. Despite the challenges of joining the Corps during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Rachel quickly jumped in and made herself an indispensable asset to the planning division. Of particular note were her efforts on the completion of the environmental compliance on several high profile and complicated PL-84-99 projects, and her leadership in the production of outreach videos for virtual public meetings, allowing the Corps to pivot our public coordination approaches during

the pandemic, and in the process making herself a "go to" person for these efforts. If that was not enough, Rachel has brought an intangible energy to the job and the RPEDN team, which is readily revealed by her willingness to throw herself into any situation to help the Corps deliver on its mission.

RPEDN Planning Professional of Year

Rachel Wooten

Rachel is recognized for embodying the spirit of a risk informed water resources planner through her dedication to the Corps civil works planning program at all levels. Rachel is an individual who never stops pushing for the advancement of planning, improving the planning community of practice, while achieving the Corps' mission. Rachel, in coordination with the vertical team and local partners, tirelessly worked to advance several BBA 18 supplemental studies. Her leadership and planning expertise resulted in the submittal of the West Bank and Vicinity GRR Director's Report in September 2021. For all of her accomplishments over the past year she is presented the Planning Excellence Award for Fiscal Year 2021.





Behind the Scenes Award

Evan Ingebrigtsen

Evan is the regulatory division selection for the Behind the Scenes Award. Evan continues to exemplify what it means to serve as a lead project manager and provides outstanding performance and project delivery to the public despite a reduced number of staff on the team for most of the year. Evan embraces challenges and ensures success of the mission by constantly offering to assist where needed, even with a high and complex workload. His exceptional mentoring for project managers has resulted in efficient and timely decisions, providing top-notch customer service, and ensuring the regulatory mission is accomplished professionally and in a timely fashion. Evan is an invaluable resource for regulatory staff, not only in the north branch, but throughout the entire regulatory division.

Regulator of the Year

Melissa Jenny

Melissa is the regulatory division selection for the Regulator of the Year Award. There is no normal day in the life of a regulatory project manager, and Melissa continuously exemplifies an adaptable and flexible approach, which is key to her success in the regulatory program. Melissa has been a rock of stability within the south branch and has weathered many workload surges that her branch has never seen over the years. Her years of experience with the regulatory program have equipped her with the necessary skills to not only manage her own workload effectively, but also mentor others on the art of project management and the complexity of our regulations. Melissa is always willing to mentor her coworkers about her successes, but also shares lessons from setbacks. Melissa's work ethic is second to none, as she continuously carries a large volume of work which often includes some of the more complex and contentious projects in her branch. Lastly, Melissa is an excellent collaborator and communicator who creates, maintains and fosters relationships with the public as well as other agencies which not only contributes to her success as a project manager, but enhances the reputation of the Corps as a whole.



Teammate of the Year

April Marcangeli

April is the regulatory division selection for our Teammate of the Year Award. April has served as the lead for our stream team, which involves on-going development and refinement of our internal and external procedures, agency coordination, internal training and stakeholder outreach. During these early days where deliberate and gradual implementation is crucial to success of the program, April has addressed challenges with honesty, fairness and objectivity. April challenges herself to learn more about how to effectively evaluate stream impacts and stream compensation, continually refining and improving her technical skills, and sharing this knowledge with her teammates. April maintains a great attitude in the face of challenges and goes above and beyond to help her regulatory teammates work through questions, consider alternatives and arrive at reasonable and sound decisions. April has facilitated contentious discussions with agency partners and stakeholders on our stream procedures, resulting in presentation and evaluation of alternatives, understanding of the issues, and fair and balanced decisions. She serves an instrumental role in the development and implementation of our stream program, and we are grateful for April's service and dedication to our program!

Support Staff Honorary Awards

32



Resource Management Employee of the Year

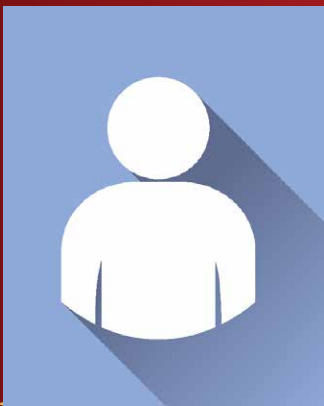
Katie Clark

Katie is representative of an employee everybody would love to have on their staff. She is a quick study and is always willing to jump in and help. She is one of our newer employees and is very resourceful in finding regulations and policies to back up whatever she is working on. She is innovative and always working on automating processes to make data more accurate and accessible to others. This past year, she has worked towards automating the budget data, conference packages and TED information which reduces the time spent on these activities. She continues to look for improvements and has exciting new items in the works benefiting the district as a whole.

Support Staff Employee of the Year

Kristen Kosterman

Kristen demonstrated exceptional support to the St Paul District, the Mississippi Valley Division and the Corps Enterprise over the last year. She was integral to the district's COVID-19 response and management of this year tracking operational orders from division and communicating requirements vertically. Kristen also developed multiple automated systems and knowledge databases to help inform supervisors of the most current pandemic conditions. She deployed in support of Hurricane Ida for an extended period in support of the Memphis District. While with the Memphis District, she immediately created and managed multiple systems and processes, which had a direct impact to the team's ability to manage the complexity of the multiple mission and personnel requirements in support of the Hurricane Ida response.



Real Estate Due Diligence Award

Denita Wesley

This award recognizes the real estate employee who best exemplifies an unwavering commitment to ensuring the success of our projects and programs. It is through the recipient's due diligence that the organization gains the trust and respect of our customers.

Denita, realty specialist, is recognized as the 2021 recipient of the MVP Real Estate Due Diligence Award. She consistently demonstrates her commitment to the continued success of her assigned projects. When faced with a technical real estate issue or controversial acquisition case, Denita remains unbiased in her decision-making process by gathering relevant data and reviewing the governing laws, regulations or policy documents to guide her as she navigates the assignment. She is a diligent team member that delivers our program in a professional manner and displays a sincere and respectful demeanor. Denita is a true inspiration to those around her and has earned the trust and respect of our team and customers.

Length of Service Award

10 YEARS



33



Mathew Andersen



Joseph Bernaix



Mark Brant



Daniel Fasching



Derek Ingvalson



Jilliane Jaeger



Jesse Kramer



Scott Rolbiecki



James Schneider



Karla Sparks



Daniel Wenger



Colleen Whaley



Length of Service Award

15 YEARS



34



Robert Altman III



Jarrod Brown



Michelle Butler



Peter Crary



Michael Gunderson



Trevor Kough



Caree Kovacevich



Joel Miller-Oates



Brian Morrill



Angelo Pedretti



Benjamin Reeser



Bryanna Sauer



Christopher Settles



Joseph Shoemaker



Catherine Voce



Travis Zabinski



Length of Service Award

20 YEARS



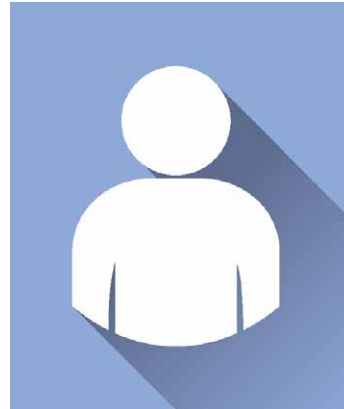
35



Jacob Bernhardt



Dwight Deloney



Kathryn Fechter



Jesse Kupietz



Elizabeth Nelsen



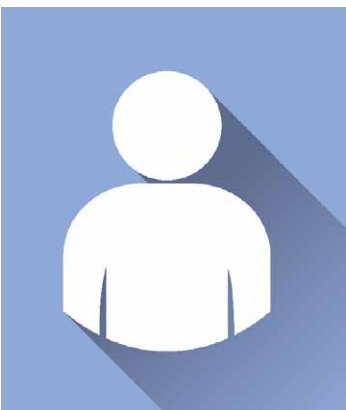
Bradley Perkl



Stephen Riley



Michael Schamaun



Langston Spencer



Christopher Stai



Length of Service Award

25 YEARS



36



Colleen Meyer



Bonnie Meyerhoff



Bart Spriggle



James Ulrick

Length of Service Award

30 YEARS



Ann Banitt



Christopher Behling



Timothy Grundhoffer



Patrick Harding



Roger Johnson



Cheryl Paulson



Amy Rothstein

Length of Service Award

35 YEARS



37



Craig Evans



Brian Johnson



Karen Randall



Bruce Young





I previously did farm and ranch work in Colorado and was a physical science aid for the Bureau of Reclamation. I started with the Corps in 1986. I enjoy working for the Corps because I get the chance to travel and meet new people – especially during times of emergency. Outside of work I like to travel and spend time with my family. My role model is my dad. My advice for people just starting with the Corps is to keep an open mind and be curious and energetic. My favorite quote is “Murphy’s Law is still in effect.” My favorite movie is Lonesome Dove.



MERRY
★ and ★
BRIGHT



Length of Service Award

40 YEARS



39



I started with the Corps as a student in 1980, right after graduating from high school. I worked as a clerk typist in human resources. In time, I progressed to an employee development specialist. In 2004, I transferred to equal employment opportunity, or EEO, as an EEO specialist. I left the Corps once to work for a private company. The only positive thing that came out of it was that I met my husband! The advice that I would give to new employees is: the sky is the limit! There are so many opportunities that the Corps has to offer, take advantage of them! Ask questions! My hero would be my dad, he always told me that I could do what I put my mind to and he taught me to be independent, which was hard for him to do because in our culture you did not show total independence. My dad told me to pick a career and that is what did. The Corps has been good to me. Family has always come first, even back when I started working we talked a lot about work-life balance. My first boss, Al Kraft, always said "Lupe, family is first." With an organization that instilled the importance of family even back then, where could I go wrong? I am proud to be a part of MVP. My favorite quotes are "Life is all about balance. You don't always need to be getting stuff done. Sometimes it's perfectly okay, and absolutely necessary, to shut down, kick back, and do nothing" and "Have patience with all things, but first of all with yourself."



Scott Goodfellow
Hydraulics
July 2021



Illona Moen
Dredge Goetz
August 2021



Michael Dahlquist
Structural
September 2021



Scott Barr
Dredge Goetz
September 2021



Bryan Peterson
Mississippi River
Navigation Project Office
October 2021



James Collins
Lock and Dam 3
November 2021



Steve Tapp
Channels and Harbors
December 2021



Dawn Brabbit
Lock and Dam 5
December 2021



