

# Crosscurrents

*Serving the St. Paul District since 1977*

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**Corps, partners, reach major milestone in reducing flood risk to the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area**  
-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) Sanjay Bimali, civil engineer, stands at the Diversion Inlet Structure, near Horace, North Dakota, Oct. 27. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes*

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Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be 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. Eric Swenson

Teammates,

First of all, a big THANK YOU for all the work you accomplished this summer. We made significant progress on many of our missions, but our work isn't over yet. We will continue to deliver our vital services throughout the coming winter months.

As we approach winter, we must remain vigilant. You've seen emails from me and several others reiterating the importance of SAFETY. This is something I cannot stress enough. Safety is everyone's responsibility, and it starts with YOU. Safety should be at the forefront of our minds whether we are in an office setting or working at a lock and dam on the river. We have had 64 good catches this year, which is a new district record. A big thank you to everyone who is paying attention and reporting these incidents.

Winter brings with it unique challenges and hazards that require our vigilance and preparedness. Our commitment to duty and mission success extends to ensuring

everyone's well-being in adverse weather conditions.

First and foremost, please remember the importance of layering and staying warm. Frostbite and hypothermia are real threats in cold environments, and we must take every precaution to avoid them.

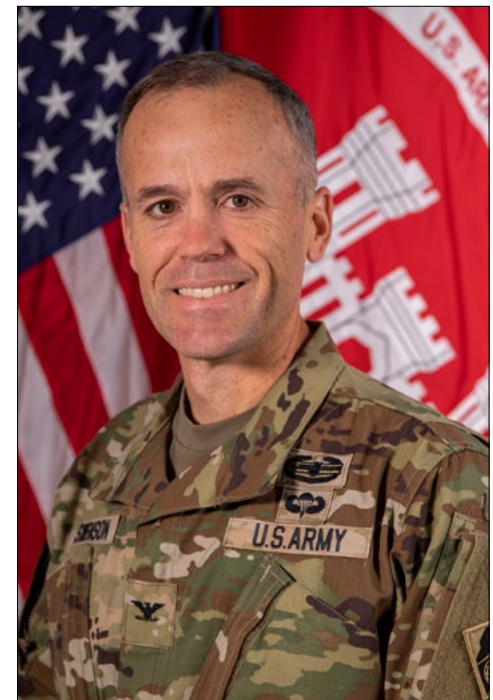
Read ahead to see some of the recent achievements of your coworkers, but I want to call attention to a very big achievement. The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project was selected as the recipient of the National Academy of Construction Recognition of Special Achievement Award. We continue marching toward completion on the Fargo-Moorhead project and we recently celebrated the completion of the Diversion Inlet Structure, a major component. A huge thank you to everyone that has worked on and continues to work on this project.

We were also honored with the Small Business Category award for 2023 at the Society of American Military Engineers'

conference. We were recognized because 94% of our awarded contract dollars went to small businesses in fiscal year 2023, which was the most in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nationally. This is a big deal! Thank you to Christine Davis and the team for making this happen!

As navigation is winding down, our maintenance and repairs are ramping up. We are completing work at four of our locks and dams this winter, including a dewatering at Lock and Dam 2. These vital infrastructure repairs means that we will be able to provide an important service to the navigation industry. I look forward to visiting with many of you as I visit these projects.

Many of you will see a familiar face in this issue as we welcome back Karl Jansen as our Deputy for Programs and Project Management. Together, Karl and I remain steadfast in our commitment to putting [REDACTED] I hope many of you had the chance to take the recent command climate survey. These results will help us usher in changes that will con-



tribute to an environment where everyone feels welcome.

I hope to see many of you at our Holiday Awards Ceremony on December 7. We will honor our coworkers with an awards presentation and then get together for some socializing.

Respectfully,  
Col. Eric Swenson

## Fargo-Moorhead project receives National Academy of Construction award

Story by Shannon Bauer

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project was selected as the recipient of the National Academy of Construction, or NAC, Recognition of Special Achievement Award.

The St. Paul District and its partners, the cities of Fargo, North Dakota; Moorhead, Minnesota; and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, are working cooperatively to implement this critical project.

According to NAC, the award highlights creativity, innovation, vision, and accomplishments of practitioners in the engineering, design and construction industries. From concept to construction, the Corps and its partners consistently solved challenges on this complex project to include splitting work between the entities to allow simultaneous design and construction which expedites project completion by approximately 10 years when compared to traditional delivery methods. Additionally, as the first Corps project in the nation to leverage a public private partnership delivery model, the St. Paul District,

the cities of Fargo and Moorhead and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority are setting the example of how to deliver projects to the nation more efficiently in a resource-constrained environment. Dozens of consultants and construction firms have participated in the effort, showing the strength of the private commitment to the project.

“NAC is thrilled to select this project for our second annual Recognition of Special Achievement Award,” said Edd Gibson, NAC president and CEO. “What stood out to us when evaluating the project was the impact that it will have on both North Dakota and Minnesota, as it is truly a generational project that will help citizens of both states for decades to come. And it provides a good road map on how to innovatively address resilience and sustainability in a large civil infrastructure project. All involved are to be applauded for their dedication to improving the lives of those in this region.”

“Congratulations to our Corps teammates and our partners, the cities of Fargo, Moorhead,

and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority for this well-deserved recognition,” said Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general. “In spearheading the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area flood risk management project, the St. Paul District exemplified the kind of innovation and partnership that we strive for, as we work to protect communities and engineer solutions for the nation’s toughest challenges.”

The \$3 billion federal project includes a 30-mile diversion channel. This project will provide flood risk management for nearly 260,000 people and 70 square miles of infrastructure in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, North Dakota; Horace, North Dakota; and Harwood, North Dakota, and will save the nation millions of dollars annually in flood fighting and potential flood damages.



*Terry Williams, program manager, speaks at the National Academy of Construction ceremony in Boston, Massachusetts, Oct. 23. USACE courtesy photo*



## Corps, partners, reach major milestone in reducing flood risk to the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area

*Story by Shannon Bauer*

The St. Paul District celebrated the completion of the Diversion Inlet Structure, the first major piece of federal infrastructure for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project at a dedication ceremony at Fargo City Hall, in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 27.

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project, which the Corps is building in partnership with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, or MFDA, and the cities of Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, includes a 30-mile-long stormwater diversion channel west of Fargo and a 22-mile-long embankment designed to temporarily stage floodwaters upstream of the Fargo-Moorhead metro area.

The project is being implemented using split delivery, in which the Corps of Engineers is building the Southern Embankment and all its associated features, and the MFDA is building the stormwater diversion channel and all its associated features. The MFDA is using a public-private partnership, or P3, to deliver the stormwater

diversion channel, which is the first time this type of contracting mechanism has been used as part of a Corps of Engineers' project. This approach, which requires the selected P3 developer to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the stormwater diversion channel for the next 30 years, has already garnered several notable awards for the Corps of Engineers and MFDA to include the 2023 National Academy of Construction's Recognition of Special Achievement Award (see story Page 4).

The Diversion Inlet Structure, located near Horace, North Dakota, is one of three gated structures that will regulate flow through the embankment and is the first of the three to be completed. It is a concrete structure with three 50-foot-wide Tainter gates that will regulate flows into a stormwater diversion channel. The Corps of Engineers awarded a \$46 million contract to Ames Construction, Inc., of Burnsville, Minnesota, to build this structure in 2016 and construction began in 2017.

**Story continued on Page 6**



*(left to right) Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander; North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven; Michael Conner, Assistant Secretary to the Army for Civil Works; and Dr. Tim Mahoney, City of Fargo, North Dakota, mayor, unveil the Diversion Inlet Structure plaque during a ceremony at the Fargo City Hall Oct. 27. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer*



## Story continued from Page 5

The dedication ceremony included remarks from Sen. John Hoeven; Mr. Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; representatives from the offices of Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Kevin Cramer and Sen. Tina Smith's offices; Col. Eric Swenson, district commander; and Dr. Tim Mahoney, Fargo mayor and MFDA chair.

The ceremony also included the unveiling of a dedication plaque that will be permanently installed on the structure. Swenson said, the plaque marks the "special partnership and relationships that have been created to get this far in the project."

Connor said he attended the ceremony because this project "is a big deal to the Army's civil works program overall." He said federal priorities for the civil works program include the need to innovate with the respect to building climate resilient infrastructure and the need to modernize what we build, how we build it and who we build it for. "This project is significant with moving forward with all of these priorities," he said.

Hoeven remarked that "the Diversion Inlet Structure is the hinge between the embankment and

the channel, so it really brings together what the Corps of Engineers, what the federal effort is, in terms of the embankment and the three (structures), and then the channel work, which is the public private partnership, which is really that public local/state effort. It represents the uniqueness and just the fantastic nature of this project. This is the first of its kind in the nation, and I believe it's going to be a model for many other projects around the country."

This project, once complete, will provide flood risk management for nearly 260,000 people and 70 square miles of infrastructure in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Horace, and Harwood.



## St. Paul District awards a record amount of construction contracts

Story by Melanie Peterson

Fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023) was a record-breaking year for the St. Paul District. The contracting team oversaw a total of 590 contract actions which totaled \$114.4 million. There was a record amount of construction placement, which totaled \$154.5 million and 11 construction contracts were awarded. According to Kevin Henricks, chief of contracting, a construction placement is the amount of construction that was completed in a given year. "I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication to executing the mission this past fiscal year by the contracting team as well as across the entire district. I look forward to another record setting year in fiscal year 2024," said Henricks.



Construction is ongoing at McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



## Corps celebrates the opening of Interstate 29 south of Exit 50

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, along with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority and the North Dakota Department of Transportation, recently announced that the Interstate-29, or I-29, construction in the Oxbow, Hickson, and Bakke area in North Dakota has finished work on all lanes of traffic. The Corps opened both the northbound and southbound lanes in addition to all ramps that access the Interstate in this area.

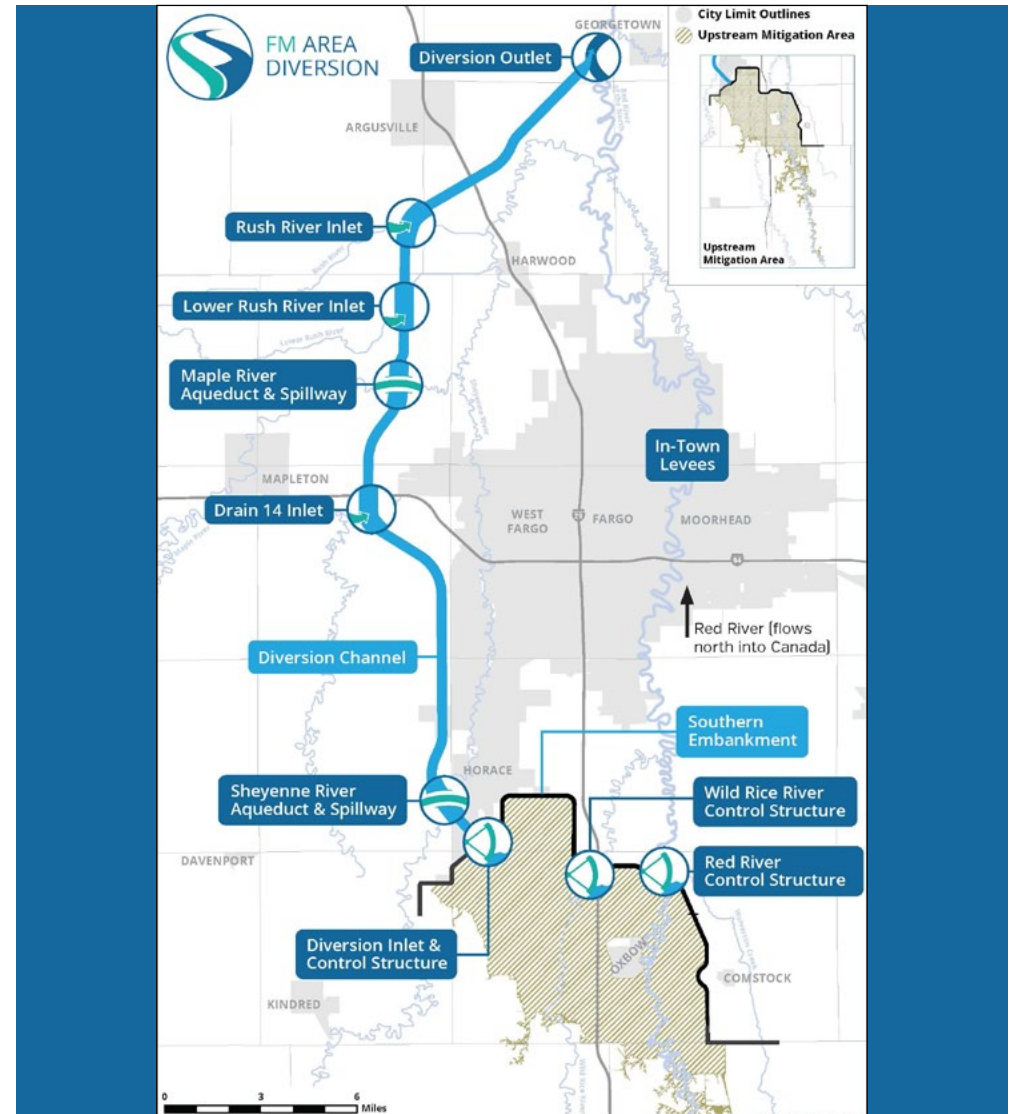
“We appreciate the residents’ patience as this vital part of the project was completed,” said Mathew Andersen, resident engineer. “The road raise will allow the interstate to stay open for residents during most flood events.”

The I-29 grade raise project is part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. It consists of a grade raise of I-29 for approximately 4 miles to bring the roadway out of the 500-year flood elevation.

The project extends from south of Exit 50 (Hickson interchange) to north of Exit 54 (Davenport/Oxbow Interchange) and includes an up-and-over where I-29 crosses the southern embankment near the Wild Rice River, bridge construction and replacement, as well as work on adjacent County Roads 18 and 81 in the vicinity of Oxbow.



The I-29 construction as part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. Photo courtesy of the FM Area Diversion



Map of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. Map courtesy of the FM Area Diversion



## St. Paul District wins national small business award

Story by Dave Elmstrom

The Society of American Military Engineers selected the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, as its Small Business Category award recipient for 2023 at the society's annual conference Nov. 1 in San Antonio, Texas.

The award is given to recognize exemplary efforts and accomplishments in support of overall small business contract awards and programs. The St. Paul District was recognized in part because 94% of the St. Paul District's \$114 million in awarded contract dollars went to small businesses in fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023), which was the top in the nation for the Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition, the district launched several new initiatives designed to identify and develop small business engagement for the district. For example, the district developed a database of contractors who either submitted a proposal in the last four years or requested information, and distribute a weekly email with policy updates, networking opportunities

and that week's contract opportunities on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

"This award is a testament to how hard our contracting office and the entire district prioritizes small businesses," said Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander. "We need a diverse and comprehensive set of private industry partners, and having these connections with so many small businesses is ultimately going to benefit our district and the taxpayers."

The St. Paul District office of small business programs is in place to ensure that small businesses have the 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 us. The district provides procurement opportunities, training and counseling businesses for success, to establish a broad base of capable suppliers to support the Army's mission.



(left to right) Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general; Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander; Kevin Henricks, St. Paul District contracting chief; Army Office of Small Business Programs Director Kimberly Buehler, and Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick accept the Society of American Military Engineers Small Business Award, Nov. 1. San Antonio, Texas USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



## Frauenshuh recognized with national award

*Story by Dave Elmstrom*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers national headquarters recently recognized Tammy Frauenshuh, natural resources specialist with the St. Paul District, with the 2023 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

This award is given annually to recognize outstanding work in interpretation and environmental education at a Corps of Engineers recreational facility, based on creativity and originality, producing a positive experience for visitors and enhancing the public's understanding of the Corps.

Frauenshuh was formerly the site lead at Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area in McGregor, Minnesota, and was recently promoted to recreation and natural resources planner. The award recognized Frauenshuh's ability to spread the messages of environmental stewardship, recreation and flood risk management, as well as fostering of a well-rounded and innovative interpretive program.

"Tammy's contribution to the recreation and natural resource

branch mission is extensive," said Randy Urich, chief of the recreation and natural resources project office. "She takes great pride in ensuring our visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at our recreation areas. Tammy's commitment is exemplary, and her hard work is an inspiration to everyone around her."

The idea of becoming a park ranger and the importance of interpretation took hold with Frauenshuh at a young age. As a youth, she was brought to several federal parks on a family road trip in the western United States. "We were taking a ranger guided tour of some cliff dwellings and a light bulb went off in my young mind. I realized that you could get a job showing people these amazing places and connect them with our nation's lands and waters, history, and visiting safely - what an awesome way to make a living!"

The award was named for Hiram Chittenden who was the major designer of facilities at Yellowstone National Park, and eventually oversaw the St. Paul District in 1901.



*Tammy Frauenshuh, recreation and natural resources planner and recipient of the 2023 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo*



## Schneider recognized with national engineering award

*Story by Dave Elmstrom*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers national headquarters recently recognized James Schneider with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2023 Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year Award for his commitment to excellence and contributions to the geotechnical engineering profession.

This past year, Schneider actively supported Corps of Engineers geotechnical guidance updates, negotiated software agreements, innovated by creating a script to plot pile driving records and share the data through web-based maps, and led the advanced geotechnical modeling committee.

Schneider, currently serving as the Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division regional technical specialist, has contributed greatly to the engineering profession by presenting at conferences, teaching courses, giving university lectures, contributing over 60 journal and conference publications, and serving as a reviewer for numerous scientific journals.

"James is certainly well known in the Corps of Engineers and within the geotechnical engineering profession for his technical expertise," said Jason Foss, levee safety and geotechnical design section chief and Schneider's supervisor. "It is his willingness to always help and his kind, collaborative nature that set him apart from most others."

Schneider completed his undergraduate and master's degrees at Georgia Tech, followed by four years of geotechnical engineering consulting practice in Georgia and California. He then spent five years in Australia, where he completed his PhD in geotechnical engineering, followed by a post-doctoral appointment. He taught at the University of Wisconsin – Madison before working for the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command in California, and finally coming to the St. Paul District in 2016.



*James Schneider, Mississippi Valley Division regional technical specialist and recipient of the 2023 Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year Award. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo*



## Drayton Dam project is nearing completion

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Once a low-level dam, Drayton dam is now a new dam with a rock passageway that creates pools for fish to pass upstream through a unique design.

Located on the Red River near Drayton, North Dakota, the project was constructed under the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area Flood Risk Management Project as an environmental permit requirement on the river.

“We’ve used a unique design of placing boulders in a series of ‘s-shapes’ across the river,” said Elliott Stefanik, biologist for the project. “We are carefully placing the boulders in a way that directs water flowing both overtop and between boulders in a way that promotes fish passage.”

The placement and spacing of boulders creates pools, allowing for resting spots for fish. It allows fish to seek out areas where they can swim over and between boulders to get upstream.”

The design allows the river to dissipate energy flowing downstream, reducing the drowning hazard from the previous dam.

“This is a project that the Corps is implementing through partnerships with local, state and federal agencies to improve both environmental conditions and safety,” Stefanik said.

The cities of Drayton, Fargo and Moorhead; the Metro Flood Diversion Authority; the North Dakota Game and Fish Department; the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have also been involved in implementation.

“It’s a great opportunity for the public,” Stefanik said. “It’s one of the biggest fishery areas for the Red River. It provides a full parking lot with increased access to a new concrete fishing piers for people to fish on the upstream side as well as the existing area down below the fish passage.”

Contractors finished the bulk of the work this summer with finishing touches wrapping up next year with final landscaping and turf establishment.



(left to right) Greg Fischer, civil engineer, and Roy Lawson, lead construction representative, discuss the Drayton Dam project, near Drayton, North Dakota, Aug. 29. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann





## Corps meets with partners to push restoration projects into the future

Story by Melanie Peterson

In September, the St. Paul District conducted an on-site training event with federal and state partners to look at past and ongoing island projects to determine the best path forward for restoration projects as part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, or UMRR.

Participants included representatives from the Corps and agency representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as from the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa departments of natural resources.

"Today is a training exercise," said Scott Baker, Winona resident engineer. "We are seeing some typical projects to talk about lessons learned, what worked well and what didn't work well, so that knowledge can be incorporated into future projects."

The team of agency representatives visited Conway Lake and Harpers Slough restoration projects, in Pool 9 of the Mississippi River, which were completed in 2022. The team also visited McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabili-

tation and Enhancement Project, an active construction project.

"These exercises are important because we're getting more money for island projects, and we have more projects now in various phases than we've ever had before," said Baker.

Baker explained that these projects are important for wildlife.

"The river is losing habitat at a very fast rate. The islands are disappearing, which has led to increasingly turbulent water and light can't get through to help the vegetation grow. That habitat and vegetation is particularly important for migratory birds," said Baker.

UMRR started in 1986 when environmentalists filed a lawsuit when Lock and Dam 27 was built, wanting environmental work done on the river. The compromise started the Environmental Management Program, which would become UMRR. It was authorized for \$200 million over a 20-year period and was reauthorized in 2006.

The program ensures the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system with a primary emphasis on habitat restoration projects and resource monitoring. In the 36-year history of the program, more than 55 habitat projects benefiting approximately

100,000 acres from Minneapolis to St. Louis, have been completed.

"I enjoy these projects in particular because you can see tangible results for future generations to enjoy the wildlife," said Baker.



(center) Scott Baker, Winona resident engineer, talks about island building in Pool 9 of the Upper Mississippi River, near Lansing, Iowa, Sept. 13. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



## Corps uses new island building technique, a first on the Upper Mississippi

Story by Melanie Peterson



John Henderson, project manager, talks to a group of people at McGregor Lake Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project showcases many different features, including thin layer placement shoreline stabilization, island enhancement, island building as well as habitat dredging.

### Thin layer placement

Something is being done at the McGregor Lake project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and Marquette, Iowa, that's never been done before on the Upper Mississippi River.

Thin layer placement is a technique that has historically only been used on coastal waterways. The placement at McGregor Lake marks a first for the St. Paul District and the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, or UMRR, for using this on an inland waterway. Thin layer placement places sand material in thin, uniform layers over eroding islands.

"It's a newer concept that we're trying to incorporate in UMRR to target a much larger area on a less intrusive scale to help raise some of these island areas into

a more suitable habitat for tree species to grow in a less impactful way than what island building has been in the past," said John Henderson, project manager.

Thin layer placement raises the forest levels to a point where it's more suitable and get the islands out of the inundation period where the trees would see harm, he explained.

"This is another tool in the toolbox," said Henderson. "We can use this in areas that are more sensitive to erosion and work around some of the limitations we have on these projects."

"We're in an unprecedented stage of habitat restoration on the Upper Mississippi River," said Henderson.

### Beneficial use of river sand is a win-win

One of the highlights of the McGregor restoration project is that the sand base material is coming directly out of the channel, said Henderson. The sand is removed

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## **Story continued from Page 13**

from the main channel of the Upper Mississippi River. Normally, the material would have to be hauled upland to a placement site.

“Here at McGregor, we’ve beneficially used almost 500,000 cubic yards of clean river sand, which is about half of our district’s annual dredging capacity,” said Henderson. “This is a testament to how we can beneficially put together two of the Corps’ missions – maintaining the 9-foot navigation channel and habitat restoration.”

Henderson added that the project will use 200,000 cubic yards of backwater dredging material, which will help enhance backwater fisheries and improve ice fishing and other recreational opportunities.

### **The Upper Mississippi River Restoration program**

UMRR is a federally funded and multi-agency partnership with both state and federal partners between a multitude of Upper Mississippi River agencies spanning from St. Paul, Minnesota, to the delta at the southern tip of Illinois.

The program targets the Upper Mississippi River wildlife refuge and other areas across the Upper Mississippi River to rebuild, restore, study and overall implement better practices and rehabilitate some of the islands that have seen change based on climate change, flooding and invasive species.

“UMRR is a proven program. We’ve been doing this for over 35 years in multiple states, with different projects, and thousands of acres of habitat have been restored,” said Henderson. “We have dozens of projects in the queue. We’ve learned how to work together, build relationships and continue helping the Mississippi River, whether it be studying it or enhancing it.”

The relationships are some of the most important aspects of the program according to Henderson.

“Most of us, contractors and agencies, we don’t just work on the river, we enjoy the river and enjoy the outdoors. We get to have a hand in building and improving these things that we enjoy daily. We all enjoy working together in the field. We work together and solve problems, but we enjoy the same things on the outside world,” said Henderson.



*Construction at McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson*





# Corps eyes Big Sandy Lake for fish data

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, or MNDNR, is looking at fish data in and around the Big Sandy Lake system, near McGregor, Minnesota.

The Planning Assistance to States Big Sandy Lake project is a two-fold effort in tracking fish that were otherwise unmonitored.

"We're doing two different projects at the same time. One, we're externally tagging fish to estimate the population size of the walleye in Big Sandy Lake. Two, we've been implanting acoustical tags in a small number of walleye for the last three years in the lake and we're tracking them using an acoustical array," said Rick Bruesewitz, MNDNR area fisheries supervisor.

"Twice a year, we go out and retrieve our hydrophones, they're receivers in the lake and surrounding system, and download the data from hearing the fish that we tagged with the acoustical tags," Bruesewitz said.

The study is looking at how fish are moving in Big Sandy Lake and if they are able to traverse the Sandy Lake Dam and move out of the lake.

Karla Sparks, project manager, said the study began in 2019 because the MNDNR was having trouble determining why fish weren't in Big Sandy Lake even though they were stocking the lake. They wanted to figure out where the fish were going.

It's a team effort.

The Corps and MNDNR have partnered with Iowa State University on this effort to utilize their fish tagging expertise and data analysis.

The Corps staff at Sandy Lake Recreation Area and biologist David Potter have been an integral part of the tagging and data analysis.

The Corps and MNDNR signed a 50/50 cost-share study within the Planning Assistance to States program in January 2020. Under the program, the Corps is authorized to use its technical expertise in water and related land resource management to help states, federally recognized Indian Tribes and other eligible units of government with their water resource problems.

"The Planning Assistance to States program is a huge way to boost our resources," Bruesewitz said.

"This program allows the Corps to help states manage their water resources," Sparks said. "This is a great example of how the Corps can help our state partners, and hopefully it will lead to additional projects helping with the bio-

logical health of our water systems."

According to Sparks, the study is ongoing. The final data collection is scheduled this fall, with a completed report in 2024.



Big Sandy Lake, near McGregor, Minnesota, Aug. 2. USACE St. Paul District photo by Dave Elmstrom



# Surveying the Upper Mississippi River

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Paddle boats, dog park use and birdwatchers were just a few of the things Corps officials observed of river patrons during the summer months on a river well known to the city.

Evaluation of recreational use provides valuable data points for officials studying the disposition of Lower St. Anthony Falls and Lock and Dam 1, both located within the city of Minneapolis. The Mississippi River is not just a recreational resource. Barges and tows move approximately 175 million tons of freight each year on the Upper Mississippi through the navigation system.

“With the help of the National Park Service, we are observing every type of interaction with the water involving recreation,” David Potter, biologist, said. “We start from the confluence of the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River through Lock and Dam 1, through Lower St. Anthony Falls and terminating at Upper St. Anthony Falls.”

The disposition study evaluates whether it’s in the federal interest

to continue ownership of the two Minneapolis locks and dams and the maintenance associated with the Mississippi River navigation channel between the lock sites. The study will consider different scenarios for the locks and dams and other commercial navigation infrastructure while weighing the costs and benefits.

“We are able to directly get on the river and physically see the public’s interaction with the river and document activities that include fishing from shore or boat, dog walkers, wildlife viewing and watercraft use like powerboats, kayaks, canoes and sports rowing,” Potter said.

“Accounting for all users on the river allows us to quantify overall usage and value to the local economy,” Molli Naber, economist, said. “This is very important to the disposition study.”

Alternatives may include deauthorization, full or partial disposal of the locks and dams, modifications and removal. If disposal is recommended, the locks and dams or portions thereof could be

transferred out of federal ownership to a willing local, state or other federal agency.



(left to right) David Potter, biologist, and Molli Naber, economist, survey the Upper Mississippi River in Minneapolis with the help of the National Park Service as part of the ongoing disposition studies, Sept. 22. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann



# St. Paul District's deep dive on soil

Story by Dave Elmstrom

On a rainy day in September, a geology and water management team from the St. Paul District took off from Lock and Dam 1 with a specially designed floating drill rig. The team was digging deep into the Mississippi riverbed, looking to determine the granular size of the sediment and to collect soil samples to assess potential contamination.

The lock dates back over a century, and a lot of sediment has deposited behind the locks and dams. "We're sampling down to the depth of the pre-dam river bottom, or to bedrock, whichever comes first," said Ashley Woods, geologist.

The drill rig brought the team to spots between the three Minneapolis locks and dams (Upper St. Anthony Falls, Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1) and samples were collected at 39 different locations. Samples were collected as deep as 35 feet below the working barge platform.

This deep dive into the river sediment is part of the Upper St. Anthony, Lower St. Anthony and Lock and Dam 1 disposition

studies. Due to the steep drop-off in demand for commercial navigation into Minneapolis, the Corps was directed to develop and study options for the future of the three locks and dams.

That future could be keeping the status quo, or redesigning existing structures for a new purpose, but it could also involve other options, including removing the locks and dams altogether.

If the existing structures were redesigned or removed, the sediment on the river bottom would be altered, potentially moving the sediment downstream.

"These samples will be tested for gradation – the soil grainsize – in addition to chemical analysis to determine if there are environmental hazards in any of the soils," said Woods. The soil grain-size data will be factored into a river sediment transport model to predict how the river bottom may be eroded with the changing river, and where the eroded soil could be deposited further downstream.

"This testing will inform our options within the disposition study," said Dan Fasching, primary Mississippi River regulator. "We

want to explore all of our options, and these samples will provide underlying data that's going to direct the disposition study moving forward."

Fasching said this data will be paramount to help the Corps make the best-informed decision to balance the needs of the health of the local ecosystem, the safety of the community, and the stability of the existing city infrastructure.

The three Minneapolis locks are the first three steps of the navigable Mississippi River. Upper

St. Anthony has a 49-foot step, Lower St. Anthony a 25-foot step, and Lock and Dam 1 a 36-foot step. In 2014, the Water Resources Reform and Redevelopment Act directed that Upper St. Anthony Falls lock be closed. The last lockage occurred there in 2015. After that, commercial traffic in Lower St. Anthony and Lock and Dam 1 dropped significantly, leaving recreational traffic as the majority user of those locks and dams.



(left to right) Army fellow Elizabeth Post and Ashley Woods, geologist, examine river sediment samples extracted from the Mississippi River above Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, Sept. 29. USACE St. Paul District photo by Dave Elmstrom

# Corps inspects levees, a shared responsibility

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

West of the Twin Cities, Corps experts rate a levee system during a routine inspection to ensure communities are compliant to reduce levee failure.

Maj. John Walleser, geotechnical engineer, and Mike DeMars, structural engineer, set out to inspect a flood risk management channel located in Rochester, Minnesota.

The channel was built to help reduce the amount of flood waters in the community.

“We’re out here today to make sure that the channel is operating as it was designed and that there are no issues threatening the integrity of the structures,” Walleser said. “Whether it’s a Corps of Engineers or a non-federal entity system, we do the inspection on behalf of the community.”

As a structural engineer, DeMars says he’s look for any parts of the levee that are structural in nature such as concrete culverts, channel walls and floodwalls that may or may not need to be repaired.

“Most of the culverts, which were

the majority of the structural components of this system, were in pretty good shape,” he said.

The Corps Levee Safety Program provides technical expertise and technical assistance to the community to help them make sure their system is properly maintained.

“This is important to our district and our mission because of the life safety of our community and for the community to thrive and grow, we partner up with our local sponsors and communities to make sure that they have the resources that they need,” Walleser said.

“Floods are unpredictable, we never know when they’re going to happen or what severity and maintaining these systems will keep this infrastructure in place,” he added.

When it comes to flood risk management, the St. Paul District currently manages 98 levee systems with 100 levee segments.

The district’s civil works borders follow the edges of four river

basins – the Mississippi River, the Red River of the North, the Souris River and the Rainy River and covers an area of approximately 139,000 square miles.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Levee Safety Program was created in 2006 to assess the integrity and viability of levees and to make sure that levee systems do not present unacceptable

risks to the public, property and environment. The program is an integral component of a broad, national flood risk management effort that employs a system-wide approach to flood risk management and embraces shared responsibility.



(left to right) Maj. John Walleser, geotechnical engineer, and Mike DeMars, structural engineer, inspect a flood risk management channel in Rochester, Minnesota, Aug. 31. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann



## Lake Ashtabula campground gets upgrades for 2024 season

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Visitors patiently anticipate the construction work that will make summer camping and recreational areas more enjoyable for all users at Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, North Dakota.

Contractors and Corps staff are upgrading electrical pedestals, water systems and lengthening, leveling and widening the campsites to accommodate newer equipment.

"It was a long time coming, but we finally received sustainability funding for upgrades in the West Crossing Campground," said Scott Tichy, supervisory park ranger for the North Dakota recreation and natural resources branch.

Built in the 1960s, the campground was originally designed for smaller, roll-light campers with no electrical service. The site accommodates 38 users.

"Over time, our users have changed the type of equipment they bring in and requirements needed, so it is important to

accommodate those larger vehicles and trailers," Tichy said.

With the help of local partners, the Barnes County Wildlife Federation and the North Dakota Game and Fish, the Corps was able to secure grant funding for a new fish cleaning station.

"This is our busiest fish cleaning facility on the lake and to have a bigger and better table for all our visitors is super exciting. The local folks that visit and use our facilities are really going to like it," Tichy said.

The campground will open again in May 2024.

"Having this inventory back in play next summer will be huge for families," he said. "I think they will be pleased to see the work we've done here at Lake Ashtabula for years to come."



(left to right) Scott Tichy, supervisory park ranger, and Landon Hill, park ranger, discuss the Lake Ashtabula campground upgrades, near Valley City, North Dakota, Aug. 31. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

## Karl Jansen returns to the district as deputy district engineer

Story by Dave Elmstrom

St. Paul District employees have a familiar face making the rounds in the offices and facilities around the district. You'll have to forgive most of us for continuing to call him "Col. J" – the transition to call him Karl is a difficult one for those used to the formal titles in the military chain of command.

But, yes, Col. J, otherwise known as Karl Jansen, is back with the St. Paul District, taking on the position of Deputy for Programs and Project Management, or DPM, sometimes known as the deputy district engineer. His planned retirement from active military duty was finalized in March.

As former commander of the St. Paul District, as well as former commander of the Buffalo District, Jansen brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his role as the top civilian engineer in the St. Paul District.

Jansen calls his return to St. Paul serendipitous. After his military retirement was final in spring, he took some time for "rest, recuperation and reflection." During that time, he spent more time at home with his two kids and wife Sarah in Lino Lakes, and volunteered

at a food bank at Stillwater Valley Outreach, but he knew he was ultimately preparing for a new career chapter post-military.

"I just decided to take some time off and reflect on what is important to me, and determine what was in the future for me," Jansen said. "I knew I wasn't going to retire permanently. I had an interest in public service, and I always had a strong interest in water resources. I just didn't know where that might take me, and I just needed a little bit of time."

And that was about the time that his predecessor Kevin Wilson stepped aside, creating an opportunity for this next chapter in his career.

"One of the reasons I wanted to come back to St. Paul was the people," he said "I had a wonderful experience getting to know everybody who works in the district. They are so committed and we are all focused on this noble purpose of serving our fellow citizens in the area of water resources. I just couldn't think of an option where I would have the same feeling as this."

Jansen says his new role comes with three different hats: 1. being division chief for programs and project management division; 2. acting as one of the senior civilian leaders exercising organizational leadership for the benefit of the entire district; and 3. serving on the command team as a close advisor to the commander.

"The purpose of this position is to deliver the program. Hands down, that is what the commander relies on the DPM to do. Synchronize and integrate the entire staff to deliver our program on-time, high quality and safely."

"Having Karl back in the St. Paul District gives us so much valuable experience," said Col. Eric Swenson, commander of the St. Paul District who took over leadership of the district when Jansen's command tenure ended. "His knowledge and background is going to be incredibly valuable not just to me as the commander, but to the entire St. Paul District."

And, sure, Jansen's military title still rolls off the tongues of his coworkers on occasion. "It's a symbol of how the district really pays respect to the office of the

commander, which is great to see," Jansen said. "A position of authority I hope doesn't define who I am. It's more about the bonds I am building. And I hope the people I am interacting with realize I'm the same person. I'm fulfilling different duties for the same ultimate purpose."



Karl Jansen, Deputy for Programs and Project Management. USACE photo by Wendy Wells



## Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



July

**Billy Thompson**

Programs and Project Management



August

**Ceres Parsons**

Engineering and Construction



September

**Mark Angelo**

Engineering and Construction





## Around the District

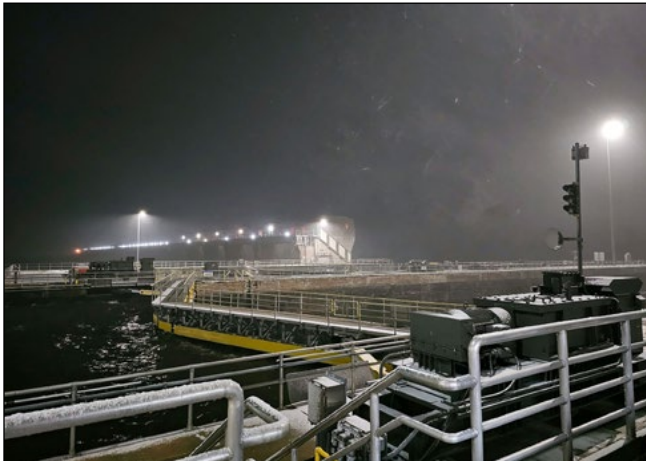


(above) Corps employees and other state and federal agency representatives, gather at McGregor Lake project as part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration roadshow, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Ashley Kiley and Sara Rother, environmental section, collected acorns this week at sites along the Mississippi River, Sept. 26. These seeds will be grown into tree seedlings that will be planted back out onto the Mississippi River, Sept. 26. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.



Fall colors at Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wisconsin. USACE St. Paul District photo by Eric Dykman



(left) The first snowfall at Lock and Dam 5, near Minnesota City, Minnesota, Oct. 31. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

(right) Corps employees at Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wisconsin, say farewell to Troy Frank as he moves to Lock and Dam 7, in La Crescent, Minnesota, as the lockmaster. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo





## News and Notes

### New Hires

**Peter Allen**, project manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Kevin Bigalke**, project manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Jhon Cerna**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

**I-Hsuan Ho**, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

**Karl Jansen**, deputy for programs and project management, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Karl Just**, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Benjamin Knutson**, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Marijo Mahoney**, secretary, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Daniel Mock**, community planner, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Gavin Olson**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Reid Olson**, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Jacob Reburn**, maintenance worker, operations, De Soto, Wisconsin

**Gabrielle Reed**, geographer, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

**Matthew Simon**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Ramsey, Minnesota

### Promotions

**Vanessa Alberto**, supervisory archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Adam Arnoldy**, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

**Patrick Dowd**, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Joseph Gurin**, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota

**Scott Haraldson**, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota

**Amy Heffernan**, regulatory specialist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

**Evan Hill**, fish biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

**Bethany Hoster**, supervisory biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

**Mason Huth**, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

**Derek Ingvalson**, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Fargo, North Dakota

**Joseph Jandrich**, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Heather Kern**, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

**Brent Lenke**, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

**Katie Leslie**, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Brian Lloyd**, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

**Stephanie Mann**, mechanical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Meghan McKinney**, regulatory systems administrator, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

**Bonnie Meyerhoff**, program analyst, engineering and construction, Fountain City, Wisconsin

**Jordan Reichel**, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota

**Jason Robinson**, lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

**Scott Rolbiecki**, master, tender, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

**Sara Rother**, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

**Kurt Schroeder**, engineering technician, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

**David Sudol**, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin

**Jeffery Stoner**, lock and dam operator, operations, Minnesota City, Minnesota

**Johnathan Stumm**, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota



## News and Notes, continued

Minnesota

**Christopher Trautman**, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Cody Walter**, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

**Aung Win**, electrical engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

### Retirements

**Cynthia Calhoun-Kosiec**, environmental protection assistant, regulatory, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

**Keith Davenport**, lock and dam operator, operations, Eastman, Wisconsin

**Daniel Hentges**, 2nd mate, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

**Lowell Moline**, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

**Kay White**, administrative support assistant, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

### Congratulations

**Carnot Joseph**, engineering and construction, married Nadia, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Aug. 5.

**Daniel Meden**, regional planning and environment division north, graduated from the Planning Associates program.

**Reid Olson**, regional planning and environment division north, recently completed his master's degree from University of Wisconsin - Madison



**Trace Strahle**, regulatory, and his wife Hailey welcomed their daughter Eastyn Lakel Strahle, Oct. 18.

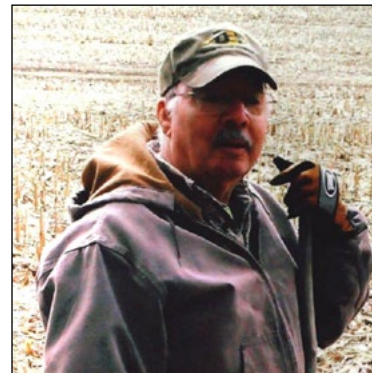
### Taps



**Lowell Hanson** passed away Nov. 6. He worked 36 years with the Corps from 1975 – 2011. His last title before retiring was Construction Quality Assurance. He was the 2001 Civil Servant of the Year, 2005 National Hard Hat of the Year and 2013 St. Paul District Hall of Fame recipient.



**Christine Kroll** passed Sept. 10. She spent 35 years with the Corps before retiring in 2009. She served with construction and later with operations.



**Roger Scottie Stewart** passed away Oct. 5 at the age of 85. Stewart retired in the 1990s from Lock and Dam 3, near Welch, Minnesota.

## Length of Service Awards

### 10 years

Meghan Brown  
Trevor Cyphers  
Cody Fairey  
Justin Garrett  
Marissa Merriman  
Daniel Mock  
Dale Rud  
Elizabeth Stowell  
Jennie Tyrell  
Tom Yang

### 15 years

Daniel Adams  
Brian Alberto  
Renee Ferguson  
Cynthia Hitchcock  
Joseph Jandrich  
Curt Larsen  
Benjamin Nelson  
Timothy Orlowski  
Matthew Platteter  
Dawn Polensky  
Jesse Ray  
Benjamin Rhoda  
Colin Riddick  
Keith Schindler  
Joe Schroetter  
Nicholas Stanton

### 20 years

James Adank  
Joseph Heffner  
Molly Hunt  
David Johnson  
Brent Lenke  
William Nissalke  
Eric Norton  
Justin Rose  
Steven Sulflow  
Nathan Van Loon

### 25 years

Ricky Hager  
Karl Jansen  
Robert Kohner  
Roy Lawson  
Adrian Lowenhagen  
Joshua Rye

### 30 years

Aaron Buesing  
William Chelmowski  
Terrance Fluekiger  
William Sande  
Ryan Winn

### 35 years

Scott Baker  
Kristen Fairbanks  
Jay Grimsled  
Joseph Gurin  
Virginia Regorrah

(below) St. Paul District park rangers participate in a water safety display for the 4th of July parade at Lake Winnibigoshish near Deer River, Minnesota, July 4. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



## District water safety team recognized by division

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District water safety team was recognized by the Mississippi Valley Division for their outstanding commitment to the water safety mission, which resulted in zero fatalities for the district in 2023. The team promoted water safety utilizing a variety of methods. Their efforts ensured every member of the public that visited a St. Paul District recreation area had a safe, enjoyable visit, and went home to their loved ones.



# Holiday Awards



2023



## Message from Colonel Swenson



Teammates,

Wow! Another year is coming to a close! It's hard to believe. As I reflect on the past year, I am grateful for all your hard work and dedication. I enjoy looking at this booklet and celebrating all our accomplishments and recognizing some truly talented people. If you know someone who deserved to be recognized, never be afraid to speak up. A huge shout out to Wendy Wells for putting this booklet together!

While our mission may demand sacrifice and discipline, it is essential to recognize the importance of taking a moment for ourselves, our families and our loved ones. The holiday season provides us with an opportunity to recharge and reflect on the values that drive us in both our personal and professional lives.

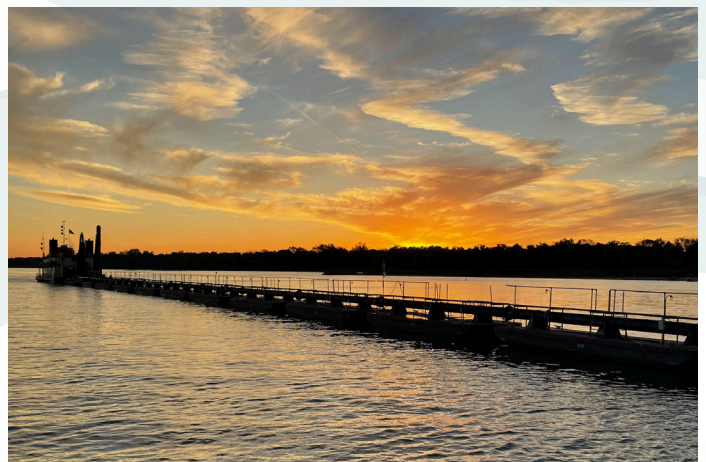
The holidays can also be a challenging time for some people as the days get shorter and the

temperatures drop. If you need help, please reach out to someone, whether it be another coworker or your supervisor. Remember that we have resources that are available to help you, including our Critical Incident Stress Management team and Employee Assistance Program.

May this holiday season bring you moments of peace, joy and happiness. Cherish the time spent with loved ones and take pride in the remarkable achievements we have accomplished as a team. Together, we have faced challenges head-on, demonstrated resilience in adversity, and exemplified the true spirit of service.

Wishing you and your families a joyful holiday season filled with love, warmth, and the company of cherished ones.

Respectfully,  
Col. Eric Swenson





# Messages from our Senior Leaders

## FROM KARL JANSEN

Team: It was a high privilege to return to the St. Paul District a few short months ago. I'm honored and proud to be part of an organization with such a rich history, a purpose that matters, and diversity of mission and people. I'm amazed and grateful for the extraordinary contributions each of you make to accomplish our mission and to keep our district great. 2023 was another year full of hard-earned successes for the benefit of our community, region, and

nation. This awards booklet highlights just a sample of truly outstanding service and achievement in alignment with our district's guiding principles and Army Values. Wishing all of you and those close to you a safe and joyful holiday season. Thanks for all you do!



## FROM TERRY BIRKENSTOCK

Staff:

It's that time of year when we pause and consider all the things we are grateful to have in our lives. One thing I am unconditionally grateful for is the opportunity to have worked one more year with so many of you

and to have been on the same team with all of you.

You accomplish so many important things day in and day out and it is truly amazing to watch you put your unique skills into action. I admire your strong focus on professionalism. I have said this before, but it is worth repeating: be proud of how you help protect, sustain and improve both the natural and the built environment, keep doing those things that set us up for success and keep pushing each other to continually improve. Thanks again for all you did in fiscal year 2023 and for all I know you will accomplish in fiscal year 2024.

## FROM TAMARA CAMERON

As 2023 comes to a close, the health and safety of our team is at the top of my mind. The perseverance and dedication to duty of our team is abundant throughout the district. Of particular note are our teams that are completing mission critical work during the holiday season. With low water on the Mississippi, our Dredge Goetz crew is working in the St. Louis area to ensure that the Miss River remains open to navigation. Here at home, our winter maintenance projects are well underway, to include our dewatering project at Lock and Dam 2. I have witnessed work that takes extreme care and skill and am so grateful to our teams that can adapt to

changing conditions and safely overcome challenges. Please, take the time it takes to complete your work safely. Look out for your teammates and call a time out if needed, particularly as we head into winter, which presents its own set of challenges at our project sites. My wish for all of us is to take some time celebrate our 2023 accomplishments, and find some time to rest, recuperate, and recharge our batteries. We've got so much to look forward to in 2024!



## FROM JOHN CARRELL

Team,  
I wanted to wish all of you a Happy Holidays and I hope that everyone gets some well deserved time off during the Holiday Season with Family and Friends. Also, congratulations on the many

outstanding accomplishments of St. Paul District this past year. We have a great team and it is because of the superb teamwork, hard work, and excellence each of you display every single day and that allows St. Paul District to be a great district in support of our Army and Nation!

# Messages from our Senior Leaders



## FROM MICHAEL KNOFF

I had the pleasure of attending the Fargo-Moorhead project Diversion Inlet Structure dedication in October. It was inspiring to hear high-level elected and appointed officials talk about the great things the Corps is doing and the difference

the project will make in the lives of the citizens of that area. While the focus at that event was one specific

project, those officials could have easily swapped out "Fargo-Moorhead" with anything else that we do. It gives me great pride to be a part of an organization of dedicated professionals that have the knowledge and skill to tackle diverse challenges as we work to deliver the Corps mission to secure our Nation, energize our economy, and reduce disaster risk. Thank you for your selfless dedication and for the part each of you plays in our collective success. Hopefully you'll take time during the holiday season to get some rest and relaxation and reflect on your contributions and their positive impact to our Nation.

## FROM CHAD KONICKSON

Congratulations Team! You made 2023 a resounding success. The achievements highlighted in this booklet, and the dedication I see every day across our entire team, remind me why it's such a privilege to serve alongside you. Your commitment to public service, your pride in your work, and your support for one another are inspiring. Whether you've been part of the team for many years or have just joined our ranks,

THANK YOU. This is a great time to appreciate one another, reflect on the many things we have to be thankful for, and lend a hand to those going through tough times. I wish you all a safe and joyous holiday season!



## FROM AMY ROTHSTEIN

Team members: Congratulations on another outstanding year in accomplishing the mission. Your commitment and dedication to the success of our programs and to each other is commendable. As

our workload increased, we continued to meet the needs of the nation while being good fiscal stewards of our resources. Thank you for your hard work and service.





# Headquarters Level Awards

## JAMES SCHNEIDER – Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year

This annual award recognizes the geotechnics professional who exhibits the professionalism and commitment to excellence that advances the Geotechnical, Geology and Materials Community of Practice. James Schneider was selected by Corps headquarters as this year's winner.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year Award is presented to James Schneider of the St. Paul District for his commitment to excellence and contributions to the geotechnical engineering profession. This past year, Schneider actively supported the Corps geotechnical guidance updates, negotiated enterprise level software agreements, innovated by creating a Python script to plot pile driving records and share

the data through a GIS Dashboard, and continued to advance the state-of-the-practice through his leadership of the Advanced Geotechnical Modeling committee. Schneider has contributed greatly to the engineering profession by presenting at conferences, teaching short courses, giving university lectures, contributing over sixty journal and conference publications, and serving as a reviewer for numerous scientific journals. James Schneider's contributions reflect highly upon himself, St. Paul District, the Corps of Engineers, and the profession.



## MOLLY HUNT – E. Manning Seltzer Award

Molly Hunt won for her incredible dedication and perseverance to the Fargo-Moorhead Diversion Project and her efforts for the successful authorization and initiation of the multi-billion dollar project with innovative

funding mechanisms. She found legal paths forward through several issues to include environmental, litigation, and legislative setbacks. Named after the Chief Legal Advisor to the Chief of Engineers and General Counsel of the Corps from 1956 to 1977, the E. Manning Seltzer Award recognizes an attorney who has made one or more special contributions to the Corps legal service mission.

## TAMRYN FRAUENSHUH Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence



The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers national headquarters recently recognized Tamryn Frauensuh, natural resources specialist with the St. Paul District, with the 2023 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

This award is given annually to recognize outstanding work in interpretation and environmental education at a Corps of Engineers recreational facility, based on creativity and originality, producing a positive experience for visitors and enhancing the public's understanding of the Corps.



## EMILY CHAVOLLA Herbert A. Kassner Communication Competition 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2022 Identity Design

## MELANIE PETERSON Herbert A. Kassner Communication Competition 1<sup>st</sup> Place 2022 Moss- Holland Civilian Writer of the Year



# Headquarters Level Awards



## ROY LAWSON – Hard Hat of the Year Award

For exceptional performance and service to the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the role of Lead Construction Representative. Lawson's technical knowledge and expertise, his teaching and mentoring skills and his ability to build teams and inspire confidence have been critical to the current success of the Corps first Public Private Partnership project. His focus on learning and creating teams has resulted in an atmosphere of acceptance within the Office and resulted in recognition of the team's successes by outside organizations. Lawson's outstanding professionalism, dedication to the mission and selfless service reflect great credit upon himself, the St. Paul District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

# Division Level Awards



## ANDY MEIER – Nominee for 2023 MVD Natural Resource Management Employee of the Year MERITORIOUS CIVILIAN SERVICE MEDAL

## Fiscal Year 2023 Water Safety Award

### ST. PAUL DISTRICT WATER SAFETY TEAM

In recognition of their outstanding commitment to the Corps' water safety mission. The St. Paul District Water Safety Team promoted water safety utilizing a variety of ways throughout 2023. Their efforts ensured that every member of the public that visited a St. Paul District project had a safe, enjoyable visit and went home to their loved ones. Their innovation and dedication resulted in ZERO fatalities for the district for Fiscal Year 2023.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

|              |                   |                 |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Eric Hammer  | Tom Mattis        | Hunter Simonson |
| Ashley Kiley | Jason Hauser      | Ellen Tabako    |
| Brad LaBadie | Matt Buchacker    | Brian Turner    |
| Bill Schmidt | Jeff Cook         | Nicole Baker    |
| Chris Botz   | Megan Severson    |                 |
| Landon Hill  | Shawn Weissenfluh |                 |

# Awards from Other Districts



## HELEN WALZ – Seattle District Certificate of Appreciation

Helen Walz is recognized for volunteering to support the Mud Mountain Dam Fish Passage Facility during 24-hour emergency operations. Walz's support in identifying and enumerating fish, monitoring, and recording water quality parameters, and ensuring safe passage of fish through the facility was critical to mission accomplishment.



# District Level Awards



**JILLIANE JAEGER**  
ST. PAUL DISTRICT  
LABOR COUNSELOR  
Civilian Service  
Commendation  
Medal



**SIMON RUTHERFORD**  
FOIA AND PRIVACY ACT,  
CLAIMS, GOVERNMENT  
CONTRACT LAW,  
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW,  
AND LABOR AND  
EMPLOYMENT LAW  
Civilian Service  
Commendation  
Medal

## CIVILIAN SERVICE COMMENDATION MEDAL



PATRICK MOES



MELANIE PETERSON



WENDY WELLS

## FLOOD PLAIN MANAGEMENT SERVICES, PLANNING ASSISTANCE TO STATES AND TRIBES, AND SILVER JACKETS PROGRAM



DENISE JULSON



CHANEL MUELLER



PATRICK DOWD



HEATHER HENNEMAN



BRETT HULTGREN

Civilian Service  
Commendation Medal

Civilian Service  
Achievement Medal

# District Level Awards

## Upper Mississippi River Restoration Project Turnover – Commander’s Coin

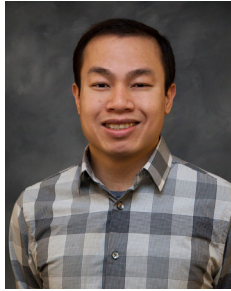
The greatest accomplishment in fiscal year 2023 for the St. Paul District Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program was the completion and successful turnover of 3 Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Projects: Bass Ponds, Conway Lake, and Harpers Slough. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service emphasized the importance of receiving the operation and maintenance manual at the time of turnover to help them manage the project. In a program that typically sees a single project turned over only once every few years, three at the same time was an exceptional feat. The technical leads, engineers and engineering technicians had to go above and beyond to complete as-builts, details in the manuals, updated the template format, and also worked overtime to meet milestone schedules. This new and improved template will also be used for other island building projects including Pigs Eye, Upper Pool 4, and the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program.



Chris Afdahl



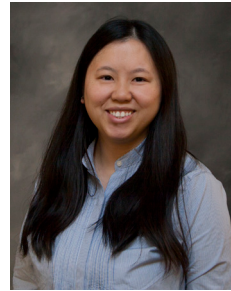
Paul Hegre



Alex Le



Paul Morken



Hlee Moua



Kacie Opat

## The Kinnickinnic River Aquatic Ecosystem Feasibility Study – Commander’s Coin

The Kinnickinnic River Section 206 Aquatic Ecosystem Feasibility Study team kicked off in mid-2023 with an aspirational goal of arriving at a tentatively selected plan within 6 months. Their ability to move through the planning process in an efficient manner directly impacts the sponsor’s access to funding. Although the established schedule is a tall order, the team took on the challenge and are on track to meet the milestone on Dec. 4, 2023.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Kevin Bigalke  
Pat Dowd  
Natalie McGlinch  
Trevor Cyphers  
Joseph Hemmer  
Samantha Carlstrom  
John Incha

Michael Davis  
Helen Walz  
Sean Wentworth  
See Xiong  
Renee McGarvey  
David Wivinus  
Steven Lee

Paul Hegre  
Michael Walker  
Jacqueline Kovarik  
Katie Leslie  
Justine Hunt  
Caitlin Piotrowski  
Nick Castellane

Tonya Baker  
Denise Julson  
Nick Lorenz  
Marianna Aho  
Finn Hotstream  
Paul Johnson  
Eduardo Torrens

## 2023 Retirements

Barbara Wall  
Peter Crary  
Kathy Halverson  
Bonnie Greenleaf  
John Kahle  
Kevin Wilson  
Christine Craig  
Arlan Baukol  
Keith Davenport

January 28, 2023  
February 28, 2023  
March 11, 2023  
April 20, 2023  
May 31, 2023  
May 31, 2023  
June 31, 2023  
July 31, 2023  
September 1, 2023

Daniel Hentges  
Kay White  
Lowell Moline  
Cynthia Calhoun-Kosiec  
Terry Zien  
DeLisa Kviz  
Colleen Meyer  
Keith LeClaire

September 20, 2023  
September 20, 2023  
September 29, 2023  
October 30, 2023  
December 30, 2023  
December 30, 2023  
December 30, 2023  
December 30, 2023



# District Honorary Awards

## NEW EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**Vince Schuyler** joined the western area office on Halloween 2022, just 30 days after retiring from the Air Force as a Chief Master Sergeant. Schuyler's cheerful demeanor, excellent communication skills, wide-ranging experience and willingness to step up and plug the gaps meant that he

immediately ended up shouldering a variety of tasks. Schuyler started as a construction representative on the Diversion Inlet Structure. His previous experience in the Air Force meant that he was the best person to fill the open Security Manager position and the vacant Safety Specialist position, eventually filling the safety position permanently when it was advertised in spring 2023. Having Schuyler serve as the Safety Specialist has been a boon for the western area office and the district as a whole; Schuyler planned and executed the office's safety budget, developed the office's safety plan, visitor's safety briefing and fatigue management plan. In addition to conducting safety training for western area

office personnel, Schuyler helped instruct an OSHA 30 course for the district, as well as conducting site safety training for district personnel and for visitors to the project sites, to include presenting during both the regional governance meeting and executive governance meeting. He has forwarded 11 "Good Catches" of the 56 identified by the district, encouraging western area office personnel to be vigilant and speak up for safety. Significantly, the western area office had its first incident-free year, executing nearly \$80 million in construction placement with more than 212,000 exposure hours and no reportable / recordable accidents. And while Schuyler's dedication to and contribution to safety are significant, his mentorship and encouragement of younger personnel is inspiring. With Schuyler's support, Kambili Nkem-Ossai planned and executed the office's summertime Family Day, which included a cook-out, potluck meal, project tours and "SWAG Bags" for the kiddies. Schuyler has been with us for just under a year, but he's done amazing things for the office's morale, for the confidence of the younger personnel, and for the safety programs of the western area office, the district and the contractors. If his first year has been this incredible, the next few years will be tremendous.

## ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**Cindy Hitchcock** plays an indispensable role as Office of Counsel's legal assistant. She is the heart and soul of the office. She is often the first point of contact for anyone seeking office of counsel assistance or calls from the public. She always treats everyone with a smile and a friendly greeting. She

has been instrumental in delivering superb technical knowledge in CEFMS and related fiscal duties in support of the mission to Office of Counsel and throughout the district. Hitchcock has singlehandedly trained and assisted several St. Paul District administrative assistants throughout the course of their careers. She is always quick to lend a hand and

assist others with CEFMS issues to include travel, time and attendance, PR&Cs, and labor codes. In addition, Hitchcock has been the constant professional in tracking office of counsel workload assignments and suspenses, which helps to ensure that legal opinions are rendered in a timely manner to support district milestones. She does a superb job to ensure the successful procurement and management of office supplies as well as strict adherence to property accountability standards. Aside from technical duties, Hitchcock has been integral to the processing and collection of over \$223,000 in affirmative tort and admiralty claims throughout the year. She has also helped manage several Freedom of Information Act requests and pursued timely collection of fee payments for administering the program. No matter the day, Hitchcock is a diligent worker who exudes warmth and brings a sense of esprit de corps to the office and the district. Office of counsel is a great department to work in and that can be attributed to the positive and can do attitude of Cindy Hitchcock.

# District Honorary Awards

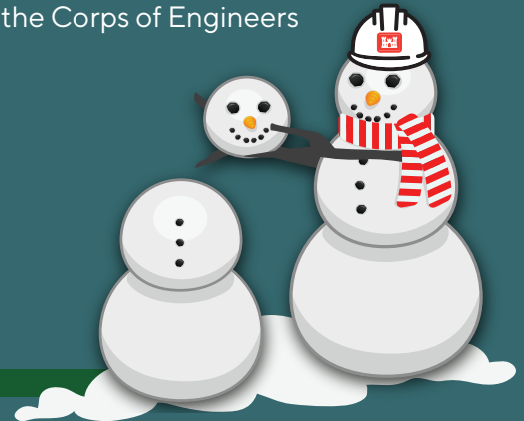
## INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR



**Ben Cox** is recognized as the Innovator of the Year. He is a true trailblazer whose exceptional work and innovative thinking have had a profound impact on our organization. His achievements center around his exceptional talent for data interpretation and visualization through the

dynamic Power BI program. He began by immersing himself in the comprehensive workings of the program from the ground up, demonstrating his dedication and passion for driving change within our organization. What truly sets him apart is his ability to think outside the box. He ingeniously leveraged Power BI to find innovative ways of presenting data, ensuring that even those unfamiliar with his specialized field could easily understand and utilize the information. The impact of his innovative approach was swiftly felt at the district level, where the tool quickly gained recognition and became a pivotal resource for our team. His exceptional work with Power BI did not stop at the district level. It soon attracted the attention of regulatory headquarters. He was called upon to meet with headquarters representatives to discuss the tool, its capabilities,

and its potential applications. His successful engagement with headquarters led to significant positive changes in the way we allocate and disburse funds at the local, regional, and national levels within the regulatory program. Furthermore, his invaluable contributions extended to our “Regulators Without Borders” initiative within Mississippi Valley Division, a groundbreaking approach that involves sharing regulatory work across different districts within the division. Through his meticulously crafted reports, Cox has empowered Mississippi Valley Division regulatory chiefs with data and insights crucial to this innovative endeavor. His work is helping us break down barriers and facilitate the seamless exchange of regulatory information up and down the valley, ultimately enhancing our organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Cox’s dedication, ingenuity, and tireless pursuit of excellence in the development and implementation of Power BI have not only greatly benefited our district but have also enhanced the reputation of the Corps of Engineers as a whole.



## INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR



Operations Division leadership would like to recognize **Brian Jorgenson**, Operations Division, for the St. Paul District 2023 Innovator of the Year. During the planning and project development phase for rehabilitation of the Lac Qui Parle Spillway, there was a requirement for

disposal of 930 cubic yards of grouted rip rap that had to be removed from the 2,500 foot spillway. Disposal of this large volume of rip rap would be extremely costly due to the volume of material, as well as the significant transportation costs that

would be incurred by hauling the material to the nearest approved location many miles from the project site. Using innovative thinking and his strong relationship with the Lac qui Parle County Highway Department, Jorgenson facilitated an agreement for the rip rap to be delivered to Lac qui Parle County’s highway maintenance facility located less than 3 miles from the project site. This action resulted in tremendous savings to the Government by avoiding costly transportation and disposal fees, while simultaneously providing a benefit to the local county government in the form of reusable construction materials, resulting in a win-win for both parties. This is an example of the value that our operations field personnel bring to our projects and that allow our missions to be executed successfully with limited resources.



# District Honorary Awards

## OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING THE DISTRICT SECURITY MISSION AWARD



Lead Ranger **John R. Fromuth** is recognized for his exceptional initiative in building partnerships with local law enforcement and emergency response personnel and fostering exceptional security awareness and compliance among facilities and personnel in the Minnesota

Flood Control Section. Under Fromuth's leadership, Orwell Dam and the Minnesota Flood Control Section consistently scores highly in the U.S. Army Physical Security Inspection Program and in compliance with all other Army security program requirements. Furthermore, Fromuth's exceptional management of the district's emergency flood control warehouse and support for the district's emergency management flood response programs ensure that the St. Paul District stands ever ready to assist local communities with rapid response flood fight materiel and support. Fromuth's initiative and leadership exemplifies not only his exceptional security mission commitment and focus but also his outstanding support to the Minnesota Flood Control Section and the St. Paul District emergency management mission.

## OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING THE DISTRICT SECURITY MISSION AWARD



Supervisory Park Ranger **Corrine K. Hodapp** is recognized for her exceptional initiative in building partnerships with local law enforcement and emergency response personnel and fostering exceptional security awareness and compliance among facilities and

personnel in the Southern Headwaters Section. Under Hodapp's leadership, the Southern Headwaters Section consistently scores highly in the U.S. Army Physical Security Inspection Program and in compliance with all other Army security program requirements. All of Hodapp's Southern Headwaters facilities and personnel demonstrate exceptional knowledge and practice of Army security disciplines. Furthermore, all of her facilities ensure proper security training is extended to seasonal and unpaid park volunteer staff as well. Hodapp's initiative and leadership exemplifies not only her exceptional security mission commitment and focus but also her outstanding and highly motivated team in the Southern Headwaters Section.



## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORTER OF THE YEAR

**Tamryn Frauenshuh** went above and beyond to educate the public on the missions of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and build

relationships with external audiences. She managed and participated in numerous community relationship events, she advised both public affairs and other natural resources staff in interpretive programming, she starred in numerous district videos, and she provided photos and educational materials for the district's social media platforms. Frauenshuh is an excellent representative of the Corps of Engineer!

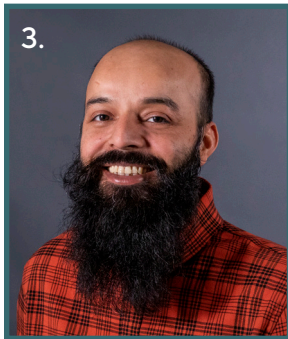
# Engineering and Construction Honorary Awards

## EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

An employee within each branch of engineering and construction division who consistently displays the following qualities:

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

- 1. Mission Possible Award** - Bryan Sprang
- 2. Steward of the Waters Award** - Kacie Opat
- 3. Critical Lift Award** - Sanjay Bimali
- 4. Never Take You for Granite Award** - Ceres Parsons



## HONORARY AWARDS



**RAISE YOUR HAND AWARD**  
- **Vince Schuyler** is someone who is consistently ready to help when and wherever needed.



**TEACHER AWARD** -  
**Aaron Buesing** is someone who has taken the time to teach/mentor colleagues.



**MOOD LIFTER AWARD** -  
**Michael Snyder** is someone who's positive attitude benefits the entire division.

## Professional Engineering License

Construction Branch

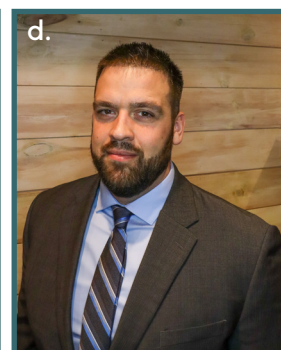
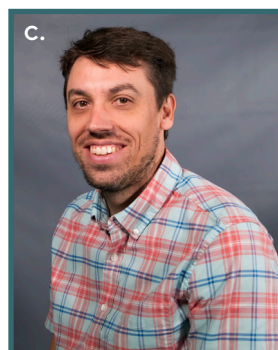
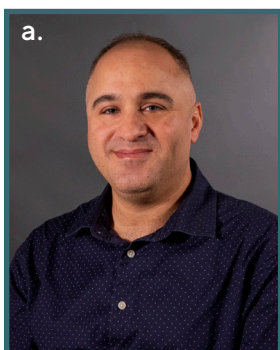
- a. Arash Shams**

Design Branch

- b. Coralys Nunez-Orta**
- c. Michael DeMars**
- d. Joshua Clark**

Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch

- e. Leigh Youngblood**





# Operations Honorary Awards

## MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

Over the course of the year, Maintenance and Repair was confronted with many challenges to include supporting the Illinois Waterway consolidated closure project, mechanical dredging, repairs to equipment / floating plant, and repairs to lock structures. Time and again this team of dedicated and uniquely skilled individuals can be counted on to overcome adversity and successfully execute complex projects. They are a team which clearly supports one another, and it shows with their continued success.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

|                   |                 |                  |
|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Luke Anderson     | Jacob Jandl     | Joshua Rye       |
| Noah Andow        | Branden Johnson | Jason Schieffer  |
| Kipp Baures       | Adam Kiedrowski | Kurt Schroeder   |
| Devon Bemis       | Keith Kirkey    | Bart Spriggle    |
| Justin Bernau     | Knute Knutson   | Christopher Stai |
| John Bostrack     | Dakota Koenig   | Matthew Stanton  |
| Dalton Eide       | Robert Kohner   | Nicholas Stanton |
| Michael Gunderson | Angelo Pedretti |                  |
| Josh Isakson      | Scott Rolbiecki |                  |

## DREDGE GOETZ

With the low precipitation that is occurring on the Mississippi River basin, the lower Mississippi River is experiencing lower than normal water for navigation. The Dredge Goetz and crew have once again mobilized to aid in the effort to keep navigation moving. In order to support this effort, it has extended the crew and equipment past the normal dredging season. The Goetz crew has pulled together to overcome many obstacles in order to support the effort during the low water event without impacts to preparational readiness for the next dredging season.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

|                    |                   |                  |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Adrian             | Ellamay Mitchell  | Kathy Halling    |
| Loewenhagen        | Eric Carlson      | Kris Taverna     |
| Andrew Lorenz      | Forrest Gunderson | Langston Spencer |
| Brady Dehnke       | Jaden Kaiser      | Logan Hoffmann   |
| Brian Krause       | Jake Zanon        | Logan Skoug      |
| Chad Simon         | Jason Ellefson    | Matt Platteter   |
| Channing           | Jaxon Weirsgalla  | Matt Rolbiecki   |
| Helgeson           | Jeff Rindal       | Mike Kouba       |
| Chris Hill         | Joel Miller-Oates | Parker Brand     |
| Christopher Wrycza | Jon Ledford       | Ricky Hager      |
| Cody Fairey        | Jon Miller        | Ryan Danielson   |
| Corey Dopkins      | Jon Nygaard       | Susan Funke      |
| Craig Bauer        | Jordan Fluekiger  | Thomas Fetting   |
| Dale Rud           | Jordan Skoug      | Thomas Loechler  |
| Dan Teigen         | Josh Przybylla    | Tony Broxson     |
| Dave Johnson       | Kaden Lisowski    | Wake Madsen      |
| Dawn Johnson       | Kaleb Doerr       |                  |

## LOCK 7 OUTDRAFT

Increasing outdraft at Lock 7 has made transiting the lock structure difficult as tows are unable to hold their tows on the lock guide wall. The Lock 7 team has adapted to this challenging situation by remaining vigilant on the lock wall and by maintaining good communication amongst the team and with lock users. Furthermore, the Lock 7 navigation improvement team made exceptional progress over the last year to study potential alternatives to address the outdraft issue. Collectively all individuals have greatly contributed to the district's goal of providing safe and reliable commercial navigation at Lock 7.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

|                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|
| Jamie Borowiak   | Don Strittmater  |
| Dan Burger       | Robert Wachholz  |
| Pete Burke       | Doyle Wilkins    |
| Chad Caya        | Christopher Stai |
| Samantha Fink    | Dan Cottrell     |
| Matt Hengstl     | William Thomson  |
| William Nissalke | Emily Moe        |
| Jason Robinson   | Aaron Buesing    |
| Tom Rohrer       | Geoffrie Kramer  |
| Keith Schindler  | Jarrold Brown    |

## CHANNELS AND HARBORS SURVEYS

Facing adversity is nothing new to the channels and harbors survey team. They have faced it in the past and again this season. The team faced several health issues which resulted in consistent and significant staff shortages. However, the team stayed focused on the mission while keeping a positive attitude and supporting their teammates. The team consistently went above and beyond, working long hours on short notice and filing in when and where needed. Their professionalism, mission focus and overall can-do attitude allowed them to complete 429 surveys covering 43,703 acres; a good season for any survey team, a great season for one faced with such adversity!

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

|                |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|
| Al VanGuilder  | Dave Francksen  |
| Brandon Olson  | Bill Chelmowski |
| Kurt Schroeder | Cole Atkinson   |
| Jake Zanon     | Joe Gassen      |
| Jon Nygaard    | Bill Meier      |

# Operations Honorary Awards

## OUTSTANDING ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT - DIRK DEZEEUW

During a 3-month period after another recreation and natural resources administrative assistant moved on to another job, Dezeeuw took on the additional responsibilities of timekeeper, travel coordinator and procurement official for the 25 employees in Northern and Southern Headwaters Sections, completing many actions, processing monthly contract invoices, and assisting with any other administrative questions that came up. He always had a great attitude and was a pleasure to work with.

## OUTSTANDING MAINTENANCE SUPPORT - JEFF HUSEBY

Huseby demonstrated outstanding leadership and selfless service during the summer season of 2023 during the rebuilding of the West Ashtabula Crossing campground. He returned to duty as a rehired annuitant in fall of 2022 after retiring in 2011. Huseby's ability as an equipment operator and construction experience enabled the North Dakota Flood Control Section to rebuild 31 campsites, fix drainage issues, install new water lines, and repair roads in the West Ashtabula Crossing in support of the contracted electrical upgrades. This work was completed all in house with Corps employees and has saved thousands of dollars. In addition to his work on the West Ashtabula Crossing project, Huseby has served as a mentor to all the staff at Lake Ashtabula.

## OUTSTANDING MAINTENANCE SUPPORT - LES MCCOY

McCoy provided excellent work on the rehabilitation of the entrance station at the Cross Lake Recreation Area. Just like most tasks he completes, McCoy was able to finish the work safely and beyond expectations. He also planned and recommended what work to be completed by contract and inhouse labor for two sustainability projects; completion of a building envelope and installation of LED lighting at the entrance station. McCoy then used the saved funding to purchase additional upgrades, including the installation of new energy efficient windows, a mini split for air and heat, new ceiling tile and paneling. What once was a dark, closed in area has resulted in an open floor plan that is welcoming to our visitors and will allow for new interpretive displays and informational boards.

## BLACKHAWK PARK FLOOD PREPARATIONS, CLEAN-UP, REPAIRS

This team is recognized for their outstanding efforts during

the spring flooding at Blackhawk Park in late April and May 2023. They worked together to complete flood preparations, significant clean-up and repairs at the park and other Mississippi River recreation areas during very high and prolonged river levels. This included securing government equipment and property, sandbagging, coordination with local electrical company to de-energize power throughout the park, timely communications with the public regarding status of recreation area closures and openings. The hard work resulted in restoration of facilities and re-opening for public use by Memorial Day weekend. Flood damage to facilities was minimized by the team's efforts and all work was performed safely.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Eric Hammer  
Ashley Kiley  
David Mikrut

Nicholas Romano  
Barbara Kraftan  
Tyr Severson

Lewis  
Wiechmann

## WEST ASHTABULA CROSSING CAMPGROUND IMPROVEMENTS

The entire staff at Lake Ashtabula is commended for their excellent work in rebuilding the West Ashtabula Crossing Campground. The team rebuilt campsites, performed landscaping, fixed drainage issues, removed hazard trees, repaired roads, and assisted the contractor with the install of the new electrical service. Their hard work above and beyond their normal duties resulted in a restored campground that will better meet the needs of our customers well into the future.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Joel Zietz  
Jeff Huseby

Adam Roerish  
Landon Hill  
Chris Botz

Maria Schneider  
Scott Tichy

## FALL CLEAN-UP AND WINTERIZATION OF REC. AREAS NORTHERN HEADWATERS

These members provided outstanding teamwork and commitment to complete the fall clean-up and winterization of the recreation areas in the Northern Headwaters Section and saving the Northern Headwaters Section significant funds over a comparable contracting effort. Compared to previous contract costs, the team effort amounted to over \$50,000 savings for the clean-up of the leaves in the campgrounds and day use areas, \$10,000 savings for the winterization of the potable water systems and closure of park facilities, and a \$7,500 savings for removal and storage of the 80 plus navigation buoys in the Leech Lake River, the Mississippi River, and the Sandy River.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Andrew Buell  
Mathew Buchacker  
Hunter Simonson

Megan Severson  
Shawn Weissenfluh  
Jeff Cook

Jason Hauser  
Jeff Steere



# Programs and Project Management Honorary Awards



## PROGRAMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIVISION EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Perhaps we should call her  
"The GOAT" - Greatest of All

Time. For the fourth consecutive year, **Denise Julson** is recognized by her peers as the Programs and Project Management Division Employee of the Year. Comments and accolades include:

- ...an amazing asset to the district and her ability to respond to requests within such a short period of time is immensely appreciated,
- ...the epitome of the St. Paul District's Guiding Principles,
- ...often, she fixes problems before anyone knows they are problems,
- ...gets things done – oftentimes before you even ask,
- ...enables me to better serve my projects and have a high degree certainty that I can find the information needed,
- ...no one of higher honor that deserves this reward.
- ...removes our worries and relaxes our stress levels within the division."

Denise is certainly the type of employee that all should try to emulate and certainly an employee that all want to work alongside. We congratulate you as the 2023 peer nominated "Division Employee of Year."



## "YOU MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE" AWARD

**Terry Zien** is the 2023 division peer selected employee that "Makes It a Better Place." Zien is always willing to assist, share his experiences, and has a historical insight like

few others. Zien does his work with a cheerful and enthusiastic attitude with a smile for everyone and takes all project managers under his wing. He builds strong relationships with coworkers and partners alike. Zien is affable and approachable and a pleasure to work alongside. His experience and helpfulness are the "glue" that keeps things together. He enjoys and values his time in the office with his peers whether he is talking about flooding challenges with communities, the importance of the work as the entire district are doing, or simply listening to each of us as unique individuals. His caring and respectful attitude towards all in the office is unmatched. Terry Zien – You Make it a Better Place!

**On 31 December 2023, Terry retires after 35+ years of Federal Service. Congratulations Terry, you will be missed!**



# Regional Planning and Environment Division North Honorary Awards

## SILENT HERO

**Lane Richter** is a brilliant environmental planner who thinks deeply about what is needed, coordinates to problem-solve with others, and quietly creates excellent work with nary a reminder needed. On the Yorkinut Slough study, Richter pivoted quickly when updates to the habitat models became necessary, and communicated consistently and clearly with the sponsor to make sure complex environmental planning information was understood. He is always ready and willing to assist team members and has a well-deserved reputation as a pillar of the team and a trusted go-to-guy for sponsors.



## CALMER OF STORMS

**Katy Fechter** is a calming presence who builds trust on her project teams. She listens to her teammates, asks helpful questions, and makes sure everyone feels heard and appreciated. When things happen that are out of her control, she is cool as a cucumber and plans a path forward. She determinedly coordinated with personnel from multiple districts and the vertical team on the Tangipahoa Feasibility Study, as one of the first projects to do so following new guidance. Fechter is an asset to the division and all her teams.



## PLANNER OF THE YEAR

**Mark Cornish** is awarded the Planner of the Year Award for his significant work on fish passage and invasive species management. He is a driving team member for the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program Lock and Dam 22 Fish Passage Project which will be the first large scale fish passage structure on a major inland navigation dam. Through his leadership this year, the interagency science team developed the plan for infrastructure needed to conduct monitoring which is critical to adaptively managing and developing lessons learned for future fish passage projects. Cornish provides key leadership for invasive species management throughout the Corps by serving on the Invasive Species Task Force, developing guidance for invasive species management on Corps projects and setting priorities for the Corps' invasive species research. Cornish's work reflects his tremendous work ethic and he stays focused on all of his work products.



## REGIONAL ROCK STARS

**Jill Bathke** has seamlessly transitioned into the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program Planner role. She jumped right in and started to tackle large and complex tasks with the little guidance. Jill has worked hand in hand with **Jessie Ray** and the upper three districts management teams to move the ecosystem projects forward in a meaningful way. Jessie and Jill continue to use their excellent communication, facilitation, and listening skills when working with the numerous agency partners. Bathke and Ray should be named the regional rockstars for their effort to get the ecosystem restoration portion of Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program off the ground.



## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - Rock Island

**Clayton Corken** was onboarded in February 2023 and has shown great potential and initiative from day one. Corken continues to ask tough questions to try to get the "why". Corken has stepped right into the planner role on the Lower Pool 13 Phase 1 study after a senior planner took a new role. Without hesitation, Corken led the team through the final report and assisted project management with routing the package to Mississippi Valley Division for their review and approval. He also assists other planners as needed and never hesitates to speak up and lead. Corken has shown great initiative and leadership in his short time with plan formulation.



## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR - St. Paul

**Amanda Goldstein** has joined our team, learning countless policies, names and acronyms to becoming a functioning team member that produces work products in her first year. Goldstein is working on multiple projects across our district and business lines, including Upper Mississippi River Restoration projects, locks and dams support, 408 support, compliance of our infrastructure program, and compliance with our water control process of our western reservoirs. She is also building good relationships with team members and agencies partners on the projects she is working on. The foundation she is building in her first year will serve her well as she continues her career with the Corps.





# Regional Planning and Environment Division North Honorary Awards

## BUCKET FILLER

**Elisa Royce** is an exceptional member of the plan form team and regional planning and environment division north who brings expertise, calm, and reassurance to her teams. She continues to demonstrate problem-solving and collaborative skills to move important Civil Works projects forward. While fairly new to the Corps, she brought with her a wealth of experience in interagency collaboration and community engagement, and since joining us has applied her warm communicational style and planning smarts to her heavy workload. Most recently, she demonstrated determination and flexibility while working towards two almost-simultaneous tentatively selected plans milestones and draft reports, resulting in approval from both milestones and a timely start to the concurrent review processes. She is exactly the kind of planner a Sponsor or team member would wish to have on their project and an asset to the Corps.



in better efficiencies in processes and procedures within the cultural section and on the Fargo-Moorhead Metro project. She is highly respected by colleagues, project stakeholders, and contractors and her service and commitment to her work and colleagues advance the expertise and knowledge of the Corps.

## TEAM OF THE YEAR SMALL UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEM TEAM

We would like to recognize the MVP SUAS team as the team of the year. This group of pilots, monitors and their Aircrew Training Program Manager have gelled very nicely in a short amount of time. This group has completed many missions often times with very limited time to plan based on suitable weather. Their accomplishments are listed below. Folks have noticed the success and the applicability to work they do generating many more requests for the coming years.

- 20 missions (15 levee inspections)
- 47 mission miles
- Supported Engineering, Operations and Public Affairs
- <https://coe-mvpgsp01stp.mvp.ds.usace.army.mil/b6arcgis/apps/sites/#/portal/pages/uas-program>

## SUPERVISOR OF THE YEAR

**Katie Opsahl** served as the Plan Formulation Section Chief in St. Paul throughout 2023 and in Rock Island from February through November 2023. Opsahl volunteered to lead both sections while continuing to carry a heavy project workload herself. During this time, she led the effort to hire a person in St. Paul, onboarded four new employees in both Sections, and expertly supported her entire staff. She made several trips to Rock Island and met weekly with newer staff. Opsahl's selfless service and leadership fostered a positive and productive work environment throughout plan formulation branch.



## THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

- **Jacquie Kovarik – Aircrew Training Program Manager and certified Pilot**
- **Kevin Hanson – certified Pilot**
- **Aaron McFarlane – certified Pilot**
- **Joel Porterfield – certified Pilot**
- **Dave Potter – certified Pilot**
- **Brad Bauer (EC-D) – certified Pilot**

## UNSUNG HERO

**Susan Malin-Boyce** is being recognized as an unsung hero for her selfless service and commitment to the team and the Corps. She is dedicated to helping others succeed and committed to giving her time and effort for the good of others. Regardless of the task, Susan always delivers quality work and support, improving and developing all those she works with. Her work ethic and dedication has resulted



# Regulatory Honorary Awards

## TEAM BUILDER AWARD



**Rachel Gralnek** has a natural inclination to make the workplace an inclusive environment. She tirelessly supports our teammates, and has stepped forward to organize and provide support for Department of the Army Fellows by facilitating bi-weekly meetings where St. Paul District Fellows can meet and ask questions to help navigate the program. Gralnek's efforts make the workplace better for everyone.

## TEAM LEADER OF THE YEAR

As a relatively new lead project manager, **Andy Chambers** has been integral to the success of not only his team and the entire North Branch. Chambers mentors and supports several team members who are relatively new to regulatory such that his team has quickly become significant contributors to regulatory. In addition to mentoring and leading his team, Chambers carried an appreciable permitting workload, including some complex and challenging projects. Chambers' knowledge of the regulatory program and his dedication to the team make Andy a vital member of the Regulatory Division.



## REGULATORY STAR



**Cam Brock** is relatively new to our program but has demonstrated great program knowledge in his time with us. He takes on challenges and direction effectively to get through the permitting processes efficiently. Brock has shown great initiative in

learning our new regulation and process and he applies this as part of his technical reviews. Brock has done a great job adapting his project management process to ensure efficient review of review requests to support the division.

## NEW TEAMMATES OF THE YEAR

**Mallory Gross** has seamlessly fit into the team, promoting collaboration, and demonstrating communication ability and technical skill unusual for a new regulator. She is highly organized and promotes a great team atmosphere. She has quickly learned the program and successfully managed a variety of complex issues and higher level project reviews. Gross has firmly established herself as an asset to the St. Paul District.



**Tom Sowinski** has been a quick study – gaining detailed familiarity with complex and changing regulations. He has forged positive relationships with Minnesota state counterparts, and is a significant contributor to our mission. In less than a year with the division, Sowinski has completed complex individual permits, inherited a wetland mitigation bank review, and has processed a multitude of general permits. Sowinski is a shining example of the Corps public service principles.

## TEAM AWARD

Regulatory Division Technical Regulatory Execution Center Team – **Sam Kitchen, Jarrett Cellini, Lorin Kinney and Rob Stout**. The team is recognized for their exceptional dedication and contributions to advancing the regulatory program within the Mississippi Valley Division. Their collaborative spirit and innovative efforts have resulted in outstanding achievements. They have processed numerous permits originating from New Orleans District in a collaborative effort to support their backlog of work. Their willingness to familiarize themselves with New Orleans' procedures and decision-making processes has resulted in an exemplary level of synergy between districts, greatly benefiting our collective regulatory mission. The team's creation of efficient standard operating procedures and the introduction of valuable geospatial tools, such as the National Regulatory Viewer and Regulatory Screening Tool, have modernized our regulatory processes within the Mississippi Valley Division. The team's dedication, ingenuity, and proactive approach to improving the regulatory program are truly exemplary. They have set a high standard for teamwork, innovation, and excellence within the organization.



# Support Staff Honorary Awards

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**Lindsey Gatzow** is one of our staff accountants for the St. Paul District. She always has a positive attitude and provides excellent customer service. During this past fiscal year, she assisted in providing exceptional support to the logistics office due to staffing shortages. Gatzow had a

positive attitude and was able to execute the finance and accounting branch's needs to meet the revolving fund nominal balance at the end of fiscal year 2023. She is innovative and is always working on process improvements to make areas more functional. She goes above and beyond the expectations of her first and second-line supervisors in addition to her colleagues. Gatzow provides excellent support in payroll, cost transfers, revolving fund accounting, and other areas as needed. Gatzow's devotion to duty and dedication to fiscal law knowledge in conjunction with the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System is in keeping with the Corps of Engineers values and reflects great credit upon her and the St. Paul District.

## REAL ESTATE "DUE DILIGENCE" AWARD



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 Real Estate Division gains the trust and respect of our customers and

partners.

**Jeremy Webb**, Realty Specialist, is recognized as the 2023 recipient of the St. Paul District Real Estate "Due Diligence" Award. Webb consistently demonstrates his commitment to the continued success of the Real Estate Management and Disposal program. When faced with a technical real estate question or controversial land management issue affecting the

federal government's land holdings, Webb diligently gathers relevant data and reviews pertinent real property laws, regulations and policy documents to guide his decision-making process. Throughout the year, Webb's personable demeanor has gained the trust and respect of our team and customers as he has continually delivered quality products and services in a professional manner.





# Length of Service Awards

\*\* For a list of all length of service awards, see the latest Crosscurrents

## 25 YEARS



Ricky Hager



Karl Jansen



Robert Kohner



Roy Lawson



Adrian Lowenhagen



Joshua Rye

## 30 YEARS



Aaron Buesing



William Chelmowski



Terrance Fluekiger



William Sande



Ryan Winn

## 35 YEARS



Scott Baker



Kristen Fairbanks



Jay Grimsled



Joseph Gurin



Virginia Regorrah