Blackhawk Park recovers from record summer flooding

The Blackhawk Park staff conducted its work by boat when high water from the Mississippi River flooded the park grounds. The flood made the park maintenance building (above) look like a marina. The park staff opened the overhead door to the service bay and floated in and docked their boat.

by Corrina Hodapp
Blackhawk Park ranger

When the Mississippi River finally crested on June 29, 1993, it had flooded the park buildings at Blackhawk Park with 37 inches of water — a new record.

Due to the rapidly rising water, we had evacuated campers and closed the park on June 20. We had also moved office supplies, maintenance equipment and furniture to safety.

The water stayed at crest levels through July 1. The high water meant that the park staff would have to do our work by boat, floating to places we never dreamed possible. Picnic shelters became fishing shelters. The playground looked like part of an aquatic theme park. The high water had transformed the maintenance building into a marina. We even opened the overhead door to

See park recovers on page 3
HOLIDAY AWARDS CEREMONY

December 17, 1993
Program 11 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Social Hour — Cash Bar — Buffet Luncheon
The Hill Murray Pioneer Performers — Awards — Door Prizes

Southview Country Club
239 E. Mendota Road, West St. Paul, MN. 55118

Menu:
Baked ham, roast turkey with gravy, sliced roast beef, whipped potatoes, buttered corn and salad

Who to contact for tickets:
Retirees: Jan Graham, 290-5305
4th floor: Linda Steele, -5698; Jan Pream, -5312
5th floor: Angie Peterson, -5309; Joanne Lewis, -5602
6th floor: Vicki Fetterly, -5423; Joyce Johansen, -5508
8th floor: Theresa Thury, -5755; Betty Krueger, -5419

Price:
$10.50 with meal and $2.50 without meal
Flood water from the Mississippi River surrounds the entrance station to Blackhawk Park. The banks of the river are a stone's throw behind the station.

Park recovers, continued from page 1

the service bay, floated in and docked
our boat.

With a normal boat ride on the river,
people fear hitting a wing dam or a
sandbar. We had to dodge picnic tables,
grills and port-o-johns.

When the flood water receded on July
19, we returned to the park in our cars
and pickup trucks. We prepared to clean
up.

Wearing waders and rubber gloves,
armed with shovels and scrub brushes,
we opened the garage door to the
maintenance building. A thick layer of
pudding-like gunk covered everything
we saw. The stench assaulted our noses.

We wore nose plugs as we removed and
cleaned the floor and walls in the
bathroom that had been completed one
year earlier. We scrubbed and bleached
the picnic table where we had our staff
meetings and ate lunch.

As the building began to take shape, we
headed out into the park. Using a
flatbottom boat, we were able to find
split railing and seven tables that had
floated off from the park.

A recycling bin proved to be a little bit
more difficult than the railing. The bin
was finally discovered in a channel on
the opposite side of the park from where
it was supposed to be. But first, we had to
persuade the beavers that had taken
up residence to leave. Then we had to
push and pull it off the tree in which
was tangled. Finally, once on shore, we
discovered bullheads and crayfish to
return to the river.

Help arrived on August 6 when
members of the Mississippi Steamers 4-
H club from Genoa, Wisconsin,
volunteered for the day. Eighteen 4-H
youth from 7 to 17 and one adult
volunteer spent the day painting and
scrubbing picnic tables and grills. They
also picked up debris carried in the by
flood waters.

Girl Scout Troop No. 203 also lent a
helping hand on October 2. Six girl
scouts and one adult leader spent four
hours washing picnic tables and picking
up flood debris. The afternoon was
chilly and we served hot chocolate to
the troop at the end of the day.

With the help from the Mississippi
Steamers, Troop No. 203, the staff of
the Mississippi River Area Office and
park staff, Blackhawk Park was
partially opened on August 27. Cleanup
and fixup continued with about one-
third of the park closed due to wet
conditions. With the summer flood
coming to an end, thoughts have turned
to next year in hopes of having an
enjoyable, dry camping season.
Con-Ops settles in with new systems furniture

Paul Machajewski, an outdoor recreation planner with Natural Resources Branch, unpacks more files as he and others in Construction-Operations settled in with their new systems furniture at the Army Corps of Engineers Centre. A contractor installed the new office furniture in Con-Ops in November.

Golden Age Passports and recreation fees

User fees okayed for Corps recreation areas

Beginning in 1994, a new law authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to collect a fee for issuing Golden Age Passports and to collect recreation user fees at many of its day use areas.

Authorization for the new fees was included in recent deficit reduction legislation, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993.

The fee for the Golden Age Passports will be a one-time $10 charge to cover the administrative costs of issuing the passports. All federal agencies which honor the passports will also begin collecting the fee on January 1.

Fees are to be returned to the Corps special account in the Treasury for later Operation and Maintenance general appropriations.

The Golden Age Passport is issued to individuals who are 62 years of age or older. It entitles the holder to free entrance at all national parks and a 50 per cent reduction in user fees at federal recreation areas.

Eligible applicants may obtain a Golden Age Passport at most Corps of Engineers offices upon showing proof of age. The passport will continue to be issued free of charge until January 1.

Corps headquarters announced in October that recreation user fees will be collected at many of its day use areas during the 1994 recreation season.

The fees will be charged for the use of beaches, picnic areas, boat launching ramps and other day-use areas. They will not be charged at wayside exhibits, overlook areas, toilet facilities or general visitor information areas.

The legislation authorizes fees of up to $3 per day for non-commercial vehicles transporting not more than eight persons (including the driver). The legislation also eliminates a previous requirement to have a free camping area at Corps-operated campgrounds.

Currently, the Corps is identifying recreation areas where fees will be charged and is developing administrative guidelines.

The St. Paul District operates 27 day use areas in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota. Most of these areas are picnic areas, beaches, boat launch ramps and public access around Corps-managed lakes and along the Mississippi River. District officials are studying the new policy and have not determined which day use facilities will have user fees.

The Corps already charges camping fees and special use fees for group picnic shelters and other group facilities, and for the issuance of special event permits. Current revenue nationwide is $19 million per year.

The Corps estimates that it will collect an additional $18 million annually from day use fees. The funds will be used to offset costs of the Corps recreation program.
Corps of Engineers bridge dedication takes the cake

by Russ Snyder, engineer manager

The Third Avenue Bridge in Rochester, Minnesota was dedicated with an official ribbon cutting on November 8. The bridge was constructed as part of stage 2a of the Rochester Flood Control Project. The stage is the first part of the $17 million stage that has been completed and is open to the public. The remainder of the stage, which includes a railroad bridge, pedestrian bridge and another street bridge will be complete by the end of 1994.

The photo of the Third Avenue cake is from a reception held after the ribbon cutting. Left to right are Curt Taylor, retired superintendent of Parks and Recreation for Rochester, Resident Engineer Leon Mucha, Mayor Chuck Hazama; and John Hunziker, a member of the city council.

Costanzo departs Corps of Engineers for Agriculture

"It's hard to leave a place which has people I like and respect," said Dave Costanzo. November 24 was Costanzo's last day as chief of Employee Relations and Development Branch. He began work the following Monday at the Department of Agriculture in Minneapolis. Over 50 district friends and colleagues took the opportunity to say good-bye at a farewell ceremony in the third floor Training Center. Costanzo worked for the Corps for a total of 11 years. Left to right are Costanzo, Mary Hendrickson, personnel management specialist; Al Santo, library technician; and Kurt Hendrickson, a supply clerk.
Honors and Awards

On-the-Spot Awards

Contracting Division
Dawn Linder

Engineering Division
Edmond C. Williamson III
Geotech Hydr & Hydro Branch
Grant Riddick

Human Resources Division
Mary Hendrickson
Jill Kubina

Information Management Office
Jeffry Bailey
Timothy Hobson
Jon Lyman
Charles Sedgwick
Georgia Simonik
Linda Steele

Real Estate Division
Amy Hennen
LuAnn Hoff

Construction-Operations Division
Natural Resource Management
Larry Albrightson
David Casey
Deborah Griffith
Corrine Hodapp
Richard Jacks
Chad Konickson
Larry McClellan
Thomas Novak
Navigation Branch
Larry Gilberston
Thomas Langreck
Thomas Precious
Duane Putz
Robert Schmidt

Maintenance Section
Robert Gross
Christy Neises
Richard Princko
Jay E. Taverna
Keith Traynor

Regulatory Branch
James Knowles

Special Act Awards

Construction-Operations
Navigation Branch
Arden L. Duval
Dennis Erickson
David Hawkenson
Judy Hutton
James Jordon
Joseph Lechner
John McQuiston
William Neeley
Karen Randall
Daniel Schmidt
Robert Stone
Bruce Young

Administration Branch
Allen Rosenberg

Natural Resource Management
Thomas Oksness

Human Resources Division
Robin Carruth
Jan Chapman
Clare Friedmann

Public Affairs
Kennon Gardner

Quality Step Increase

Engineering Division
Design Branch
Christine Schmitz

Achievement Medal For Civilian Service

Construction-Operations
Administration Branch
Rosemarie Braatz
Eastern Area Office
Dean Peterson

Flood Awards - Special Acts

Engineering Division
Robert Post
Geotech Hydr & Hydro Branch
Ed Eaton
Robert Engelstad
Gordon Heitman
Helmer Johnson
Daniel Reimartz
Kelsey Willis

Planning Division
Environmental Resources Branch
Richard Beatty
Teri Sardianas

Construction-Operations
Natural Resource Management
Timothy Bemershi
Steven Odegard

Emergency Management Office
David Christenson

Maintenance Branch
John Grossell

Eastern Area Office
Dean Peterson

Planning Division
Water Resources Study Branch
Thomas Crump

Public Affairs Office
Kennon Gardner
Peter Versiegen
Berwick appointed to Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board

Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson has appointed Dave Berwick, chief of Cultural Resources, to the Wisconsin Historic Preservation Review Board. The board is composed of 15 members appointed by the governor for staggered, three-year terms. Berwick is one of nine members who was chosen for his professional qualifications. Among other things, the board reviews nominations for the National Register of Historic Places and approves grants for historic preservation.

Annals of Iowa publishes Anfinson article

The Fall 1993 issue of Annals of Iowa published “Commerce and Conservation on the Upper Mississippi River” by John Anfinson, a historian in Environmental Resources Branch.

Anfinson describes how the nine-foot channel project in the 1930s forced two competing interests — commerce and conservation — into an uneven compromise. The result shaped the Upper Mississippi River into what it is today.

The journal’s cover photo features Lock and Dam No. 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa, as it was in 1936. The photo was taken near the time when construction on the lock and dam was complete.

Santa Anonymous kicks off 45th year

The Santa Anonymous kicked off its 45th year Friday, November 26. Dave Berwick, chief of Cultural Resources, is again heading the campaign for the district.

Here’s what you can do to help. Buy a toy for a boy or girl, infant to age 16. If the toy needs batteries, please include them. Gifts need not be wrapped. If you prefer to give money, rather than a gift, please make your check payable to the Santa Anonymous Fund and mail it to the Federal Executive Board, 1 Federal Drive, Ft. Snelling MN 55111-4007. All gifts are tax deductible. The deadline for delivery of all gifts to Santa Anonymous is December 15.

For more information, call Berwick at 290-5261.

Goodies and handicrafts offered at holiday boutique and bake sale

Baked goods, handicrafts and holiday trims will decorate the tables of the third floor training room for the 1993 Boutique and Bake Sale this month. The sale is open to Corps employees, their families and retirees and runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dec. 13 and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Dec. 14. The Employee Benefit Fund sponsors the annual event. For further information, contact Lupe Santas at 290-5485; Debbie Peterson at 290-5408; or Lois Pream at 290-5420.

Hello

Construction-Operations Division
Keith A. Graham, deckhand
William H. Loomis, deckhand

Good-bye

Resource Management Office
Theodore B. Anderson, Jr., voucher examiner

Office of Counsel
Alanna B. Keto, office automation clerk
Linda R. Kirts, general attorney

Human Resources Division
Alan W. Kraft (retired), employee development

Planning Division
Gregory A. Johnson, landscape architect
Charles R. Stigen, student trainee

Construction-Operations
Raymond R. Flock, supervisory construction engineer
Douglas A. Grimsled, deckhand
Kenneth Harrell (retired), environmental protection specialist
Dennis J. Kupietz, deckhand
Sven G. Telander, lock and dam operator
Robert A. Wildeisen, deckhand

Real Estate Division
Jacelynn M. Hudalia, office automation clerk
Latrice D. Jackson, office automation clerk

Contracting Division
Millie Henderson, procurement assistant

ASA(CW) nominated

Mr. Robert A. Peck will soon be nominated as the new Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASA(CW)). Peck is vice president for the American Institute of Architects, a lawyer and worked as Sen. Moynihan’s chief of staff.
District recommends merger of Planning into Engineering

District Commander Col. James T. Scott has requested approval of a plan to consolidate the district’s Planning and Engineering Divisions. Under the proposal, Planning Division will be reconstituted as a branch in the newly named Engineering and Planning Division.

Planning Division branches will revert to sections with no immediate changes in mission or manpower. All suborganizations in the sections will be eliminated.

The request responds to decreases in workload and to continued pressures to reduce the number of GS 13-15 positions. It is consistent with the Corps’ efforts to flatten organizations to achieve greater flexibility and efficiency in work. The district commander also requested additional authority for Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP) to support the consolidation and streamline operations.

“I want to very clearly state that no involuntary reductions in staff or downgrades are envisioned at this time as a result of these planned changes,” said Scott.

Thrift Savings Plan open season deadline is Jan. 31

To enroll or make changes in your Thrift Savings Plan (TSP), be sure to submit a completed “Election for TSP-1” form to Human Resource Division by close of business on January 31, 1994. The TSP open season, which began Nov. 15, ends January 31.

During an open season, you may begin contributing to the TSP, change the amount of your TSP contributions, or re-allocate current TSP contributions to your account among three investment funds.

All permanent employees hired on or before June 30, 1993 are eligible to participate in this open season.

The TSP is a retirement savings plan for both FERS (Federal Employees Retirement System) and CSRS (Civil Service Retirement System) employees.

If you have any questions, contact Jan Chapman at 290-5480.

Chief of Engineers sends holiday message

The holiday season is a time to reflect over the past year and to start thinking about the future.

This past year has been one of changes, opportunities, natural disasters, and a host of other challenges for the Corps of Engineers family. But regardless of the challenges, you responded to the call. I’m extremely proud of your contributions, sacrifices, and successes.

The Corps has been in the headlines many times this past year. Corps assistance during the Midwest floods certainly was an example of Corps capability, responsiveness, professionalism, compassion, and service to the nation. We had more Corps volunteers than we could use and, from the engineers to clerks and drivers, your efforts were superb.

Although some Corps families lost their homes early in the disaster, they selflessly continued helping others fight the flood. I was also touched by the outpouring of financial help for Corps families who were devastated by the floods. Your charity makes the phrase “the Corps takes care of their own” take on true meaning. These are just a few examples of the caring and giving that is the hallmark of the Corps of Engineers. I salute each of you.

As we prepare for the challenges of the New Year, please keep in mind the importance of our families, our health, and our service to the nation.

My family joins me in wishing you and yours a healthy and happy holiday season.

/s/ Lt. Gen. Arthur E. Williams
Commander, USACE