US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

Vol. 24, No. 3 March 2001

Snow surveys, training, ready district for floods

By Mark Davidson,
Chief of Public Affairs

The flood fight for the St. Paul District begins months before people even start thinking about snow melting and warmer weather, according to David Christenson, Chief of the Readiness Branch.

Photo by Mary Kay Larson

Gregg Struss measures snow depth at Gull Lake Recreation Area where he is park manager. The survey data he and others gather assists in determining the flood outlook.

"We start flood preparations every December," said Christenson. "We update the district flood response plan, inventory sandbags and pumps, and schedule meetings with federal, state and local flood fighters."

Externally, Readiness Branch personnel held flood preparedness meetings in February in Moorhead, Minn., and Grand Forks, N.D. (See "Flood preparations make news," page 8.) Internally, flood responders met during the annual flood seminar to review procedures. District personnel also received training for work in the emergency operations center, for the emergency response plan and for ENGLink, an emergency operations software application.

The Minnesota River and the headwaters of the Red River of the North are the areas of concern for spring flooding, said Christenson, "because the water content in the snow in these areas is high. If the snow melts quickly, or we get heavy rains during the snowmelt, the district could be fighting floods along with state and community responders."

The district cannot help local communities until the governor of a state requests Corps of Engineers assistance. "The local citizens look to the Corps to help when it gets beyond their capabilities," he said.

"When the District Engineer decides to move, the district must be ready to respond," said Christenson. "Not just the flood team, but the entire district must be involved – either directly or indirectly."

More than 120 district employees were directly involved in the major floods of 1997 that struck the Red River of the North, the Minnesota and the Mississippi rivers. "I don't anticipate the situation will reach the 1997 levels at this time," said Christenson. "However, a major storm with a heavy, widespread rainfall could change that outlook."

(More snow survey photos on page 3)

Target goals of 'White Paper 2001'

By Col. Kenneth Kasprisin,
St. Paul District Commander

... lead change by the hand before it grabs you by the throat...

Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers' INTENT (Crosscurrents, Jan. 2001) can be clearly seen in the five goals he has established for his tenure:

- Provide Excellence with Integrity and Credibility;
- Serve the Army and its Transformation;
- Serve the Nation through Effective Advocacy for Water Resources Development;
- Accomplish Environmental Stewardship;
- Seek Consensus – Do What is Right.

With respect to the last item, the Chief of Engineers described one of his principal personality characteristics as being a "bridger." As commander, he will always seek to do what is right and expects all USACE employees to embody these characteristics.

In a recent letter to all USACE employees, Flowers further articulated his intent. He focused on people – maintaining the highest standards of excellence; on process and organizations – institute a more unified approach to our operating processes and organize ourselves accordingly; on performance – measure success against our obligations and stakeholder/sponsor requirements; and communications – improve them.

The overarching intent and guidance is pretty clear – we know where we need to go! We can also expect to receive significant additional guidance after the new chief completes his transition process and adjusts his Vision for the Corps. A couple of his current initiatives revolve around empowering employees (everyone received a "Just Do It" card) and generating situational awareness and pride: random phone calls, a 30-second personnel commercial and weekly SITREPS (situation reports) to the field.

What remains is to establish an assessment as to where the organization (MVP) is, then create a path to where we are going. HOW DO WE DO THIS? The answer is APIC (Army Performance Improvement Criteria). This is not an end-state – it is a journey. It provides the framework for us to assess ourselves periodically and to put changes into place for improved performance! It is how we must manage change. The maxim, "The art is to lead change by the hand before it grabs you by the throat," is attributed to Winston Churchill. What we cannot do is ignore or only pay half-hearted attention to the guidance received!

Gen. Edward C. Meyer (retired Chief of Staff of the Army) said it best: "Up to the point of decision, you have the right, indeed, the obligation, to lay out your views clearly. Once the decision is taken, you have the responsibility either to salute or to leave."

Win with synergy

By Lt. Gen. Robert Flowers,
Commanding General and Chief,
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

"Synergy is the fruit of thinking win-win and seeking first to understand ... It's not compromise ... It's the creation of third alternatives that are genuinely better than solutions individuals could ever come up with on their own." – Stephen R. Covey

Our Corps of Engineers serves the nation well. We are a unique and extremely important national resource. The collective skills and the energy of our dedicated work force make this possible. I'm writing to ask for your commitment to an idea. I ask you to adopt and support Stephen R. Covey's definition of synergy. You hold the key to an even brighter future. The fruit that synergy creates will empower us to serve the nation even better. As always, I need you to make it a reality. Essayons!

Photo by Deborah Griffith

Photo by Jeffrey Kleinert

Above, Jim LuMaye (left) and Patrick Duffney, park rangers at Pokegama Lake and Lake Winnibigoshish at Grand Rapids, Minn., bag a measured sample of snow to determine water content. Rangers gathered content data from six headwaters sites on Feb. 28, representing a drainage area of 4,535 square miles. Left, Bob Gossett ventured out at the Cross Lake Recreation area to take snow samples. Each team of rangers took four samples from different sites with a snow measurement tube.
Far left, Tony Klee of Sandy Lake in McGregor, Minn., weighs his sample. Below, Timm Rennecke records the data after weighing his sample near Leech Lake at Federal Dam, Minn.

Photo by Jeffrey Steere

Photo by Jason Hauser

Water Control Section knows water

By Nadine DuPree,
Student in Public Affairs

My first exposure to the Water Control Section began when I started to receive calls from the public asking about water levels on the different rivers. I, of course, directed the calls to Engineering Division's Water Control Section. At the same time I was also looking for story ideas for my monthly article and realized that water management is a timely subject for the springtime – the number of telephone calls was a strong hint.

The primary water management mission of this section is to optimize the regulation of water levels and river flows from each of the 14 St. Paul District reservoirs and 13 locks and dams. Engineers and technicians in water control:

- Operate structures in accordance with approved Water Control Plans;
- Work with a wide range of customers to include Corps officials, the public, stakeholders, and various interest groups.

"We make dozens of water management decisions every day," said Ed Eaton, section chief.

Other missions include flood fighting, environmental management, partnering and assisting stakeholders.

Flood and other emergencies are complex and involve coordinating with cities, states, other federal agencies and other stakeholders.

Some of Water Control's functions include:

- Regulate the district's flood control reservoirs and navigation projects;
- Collect, assure the quality and maintain hydrologic data;
- Disseminate and report project related information;
- Review hydrologic and hydraulic engineering designs;
- Collect water quality data;
- Perform water quality analysis design, and environmental support;
- Provide emergency and general support to the district and the IJC (International Joint Commission) boards.

"We have a system of 105 gauging stations throughout the District that transmit data used to regulate the lock and dam system and the district's reservoirs. The data is transferred via satellite and phone lines to the district office," said Ted Pederson, hydrologic technician.

Water control supports a database, made up of the Water Control subnet and several servers – a data system which stores water-related information.

Water control works in the winter to prepare for floods in the spring. It acquires and maintains snow survey equipment and collects snow data for approximately 260 sites. It coordinates with Canadian agencies and with the U.S. National Weather Service (NWS) to collect, store and maintain this data. The data helps the NWS prepare spring runoff forecasts. The objective is to optimize reservoir regulation and to assist in planning and coordinating emergency efforts among many agencies in the event of spring flooding.

Water quality data collection involves the installation and maintenance of monitoring systems for surface and ground water and sediment.

The data is collected by physical and chemical methods (lab analysis) from remote hydrolab units that record water temperature, pH levels, electrical conductivity and dissolved oxygen. The units are placed in a stream or lake to gather data for later retrieval.

Photo by Mark Davidson

Ferris Chamberlin of Water Control Section explains the functions of the gauging station on the Mississippi River in St. Paul to a crew from KSTP-TV for a story on flooding.

District conducts outreach for National Engineers Week

Photo by Jim Mosner

Jodi Kormanik (standing) of Engineering Division (ED) spoke to an eighth grade class at Capitol Hill Middle School as part the district's program for National Engineers Week, Feb. 19-23.

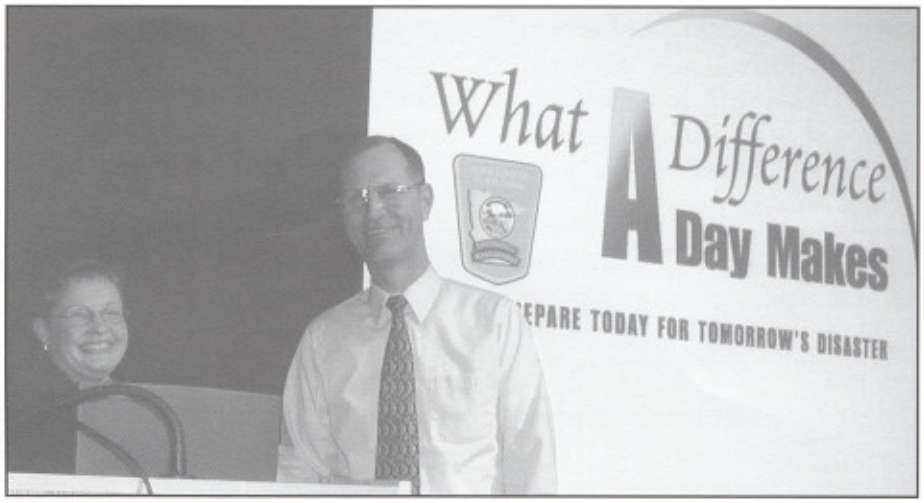

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Al Geisen, chief of Design Branch, stands on stage with Terri Smith from State of Minnesota Division of Emergency Management. She was the keynote speaker for National Engineers Week. "We have a lot to gain by working together to enhance recovery from disasters," she said.

Photo by Mark Davidson

Noeun Kol (left) of Design Branch visited with students at Cleveland Middle School about his work with the Corps of Engineers.

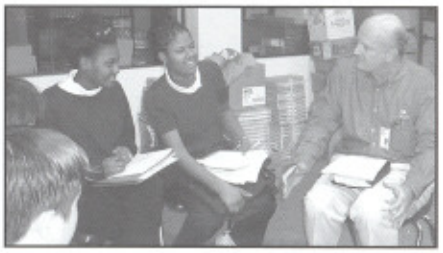

Photo by Mark Davidson

Randy Sitton of Contracting Division also met with students from Cleveland Middle School.

Photo by Peter Verstegen

Cookies left a sweet aftertaste for the National Engineers Week keynote speech. Hosting the table at the entry to the speech are (left to right) Stephanie Ehnstrom, Andrea Childress and Marilyn Caturia. All work in Engineering Division.

Lake Ashtabula drawdown hits target

By Mark Davidson,
Chief of Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed the drawdown of Lake Ashtabula, N.D., on March 15 to provide flood storage for snowmelt runoff this spring. The targeted lake level was 1,257 feet by Mar. 15, which the district hit. The drawdown was initiated in November 2000 and as of March 28 the lake level was 1257.8 feet. Warm weather added the .8 foot increase. A level at 1,257 feet represents a drawdown of nine feet from the summer pool elevation of 1,266 feet and is the maximum drawdown allowed for Lake Ashtabula.

The flood control storage realized by this drawdown of Lake Ashtabula provides benefits to the North Dakota cities of Valley City, Lisbon, Kindred and other downstream communities along the lower Sheyenne River, according to Tim Bertschi, St. Paul District Western Flood Control operations manager. Snow survey data collection in the Sheyenne River basin above Lake Ashtabula in late February averaged about 12.5 inches of snow or 2.8 inches snow water equivalent, said Bertschi.

Daily information on the regulation of Lake Ashtabula, including pool level and discharge from Baldhill Dam and other reservoirs is on the district's web under Water Control at http://www.mvp-wc.usace.army.mil.

Corps holds meeting at Red Wing on Lock and Dam 3 navigation safety and embankments

Photo by Dave Hawkenson

The out-draft current on the Mississippi River at Lock and Dam 3 pulls barges and a tow boat away from the lock chamber and toward gates in the dam that maintain the navigation pool.

By Peter Verstegen,
Public Affairs specialist

Thirty people attended a public meeting on Lock and Dam 3 navigation safety and embankments on February 6 in Red Wing, Minn. The Minnesota Wisconsin Boundary Area Commission and the St. Paul District co-sponsored the meeting. This was the first public meeting on the re-evaluation study which addresses navigation safety and embankment issues together.

Dan Wilcox, project manager, gave a presentation and discussed the status, schedule and an outline of the remaining work.

"In general, the people attending the meeting were supportive of the study and its direction," said Wilcox.

"The Minnesota and Wisconsin Departments of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are pleased that we combined the related navigation safety and embankments problems into one study. By reducing the risk of navigation accidents related to the out-draft current, we can reduce the potential for a spill of toxic cargo and an accidental drawdown of Pool 3. We can also consider a less conservative design for strengthening the Wisconsin-side embankments."

Lock and Dam 3 study objectives

- Improve navigation safety – reduce risk of navigation accidents
- Reduce risk of embankment failure
- Protect the river environment

Potential effects of navigation accidents

- Injury and loss of life
- Damage to Lock and Dam 3 structure
- Damage to towboats and barges
- Spilled cargo
- Loose barges render dam gates inoperable
- Pool level rises, overtops embankments
- Embankment failure
- Accidental drawdown of Pool 3

People

DesHarnais named St. Paul DDPM

Judy DesHarnais was selected to be the new Deputy District Engineer for Planning, Programs and Project Management (DDPM) this March. She replaces Chuck Crist, who retired. She moved into her new office the weekend of March 10-11 to begin responsibilities as DDPM on March 12.

On Jan. 2, 2001, she was named St. Paul Deputy District Commander. Prior to her assignment as district deputy, she was previously Project Management Branch chief.

Pedersen retires

The St. Paul District held a retirement reception on Feb. 26 to recognize **Bernard Pedersen** for his 30 years of distinguished federal service.

Pedersen retires as chief of Support Services Branch in Information Management (IM). He transferred to the district in 1984 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and began his career at the district in the old Automated Data Processing (ADP) Center, the predecessor to IM.

He plans to teach in high school beginning in March.

Mose returns as new Executive Assistant

On February 20 **Marsha Mose** became the district's new Executive Assistant. Mose worked as Chief of Programs Management Branch in the district until October 1995 when she moved to New Mexico where she worked for New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission and in the private sector. She began her employment with the district in 1981.

She replaces **Capt. John Weidner** who was named Deputy District Engineer until he departs the district this summer.

Krueger CPAC Chief

The new Civilian Personnel Advisory Committee (CPAC) Chief is **Linda Krueger**. Her selection for the position of chief was announced in late February after having held that position on an acting basis for almost a year. Krueger has worked in the district as a personnel specialist for about 12 years, including as Chief of the Employee Relations and Training Branch from 1994-98. She started her federal career as an employee development specialist with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management in Washington, D.C. She has also worked in personnel at the VA Regional Office and Insurance Center at Fort Snelling.

It's Stadelman in PM and Whiting in CO-R

Jim Stadelman was selected as the Programs Management Branch Chief, in the Planning, Programs and Project Management Division. Stadelman has worked for the St. Paul District since 1975. He has held the position as acting chief.

Bob Whiting, former Environmental and Economic Analysis Branch Chief (PD-E), was selected this March as the new Regulatory Branch Chief in Construction-Operations Division. He has been chief of PD-E since 1989.

William J. McCarthy

William J. McCarthy, 56, Reality Specialist in the Real Estate Division, died accidentally on December 4, 2000 in an automobile accident. He started in the St. Paul District in 1990 and in 1992 was hired in the Real Estate Division. Bill is survived by his daughter Christine and son Timothy. The service was held December 9, 2000 in St. Paul, Minn.

Flood preparations make news

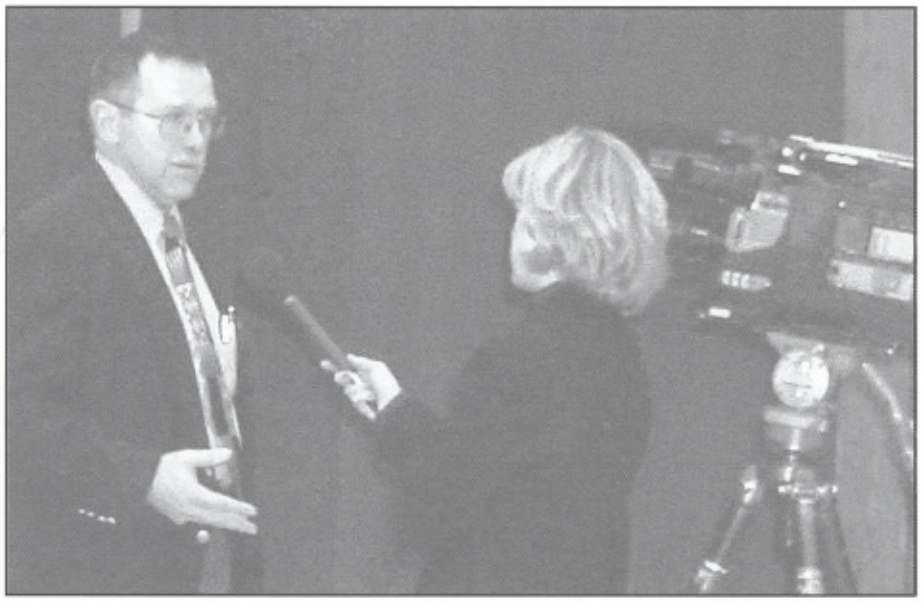

Photo by Virginia Regorrah

Dave Christenson (left), Readiness Branch, was interviewed by the media during a flood preparedness meeting in Grand Forks, N.D. on February 15 at the Grand Forks Civic Auditorium. The meeting included discussions on the National Weather Service probabilistic forecast system, federal and state assistance during a flood of the Red River of the North, and overland and local flooding. A panel of local, regional and federal officials made presentations on responding to flooding due to overland flow and localized heavy precipitation. Dennis Walaker, city of Fargo; Kent Ritterman, Moore Engineering; Randy Gestveng, North Dakota State Water Commission; Mr. Bob Merritt, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, and Sonja Jacobson, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), participated on the panel. The meeting was the second on two preparedness meetings. A meeting was held in Moorhead, Minn., on February 14. More than 30 local and county officials attended the meetings.

Crosscurrents

US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication, authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published monthly by offset for the St. Paul District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Editorial views and opinions are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers, nor of the Department of the Army.

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Army Corps of Engineers Centre
190 Fifth Street East
St. Paul, MN 55101-1638

District Engineer	Col. Kenneth Kasprisin
Public Affairs Chief	Mark Davidson
Editor	Peter Verstegen
Phone:	651-290-5202
e-mail:	cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

Safety Corner

Study: no link between cell phone use and brain tumors

By the Safety Office

Researchers at the National Cancer Institute (NCI) found that people who used cellular phones did not have an increased risk of brain tumors compared to non-users. The study, published in the Jan. 11, 2001, issue of the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM), was released on Dec. 19.

The use of hand-held cellular phones involves placing a small transmitter that emits radio frequency radiation next to the head. There has been widespread public concern that this radiation might cause tumors of the brain and nervous system. Because it is not known whether the radiation from cell phones poses a cancer risk, NCI scientists included cell phone use as part of a comprehensive study on the causes of brain tumors that began in 1994.

Information about the specific make or model of the phone was not collected. Data collection was completed in 1998.

"We don't see any evidence that cell phones cause brain tumors," said Peter D. Inskip, Sc.D., principal investigator for the study from NCI's Division of Cancer Epidemiology and Genetics in Bethesda, Md. "But if an increased risk of brain tumors occurs only after five or more years, or only among very heavy users, this study probably would not detect it."

The study is available on the NEJM web site at http://www.nejm.org/content/index.asp