



Photo by John Reese

Keynote speaker Col. Julie Balten, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, addresses an audience at the Orange County District 2 Flag Day event June 14 in Santa Ana, California. Balten spoke about the Army and Army Corps' history and the all-volunteer force of today. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 247th birthday followed two days later on June 16.

## Army Birthday, Flag Day celebrated at Orange County event

BY JOHN REESE  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SANTA ANA, Calif. — With 247 American flags fluttering in the breeze on a perfect Southern California day, Orange County District 2 celebrated Flag Day and the Army's 247th birthday June 14 in Santa Ana. The event was in honor of all military personnel, firefighters, police officers, medical personnel and other first responders.

The patriotic field of flags sponsored by the Exchange Club was planted by multiple troops of Boy and Girl Scouts, while JROTC cadets provided a color guard and Marine

Corps Air Station Tustin Young Marines demonstrated the 13 symbolic folds of the flag. Veterans attending the event wore hats and clothing displaying their branches of service and combat units. Supervisor Katrina Foley, Orange County District 2, led the event and introduced speakers.

Keynote speaker Col. Julie Balten, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander, addressed a socially distanced audience of citizens seated amidst the sea of red, white and blue at the Old Orange County Court House, the oldest court building in California and now a historic landmark. Balten spoke

about Army life and being a Soldier.

"Our all-volunteer military is the best trained and most professional force in the world. Today's Army is a cross-sectioning of all Americans, with warriors from the 50 states and protectorates," Balten said.

Balten noted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' 247th birthday follows two days later on June 16 and provided some Corps history.

The traditional cutting of the Army birthday cake using a saber was performed by Foley, Balten and a 72-year-old Army veteran from the audience. Participants were treated to a hot dog barbeque following the ceremony.

Lights, camera, action!

# 2022 Life Jacket Video Contest

CONTEST DEADLINE: AUGUST 1, 2022



## THE PRIZE:

\$5,500 for 55-second Video PSA  
\$2,500 for 25-second Video PSA  
\*ONE WINNER PER CATEGORY WILL BE SELECTED



TO LEARN MORE:  
[www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com](http://www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com)

There's less than a month to participate in the Life Jacket Video Contest. This is a chance to win a total of \$8,000 in cash prizes by creating video PSAs that help encourage adults to wear life jackets. You have until Aug. 1 to enter your 55-second and 25-second videos. Enter at [www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com](http://www.LifeJacketVideoContest.com) and make sure you read and follow the rules. Please Wear It!



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

The Los Angeles District Phoenix office conducted several team-building exercises to celebrate the 247th Engineer's Day June 30 near the Phoenix office.

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# Engineer Day, safety, Construction Partnering Playbook

Hello, SPL Team!

I hope you all had a safe and enjoyable Fourth of July weekend!

A HUGE thank you goes out to all who served on the 2022 Engineer Day Committee and those who volunteered their time and hard work outside the committee. Please know your commitment, dedication and teamwork were instrumental in making the 247th Engineer Day observance and celebration at the end of June such a great event.

It also was an honor to present length-of-service awards for so many members of our Mighty LA District. Many of you work in different areas, so not all those we honored were able to accept their awards in person, but we recognized 92 people with a combined total of 1,715 years of service, including one person for 50 years!

Whether you're new to the Corps or preparing for retirement, you are part of our nation's history. Army engineers played a crucial role in the growth of the young republic — surveying routes for canals and railroads and serving as explorers, surveyors and map makers, who opened the American West.

Today, the Corps is a globally recognized leader in military and civil engineering and



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN  
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

science. It was appropriate that we held the event just down the street from Whittier Narrows Dam, as the Corps' Civil Works mission provides a key foundational component of the nation's public infrastructure that facilitates economic growth, quality of life, environmental health and national security for the American people. Keep up the great work and continue delivering the program!

## SAFETY

Though Army Safety Month was in June, safety is no less important than any other time of the year. Safety should be at the forefront of our minds in all we do, whether on a worksite or after duty hours spending time with friends and family.

It's important to know how to prevent accidents and injuries for yourself and others. Safety is both an individual effort and a team effort. Please understand we are trying to grow a safety culture in our district, as a part of the Corps' Safety and Occupational Health Management System.

I highly encourage you to check out this excellent safety video our SPL Safety Team has created that outlines the steps you and your family can take while on vacation, at home or at celebrations during summer and

beyond: <https://youtu.be/PceFWjzypYA>. Together we can make a difference!

## PARTNERING PLAYBOOK

To paraphrase Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, the Corps' 55th chief of engineers and commanding general, we are not alone when we execute our missions. Our success depends greatly on the strength of the partnerships we build and sustain with our stakeholders — whether those missions are in civil works, contingency operations, military or inter-agency and international programs.

In April, the Corps issued an updated set of standards, actionable guidance, best practices and tools to help you create, sustain and strengthen partnerships in the project-delivery process. This document, called the USACE Construction Partnering Playbook, is at [www.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Partnering](http://www.usace.army.mil/Business-With-Us/Partnering).

I also recommend checking out the latest episode of the "Inside the Castle" podcast, which covers the playbook in depth, at [www.dvidshub.net/audio/69708/inside-castle-talks-usace-construction-project-partnering-playbook](http://www.dvidshub.net/audio/69708/inside-castle-talks-usace-construction-project-partnering-playbook).

As always, thank you for all you do!

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten



David Van Dorpe, outgoing deputy district engineer for the Los Angeles District, left, was selected to serve as the South Pacific Division's program manager/PEO for the Department of Veterans Affairs program. Congratulations to David as he takes on a larger and regional role for the largest DVA program in the Corps!

Justin Gay, the outgoing Mega Projects Division chief, right, is slated to assume the role of district deputy engineer and chief of the Programs and Project Management Division. Congratulations to Justin as he takes on a more prominent role within the district!



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, third from left, joins representatives from the Eastern Municipal Water District, the State Water Resources Control Board, the City of Menifee and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California to “open the valve” on the Perris II Reverse Osmosis Treatment Facility in Menifee, California.

## Corps joins partners to ‘open the valve’ on new desalination facility

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

RIVERSIDE COUNTY, Calif. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined officials from the Eastern Municipal Water District for their grand opening of the newest desalination facility June 23 in Menifee, California.

The Perris II Desalter, as it’s called, uses reverse osmosis to remove salts from the groundwater in the Perris and Menifee areas in Riverside County. It is the third such facility that the EMWD operates, and it is expected to increase capacity by 5.4 million gallons of potable water per day to help ensure basic human health and safety.

Though the Corps is not responsible for the construction of the project, it provided \$10.8 million of funding toward the construction of wells for the facility – as well as in-kind support alongside several other EMWD project partners such as the California Department of Water Resources, the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, the Santa Ana Watershed Project Authority and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

– with the shared goals of helping provide a reliable, potable water supply to the area, preserving existing groundwater resources, and allowing the water district to rely less on imported water sources.

“EMWD is incredibly appreciative of all our program partners who made this day a reality, including the funding agencies that supported this facility,” said Phil Paule, EWMD board president. “We thank everyone who played a part in this facility that will help serve our communities today and for many years to come.”

Due to the state’s historic drought, the Metropolitan Water District has taken measures to conserve water for Southern Californians, like in April when the organization’s board of directors made the unanimous decision to impose mandatory restrictions on outdoor watering for 6 million Southern Californians to once a week.

“This is a historic day for EMWD and for the residents we serve,” Paule added. “As we continue to face water supply challenges throughout California, this facility will further ensure that our area is prepared to meet the

needs of our customers through investments in local water supply sources.”

“I’m proud that the Corps is one of the external agencies that invested heavily in this effort,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, deputy  
[‘DESAL’ continued on Page 5](#)



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, right, Los Angeles District deputy commander, greets Menifee Mayor Bill Zimmerman during the June 23 grand opening of the Perris II Reverse Osmosis Treatment Facility in Menifee, California.

### [‘DESAL’ from Page 4](#)

commander of the Los Angeles District, who added that he was pleased to be able to confidently call the partnership between EMWD and the LA District “an amazing relationship.”

“It’s not uncommon for California to have to endure extended dry periods – like the one we’re in today – and face water-supply challenges,” Beeman said during the event, “so rarely has a system like this that expands local groundwater supplies been more important. I want to express my sincere appreciation for being such great partners as we work together on this vital mission.”

Beeman added, “A complex project like this would be impossible without such strong partnerships.”



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, right, deputy commander of the Los Angeles District, talks with Menifee Mayor Bill Zimmerman, center, and Menifee Mayor Pro Tem Dean Deines during the June 23 grand opening of the Perris II Reverse Osmosis Treatment Facility in Menifee, California.



Eastern Municipal Water District is the water, wastewater service and recycled water provider to nearly 1 million people living and working within a 558-square-mile service area in western Riverside County. It is California’s sixth-largest retail water agency and its mission is: “To deliver value to our diverse customers and the communities we serve by providing safe, reliable, economical and environmentally sustainable water, wastewater and recycled water services.”

# Corps partners with LA County on summer safety videos

STORY AND PHOTOS BY ROBERT DEDEAUX  
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LA COUNTY – The Los Angeles District teamed up with LA County Parks and Recreation May 31 – June 1 to produce videos promoting summer safety.

The joint production, which was shot at the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area in Irwindale and at San Gabriel River hiking trails in Azusa, is the first official collaborative communication effort between the two organizations.

“It’s important because it is our responsibility as public servants to educate the community, so they have a safe and enjoyable time when they come to our facilities,” said District Senior Park Ranger Robert Moreno. “We are really focused on how to be safe in and around the water.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention safety statistics and estimates, drowning is the second leading cause of unintentional injury or death for children 14 and younger, following vehicle accidents. There are more than 3,900 drownings each year in the U.S. That is an average of 11 unintentional drowning deaths per day.

“The Corps and the lake lifeguards have the same mission to serve the public and provide a safe outdoor space for recreating, especially around a water environment,” said LA County Parks and Recreation Senior Lake Lifeguard Oscar Villagomez.

Most of the completed videos, or public service announcements, will focus on water safety – including extensive life jacket information.

“My greatest fear is that parents may drop their defenses and forget how dangerous it is for children to be around water,” said Villagomez, a county employee of more than 20 years. “Drownings happen too often. It’s preventable. We must all do everything we can to make sure a fun day doesn’t become a tragedy.”

In 2019, the U.S. Coast Guard reported 613 boating-related deaths. Seventy-nine percent of these deaths were drownings, and 86 percent of those who drowned were not wearing life jackets.

“This video explains the importance of life jackets, what type of lifejackets to wear, how to properly wear them, and places to find one for free,” Villagomez said.

Most of the videos will be produced in both English and Spanish for the public’s convenience.

“It is important to look at the demographics of Los Angeles County,” said Villagomez, an LA County resident.

The public service announcements will be available on the LA County Parks and Recreation website and several LA District media platforms,



Los Angeles District Park Ranger Annel Monsalvo and LA County Parks and Recreation Senior Lake Lifeguard Oscar Villagomez host a public-service announcement in Spanish during a joint safety video production at Santa Fe Dam Recreational Area June 1 in LA County. The District and the LA County Parks and Recreation partnered to produce bilingual videos to promote safe summer recreation.

including YouTube and other social media sites. In addition to the topic of water safety, one of the PSAs will focus on other summer safety topics, such as hiking safety awareness.

“I look forward to collaborating with our county supporters, so we may continue to provide outstanding service to the recreating public,” said Nicolas Figueroa, LA District park ranger. “We work really close with Parks and Recreation and are happy to be able to partner with them.”

There are six dams and five recreational parks that the Corps operates in the LA County area. LA County Parks and Rec is one of the agencies that lease Corps-operated lakes and dams.

“We really want to get the word out about water safety,” Moreno said.

For more information on drowning prevention: [www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/drowning/facts/index.html).

[More photos on Page 7](#)



LA District Park Ranger Nicolas Figueroa prepares to shoot a safety video at the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Park June 1 in Los Angeles County. Figueroa is the field training officer for new park rangers for LA District and has been with the Corps for almost 19 years.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District public affairs set up lights, camera, audio equipment and rehearse with the lead actress before a video production at the Santa Fe Dam Recreational Park May 31 in LA County. The District and the LA County Parks and Recreation partnered to produce bilingual videos to promote safe summer recreation.



(Above) LA County Parks and Recreation Senior Lake Lifeguard Oscar Villagomez, left, along with Los Angeles District Park Rangers Robert Moreno and Annel Monsalvo, review their scripts for the joint safety video production in Santa Fe Dam Recreational Park June 1 in LA County.

(Left) LA County Parks and Recreation Senior Lifeguard Brittany Orduño poses for a photo during joint safety video production in Santa Fe Dam Recreational Park June 1 in LA County. In addition to being a first-aid first responder, Orduño is also a certified emergency medical technician.

# Sepulveda Basin cleanup

Volunteers organized by the Friends of the LA River picked up trash in the Sepulveda Basin and painted over graffiti on the face of Sepulveda Dam, the side accessible by the public, June 25 in Encino, California.

Two sets of volunteers put on gloves and used grabbers, rakes and shovels to pick up litter, while LA District park rangers were joined by the Los Angeles Police Department to ensure safety in the vast basin. The area saw less litter than the 2021 cleanup.

Photos by John Reese, LA District Public Affairs



(Top left) Corps Park Rangers Jon Tegtmeier, left, and Nicolas Figueroa lift a shopping cart filled with debris into a dumpster June 25 during a cleanup of the Sepulveda Basin in Encino, California.

(Top right) LA District Park Ranger Annel Monsolvo joins a volunteer from Friends of the LA River to show the litter they collected during a June 25 cleanup of the Sepulveda Dam and Basin. Volunteers and park rangers also worked together to clear the graffiti, as seen in other pictures in this two-page photo spread.

(Right) Corps Park Ranger Henry Csaposs paints over graffiti on the face of Sepulveda Dam during a June 25 cleanup of both the dam and basin.



(Top left) Los Angeles District Park Ranger Annel Monsolvo briefs volunteers during a June 25 cleanup of the Sepulveda Dam and Basin in Encino, California.

(Top right) Setup nears completion as LA District park rangers prepare to greet volunteers participating in a cleanup of the Sepulveda Basin. Friends of the LA River and Encino Neighborhood Council are represented under the blue awnings; both groups picked up trash and helped paint over graffiti on Sepulveda Dam. The basin is open to the public with many trails and recreational facilities. It is home to many species of birds during nesting season.

(Middle) Volunteers work together June 25 to pick up litter in the Sepulveda Basin.

(Left) Volunteer Cole Bazemore, wearing a coverall, stretches to paint over a high patch of graffiti on the face of Sepulveda Dam. Bazemore, who works for FEMA, said he just felt like volunteering to improve the community.



# Does Your Life Jacket Fit You Properly?

Life jackets come in sizes to fit babies through larger adults. They are intended to keep you afloat in lakes, rivers, and other bodies of water. Worn correctly, they work!



Life jacket should feel snug, yet comfortable. Lift up on the shoulders to make sure it doesn't slip above your chin or ears.

Check the label for U.S. Coast Guard approval, weight limit, and activity types.

Straps should be pulled tight and not twisted.

All buckles and zipper, if it has one, should be fastened.

Damaged life jackets should be discarded and replaced. Check often for mold, broken parts, holes, tears, and buoyancy.

Infant and some child life jackets have a strap between the legs. Be sure to fasten that for extra protection.



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