

Topping-out ceremony



Photos by Jennifer Rivo

Participants celebrate the placement of the last steel beam on top of the San Diego Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building Oct. 25 at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Health Care System complex in San Diego.

BY LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAN DIEGO — Representatives with the Los Angeles District and their partners celebrated as the last steel beam was placed on top of the San Diego Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building Oct. 25 at the San Diego VA Health Care System complex in San Diego.

Partners included the Department Veterans Affairs Office of Construction and Facilities Management, VA San Diego Healthcare

System, Paralyzed Veterans of America and contractors, Archer Western Federal Joint Venture of San Diego and Cannon Design.

Those present at the steel-topping ceremony were invited to sign the beam prior to its placement, signifying the continued commitment of all of the agencies to support veterans, warfighters and their families.

The more than \$205-million contract for the building was awarded by the Corps' Los Angeles District to Archer West Federal JV

'CEREMONY' continued on Page 2

LA District senior leaders visit sites, meet with partners at several Arizona projects

BY LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PHOENIX — During a weeklong tour in October, LA District senior leaders met with partners and toured several of the district's project sites in Arizona.

From Oct. 24-28, Col. Julie Balten, LA District commander, and Justin Gay, LA District deputy district engineer, along with other Corps' leaders, met with partners in Maricopa County to celebrate the completion of a project restoring the capability of five federally constructed channels; participated in the Arizona Flood Control District Managers meeting with other agencies to discuss potential Water Resources Development Act projects and studies; visited the Corps' Whitlow Dam; met with the Hopi Tribe to discuss flood mitigation on the reservation; and rounded out the week meeting with stakeholders to discuss flood mitigation and control projects in Winslow and Flagstaff.

NEW RIVER DAM OUTLET CHANNEL

The leaders started their weeklong tour by visiting the New River Dam Outlet Channel Oct. 24 in Florence, Arizona, to recognize the completion of a project that restores the capability of five federally constructed channels in Maricopa County under the authority of the Corps' Public Law 84-99.

The repairs to the New River, New River Dam Outlet, Skunk Creek, Cave Creek and Agua Fria River channels began in November 2020 and were completed April 2022 by SWP Contracting & Paving of Arizona through a cooperation agreement with the Corps' LA District and the Maricopa Flood Control District, under the authority of Public Law 84-99.

Public Law 84-99 is the discretionary authority given to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Congress to act and react to

['ARIZONA' continued on Page 4](#)



Photos by Jennifer Rivo

UPPER PHOTO: An event attendee signs his name on a steel beam during a topping-out ceremony Oct. 25 at the San Diego Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Health Care System complex in San Diego. **LOWER PHOTO:** A crane lifts the signed beam away for placement onto the structure.

‘CEREMONY’ from Page 1

of San Diego, headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, in February 2021. The Corps broke ground on the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center in June 2021.

The four-story, 197,000-square-foot building consists of 50 spinal cord injury private inpatient rooms, 33 community living center beds, and outpatient and therapy clinics. The contract also includes a parking structure.

The building is expected to be completed in March 2024, which will increase service capacity and support to veterans in San Diego and Imperial counties.

The Corps’ Los Angeles District

has partnered with the VA San Diego Healthcare System since 2009 and has awarded 23 projects since that time, totaling more than \$83 million.

Nationally, the Corps is supporting 16 major medical facilities for the Department of Veteran’s Affairs, totaling an estimated \$7 billion.

The Los Angeles District is part of the South Pacific Division, which oversees the largest VA design and construction program across the Corps. The Corps’ partnership with the VA in the region includes 13 major projects and an investment of more than \$4.36 billion in updating and upgrading facilities throughout the Pacific Southwest.

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Looking out for each other as we move into the holidays

Hello, SPL Team!

As we enter the holiday season, I wish you all a happy and safe Thanksgiving. I hope this special day gives you all an opportunity to connect with your loved ones, a much-deserved chance to recharge and quality time to reflect on the things in life for which you are grateful.

For me, the theme for November is gratitude. Good times may come and go with the natural ebb and flow of life, but regardless of what we are going through, I believe we can always be grateful for the good people in our lives, the gifts we have and the positive experiences we share.

First and foremost, I am grateful for my family, for whom I owe so much. I would not



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

be where I am today without their support.

I am also extremely grateful to have such amazing people around me – you, the LA District team! I can’t thank each and every one of you enough for everything you do to accomplish our mission of providing world-class project management, engineering, environmental, contracting

and construction services that respond to the needs of the nation, our environment and the communities we serve.

Just as there is strength in numbers, there also is safety in staying connected to the network of supportive people around you – whether that be friends, family members, co-workers or all of the above.

So, as we head into the holiday season,

I encourage you all to stay connected and please reach out to your LA District teammates to let them know they are supported. Not everyone experiences the holidays the same way; some of us may have a more difficult time than others, and that’s why I am so very grateful our district team members are continuously looking out for each other. Please keep it up!

And, as much as we all enjoy the holidays, it’s important to continue keeping safety in mind. Please don’t drink and drive, and be careful on the roadways.

As always, thank you again for your hard work and dedication! Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving!

Sincerely,

Col. Julie A. Balten

Inspiring future leaders



Photo by John Reese

LA District Park Rangers Connie Chan-Le and Henry Csaposs demonstrate the impacts of non-point and point source pollution with a watershed model during the sixth annual Girl Scouts of Orange County STEM Expo Oct. 22 in Irvine, California.



Photo by Robert DeDeaux

Col. Julie Balten, left, Los Angeles District commander, discusses the Rio de Flag flood-control project with City of Flagstaff leaders Oct. 28 in Flagstaff, Arizona.

[‘ARIZONA’ continued from Page 1](#)

emergencies caused by floods, contaminated water sources, droughts or dam failures. The authority allows the Corps to repair and/or rehabilitate any qualified flood-control project (levee), whether it is federally constructed or privately owned.

“It was very exciting to see the work of our Public Law 84-99 actually completed for the five federally constructed levees in Maricopa County,” Balten said. “It was just a fantastic opportunity to meet with our partners in the Maricopa County Flood Control District, and (it was) critical in our partnership to be able to provide and complete that project.”

The request for the repairs stemmed from a storm-related event that occurred in September 2014, when the five channels sustained significant damages in the form of erosion, scour and rip rap displacement.

ARIZONA FLOOD CONTROL DISTRICT MANAGERS MEETING

On Oct. 25, the commander traveled to Florence for the annual Arizona Flood Control District Managers meeting, hosted by the

Flood Control District of Pinal County.

In all, 15 counties were invited to the event, which featured presentations and discussions related to flood-control infrastructure.

“Thank you for coming here,” said Joshua Plumb, Flood Control District assistant county engineer for Pinal County. “This has been extremely valuable for me, as I trust, for all the other participating agencies. It’s nice to have everybody in person this time for one of these.”

During the annual meeting, which is similar to the Seven Counties Flood Control Managers Meeting hosted in November in Los Angeles, Corps and county representatives discussed common-interest issues, including potential Water Resources Development Act projects and studies, emergency assistance procedures, continuing authorities program projects, regulatory programs and permitting.

“This is about partnering,” Balten said. “The more that we share the information and have an understanding, the better we can partner. We’re passionate about these programs and about delivering for your communities. It’s that partnership that’s really vital to us,” she added.

WHITLOW RANCH DAM

Then on Oct. 26, Balten and Gay traveled with members of the LA District’s Operations Division to Whitlow Ranch Dam in Superior, Arizona.

Every year, the Operations Division team travels to dam for two weeks in October for flood-management activities. The team works closely with the town of Queen Valley, which uses the water from the dam for irrigation.

“It’s really great to meet the team out here,” Balten said. “What they do is critically important. They are the face of the district with the community. Not only do they maintain these dams to protect the communities, but they also provide great communication and support to these communities as well. It’s great to know the communities here are very supportive of the Corps’ team that is doing the operations.”

WINSLOW, HOPI TRIBE

The next day — Oct. 27 — the team headed to Winslow to meet with representatives from

[‘ARIZONA’ continued on Page 5](#)

[‘ARIZONA’ continued from Page 4](#)

Navajo County to review plans for the Little Colorado River at Winslow Flood-Risk Reduction project.

The project area includes 4.3 miles of flood-risk reduction levees and improvements, located along the Little Colorado River near Winslow.

“This project will have the biggest of impact of any project in Winslow,” said Tim Westover, Winslow Public Works director. “It would bring life to the city.”

About 5,000 people who live, work and call Winslow home — along with critical infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, nursing homes and utilities, are located within a flood plain and are at the potential risk of flooding.

“I think the importance of today’s meeting reunites the economic impact this project has on the vitality of the people of Winslow,” said Rochelle Lacapa, government relations director for Navajo County. “It provides continuity and demonstrates the Corps’ commitment to the project.”

About \$65 million in funding for this project — announced by the Army in January — is be-

ing received through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act. The bill will provide full funding for the project to complete both its design and construction.

The LA District team is strengthening collaboration and its relationship with the county and the city, as the agency continues to plan for the project’s design, said Darrell Buxton, Civil Works Branch chief with the Corps’ LA District.

“This is a meeting to get all of the stakeholders together to move forward,” added Una Wirkebau, economic development director. “Having face-to-face meetings really helps to move the project. Personal engagement is important because projects don’t happen without relationships.”

Following the meeting and tour at Winslow, the team met with Hopi tribal leaders to discuss flood mitigation on the reservation at the Hopi Tribe headquarters in Kykotsmovi, Arizona.

The Hopi Tribe consists of 14,000 members, has 12 villages spread throughout three mesas with 8,000 people living on the reservation.

“Our last flooding event was in September,

and this is the longest monsoon season,” said Paul Saufkie, Hopi emergency management coordinator. “Now I can see that we are moving forward with a mitigation plan with the Corps.”

RIO DE FLAG FLOOD-CONTROL PROJECT

The last visit of the week took LA District leaders to Flagstaff, where they met with city leaders to discuss the Rio de Flag flood-control project.

According to Jim McCarthy, city council member, the project will prevent flooding of important downtown, residential and Northern Arizona University property.

After severe fires, the city and surrounding area have been subject to flooding from the Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash tributaries. The plan for the project consists of channel modifications, bridge enhancements, and detention basin and floodwall construction.

The LA District has been allocated \$79 million in federal funds for the Rio de Flag project and plans to award the first construction contract for the Lower Rio de Flag and Clay Avenue Wash reaches in 2023.



Photo by Dan Collins

Col. Julie Balten, center, Los Angeles District commander, poses for a picture with members of the LA District Operations Division during an Oct. 26 visit to Whitlow Ranch Dam in Superior, Arizona.

Día de los Muertos community outreach

STORY AND PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Professionals with the LA District, comprising a diverse range of specialties, participated in the Día de los Muertos community event and procession Oct. 25 at the LA River Center and Gardens in LA's Cypress Park neighborhood.

Hundreds of community members attended the event, which was organized by Mujeres de la Tierra, a nonprofit group whose mission is to "inspire, motivate and engage women and their children to take ownership and leadership of their neighborhood and local community issues."

The LA District team provided information and talked to community members of all ages and backgrounds about water safety, environmental concerns, LA River topics, recreation, civil works projects and more. Bobber the Water Safety Dog also made an appearance in the event's procession to connect with children and their families, and to stress the importance of wearing a lifejacket.

LA District representatives included Park Rangers Nick Figueroa and Annel Monsalvo; Grant Adams, project planner with the Coastal Planning Section; and Christopher Solek, chief of the Regional Planning Section in the district's Environmental Resources Branch. Also at the event was Eileen Takata, a former member of the LA District and now an environmental manager with the USACE South Pacific Division, and one of the chief facilitators of the district's participation in the event.

[More photos on Page 7](#)



Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nick Figueroa, right, talks with Diana Macias, who is with her baby, Jackie, during the 2022 Día de los Muertos community event Oct. 25 at the LA River Center and Gardens in LA's Cypress Park neighborhood.



Eileen Takata, right, an environmental manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' South Pacific Division, talks with community members during the 2022 Día de los Muertos community event Oct. 25 at the LA River Center and Gardens in LA's Cypress Park neighborhood.



Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers line up for a Día de los Muertos procession Oct. 25 outside the Cypress Park Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library. From left, foreground: Bobber the Water Safety Dog is joined by Eileen Takata, an environmental manager with the Corps' South Pacific Division, and Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nick Figueroa.



LEFT: Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nick Figueroa, left, and Bobber the Water Safety Dog pose for a photo with a group of young attendees of the 2022 Día de los Muertos procession Oct. 25 outside the Cypress Park Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library.

ABOVE: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' very own Bobber the Water Safety Dog high-fives a participant of the 2022 Día de los Muertos procession Oct. 25 in the Cypress Park neighborhood of Los Angeles.



Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nicolas Figueroa, right, observes fellow Park Ranger Henry Csaposs as he negotiates a relatively steep incline during utility terrain vehicle training Nov. 2 at Whittier Narrows Dam in Montebello, California.

Park rangers take on UTV training

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LA District Park Ranger Nicolas Figueroa led the first interagency operations and safety training on utility terrain vehicles Nov. 2 at the Whittier Narrows Dam area of operations in Montebello, California.

Figueroa provided the training to four district park rangers, a biologist, a natural resources program manager and a Montebello police officer in accordance with Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association Basic Rider's Course standards.

Park rangers, first responders and operations personnel benefit from the use of UTVs because the vehicles enable them to reach remote and often difficult-to-traverse areas to perform their missions. Figueroa said more training sessions are in the works.

[More photos on Page 9](#)



Los Angeles District Senior Park Ranger Robert Moreno, right, performs a maintenance check on a utility terrain vehicle with fellow Park Ranger Henry Csaposs during the district's first interagency operations and safety training on utility terrain vehicles Nov. 2 at the Whittier Narrows Dam area of operations in Montebello, California.

Los Angeles District Park Ranger Nicolas Figueroa, right, introduces the basic components of a utility terrain vehicle to participants of the district's first interagency operations and safety training for UTVs at the Whittier Narrows Dam area of operations in Montebello, California.

Figueroa provided the training to five district park rangers, an LA District biologist and a Montebello police officer in accordance with Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association Basic Rider's Course standards.



LEFT: Brian Paul, natural resources program manager with the Los Angeles District, drives a utility terrain vehicle Nov. 2 during the district's first interagency operations and safety training for UTVs at the Whittier Narrows Dam area of operations in Montebello, California.

BELOW: Los Angeles District Park Rangers Henry Csaposs, left, and Robert Moreno get acquainted with the turning radii of their utility terrain vehicles Nov. 2 during operations and safety training for UTVs at the Whittier Narrows Dam area of operations in Montebello, California.



Deputy talks with cadets at Cal Poly Pomona

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LA DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

POMONA, Calif. — Drawing on what he’s learned throughout his nearly 20 years as an Army engineer officer, Los Angeles District deputy commander Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman spoke with ROTC cadets at California State Polytechnic University Pomona during an Oct. 27 visit to the college.

Beeman, a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona himself, talked with the cadets about how they might use their own skills and education as future engineer officers and the many different paths they could take — such as managing engineering projects, building roads, bridges and airfields, supporting disaster relief and civilian rescue efforts, and even researching alternative engineering technology.

“My main objective was to get them excited about the Engineer Branch and to let them know about the different opportunities and assignments they can expect or could apply for as young engineer officers,” he said.

Beeman said he tailored his presentation for the students who have yet to determine their specific path into the Army or who are still gathering information before submitting their branch preferences — the freshmen, sophomores and juniors, referred to as MS1s, 2s and 3s respectively.

One of those students is MS3 Marcos McGalliard.

“I got a lot of information about how to get into USACE, which is my ultimate goal,” said McGalliard. “Both of my dads’ brothers served in the Corps of Engineers. One of them retired as a brigadier general, and the other one is a retired lieutenant colonel. Learning about those different schools and the things that will make me competitive are probably the most important things I got out of this — like being able to get technical degrees and reimbursement for a (professional engineer license).”

McGalliard is working toward an industri-



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman, left, LA District deputy commander, talks with California State Polytechnic University Pomona ROTC cadet and sophomore Jax Bond during Beeman’s Oct. 27 visit to the school.

Photo by Stephen Baack

al engineering degree, which he said focuses more on systems analysis.

“I know that the Army is more focused on construction, but the fact that they accept all types of engineering and that they will teach you no matter what — whether you are a construction engineer or not — about construction, then that would be a great opportunity for me,” McGalliard said. “Going into engineering in the Army is going to give me that knowledge of how to do construction, so it will build upon what I’ve learned here.”

— Lt. Col. Jeffrey Beeman,
LA District deputy commander

Additionally, many of the cadets in the room were not even majoring in engineering, something Beeman said “didn’t impact my presentation at all.”

“For the Engineer Regiment, less than half of the engineer officers actually have hard en-

gineering degrees,” Beeman said. “Although an engineering degree is a plus for leading construction platoons and construction-heavy battalions, we still have a major focus in the Engineer Regiment on combat engineering capabilities. What the Engineer Branch needs and is looking for are the best leaders who can solve problems, who inspire their Soldiers and lead their formations.”

Beeman called the Engineer Branch “a phenomenal deal” as an option for young Army officers.

“The takeaway for the students is that, whether they want to have a successful career focusing on the Army’s operational mission or they want to succeed in a more technical role in the Corps, I wanted to impart upon them that they have the ability to choose their career paths and chart their own destiny.”

In addition to his bachelor’s in civil engineering from Cal Poly Pomona, Beeman also holds a master’s in engineering management from Missouri University of Science and Technology, and a master’s in construction management from the University of Hawaii.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Project Engineer David Silvertooth, left, and Quality Assurance Representative Clinton Griffin look out over a construction-reinforced embankment designed to protect critical infrastructure against flooding Oct. 5 in Duncan, Arizona. The embankment protects the town’s wastewater treatment station from similar flooding events.

LA District protects critical infrastructure during flood fight in Duncan, Arizona

STORY AND PHOTO BY ROBERT DEDEAUX
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DUNCAN, Ariz. — The small eastern Arizona town of Duncan, home to about 800 people, suffered damage to homes and critical infrastructure after the Gila River flooded in late August.

The severe flooding led the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District to build a reinforced embankment to protect a wastewater treatment station in the town Oct. 3-14.

“This project will prevent damage to the treatment facility from similar flood events,” said David Silvertooth, a district project engineer. “We are providing protection to a critical public infrastructure using emergency management authority Public Law 84-99.”

Under Public Law 84-99, Emergency Re-

sponse to Natural Disasters, the Corps can provide both emergency technical and direct assistance in response to flood and coastal storms, such as hurricanes and nor’easters.

Duncan Town Manager Terry Hinton said that after talking with Silvertooth about the Corps’ emergency management process and policies, he felt comfortable about the project.

“I think what the Corps is doing out there is good for protecting the plant,” Hinton said. “There were a couple of levees near the wastewater plant that washed away, and it got dangerously close to taking out the treatment station. I think another flood event would have taken it out.”

Although the major storm and flooding happened Aug. 22, the soil around the Gila River remained saturated for about two months. Intermittent storms continued to

threaten homes and wash away roads.

On Oct. 4, the Corps’ second day of construction, morning rain shut down roads and the project site. Hinton described road conditions during the safety standdown.

“Today, they suspended the work because of the rainstorms,” Hinton said. “The roads were slick and muddy, and you have all of these trucks carrying these heavy rocks. It’s easy to tip over.”

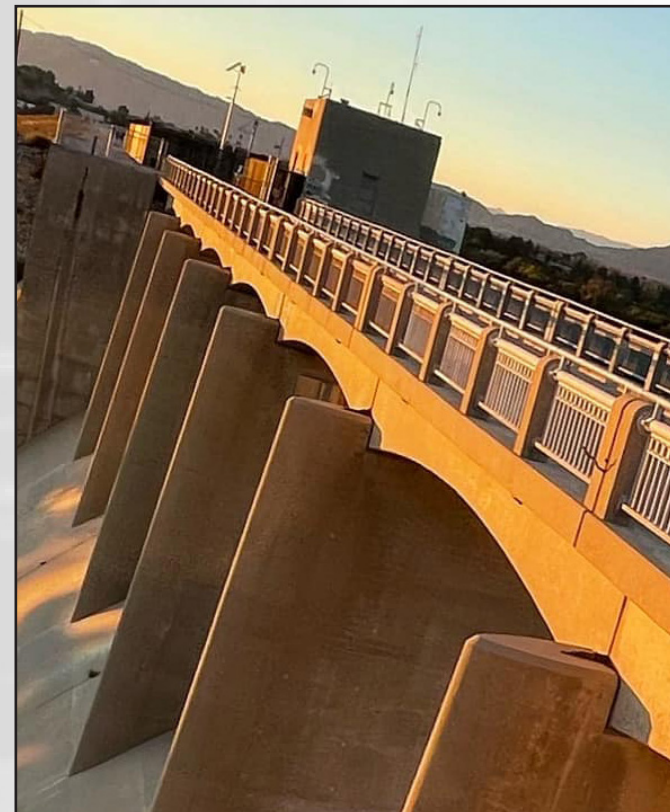
Despite the storms, the district completed its mission to deliver bold solutions to serve and strengthen all communities, by completing the reinforced embankment around the town’s wastewater treatment station Oct. 14.

“I’m happy that we could protect critical public infrastructure for the town of Duncan,” Silvertooth said.

Outreach at Hansen Dam

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Los Angeles District Park Rangers Connie Chan-Le and Annel Monsalvo represented the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at the American Heroes Air Show Nov. 12 at the Hansen Dam area in Pacoima, California. The park rangers joined more than two dozen agencies, which included law enforcement and fire services, medical, public safety, military, disaster relief and animal rescue organizations, at this helicopter-only air show attended by hundreds of people of all ages. Chan-Le and Monsalvo talked with about 400 visitors at their booth throughout the day, telling them all about the Corps, its missions and how to be part of the workforce, and handed out fun, educational materials to families.



LEFT: Los Angeles District Park Ranger Annel Monsalvo, left, gives educational materials to 5-year-old Xol Kuykendall and his mom Noramay during the American Heroes Air Show Nov. 12 at the Hansen Dam area in Pacoima, California.

ABOVE: Hansen Dam just before sunset Nov. 12.



A helicopter takes off during the American Heroes Air Show Nov. 12 at the Hansen Dam area in Pacoima, California.



Los Angeles District Park Ranger Connie Chan-Le talks to three young visitors to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' community outreach booth Nov. 12 during the American Heroes Air Show at the Hansen Dam area in Pacoima, California.

Department of Interior assistant secretary meets with LA-area Urban Waters Federal Partnership reps

PHOTOS BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District hosted a Nov. 3 meet-and-greet at Lewis-MacAdams Riverfront Park for LA-area representatives of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership during a visit from Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Tanya Trujillo to the Los Angeles River and Southern California.

UWFP partner agencies, many of which were represented during the event, include the Environmental Protection Agency, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Housing and Urban Development, National Parks Service, National Weather Service, Department of Transportation, Bureau of Reclamation, Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey.

The Urban Waters Federal Partnership, an EPA initiative, is designed to reconnect urban communities, particularly those that are overburdened or economically distressed, with their waterways by improving coordination among federal agencies. The Partnership also collaborates with community-led revitalization efforts to improve the nation's water systems and promote their economic, environmental and social benefits.



Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Tanya Trujillo speaks with LA-area representatives of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership during her Nov. 3 meet-and-greet at Lewis-MacAdams Riverfront Park beside the Los Angeles River.



Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior Tanya Trujillo, fifth from right in the front row, joins LA-area representatives of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership for a photo during her Nov. 3 meet-and-greet at Lewis-MacAdams Riverfront Park beside the Los Angeles River.



Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, front right, discusses the successful completion of a flood-control project for Maricopa County with Michael Fulton, left, director of the Maricopa County Flood Control District, during an Oct. 25 visit to the New River Dam Outlet Channel in Florence, Arizona.

Corps, Maricopa County leaders celebrate completion of repairs to 5 federally constructed channels in Arizona

STORY AND PHOTO BY ORVILLE "DAN" COLLINS
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

PHOENIX – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District leaders visited the New River Dam Outlet Channel Oct. 24 in Florence, Arizona, to recognize the completion of a project that restores the capability of five federally constructed channels in Maricopa County.

The repairs to the New River, New River Dam Outlet, Skunk Creek, Cave Creek and Agua Fria River channels began in November 2020 and were completed April 2022 by SWP Contracting & Paving of Arizona through a cooperation agreement between the Corps' LA District and the Maricopa Flood Control District, under the authority of Public Law 84-99.

Public Law 84-99 is the discretionary authority given to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by Congress to act and react to emergencies caused by floods, contaminated water sources, droughts or dam failures. The authority allows the Corps to repair and/or rehabilitate any qualified flood control project (levee), whether it is federally constructed or privately owned.

"It was very exciting to see the work of our Public Law 84-99 actually completed for the five federally constructed levees in Maricopa County," said Col. Julie Balten, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District commander. "It was just a fantastic opportunity to meet with our partners in the Maricopa County Flood Control District, and (it was) critical in our partnership to be able to provide and complete that project."

The request for the repairs stemmed from a storm-related event that occurred in September 2014, when the five channels sustained significant

damages in the form of erosion, scour and rip rap displacement.

In addition to repairing the projects to their pre-damaged condition, Maricopa County requested that the Corps of Engineers design and construct a vehicle access ramp that didn't previously exist for the New River Dam Outlet Channel. The ramp was considered a "betterment" to the project, which is allowed under PL 84-99 authority.

"Maricopa County asked us if we could, as part of the project, design and construct a ramp down into the bed of the New River Channel levy," Balten said. "We were able to use contributed funds and put that in as part of the project, which was a great feature for them to be able to easily access that channel and now be able to maintain it with much greater ease and ability."

The repairs restored the federal channels to their original conveyance capacity, reducing flood risk for residents in Maricopa County.

"Walking the site really gave us the perspective of the importance of that levy coming from a dam outlet and being able to basically channelize any flood control waters," Balten added. "The project is going to then be able to really restore the level of flood protection for that levy and the community surrounding it."

The Corps' Emergency Management Branch will continue to coordinate closely with Maricopa County officials to close out the project and ensure the rehabilitated projects perform as designed.

The video about the completion of the project can be viewed at: US-ACE Partnership with Flood Control District of Maricopa County.

LA District, counties meet to collaborate on flood-risk management, share best practices



Col. Julie Balten, Los Angeles District commander, right, welcomes a group of directors from flood-risk management agencies representing seven Southern California counties during the Seven County Flood Control Directors Meeting Nov. 9 at the district headquarters building in downtown LA.

BY LOS ANGELES DISTRICT
PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

LOS ANGELES – Directors from flood-risk management agencies representing seven Southern California counties met for the Seven County Flood Control Directors Meeting Nov. 9 at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District headquarters in downtown LA.

Col. Julie Balten, the Corps' LA District commander, and Justin Gay, LA District deputy district engineer, welcomed the group.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the Corps' partners with the latest information about flood-risk management programs and operations, including emergency assistance procedures, regulatory programs and permitting, as well as address matters of concern and interest from each respective county.

Discussions included an overview of some

of the Corps' planning, studies and programs, as well as the Corps' availability during flood fights; status of the Levee and dam safety programs; Section 408 and Section 404 permit updates, Waters of the U.S. information and infrastructure permitting plan; debris cleanup processes along Corps-owned and operated dams and channels; and a 2022-2023 Winter update from the LA District's Hydrology and Hydraulics Branch.

Representatives from the seven counties – Los Angeles, Santa Barbara, Orange, Riverside, Ventura, San Diego and San Bernadino, along with Corps and the National Association of Flood and Stormwater Management Agencies – NAFSMA – were present.

NAFSMA is an organization of public agencies with the function of protecting lives, property and economic activity from the adverse impacts of storm and flood waters. According to

its website, the mission of NAFSMA is to advocate public policy, encourage technologies and conduct education programs that facilitate and enhance the achievement of the public service function of its members.

In addition to allowing the Corps to be transparent about its programs and operations, the annual meeting is a way for those involved to collaborate and discuss programs that impact their communities. It's also a way for the various county representatives to familiarize themselves with key Corps' staff and each other.

Discussions during the meeting also included working with the Corps' headquarters on a potential pilot program for 408 permits to streamline the process.

The overall goal of the annual meeting is continued communication and collaboration with local partners to keep communities safe.

CULTURAL
AWARENESS



OBSERVANCE

National American Indian Heritage Month



FACTS

November is National American Indian Heritage Month (NAIHM). The Department of Defense (DoD) joins the Nation in recognizing the rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories of American Indians and Alaskan Natives.

This year's theme is Celebrating: Respect, Culture and Education.

NAIHM's origin began when Cherokee American Indian J. C. Elliott-High Eagle authored the legislation for American Indian Awareness Week. It was signed in 1976, making October 10-16 the first official week of national recognition for the American Indian since the Nation's founding.

This set a precedent which was followed by later public laws that expanded the observance to what we now know as National American Indian Heritage Month.

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs there are 574 federally recognized tribes.

Did you know? In 2022, Mary Peltola, who's from the Yup'ik tribe, made history as Alaska's first woman and Indigenous representative in the U.S. Congress. This fall, U.S. Marine Corps pilot Nicole Aunapu Mann is set to become the first American Indian woman to go to space as part of NASA's new crew to the International Space Station. Mann is a Wailacki tribal member from the Round Valley Indian Tribes in Northern California.

This month we celebrate American Indian and Alaska Natives who have served with great honor, dedication and distinction.

They have built a legacy of courage, professionalism, and selfless service that will inspire future generations.