



U.S. ARMY



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
New England District

YANKEE ENGINEER

Volume 56, No. 1, October 2023

BUILDING STRONG®



Volunteers, New England District
celebrate National Public Lands Day

See story on page 4

Yankee Voices

Participants of the West Hill Dam clean up Sept. 30



Welcome

...to the newest member of the New England District Office of Counsel team, **Sheena Wandera**. Wandera's last position was with the Defense Contract Management Agency (DCMA). Prior to DCMA, she worked in the private sector as a litigation attorney.

Wandera graduated from Montclair State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Communication Studies. In 2016, she graduated from The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law, during which time she interned at the Supreme Court of the United States.

While Wandera's primary focus will be assisting clients on procurement and litigation, she will likely be working on the gamut of USACE-related legal matters. She can be reached at Sheena.M.Wandera@usace.army.mil.



Photo by Brian Murphy

The Honorable Michael Connor (left) and Col. Justin Pabis receive a briefing on the canal bridges from project manager Craig Martin.

ASA visits New England District projects

The Honorable Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works visited the New England District, Sept. 19-20. Mr. Connor first stopped at Boston Harbor to discuss the upcoming Coastal Storm Risk Management Study.

Mr. Connor then visited the Sandwich, Massachusetts, dredging and beach renourishment site to observe a Beneficial Use project in action.

Next, he toured the Cape Cod Canal to discuss the plans for bridge replacement and transfer to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Finally, Mr. Connor visited the New Bedford Hurricane Protection barrier to observe the ongoing Vineyard Wind turbine assembly operations and talk about component passage through the barrier. *(Executive Office contribution)*

Words worth repeating

"We must either learn to live together as brothers, or we are all going to perish together as fools."

— *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

YANKEE ENGINEER is an authorized unofficial Army newspaper under provisions of AR 360-1 published monthly. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions from readers are solicited, but publication depends on judgment of the editor. No payment will be made for contributions. Published by the Public Affairs Office, New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 696 Virginia Road, Concord MA 01742-2751, 978-318-8777. Printed by the offset method on recyclable paper by the Defense Printing Office in Philadelphia, Pa. Circulation 1600. The YANKEE ENGINEER can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/news/yankee.htm>. ON THE COVER: Park Ranger James Higgins and volunteers perform cleanup work at Buffumville Dam in Massachusetts.



District Commander: Col. Justin R. Pabis, PE
Chief, Public Affairs: Elizabeth D. Gosselin
Editor: Ann Marie R. Harvie
Media Relations Officer: Bryan Purtell
Community Relations Advisor: Vacant
Web Content Manager: Linnea Shirley

Commander's Corner:

Hispanic Heritage Month - Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power and Progress in America

by **Col. Justin R. Pabis, PE**
New England District Commander

Hispanic Heritage Month runs from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. This year's theme is, "Latinos: Driving Prosperity, Power and Progress in America."

This is the only observance that starts in the middle of the month instead of the beginning. The reason is because Sept. 15 is the day Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua celebrate their Independence Day. Mexico celebrates its independence shortly afterwards on Sept. 16, and Chile on Sept. 18. Oct. 12 is significant because it is celebrated across Spain and Latin America as the Day of Hispanic Heritage.

Hispanic culture can be found in all aspects of American life – in food, entertainment, sports, and our military.



Hispanic Heritage Month gives us the opportunity to recognize and appreciate the contributions of Hispanic American Soldiers, Army Civilians and family members, who live by the core Army values every day.

Hispanic Americans have an honorable record of military service dating all the way back to the Revolutionary War. They have made significant contributions to our Army and nation. Forty-four Hispanic American Army Soldiers have been awarded the Medal of Honor, the first going to Boston Native Joseph DeCastro, who served in the 19th Massachusetts Infantry and fought in the Civil War.

Today, more than 163,912 Hispanic Americans serve in the Total Army and 1,844 serve in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. I am appreciative of the contributions made by our Hispanic New England District teammates, and I thank each of you for all the important work you do each day.

Celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month

by **Elliott Ashby**
Equal Employment Opportunity Officer

National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) is observed annually across the United States each October. The theme for NDEAM 2023 is, "Advancing Access and Equity." This theme highlights the importance of removing barriers to employment for people with disabilities and providing equal opportunities to succeed in the workforce.

The U.S. government observes NDEAM to educate personnel concerning disability employment and to recognize the valuable contributions of workers with disabilities. Enacted 50 years ago, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits discrimination based on disability in programs conducted by federal agencies, in programs receiving federal financial assistance, in federal employment, and in the employment practices of federal contractors.

While great progress has been made in establishing DoD as a model employer for individuals with disabilities, more work must be done to ensure equitable access to

employment opportunities.

At least 12 percent of DoD civilian employees are individuals with disabilities and two percent are individuals with manifest disabilities who often face significant barriers to employment. I encourage each of you to renew your efforts to provide a workplace that is both accessible and inclusive for such workers. To assess and advance current accessibility measures, take advantage of DoD's many accessibility programs, including those in your Component and the Department's Computer/Electronics Accommodation Program (<https://www.cap.mil>). Finally, I challenge leaders to actively promote opportunities to employ qualified individuals with disabilities.

USACE remains committed to increasing employment opportunities for qualified individuals with disabilities by removing barriers of inaccessibility. Join us in providing a more inclusive workforce that fosters an environment where all people are recognized for their abilities and valued for their contributions.

District projects celebrate Public Lands Day with cleanups

Buffumville Lake/Hodges Village Dam and West Hill Dam all held cleanup events at their projects to celebrate National Public Lands Day (NPLD).

Buffumville/Hodges held their event on Sept. 24.

“We had a total of 52 volunteers and five Ranger staff for the event,” said Angela Erskine, Park Ranger, Buffumville Lake/Hodges Village Dam. “Our workday projects included a fishing platform rebuild, wood chip dispersal for erosion on the park peninsula, picnic table staining, trail trash picks with Cub Scouts and an Enduro track rehabilitation at Hodges Multiple Use area.”

The team members who participated

that day were Project Manager Nicole Giles, and Park Rangers James Higgins, Angela Erskine, Aidan Buck and Noah Tyler.

West Hill Dam spread out their celebration through the week of Sept. 30, delaying their original event due to Tropical Storm Ophelia. Volunteers who participated at the West Hill Dam event totaled 50. Many came when they could during the week to get their improvement projects completed.

“One scout came earlier in the week when he had parents available so Trevor Horan and volunteers from Troop 1122 performed restoration and upgrades to the to the scout camping area,” said Park Ranger Viola Bramel.

Bramel and scout adult volunteers participated in West Hill Dam’s event.

Jason Comisky, Troop 4 of Milford, Massachusetts arrived with this patrol earlier in the week for the final installation of a beach glider and foundation at the park. Joshua Maillet, also of Troop 4, brought a work detail to assist him with foundation work and to start a new beach glider at the dam picnic/shelter area.

In addition to scout troops performing work around West Hill, Strickland Wheelock, a volunteer from the Rhode Island Audubon, held a bird banding event with Outdoor Explorers and Junior Rangers to record bird migrant population.



Park Ranger James Higgins, assisted by volunteers, rebuild a fishing platform at Buffumville Lake.

Photo by Angela Erskine

It has been an annual tradition for New England District projects to participate in NPLD. Buffumville and West Hill Dam have held events for decades.

According to the National Park Service, established in 1994 and held annually on the fourth Saturday in September, National Public Lands Day is traditionally the nation's largest single-day volunteer effort. It celebrates the connection between people and green space in their community, inspires environmental stewardship, and encourages use of open space for education, recreation, and health benefits.



West Hill Dam photo.

Jason Comisky, Troop #4, Milford Massachusetts (right) and an assistant perform the final installation of a bleacher and foundation at the West Hill Dam park.



Photo by Angela Erskine

Volunteers complete wood chip spreading at Buffumville Lake.



Bikers stop by the bird banding event at West Hill Dam.

West Hill Dam photo.



Volunteers prepare to do trail work at Buffumville Lake.

Photo by Angela Erskine

New England District completes Bucks Harbor waterline

The waterline project at the Bucks Harbor Former Air Force Tracking Station (AFRTS) in Machiasport, Maine is complete and bringing clean drinking water to the residents living along Howard Mountain thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers New England District the Downeast Correctional Facility (DCF) and the Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Contaminants detected in the water made it necessary to construct the waterline. The project was completed under the New England District's Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP), Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) program.

"The Bucks Harbor site was used between 1954 and 1984 as an AFRTS for protection against hostile aircraft," said Project Manager Marie Wojtas. "While the AFRTS was in operation, toxic solvents were reportedly used, including trichloroethene (TCE) and tetrachloroethene (PCE) for maintenance and cleaning operations."

Part of the property is now owned by the state of Maine Department of Corrections and used for a minimum-security prison known as the Downeast Correctional Facility (DCF). The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) currently owns the remainder of the property.

Investigations performed in 1995 by the New England District determined those solvents were disposed of on the ground surface at various locations and consequently found in the groundwater.

"As a result of those investigations, point of entry treatment systems (POET) were installed in the homes at residential locations where groundwater was contaminated," said Wojtas. "The residential POET systems are essentially filters which use vessels filled with granular activated carbon (GAC) to remove organic contaminants from water."

Between 1995 and 2017, USACE completed the investigation phase of the project. The investigation included removing the underground and above ground storage tanks, soil excavation, installing monitoring wells, sampling monitoring wells and residential wells, installing POET systems for contaminated water supplies, and completing project reports such as the site inspection, the remedial investigation, proposed plan, and decision document.

In May 2017 a project decision document identified the need to provide an alternate water supply to impacted residents.

"The alternate water supply was to include the extension of the waterline from the public water system well which is served by the DCF," said Wojtas.

The District awarded a \$170,000 contract to Colby Company LLC for the design and construction of a water



Photos provided by Colby Company LLC

A waterline is installed at Bucks Harbor to bring clean drinking water to residents.

supply distribution system extension and treatment system upgrade. CCI Energy and Construction Services received a \$1.5 million design and build contract award to upgrade the DCF water supply and to install the waterline extension – to include 5,400 feet of excavation from the DCF to five existing residences, plus the capacity of up to 10 residences, that have contaminated water.

"The project included upgrades to the existing public water supply including upgrades to the mechanical and electrical infrastructure, general building repairs, addition of a GAC filtration system, upgrade of existing chlorination system, and modification of the well to a non-confined space condition," said Wojtas.

The design documents for the project were completed in January 2018, but the project hit a roadblock when DCF suddenly closed in February 2018 and the contract was terminated. The Maine Department of Corrections renovated and re-opened the facility and later the District contracted WSP USA Environment and Infrastructure to review the 2018 design documents and update them. The contract also included administrative support and advice during construction.

A \$3 million construction contract was awarded to CCI Facility Contractors in 2021 to complete construction of the waterline extension and treatment system upgrades for the DCF public water supply and the work was completed in September 2023. The District and MDOC have a memorandum of agreement regarding the operation and maintenance of agreement regarding the operation and maintenance of the treatment system and the waterline extension.

“Groundwater monitoring, which began in 1995, will continue with samples being collected annually,” said Wojtas.

DERP/FUDS is a Congressionally directed program (PL 98-212) that provides for an expanded effort in environmental restoration. It emphasizes the identification, investigation and cleanup of hazardous and toxic waste; unexploded ordnance; and unsafe buildings, structures and debris at current and former military facilities. One hundred and eighty-one formerly used defense sites have been identified in Maine. Site and project eligibility investigations at 181 sites are now complete, including 93 where no work was found to be necessary.

The DCF and Ivar McLeod, project manager for the Maine DEP, contributed to the successful creation completion of the project. In addition to Wojtas, other New England District



The contractor digs a trench to run the waterline.

team members who worked on the project include Kathy Miller, project chemist, Dan Folan, project geologist, Grace Greenberg, project risk assessor; Lee Thibodeau, Design Civil engineering section chief; Gary Morin and Heather Sullivan, FUDS program managers; Susanne Grant Devens Resident Office (DRO) Chief, Travis Dancewick and Bill Phelan DRO project engineers.



View of GAC tanks area.

Dredging up the past



Park Ranger Jason Tremblay supervises as a child works on a bird box during National Public Lands Day in this September 1998 photo.