

# Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

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## St. Paul District makes progress in Fargo/Moorhead

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US Army Corps  
of Engineers®

St. Paul District



**(cover)** April Erickson, contracting officer representative, talks to the contractor superintendent on the Interstate-29 borrow ditch bridge in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 20. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



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Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be mailed or emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

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## Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson

Teammates,

It's been a few months since we last published *Crosscurrents* and what a few months it has been. If you remember back to the spring we had water everywhere, I mean, literally, everywhere.

The rivers in the north were full and the Mississippi was roaring. In a few months' time, the cross-currents that made boating dangerous dissipated and the river slowly dropped. Our sister districts in New Orleans, Vicksburg, and Memphis are now searching for water and hoping for rain. We could all use a little rain.

What does low water mean for us? Well, it means that our dedicated sand reclamation and survey crews have been extraordinarily busy. The mighty Dredge Goetz, under the steady hand of Captain Brian Krause, has been in and around Rock Island and St. Louis districts for months to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel. The maintenance and repair section, under the leadership of Chris Stai, chief of maintenance and repair, has been "bouncing" around the Upper Mississippi River trying to manage

hot spots (or low spots) so that we can keep commerce moving.

His teams have also done some outstanding work with both the programs and planning divisions. They continue to impress me with their work ethic and attention to detail (check out the big bird nest near Buffalo Slough Island if you want proof). Maintenance and Repair is also keeping our vintage locks and dams serviceable with the help of the lock equipment repairers.

All this river fuss has led to a decrease in commercial river traffic. For the barges that are still moving, they are being light loaded so as not to draw too much water (river speak for snag the bottom or just run aground).

The Coast Guard has been busy as well; low water and shifting sand makes for a wandering channel and the need to adjust navigational markers.

Fear not...just follow Dan Cottrell, channel maintenance manager, and his weekly channel guide. Not to be confused with the *TV Guide*. Both help navigate

channels, but one did not work well when wet.

Light river traffic also means that our lock and dam crews have not been as busy on the wall, but with the backlog of maintenance, Sam Mathiowetz, chief of locks and dams, is keeping his teams busy. Whether we lock one or 10 a day, our teams work around the clock. Low water also forced a river cruise line to stop short of the Twin Cities. If you missed the Viking or American Cruise Line ships this season, don't fret, they will be back next year. You can also check out our social media; Shannon Bauer, chief of public affairs, and her team captured the best moments of 2022 and even caught a glimpse of the newest Viking Cruise ship on its maiden voyage.

Though low water has impacted navigation on the Great River, it has had less of an effect on our flood control dams and recreation areas. That is a far cry from the spring when we were at capacity. Speaking of at capacity, this year was another record year for the recreation and natural resources branch.



Randy Urich, chief of recreation and natural resources, and his team of rangers and resource specialists used the mild temperatures and dry days to complete overdue maintenance, tidy up the lakes, entertain visitors with interpretive displays and educational demonstrations, and complete some ongoing construction.

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## Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson

### Story continued from Page 3

The Lac qui Parle Dam (French for “the lake that speaks”) is nearing completion and the spillway renovation contract is moving forward.

Big Sandy Lake Dam is expecting visitors in the spring which will be infinitely more than they had last year. Now that the dam rehabilitation is almost done, springtime guests will again get to tour the oldest lock and dam on the Mississippi River. Want to stay with Randy and his team for the night? Check out [www.recreation.gov](http://www.recreation.gov). You can book 6 months in advance.

Another team that is benefitting from the dry weather is our Western Area Office in Fargo, North Dakota. The Fargo Moorhead Metropolitan Area Diversion project is moving along on schedule. Terry Williams, our fearless Fargo program delivery team leader, has a great group of district employees working side by side to shepherd that project along. The diversion channel in the north is also underway. If we have a mild winter, we may be able to get ahead. Fingers crossed. Based

on the conditions outside my window, I think the cold is here to stay.

There is so much to talk about in our district right now, but I am running out of paper.

In closing, it has been a wonderful first six months in command, and I am truly honored to be your 67th commander. I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season. I wish you good fortune, great health, and most importantly, the wisdom to always make great decisions. We have a big program ahead of us and each of you is critical in helping the team realize our full potential. Stay safe, stay healthy, and continue to look out for one another.

Respectfully,

Col. Eric R. Swenson

P.S. I almost forgot, our district recently awarded the first Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program ecosystem project contract. This is big news! Thanks to Kim Warshaw, project manager, and her team for the hard work in getting that done.



St. Paul District Commander Col. Eric Swenson and Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Robert Wilkins stand with a Veterans Day flag from kindergartners of Eagle Elementary, Fargo, North Dakota, Nov. 8. USACE St. Paul District photo by Barb Griffin

## St. Paul District makes progress in Fargo/Moorhead

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District reached another milestone in its efforts to reduce flood risk to more than 235,000 people in the greater Fargo, North Dakota / Moorhead, Minnesota metro area.

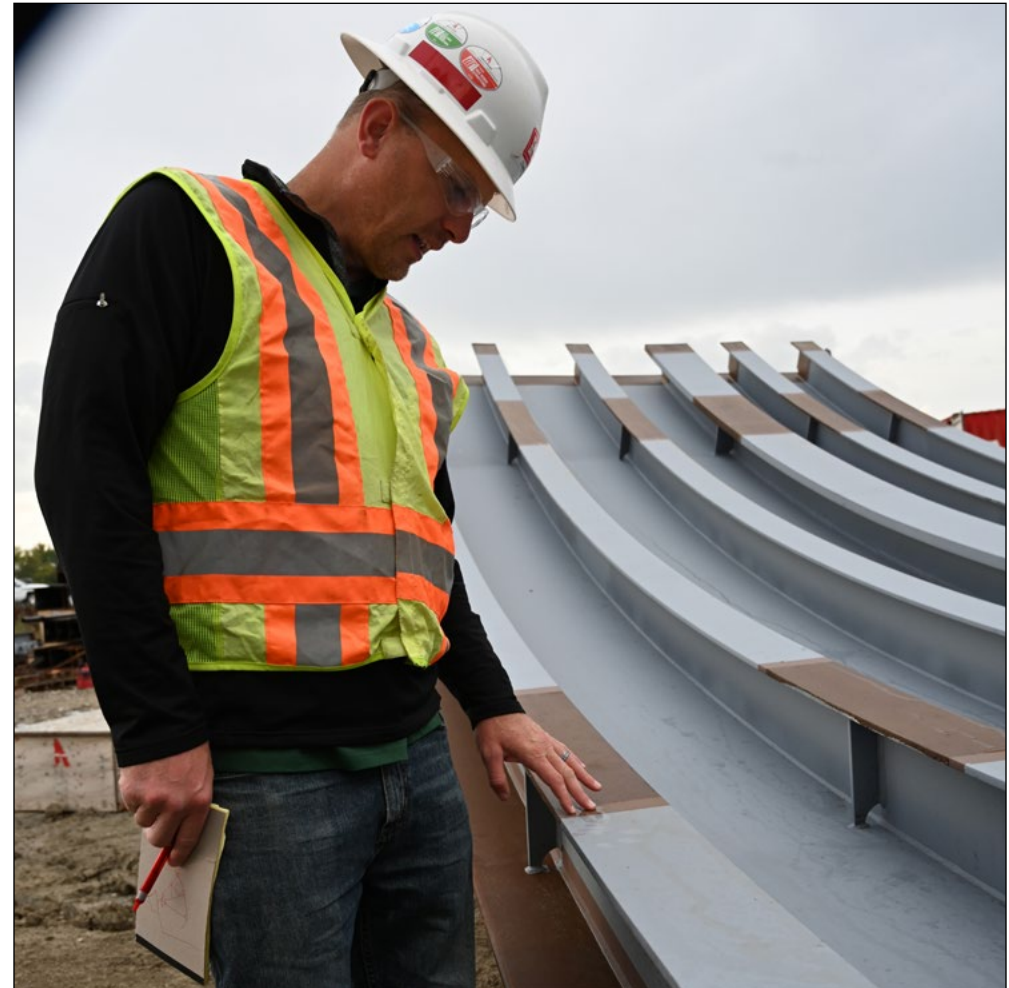
The Corps of Engineers contractor, Ames Construction from Burnsville, Minnesota, installed the first of two Tainter gates at the Wild Rice Structure near Horace, North Dakota, Sept. 19. The gate was hoisted by a crane and was welded to strut arms that anchor the gate to the concrete structure, said Duane Perkins, technical lead engineer for the project.

Perkins said the gates will be used during a flood event to reduce the amount of water that enter the cities of Fargo and Moorhead. He added that the excess flood water from the Wild Rice River, as well as the Red River of the North would then be diverted to a 30-mile-long channel the runs on the west side of the cities before reconnecting to the Red River of the North downstream of Fargo and Moorhead.

Speaking about the significance of the milestone at the site, Per-

kins said, “This is another piece of the bigger puzzle to reduce the flood risk to the community.” He added that the Tainter gates were fabricated over the past two years in northwest Alabama and was excited to finally see that work come to fruition and see the gates get rotated into place. “We started the design on this project in 2017,” Perkins said. After several challenges, he said it was an amazing experience to be able to see what was once just a drawing become something that is permanent and will ultimately help reduce flood risk to the community.

Richard Tollefson, contracting officer’s representative for the Wild Rice Structure, said each Tainter gate weighs approximately 140,000 pounds. He said with the first of two Tainter gates being installed at the site, the team is essentially halfway through completing the Wild Rice Structure. Tollefson added that it was cool experience to tour the factory and see raw steel on a floor to now seeing that same steel fabricated into Tainter gates that are being installed on the structure. “I had a smile on my face watching the gates get raised,” he said.



*Duane Perkins, technical engineer lead for the Fargo/Moorhead Metro Area Diversion project examines a paint coating on a piece of a Tainter gate that was erected at the Wild Rice Structure near Horace, North Dakota, Sept. 19. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes*

## Navigation and restoration projects provide value

Story by Melanie Peterson

The Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program, or NESP, is a long-term program of navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration for the Upper Mississippi River System. The program spans three Corps of Engineers districts: St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis.

### History

In 1986, the Upper Mississippi River System was declared by Congress as a “nationally significant ecosystem and a nationally significant commercial navigation system.” This led to a navigation study in 1990 that looked at the constraints of the navigation system and the effect of increasing locks to allow bigger locks and improve efficiencies in the navigation system, according to Terry Birkenstock, chief of regional planning and environment division north.

In 1993, The Upper Mississippi River - Illinois Waterway System Navigation Feasibility Study was initiated to further study waterway improvements.

“During these studies, there was controversy from the environmental community,” Birkenstock said. “They wanted equal expenditure on ecosystem and navigation, so they agreed to collaborate and attend the public meetings.”

Coupled with recommendations from the National Research Council and based on input from a federal agency task force, the study was restructured in 2001 with the goal of an environmentally sustainable navigation system that ensured efficient transportation for the future. The report was finalized and signed in 2004.

In 2007, Congress authorized NESP in the Water Resources Development Act, Title VIII. The first dual-purpose program of its kind to enhance and improve the Upper Mississippi River System.

“After that, it was on the back burner,” Birkenstock said. “Industry and other organizations have been lobbying Congress for years to fund construction and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, or BIL, finally made it happen. The appropriations from the law,

signed in January, will propel projects to modernize navigation on the Upper Mississippi River System and restore the environment.

### Implementation

With money coming in from the BIL there’s a lot of potential for future environmental projects said Kimberly Warshaw, project manager. The St. Paul District awarded the Pool 2 Wing Dam Modification project in December, which was the first ecosystem restoration program under NESP.

Warshaw said there are two more projects that could start construction as soon as 2025: the Pool 3 Northern Sturgeon Lake project and the Wacouta Bay project. Both these projects will also include collaboration with engaged partners, Prairie Island Indian Community and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources for Sturgeon Lake and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for Wacouta Bay.

“It’s exciting to work with the Rock Island and St. Louis dis-

tricts to determine how this program will operate for the next 15 years,” Warshaw said. “If we’re able to execute NESP, it will lead to hundreds of millions of dollars in ecosystem restoration projects in the three districts, adding value to the Upper Midwest.”

The Pool 2 wing dam modification project includes notching 17 wing dams to improve habitat for fish outside of the main channel. A wing dam is a rock structure that diverts the water to the center of the river channel. Portions of the wing dam will be taken out of the rock structure to encourage depth and flow diversity for river habitat for fish.

## Good things come in threes: Restoration program celebrates third project completion this year

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, in partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, celebrated the completion of the \$4.9 million Bass Ponds Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement project, with a ribbon cutting ceremony in Shakopee, Minnesota, Oct. 11.

This milestone project, marking the third Upper Mississippi River Restoration, or UMRR, project dedication in a single year for the district, is made possible through UMRR funding. The program ensures the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system with a primary emphasis on habitat restoration projects and resource monitoring.

The Corps celebrated the completion of two other UMRR projects, Harpers Slough and Conaway Lake, with a ribbon cutting ceremony April 22, in Lansing, Iowa.

The Twin Cities restoration project built five new water level management structures so that refuge staff can lower, raise or maintain water levels to restore plant and bird habitat.

“The one thing that’s unique about this project is its location. The other UMRR projects are on the river and primarily only accessible by boat. Here, you can walk to the project, ride your bike or kayak through here. It’s more present to the public in this central location so they (the public) can truly appreciate it,” said Kevin Wilson, St. Paul District deputy district engineer.

Prior to the 1850s, this area was primarily wetlands and native prairie; however, land-use changes, trending toward agricultural usage, as well as climate change resulting in more frequent flood events, have significantly altered the hydrology of the area.

In the 36-year history of the UMRR program, more than 55 habitat projects benefiting approximately 100,000 acres on the Upper Mississippi River, from Minneapolis to St. Louis, have been completed.

“Over 35 years after its inception, the UMRR program endures. It’s now a highly effective federal program and the promise of the program’s early years is being met and exceeding expectations,” said Kirsten Wallace Upper Mississippi River Basin Association executive director.



(fourth from the right) Sabrina Chandler, Upper Mississippi River Wildlife Refuge manager, and (third from the right) Kevin Wilson, St. Paul District deputy district engineer, and other project representatives, cut a ceremonial ribbon at the Bass Ponds project dedication in Shakopee, Minnesota, Oct. 11. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### MEET

# MARCUS PATTERSON

## PROGRAM ANALYST



Q: What is your position with the Corps?

**A: I'm a program analyst/project scheduler in programs and project management, which mean I'm resourcing funds for projects and tracking milestones**

Q: How long have you been with the Corps?

**A: Over 13 years**

Q: What did you do before your current position?

**A: I was in the U.S. Army where I served in different locations including Korea. Then, I joined the Corps as an admin in the Operations Division.**

Q: What do you like about working for the Corps?

**A: The relationships (personal and professional), there are a lot of good people that work for the Corps, also that the Corps is family-oriented. I also appreciate the growth opportunities and flexibility.**

Q: What do you do outside of work?

**A: Work out, drum and take care of my kids**

Q: What's your favorite sports team?

**A: The Dallas Cowboys**

Q: What's your favorite movie?

**A. Marvel movies**

## Koenig honored as 2022 Hall of Fame inductee

Story by David Elmstrom

Mark Koenig was inducted into the St. Paul District Hall of Fame at the St. Paul District's Corps Day, Oct. 3.

Koenig was honored for his exemplary service to the St. Paul District and the Corps of Engineers. Over the course of his 41-year career, Koenig served in various roles with significant responsibility and impact to include the chief of safety, emergency management and, most recently, construction. During his tenure as chief, he oversaw significant construction projects in Fargo, North Dakota, and on the Mississippi River.

He served as the district's emergency manager during the Global War on Terror and the 2011 Red River of the North and Souris River floods. He voluntarily deployed to Iraq, Afghanistan and numerous hurricane and flood response and recovery efforts across the U.S.

"Mark enhanced the value of every organization in which he was involved, inspiring subordinates and challenging himself and others to do more in the service of this great nation," said St. Paul District Commander Col. Eric Swenson. "His selfless service and tireless championship of teamwork leave a lasting legacy on the St. Paul District."



(left) Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, presents Mark Koenig, former chief of construction, with the Bronze Order of the de Fleury medal at Wabun Park in Minneapolis, Oct. 3. USACE St. Paul District photo by Emily Chavolla



## First Tribal Partnership Program for tribal government, division

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

A native island that was once heavily eroded and filled with invasive reed canary grass is now one of the first ecosystem restoration projects in full design and implementation phase for the Prairie Island Indian Community and the Mississippi Valley Division.

Nestled in Pool 3 of the Mississippi River, near Red Wing, Minnesota, the 8-acre Buffalo Slough Island is one of four ongoing Tribal Partnership Program projects, or TPPs. This program helps federally recognized tribes enter into cost-share agreements with the Corps of Engineers to help solve water-related planning activities with design and construction projects on their tribal lands.

“We are pleased with the progress on Buffalo Slough Island,” said Kimberly Warshaw, project manager. “It’s important to our partnership with the Prairie Island Indian Community that we successfully protect Buffalo Slough and restore floodplain forest habitat on culturally significant lands.”

In addition to the negative environmental impacts caused by the erosion due to high flows and the overgrowth of canary grass, the damage to Sturgeon Lake makes the area inaccessible to the community to continue their cultural practices collecting plants for consumption and medicinal purposes and practices sacred to the community.

Since last fall, the district’s maintenance and repair crew teams have been busy dredging and preparing the land with rock vanes, shoreline protection, granular fill and constructing a stone bullnose at the northern point of the island to counteract the impacts of the Mississippi River’s force on the island.

By placing main channel dredged material on the island, crews were able to raise the island elevation as well as building a bench along the eastern side of the island towards the river. Now, this material serves as a topsoil for the new and natural regeneration of grass, trees and plants.

“Now the final step is getting forestry established on the island,” explained Andy Meier, natural resources specialist based out of the La Crescent environmental office. “Contractors will start planting native herbaceous vegetation and tree seedlings, includ-

ing oak trees that produce acorns for wildlife. Natural regeneration is already occurring on the island from native species like cottonwood and willow which grow thick and fast to ensure an intact forest

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Construction equipment at the Buffalo Slough Island restoration project, near Red Wing, Minnesota, Nov. 2. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

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to prevent reed canary grass from growing and ultimately have a forest 75 years from now.”

Wildlife habitats rely on the island for survival and future generations.

Gabe Miller, Prairie Island Community environmental program manager, has been working with Corps officials to help restore the islands with natural forest habitats.

“Cottonwood trees are really important to the tribal community because it is the preferred nesting tree for the bald eagle, an iconic animal species of the tribe, so preserving those nesting areas for the species is really critical,” Miller said.

The Prairie Island Indian Community’s tribal members are descendants of the Mdewakanton Band of Eastern Dakota, or “those who were born of the waters,” and have lived in the region since before European contact.

TPPs provide Corps officials authority, in cooperation with Indian nations, to study and determine the feasibility of carrying out projects that will substantially benefit Native American nations.

## Silver Jackets emphasizes teamwork and collaboration

Story by Melanie Peterson

Silver Jackets is a federal and state interagency collaboration program that promotes having a team in each state. The Corps of Engineers coordinates it, and states lead the team efforts and

set priorities, usually through their emergency management staff. Terry Zien, St. Paul District program manager, is the lead coordinator for Minnesota and Wisconsin and the assistant lead for

North Dakota. Silver Jackets is a planning program that promotes communication, collaboration and education. The program

**Story continued on Page 11**



Terry Zien (red shirt) and the North Dakota Silver Jackets team at Fraine Barracks, Bismarck, North Dakota, November 2019. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

## **Story continued from Page 10**

works primarily to mitigate the consequences of floods but can address any hazards important to each state. Non-structural flood risk management methods are emphasized. This means that the teams seek to mitigate flood consequences rather than change the flood itself with structures like dams and levees.

The color “silver” was chosen to promote unity because no agency uses it in an official manner for symbology or clothing as part of their normal operations. During an emergency, the Corps wears red, the U. S. Geological Survey wears green, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, wears navy blue. “Those different colors can become confusing to the public. We don’t actually receive a silver jacket to wear, but everyone understands that we represent one team working together,” Zien said.

Perhaps the most important part though, is the relationships that are formed through the program.

“The biggest value of the program is team synergy. This teamwork has transformed how we plan for and respond to these events,”

Zien said. “The team in each state can leverage resources to address common issues, which is more powerful than any one agency alone.”

For example, in 2012, northeastern Minnesota and the Duluth area experienced historic flash flooding. None of the agencies had the resources to document the flash floods. Zien sent a request to Minnesota and Michigan Silver Jackets and within an hour they were able to pull together \$50,000 and were able to send member agency staff to 250 different locations to record high-water marks and other data on the flood events. Zien said that after the event, and learning of the extensive data collected, FEMA provided money to turn the data into a report.

“Collaboration is key during times of crisis,” Zien said. “Leveraging the expertise, programs and perspectives of partner agencies results in more comprehensive solutions.”

Zien emphasized the importance of relationship-building in the program and networking opportunities. “This isn’t traditionally what we used to do. We’re working with people we wouldn’t be working with otherwise, and that

extends to collaboration beyond Silver Jackets,” Zien said. “We tap into the entire team’s network of contacts across highly varied stakeholder groups.”

Another example is the June 2014 Mississippi and Minnesota rivers flooding event. Zien served as the Corps’ representative to the state of Minnesota emergency operations center and was able to take information that he learned from the center and share it back to the Corps’ readiness operations center to ensure the flow of information and quickly resolve emergency issues in the field. The interagency coordination that took place saved time and prevented problems from falling through the cracks.

Zien also serves as the program manager for the Flood Plain Management Services program, flood risk management business line, and works with the Planning Assistance to the States program. Zien has a Bachelor of Science degree in geology and a Master of Science degree in civil engineering in water resources from the University of Minnesota. He has worked for the St. Paul District for over 34 years.

Future projects include flood modeling of the Rainy River, the Baraboo River 2-dimensional hydraulic model, elevation-frequency analysis of the six Mississippi Headwaters reservoirs, and hydrologic analysis of the Upper St. Croix River between Solon Springs and Gordon, Wisconsin.



*Terry Zien, program manager, responds to flooding in Dawson, Minnesota, April 10, 2019. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo*

## Team reaches milestone on Pool 4 dredging plan

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District team responsible for developing a solution for managing Mississippi River dredged river sand removed from the water near Wabasha, Minnesota, reached a major milestone Nov. 11.

The team reached the finish line of the plan with the signing of the environmental assessment and planning document, also known as a finding of no significant impact, or FONSI, after more than 5 years of planning efforts with a few major challenges and obstacles along the way.

“The final approved plan was the culmination of hard work, compromise, and a willingness to remain focused on developing a solution that worked best for most,” said Bob Edstrom, project manager in charge of the Pool 4 plan.

Edstrom added that the completion of the Pool 4 plan, also known as a dredged material management plan, is not the end of the team’s work in the region but a major accomplishment, nonetheless. He said additional work remains to include working

with the city of Wabasha to develop a cost-share agreement to compensate the city for managing some of the material. Known as a Section 217 agreement, Edstrom said it’s one of the most important aspects of the Pool 4 plan. He added that the agreement, while non-binding, allows the Corps of Engineers to partner with the city of Wabasha to help manage river sand. “The coordination with the city in developing the revised plan may have taken longer than expected, but we believe the new version truly embodies the spirit of cooperation,” said Edstrom.

Paul Machajewski, dredged material manager, said the Pool 4 plan is focused on doing three things. “It ensures the required placement capacity for this part of the Mississippi River for the next 20 years; it provides a path forward for the city and the Corps of Engineers to develop solutions that effectively and safely manage river sand; and it improves the environment by reducing the carbon footprint needed by trains and semi-trucks to move the same commodities

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*Paul Machajewski, left, dredged material manager, and Bob Edstrom, project manager, review a potential real estate location near Wabasha, Minnesota, Aug. 3, 2020. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes*

## **Story continued from Page 12**

via navigation and avoids impacting adjacent wetlands or placing the material back in the river," he said.

Machajewski said some of the obstacles encountered while developing the final plan included properties that the community didn't want to be used to store the river sand. After listening to these concerns, the plan was changed to accommodate the community's request. That said, Machajewski added that one of the biggest challenges the team consistently faces in finding suitable placement sites is ensuring they meet the federal standard. "The federal standard is the least costly alternative that is both environmentally acceptable and includes sound engineering practices," he said. "Additionally, the plan must meet federal environmental requirements to include the Clean Water Act, National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act."

While the new plan identifies solutions to managing river sand near Wabasha for the next 20 years, there are more plans to be developed for other areas along the Mississippi River within the St. Paul District boundaries. At the end of the day, Machajewski

said it's all about ensuring the Mississippi River 9-foot Navigation Channel remains open and safe for commercial navigation. "We're committed to maintaining the navigation channel to ensure it continues providing safe, reliable transportation for bulk commodities," Machajewski said. "As neighbors within this community, we have a vested interest as both federal employees but also citizens that want the best for our communities and the environment."



*Corps and city of Wabasha officials discuss the navigation mission and dredged material management plans during a public meeting in Wabasha, Minnesota, Jan. 15, 2018. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes*



*The Dredge Goetz dredging river sand in Pool 4, near Wabasha, Minnesota, June 5, 2018. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer*

## Wounded warriors gather for special hunt

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

It's a place of hope and connection for hunters who gather for the annual wounded warrior hunt at Orwell Dam, located on the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Nov. 15-16.

Hosted by the nonprofit Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, four wounded warriors and six volunteers don their blaze orange and gear to a designated hunting spot on the Orwell sanctuary.

"This is a huge win/win opportunity for veterans and our natural resources," said John Fromuth Orwell Dam dam tender. "We have a pretty big deer population in the sanctuary, mostly doe and then fawns in the spring, so hunters have a really easy chance of harvesting a deer and that really helps with over population."

Ron Welle started Midwest Outdoors Unlimited in 2008 to help physically disabled individuals go hunting. Now, he says the organization provides outdoor activities in a wide range from hunting to boat rides and fishing and even outings to a baseball game. Every outing is with a different group

of people, giving an opportunity to as many individuals as possible.

Sponsored on Corps-owned land, Orwell Dam officials have been

actively involved in the program for many years, except during the pandemic. The program that was originally designed for disabled veterans close to end of life has

evolved to host people with disabilities in general.

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Wounded warriors and volunteers gather for the annual wounded warrior hunt at Orwell Dam, located on the Otter Tail River near Fergus Falls, Minnesota, Nov. 15. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.

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Fromuth works directly with Midwest Outdoors Unlimited in getting the required permissions and equipment ready for the hunters to participate.

“We stage ice houses with big windows, propane heaters and tanks for the hunters and their volunteer to sit in,” Fromuth said. “We also set up a 50-yard target for hunters to zero their shotgun the morning of the hunt.”

Upon arrival, Fromuth provides a safety brief and hunting information. Next, volunteers escort hunters to zero their shotgun and return to the indoor office for a hot meal. Then, they are taken to their hunting locations to get a deer.

Hunters are not usually local, so they are not always prepared with what they need for the day, he said.

“I’ll borrow my own weapons and hunting gear (if needed) to those gentlemen because I will likely be living in a similar veteran home one day and pray someone (like myself) will help me and other veterans just the same,” Fromuth said.

Next year, they are hoping to get more hunters from the local veteran homes with additional donations

“It’s a humbling experience watching these veterans out here,” he said. “I watched one of the hunters this year go right from the deer stand directly into a truck to the Mayo Clinic for surgery the following morning. This man literally spent what could have been his last day in a hunting blind at Orwell Dam. He didn’t shoot a deer, but he was able to take six shots. He was in pretty rough condition and had a hard time keeping a steady aim.”

The veteran said it was an amazing experience and that he hoped to live longer so he could tell his friends and family about the beautiful hunting experience he had at the dam.

“I support the event as needed while attending to day-to-day tasks,” Fromuth explained. “This year we got a bit of snow during the hunt, so I was focused on clearing the snow and salting everything down so hunters were safe with their canes and wheelchairs.”

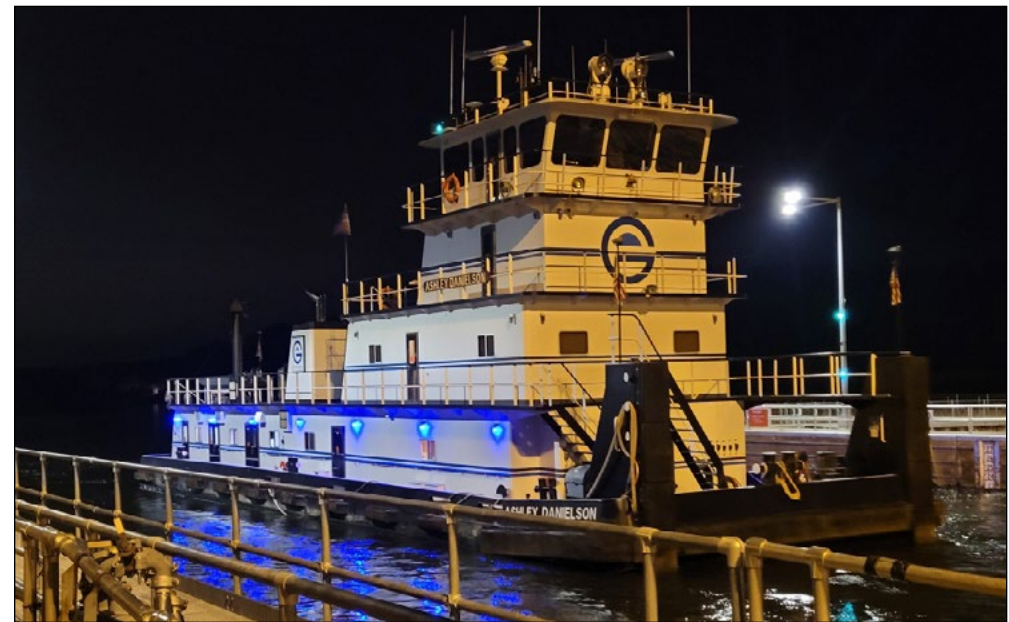
The event is made possible by the partnerships with the Midwest Outdoors Unlimited, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the Corps of Engineers.

## Tow marks the end of the navigation season

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

The St. Paul District, saw the last barge of the year, the Motor Vessel Ashley Danielson, depart Lock and Dam 2 Nov. 29 at 4:25 a.m., ending the 2022 navigation season on the Upper Mississippi River.

Traditionally, the last tow departing the capital city heading south of Lock and Dam 2, near Hastings, Minnesota, has marked the unofficial end of the navigation season. The last tow to leave St. Paul, Minnesota, usually occurs around the last week of November or the first week of December.



The last tow of the 2022 navigation season, the Motor Vessel Ashley Danielson, locks through Lock and Dam 2 in Hastings, Minnesota. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

## Safety introduces the “Good Catch” program

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

### GOOD CATCH

Formerly known as the “near miss reporting,” the Good Catch program is available to all employees to proactively prevent accidents in the workplace.

The purpose of the program is to demonstrate that close-call situations are strictly used to prevent future mishaps for the benefit of all and focus on the district’s safety culture.

“It is a resource we use to recognize our employees identifying hazards before something occurs and a way to share and distribute that information to applicable disciplines, areas or all hands depending on the hazard,” said Dustin Strand, St. Paul District safety and occupational health specialist.

By practicing the age-old “see something, say something,” employees are encouraged to share lessons learned with district personnel to prevent future accidents.

Details of the Good Catch program highlight proactive vs. reactive behaviors, identify trends and efficiencies in reducing workplace hazards and reinforce everyone’s responsible for workplace safety.

Since the inception of the program in 2020, the safety office has received more than 25 reports that have significantly impacted the safe operation of locks and dams, miter gate controls, equipment use, load handling equipment, slips, trips and falls, snow removal, government vehicle safety checks, etc., to name a few.

“A Good Catch was received from our Western Area Office, Fargo, North Dakota, in May that a crane that was improperly rigged for a critical lift of 120,000-pound concrete beams. The attention to detail in recognizing this was exceptional and could have been catastrophic. This Good Catch was recognized by our Corps load handling equipment high hazard work group – a team of subject matter experts across the Corps,” Strand explained.

All reports are extremely beneficial and prevent workplace accidents and injuries, he said.

How to get involved?

1. Identify the unsafe act, condition, hazard, or potential for mishap
2. Take appropriate immediate action to correct the situation and prevent property damage or injury
3. Ensure the situation is safe to proceed with the intended activity
4. Fill out the “Good Catch Reporting Form” [here](#) and submit it to your supervisor. The supervisor will review the form, add information and documentation as necessary and submit the packet to the district safety office as soon as reasonably possible, preferably within 10 days of the Good Catch occurring

“We will always have injuries, but our hope is to prevent as many as possible,” Strand said. “The Good Catch program helps communicate unsafe issues or

problems through the district. By sharing best practices in a safety-first culture, accidents are reduced and prevented, and everyone can go home safely.”



(left) Dustin Strand, safety and occupational health specialist, and John Dehnke, collateral duty safety officer, sample the ventilation system at Lock and Dam 5 near Minnesota City, Minnesota. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

### GOOD CATCH

### GOOD CATCH

GOOD CATCH

GOOD CATCH



## St. Paul District celebrates Corps Day

St. Paul District employees celebrated Corps Day Oct. 3 at Wabun Park in Minneapolis. The day included recreational activities, food and an awards ceremony. USACE St. Paul District photos by Shannon Bauer, Melanie Peterson and Wendy Wells



## Corps Day, continued



## Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



September  
**Samantha  
Coungeris**  
*Regulatory*



October  
**Thomas  
Rohrer**  
*Operations*



November  
**Elliott  
Stefanik**  
*RPEDN*





*(top) The 2023 Leadership Development Program participants tour the Fargo-Moorhead diversion project in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 12. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo*

*(bottom) In honor of Veterans Day, the Western Area Office stands in front of the Diversion Inlet Structure representing their service. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo*



*(top) Angie Phipps, equal employment specialist, meets with Chaplain (Col.) Geoffrey Bailey to discuss the St. Paul District special emphasis program in St. Paul, Minnesota, Oct. 12. USACE St. Paul District photo by Emily Chavolla*

*(bottom) Jill Bathke, planner, and Angela Deen, program manager, prepare for the Reno Bottoms public meeting in New Albin, Iowa, Nov. 3. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson*



*(left) Kevin Wilson, deputy district engineers and (right) Col. Eric Swenson, meet with the St. Paul District emerging leaders at the Mississippi Valley Division regional governance meeting in Hot Springs, Arkansas, Oct. 19. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.*



## News and Notes

### New Employees

**Taylor Adams**, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Shaheen Mokhtari**, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Cole Atkinson**, survey technician, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin  
**Jonathan Hotstream**, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, Madison, Wisconsin  
**Benjamin Bejcek**, regulatory specialist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

### Promotions

**Daniel Burger**, lock and dam operator supervisor, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota  
**Daniel Dzwonkowsky**, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota  
**Joseph Jandrich**, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota  
**Dean Zwiefel**, management and program analyst (human capital), public affairs, St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Steph Brunot**, civil engineer (structural), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota  
**Andrew Chambers**, biologist, regulatory, Duluth, Minnesota  
**Donald Strittmater Jr.**, lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota.

### Retirements

**Diyona Breitung-Schmillen**, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin  
**Stanley Marg**, welder, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin  
**Jon Hendrickson**, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

### Congratulations

**Re’Nisha Brown**, engineering and construction, welcomed Greyson Brown on Sept. 7.

### Taps



**Ivette Garrett** passed away Sept. 22. She served as an attorney in office of counsel from 1994 to her retirement January 2008.



**Larry J. Sass** passed away Nov. 27. He worked for the Corps of Engineers, dredging the Mississippi River, refurbishing the dams, and retired as a lock and dam operator at Lock and Dam 5, in Minnesota City, Minnesota .



**Ellen Scheppeke** passed away Oct. 4. She retired from the Corps in May 2020. She had 17 years of service with the Corps, all at the Eau Galle Dam and Recreation Area as an office clerk.

## Length of Service

### 5 Years

Catherine Beatty  
James Beers  
Edward Bradley  
John Carrell  
Jerry Cudney  
Daniel De Vaney  
Kevin Denn  
Patrick Dowd  
Dalton Eide  
John Henderson  
Thanri Meyers  
Daniel Mielke  
Ellamay Mitchell  
Christopher Olson  
Bryce Pellock  
Dustin Strand  
Mitchell Weier

### 10 Years

Nicole Baker  
Jonathan Bakken  
Trevor Blake  
Susan Funke  
William Grinde  
Cherie Law  
Melissa Schultz

### 15 Years

Melissa Brossi  
Jeffrey Hallam  
Kristoffer Laman  
Ryan Price  
Monique Savage  
Keith Schindler  
Nicholas Stanton  
Michael Vogt  
Kimberly Warshaw

### 20 Years

Arlan Baukol  
Rebecca Graser  
Jeffrey Grow  
Eric Hanson  
Daniel Kelner  
Lawrence Kjellberg  
Jon Ledford  
Melissa Murray  
Aaron Pieplow  
Eric Thiese  
Richard Tollefson  
Toni Wasgatt

### 25 Years

Brian Krause  
Jimmy Rand

### 30 Years

Eric Carlson  
Kathy Halverson  
Kenneth Peterson

### 35 Years

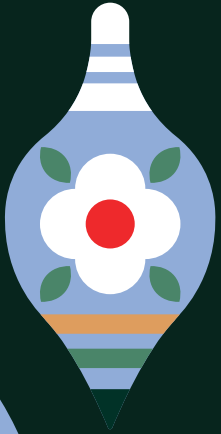
Thomas Johnson  
Denise Julson

### 40 Years

Stephanie Dupey  
Theresa Thury



*(left to right) Theresa Thury, project scheduler, and Ken Peterson, realty specialist, receive a length of service award from Col. Eric Swenson, district commander, at the Holiday Awards Ceremony in St. Paul, Minnesota, Dec. 8. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer*



# Holiday Awards

# Message from Colonel Swenson



Greetings fellow MVP teammates!!!

It's that time of year again when the mercury dips, the trees shed their leaves, and the cold wind blows. Fall is winding down and winter fast approaching. Winter may not be here until December 21, but by looking out my window, I think it came early.

The changing of the seasons means so much more than cold temperatures, poor commutes, and higher heating bills, it also means that we have made it through another construction, navigation, recreation, regulation and hurricane season. In all seriousness, December is a time when many employees take a deep breath, and the district slows down. We take annual leave, celebrate the return of college kids to the nest, spend time with elders, buy presents for loved ones and celebrate life with family and friends alike.

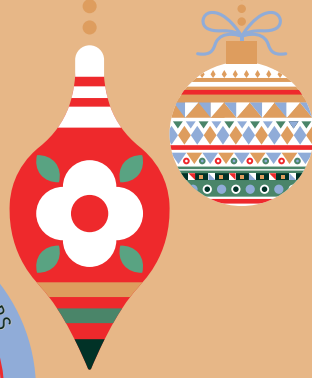
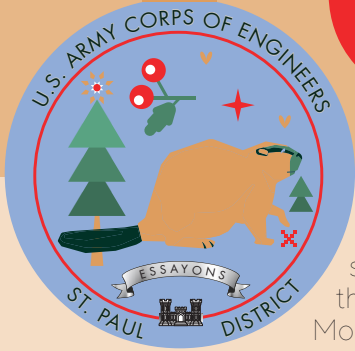
This December, like so many before, we, the leaders in this district, are taking the time to celebrate you and the accomplishments you made in large part while serving on great district teams. We have so many teams it's hard to remember them all. Here is a quick list: project delivery, lock operation and maintenance, park ranger, clean sand reclamation (Dredge Goetz and maintenance and repair), unmanned aerial reconnaissance and mapping, underwater [aka dive team], dam safety, levee inspection, natural resource enhancement, tribal liaison, logistical support, engineering, navigation support, real

estate, public affairs (covering all your great work), IT, building move, mailroom, contracting, security, planning and environmental, and our unsung heroes—the administrative teams that keep us clothed, fed, and sheltered. As I see it, we are a team of teams and that is our greatest strength. The booklet you are about to read contains the names and faces of our awardees. It also contains the write-ups justifying the award, but more specifically documents the hard work, blood, sweat and tears that you collectively gave in support of our mission. Every one of these awards was based on a recommendation or an observation by a teammate. I am immensely proud of all those being recognized today and for the efforts of those whose names may not appear in print, but whose sacrifice and dedication were critical to our success.

I wish all MVP teammates a safe and relaxing holiday. When life gets busy, whether at work or home, take a minute to reflect on all the good in your life. If you feel that you are adrift in your thoughts, set an achievable goal and then go out and achieve it. Find a colleague you have something in common with and get to know them better. Better yet, find a colleague you do not know and get to know them. If you are at the top of your game in life, share your gifts with others. If you are still struggling, write your own eulogy and highlight the kind of person you want to be remembered as. Post it on your wall and ask yourself each day, am I doing the things I need to do to be the person I want others to remember me by. We are never too old or too busy to learn something or someone new. Practice random kindness. It will make you feel better and undoubtedly make someone else's day. Finally, Happy Holidays. Julie and I wish each of you and your families the very best this holiday season.



# District Level Awards



## FMM Red River Structure Team

The following candidates served a critical role in the design of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Red River Structure. They all provided exceptional expertise in their respective fields. They each went above and beyond expectations to ensure

that the design was completed. The team overcame challenges related to the pandemic, going into a completely remote virtual design environment and maintained the ability to complete the complex and difficult design process. Teammate Leon Opatz will be recognized posthumously at the first concrete placement for the structure.

## CIVILIAN SERVICE COMMENDATION MEDAL

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Aaron Buesing  
Kevin Denn  
Paul Fleming  
Daniel Flittie  
Bonnie Greenleaf  
Noeun Kol  
Renee McGarvey

Aaron Mikonowicz  
Hlee Moua  
Leon Opatz  
Coralys Nunez-Orta  
Lexi Ousky  
Duane Perkins  
Darold Sanderson

Luke Schmidt  
Friend Solberg  
Toni Wasgatt  
Denita Wesley

*From Other Districts*  
Javier Arias  
Brennen Burklund

David DePolo  
Thomas Lytle  
Michael McCollum  
Christopher Schumacher  
Ryan Smith  
Chong Walker

## CIVILIAN SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Kent Hokens  
Michael Davis  
Jacob Fall  
Jason Foss  
Heather Henneman  
Paul Johnson

Brant Jones  
Erin Krug  
William Odell  
Kacie Opat  
Grant Riddick  
James Schneider

Loren Soma  
Sally Swenson  
Miray Welle

*From Other Districts*  
Michael Donohoe  
Matthew Fitzgerald

Tarris Greer  
Brian Hall  
Nathan Kabat  
Chase Keys  
Adrian Kollias  
Nicholas Koutsunis

## CERTIFICATE OF APPRECIATION

Mathew Andersen  
Amy Dessner  
Anthony Feilzer  
Joseph Hemmer

Derek Ingvalson  
Roy Lawson  
Christine Moss  
Virginia Regorrah

Samuel Smith  
Elliott Stefanik  
*From Other Districts*  
Bjorn Boydston  
Cole Clements  
Ethan Dawson

Tu Ha  
Carl Leunig  
Patrick Luff  
Douglas Meier  
Marneshia Richard  
Colin Riddick



## Robert Slininger - CIVILIAN SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

For exceptional performance and service to the St. Paul District, in support of the St. Cloud Veterans Affairs. Robert's ability to adapt to an expanded mission

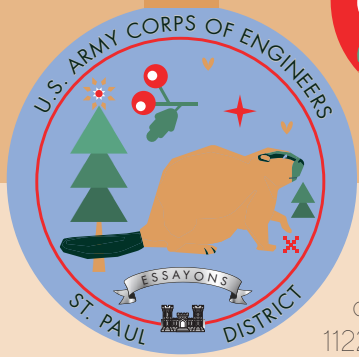
and his commitment to the customer were key to building a successful relationship with the St. Cloud Veterans Affairs.

## Richard Tollefson - CIVILIAN SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

For exceptional performance and service to the St. Paul District, during the construction of Fargo Moorhead Metro Wild Rice River Structure project. Richard's contract administration knowledge, communication, commitment to excellence and perseverance have

resulted in multiple improvements on the project, to include reduction in the number of outstanding modifications and incorporation of lessons learned from previous projects.





# District Level Awards



## The Upper Pool 4 Team

For outstanding performance on the Section 1122 Upper Pool 4 project, these

individuals provided expertise that resulted in project advertisement and contract award on schedule.

### CIVILIAN SERVICE ACHIEVEMENT MEDAL

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Jon Hendrickson**  
**Sean Johnston**

**Adam Rasmussen**  
**Jennie Tyrrell**

### CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Paul Fleming**  
**LeeAnn Glomski**

**Joseph Hemmer**  
**John Henderson**

**Thomas Novak**  
**Kacie Opat**

**Justin Rose**

## Tribal Partnership Program Sturgeon Lake Island Erosion Project - COMMANDERS COIN

For outstanding achievement in support of the Sturgeon Lake Island Erosion project. The Sturgeon Lake Island Erosion project is only the second project under the Tribal Partnership Program to move into the design and implementation phase in the country, and the first

within the division. Each member of this team contributed toward the successful completion of the feasibility study, design and construction of the Sturgeon Lake Island Erosion project, a project that serves to protect culturally significant lands of the Prairie Island Indian Community.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Vanessa Alberto**  
**Noah Andow**  
**Kipp Baures**  
**Re’Nisha Brown**  
**Travis Burrier**  
**Daniel Cottrell**

**Todd DeCose**  
**Daniel DeVaney**  
**Josh Isakson**  
**Denise Julson**  
**Daniel Kelner**  
**Zachary Kimmel**

**Andrew Meier**  
**Katie Opsahl**  
**Melanie Peterson**  
**Justin Rose**  
**Kurt Schroeder**  
**Michael Snyder**

**Christopher Stai**  
**James Ulrick**  
**Denita Wesley**  
**Tammy Wick**  
**Kimberly Warshaw**

## Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Program’s Drayton Dam Fish Passage Mitigation Project - CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

The following candidates served a critical role in the preparation of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Program’s Drayton Dam Fish Passage Mitigation Project. They all provided exceptional expertise in their respective fields. They

each went above typical expectations to ensure that the Drayton Dam fish passage structure was designed in coordination with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and the North Dakota Game and Fish and Department of Water Quality.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Mark Angelo**  
**Greg Fischer**  
**Justin Fisher**  
**Paul Fleming**  
**Joseph Hemmer**

**Derek Ingvalson**  
**Roy Lawson**  
**Susan Malin-Boyce**  
**Abigail Moore**  
**Kambili Nkem-Ossai**

**Adam Rasmussen**  
**Grant Riddick**  
**Justin Rose**  
**Luke Schmidt**  
**Elliott Stefanik**

**Theresa Thury**  
**Kimberly Warshaw**  
**Denita Wesley**  
**Leigh Youngblood**

# District Honorary Awards

## NEW EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Stephanie Mann** joined the Design Branch in the Engineering & Construction Division as a mechanical engineer in April. Her main projects have been the new miter gates for the locks on the Mississippi River. During the installation of the new miter gates at Lock and Dam 5A, there was an incident involving the

existing anchor bars that almost resulted in closing navigation. Stephanie was a key contributor in investigations that proved the anchor bars were safe, preventing the need to close navigation.



## INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

**David Klocker** joined Construction Branch in early 2022. Dave took initiative to coordinate with the Resident Management System (RMS) Center in developing a new custom

data query and report that was able to gather all the necessary information from the RMS database and display it in a format matching the prior manual reports. His effort greatly increased the efficiency of the monthly sponsor reporting effort, and it was just in time as the number of projects to report on doubled when construction season started in the spring.



## ADMINISTRATIVE PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Andrea Sterling** is the glue that binds all of RPEDN together, which is made even more remarkable because our footprint interwinds with three districts St. Louis, Rock Island and St. Paul. Andrea's willingness to travel to Rock Island and St. Louis at least two times each year allows her the opportunity to help each RPEDN family member. She always puts each person

ahead of herself and she does whatever it takes to make sure our staff have what they need. Not only does Andrea take care of all RPEDN but she also reaches across the aisle and helps others within the Corps. Andrea truly does demonstrate what it means to be a team player as she has shown throughout this past year!!



# Honorary Awards



## OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP IN ADVANCING THE DISTRICT SECURITY MISSION AWARD

The Outstanding Leadership in Advancing the District Security Mission Award goes to Lockmaster **Brian Sipos** for his exceptional initiative in building partnerships with local law enforcement and emergency response personnel and fostering interagency cooperation by conducting a full response active shooter exercise.

Sipos's initiative and leadership exemplifies not only his exceptional security mission focus but also his outstanding and highly motivated team at Lock and Dam 9.

## OUTSTANDING SUPPORT FOR THE DISTRICT SECURITY MISSION AWARD



**Jay Grimsled and Dan Burger** are nominated for this award for their outstanding support for the district's security mission at Lock and Dam 9 and during this year's full performance active shooter drill. All of the team members of Lock and Dam 9 demonstrate on a daily basis that it takes exceptional people to make a highly motivated team that can overcome any obstacle and it takes a team to go above and beyond in accomplishing the district's security mission.

## PUBLIC AFFAIRS SUPPORTER OF THE YEAR

**Craig Jarnot** had his hands full dealing with the highly visible Enbridge Line 3 project this past year. The project garnered him quite a bit of media attention and unsolicited public opinion, and he weathered the storm with civility and expertise. Through it all, Craig consistently maintained the utmost professionalism and shone a positive light on the U.S. Army Corps of

Engineers by skillfully communicating the Corps of Engineers' roles and responsibilities regarding the project, permitting authorities and timelines to a variety of key publics to include elected officials, stakeholders, tribal partners, media representatives and concerned citizens.



## EEO CHAMPIONS OF THE YEAR

The **Engineering and Construction Division** demonstrated consistent support to the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) program initiatives and have gone above and beyond placing EEO objectives into action. The office

has provided recommendations to diversify the outreach program. The division has specifically promoted equal employment in the hiring, advancement, training and treatment of women and minorities in the workforce. The division is leading the agency in embracing diversity, equity and inclusion and taking care of people.

# Engineering & Construction Honorary Awards

## EMPLOYEES OF THE YEAR

An employee within each Branch of Engineering and Construction Division who consistently displays the following qualities:

- Dedicated and dependable
- Helpful, cooperative and displays positive attitude towards fellow employees
- Performs duties at a high level, goes the extra mile to help us execute
- Freely shares knowledge to assist others
- Accomplished a significant task that would not have been possible without their efforts

- Mission Possible Award** - Design Branch awarded to **Chris Afdahl**
- Steward of the Waters Award** - Hydraulics & Hydrology Branch awarded to **Charles Boyd**
- Critical Lift Award** - Construction Branch awarded to **Adam Gamblin**
- Never Take You for Granite Award** - Geotechnical and Geology Branch awarded to **Grant Riddick**

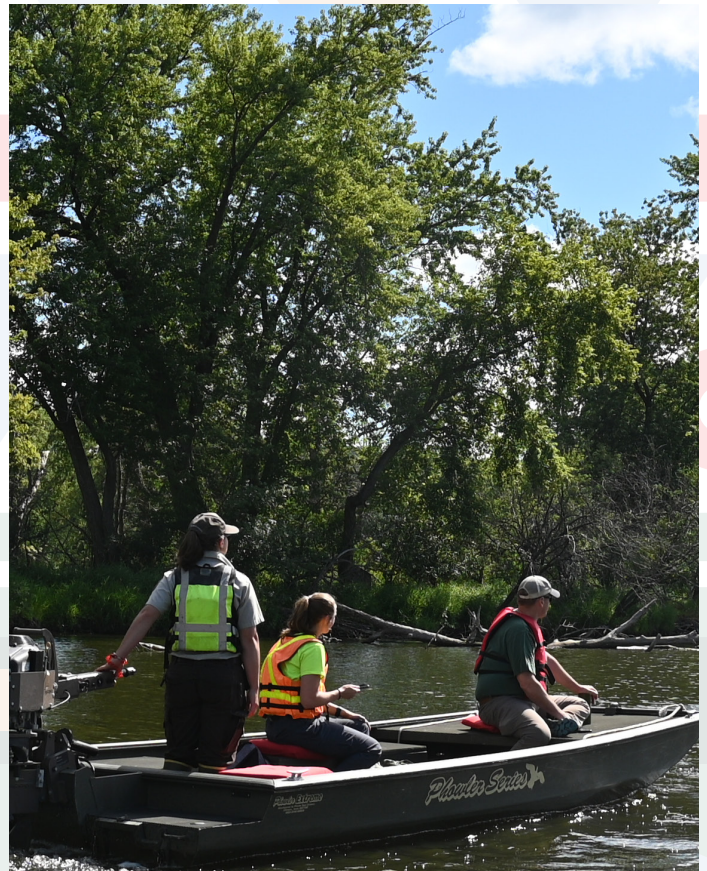
## HONORARY AWARDS

**RAISE YOUR HAND AWARD** – **Anthony Levine** is someone who is consistently ready to help when and wherever needed.



**TEACHER AWARD** – **Greg Wachman** is someone who has taken the time to teach/mentor colleagues.

**MOOD LIFTER AWARD** – **Faith Sandberg** is someone who's positive attitude benefits the entire division.





# Operations Honorary Awards



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE PROTECTION AT GOOSE ISLAND

The Fountain City Service Base maintenance and repair section was instrumental toward the successful operation and completion of 1,200 linear feet of cultural resource bank stabilization in Pool 8. Tremendous quality product delivery with in-house personnel!

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Chris Stai**  
**Luke Anderson**  
**Nick Stanton**  
**Devon Bemis**  
**Justin Bernau**  
**Bob Kohner**

**Jason Schieffer**  
**Vanessa Alberto**  
**Trevor Cyphers**  
**Ray Marinan**  
**Jon Schultz**

## IMPLEMENTATION TEAM FOR RECREATION OPERATIONAL CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

Operational condition assessments are an important assessment and decision process for prioritizing maintenance and repair funding

for Corps assets. In 2022, recreation facilities were added to this nationwide Corps effort. **Brian Turner and Brad LaBadie** were chosen to spearhead the training and assessment effort for all St. Paul District recreation areas. Brian and Brad collaborated with headquarters natural resource management staff to learn the process, teach local staff, lead the St. Paul District assessments, troubleshoot issues and deliver high quality assessment data for corporate use.



## SANDY LAKE DAM REHABILITATION

Collaboration with other district elements for successful completion of the Sandy Lake Dam rehabilitation project.

Both **Tammy Frauenschuh** and **Hunter Simonson** provided valuable insight on dam operations and water level management during the 2-year rehab project.



## FALL CLEANUP AND WINTERIZATION OF NORTHERN HEADWATERS REC AREAS

This team worked together to accomplish the fall clean up of the recreation areas and winterization of the facilities. The staff completed the clean up of all the recreation areas and winterization of the facilities in the section saving approximately \$50,000 in contract costs over hiring local contractors.

THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Jeff Cook**  
**Andrew Buell**  
**Mathew Buchacker**

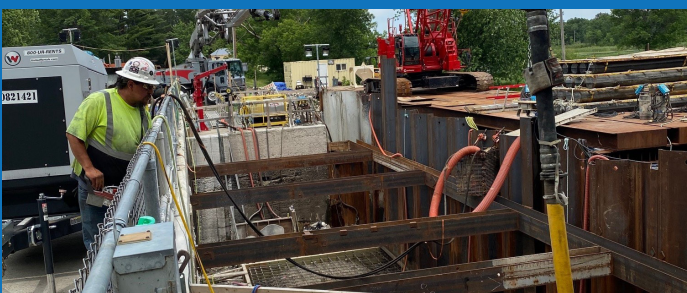
**Megan Severson**  
**Hunter Simonson**

## URGENT REPLACEMENT OF RESERVATION DAM BLADDER AIR LINE

Over the Fourth of July weekend, Lake Traverse's Reservation Dam low flow gate became inoperable. This was due to the air lines breaking that supplied air to the bladders that held each of the gates at the desired levels. With the loss of air in the system, the low flow gates dropped. Lake Traverse's project maintenance team immediately coordinated the install of bulkheads in the low flow to stop the release of waters in order to maintain the desired lake levels. The project team continued to pursue the purchase of new air lines, coordinate and execute repairs of the air lines with the company that originally designed and installed the gate system. Their efforts resulted in the low flow gates returning to full operation in a timely manner.

**Steve Kocher**  
**Tom Mattis**

**Zach Santjer**  
**Mike Tolifson**





# Operations Honorary Awards



## DREDGE GOETZ

With the low precipitation that is occurring on the Mississippi River basin, the lower Mississippi River is experiencing lower than normal water for navigation. The low water event has caused the movement of commodities to resort more to shallow water vessels and less utilization of the deep draft vessels. Also with the low water, there is an increased need for dredging to allow for the shallow draft vessels to navigate safely. The Dredge Goetz and crew have mobilized to aid in the effort to keep navigation moving. In order to support this effort, it has extended the crew and equipment past the normal dredging season. This also comes at a time when the Dredge Goetz and attending plant have a contract in place for the planned 5-year drydocking for below water repairs. The Goetz crew has pulled together to overcome many obstacles in order to support the effort during the low water event without impacts to preparational readiness for the next dredging season.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Luke Anderson	Thomas Loechler
Sam Banicki	Adrian Loewenhagen
Thomas Burrows	Andrew Lorenz
Eric Carlson	Wake Madsen
Ryan Danielson	Jon Miller
Brady Dehnke	Joel Miller-Oates
Kaleb Doerr	Ellamay Mitchell
Jason Eleffson	Matt Mohlke
Cody Fairey	Jon Nygaard
Thomas Fetting	Mathew Platteter
Jordan Fluekiger	Josh Przybylla
Susan Funke	Jeff Rindal
Forrest Gundersen	Matthew Rolbiecki
Ricky Hager	Scott Rolbiecki
Channing Helgeson	Dale Rud
Daniel Hentges	Michael Seibel
Chris Hill	Chad Simon
Jamie Hill	Logan Skoug
Logan Hoffmann	Jordan Skoug
Jacob Jandle	Langston Spencer
David Johnson	Nikita Sumbry
Heather Kern	Kristopher Taverna
Mike Kouba	Daniel Teigan
Brian Krause	Al Vanguilder
Jon Ledford	Jake Zanon
Kaden Lisowski	

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER PROJECT OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

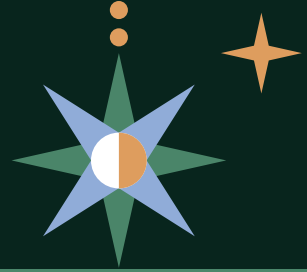
The MRPO administrative team consisting of **Wendi Baker, Melisa Murray, and Kay White** has overcome adversity time and again as they are consistently faced with staffing shortages. The group buckled down and took on additional duties while also working long hours. Additional support was provided from one of our admin professionals while on detail with resource management, as well as support from the operations administrative team. Without this full team effort, we would not have been able to provide adequate support to the navigation branch and free them up to complete their critical duties for the navigation mission.

## LOCKS AND DAMS 5A AND 8 MITER GATE INSTALLATION

With a collaborated effort between Rock Island and St. Paul Districts, the lock chamber miter gates at Lock 8 and Lock 5A were replaced. The old miter gates were in service for more than 80 years and nearing the end of their useful life. Throughout the planning process to final installation, the team worked to overcome challenges that were presented. It is a true testament to the Corps that winning attitudes foster winning results.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

Luke Anderson	Eric Lockington
Scott Baker	Stephanie Mann
Kipp Bauers	Stan Marg
Kraig Berberich	Ryan Markey
Justin Bernau	Lexi Ousky
John Bostrack	Angelo Pedretti
Jarrod Brown	Jon Peters
Wade Carr	Melanie Peterson
Nick Castellane	Aaron Pieplow
Jim Cook	Faith Sandberg
Eric Dykman	Arash Shams
Jeff Ferguson	Jordan Skoug
Jacob Gosnell	Loren Soma
Mike Gunderson	Chris Stai
Mike Holzer	Matt Stanton
Adam Kiedrowski	Nick Stanton
Keith Kirkey	Tim Tabery
Dakota Koenig	Nate Van Loon
Bob Kohner	Dexter Yoon
Erin Krug	



# Programs & Project Management Honorary Awards

## PPMD EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

While this might sound routine, there is nothing routine about her. For the third consecutive year, **Denise Julson** is recognized by her peers as the programs and project management division Employee of the Year. The accolades from many include, "she always responds quickly, she is simply the best, teams function because of her, she is indispensable, she communicates constantly and efficiently, she finishes all her tasks, treats everyone with dignity and respect, she is the model team member, etc." Denise always has a "let's solve the problem" attitude and is committed to executing the mission second to none. Denise always keeps her cool and treats people in a way that makes them feel grateful they are a part of the team. Denise is truly a CHAMPION amongst her peers modeling the MVP values – Mission, Value, People.



## "YOU MAKE IT A BETTER PLACE" AWARD

There is always that person that makes the workplace around us a better place – **Bonnie Greenleaf** is recognized as that special person. Bonnie treats all of her peers like family, she brings in treats for co-workers, teams, and even her bosses. She recognizes birthdays, special events, or she might just make up something to make those around her feel even more valued. Bonnie is the one who will take coach, advise, mentor, or just give work to new employees, interns or whoever she can find – she will assure they are growing in their profession. She will always be there to support those around her and lend a helping hand and offer an encouraging word. Bonnie will make personal sacrifices to assure her work is completed and the public is served in a positive, professional and quality manner. As one coworker said, "Bonnie is the one in which we should all strive to emulate." Bonnie Greenleaf – you make it a better place!







# RPEDN Honorary Awards



## SILENT HERO



**Kelsey Hoffmann** is recognized for her significant role as a silent hero in our Rock Island office. Kelsey has taken it upon herself to help our new archaeologists with environmental compliance advice, teaching them our review procedures and report filing locations.

## CALMER OF STORMS

**Michelle Kniep's** ability to focus teams on the critical issues, help teams solve problems, and quietly motivate people through her own actions is what makes her such a critical part of RPEDN.



## PLANNER OF THE YEAR

**Karla Sparks'** dedication towards delivering high-quality work assigned to her is truly commendable. RPEDN success is tied to hard-working employees like Karla who maintain high standards.



## REGIONAL ROCK STAR

In more than twenty years with the Corps, **Dan Kelner** has carved out a niche as a leading mussel expert in our region. His expertise and contributions to his field are also well known by our partner agencies; his work with them has surely strengthened our relationships over the years. Dan does all of this with a humble and appreciative attitude, and never seeks any special recognition for it.



## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

One year ago, we were lucky enough to hire **Justin Garrett** away from the Louisville District Regulatory Program. Justin came with glowing recommendations and has continued that trend in his short time with RPEDN. Justin had several years of regulatory experience coming in, but this was his first foray into environmental planning. Despite this, Justin has shown an innate ability to dive right into the deep end of whatever tasks are thrown his way and get the job done with enthusiasm, very little supervision, and zero complaints.



## TEAM OF THE YEAR RPEDN ARCHAEOLOGISTS

The cultural resources team is recognized for its strength and unity within the Corps. The team demonstrated its ability to anticipate the needs of the organization and those we serve, remaining focused on the future, while preserving the past.

### THE TEAM MEMBERS INCLUDE:

**Vanessa Alberto  
Lara Anderson  
James Beers  
Darcy Calabria  
Kristen Fuld  
Katie Leslie  
Susan Malin-Boyce**

**Kelsey Myers  
Brad Perkl  
Brandon Sexton  
Matt Terry  
Meredith Trautt  
Amy Williams**





# Regulatory Honorary Awards

## TEAM BUILDER AWARD



**Jarrett Cellini** is recognized for his leadership within the regulatory division. His mentoring and leadership led to his new teammates developing essential project management skills, such as strategic planning, time management and prioritization, and expanded their expertise and knowledge of the regulatory program. His calm demeanor, effective communication, active listening, and willingness to spend the necessary time with his teammates has resulted in a resilient and highly adaptable team that is ready to tackle whatever challenges come their way.

## ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD

**Jonathan Bakken** is recognized for exemplifying loyalty and selfless service by willingly accepting challenging projects, high work volume, and providing leadership above and beyond expectations. His contributions are especially commendable while supporting the Hayward team during times of transition.



## REGULATORY AMBASSADOR AWARD



**Kyle Zibung** is recognized for outstanding representation, public service, and mentoring. While on temporary detail with the Albuquerque District, Kyle received a special note of gratitude from a private consultant for his responsiveness and great communication.

## DEDICATED SERVICE AWARD

**Meghan Brown** is recognized as a knowledgeable and respected leader in the regulatory division. In addition to her usual duties of reviewing complex projects and providing programmatic improvements, she has provided exceptional mentorship to our south branch staff during a challenging transitional period. She leads by example but also by unselfishly and patiently using her time to walk through any issue.



## TEAMMATE OF THE YEAR

**Samantha Coungeris** is recognized as the Teammate of the Year Award. Samantha's welcoming personality and her emphasis on the people in MVP has ensured that our new teammate is on the path to become a productive member of regulatory division.



## TEAM LEADER OF THE YEAR

**A.J. Kitchen** has been integral to the success of the east branch because of his leadership and skill mentoring new staff. A.J. is consistently available to teach new staff our internal processes and technical aspects of our program to put them on path towards success. He has utilized effective communication skills to maintain organization within the team and to complete crucial stakeholder outreach. A.J. has excelled at these responsibilities all while maintaining a high level of quality in his permit workload.



## REGULATORY SUPPORT STAR



**Janel Shafer** has been critical to responding to the regulatory division's customers in a timely manner and ensuring the successful execution of our mission. She is a tireless worker and the ultimate teammate. She quickly and accurately processes her work and then immediately seeks out additional duties to the benefit of the team.

## NEW TEAMMATE OF THE YEAR

**Sam Kitchen** started with the regulatory division in April of this year as a project manager. She never shies away from a complex project or a tough customer and is always willing to provide support to her team. She is a team player at heart and is always willing to share new things she learns with her teammates. In addition to her permit workload, she has volunteered for additional efforts supporting the division.



## TEAM AWARD

For their work on the summer 2022 monitoring effort at wetland mitigation banks, the regulatory division selects **Leslie Day, Brian Yagle, Marissa Merriman and Eric Norton** for our Team of the Year Award.



# Support Staff Honorary Awards

## RESOURCE MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

**Kimberly Bahls** is our customer service representative for the district, and she is our resident subject matter expert on all things payroll. She is very resourceful in finding solutions to difficult problems and tries very hard to provide top-notch customer care to all district employees with their government travel card issues as well as ensuring timely monthly payments on the government purchase card. With the unprecedented 3- week CEFMS II outage in early fiscal year 2023, she quickly came up with plans addressing several possible scenarios and conducted behind the scenes actions to ensure everyone was paid on time, thus putting our district in a favorable position, where we did not need to invoke emergency payroll procedures. Her devotion to duty and dedication to the district timekeeping and payroll mission is valued and appreciated by the entire district.



## REAL ESTATE "DUE DILIGENCE" AWARD

This award recognizes the real estate employee who best exemplifies an unwavering commitment to ensuring the success of our projects and programs. It is through the recipient's due diligence that the organization gains the trust and respect of our customers and stakeholders. **Ken Peterson**, realty specialist, is recognized as the 2022 recipient of the St. Paul District Real Estate "Due Diligence" Award. Ken consistently demonstrates his commitment to the continued success of the real estate management and disposal program. When faced with a technical real estate question or controversial land management issue affecting the federal government's land holdings, Ken diligently gathers relevant data and reviews pertinent real property laws, regulations and policy documents to guide his decision-making process. Throughout the year, Ken's direct demeanor has gained the trust and respect of our team and customers as he has continually delivered quality products and services in a professional manner.





# Length of Service Awards

\*\* For a list of all length of service awards, see the latest Crosscurrents



## 25 YEARS



Brian Krause



Jim Rand

## 30 YEARS



Eric Carlson



Kathy Halverson



Kenneth Peterson

## 35 YEARS



Thomas Johnson



Denise Julson

# Length of Service Awards 40 YEARS



**THERESA  
THURY**

What is your current position with the Corps? *I am the project scheduler/analyst for the Fargo-Moorhead project in project management.*

What were some of your previous positions? *I started at the Corps as a temp GS-02 clerk/typist working in the file room in November 1981 and was let go under a reduction in force in the spring of 1982. I came back in May of 1984. In between I was a machinist at a plastics plant that made toys.*

What do you enjoy about working with the Corps? *I enjoy working with my teams and I like to help others solve problems. I have met many*

*wonderful friends along the way!*  
What do you like to do outside of work? *My oldest son and wife have four children age 4 years and under. They keep me pretty busy and fill my heart with joy. I also sing in the church choir and love to travel and spend time at the cabin.*

What would be your advice for people just starting their careers with the Corps? *Learn how your job fits in with the bigger picture of what the St. Paul District does and don't be afraid to ask questions. Also get to know your coworkers and enjoy those relationships.*

