

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

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Ferguson
reunites dog
with owner
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**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District



Jeff Ferguson (right), head lock and dam operator at Lower St. Anthony Falls in Minneapolis, holds Harper, Justin Inman's (left) dog. Ferguson discovered Harper when his dog, Cora alerted him there was something on the cliffside. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson



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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. Karl Jansen

Each winter, senior leaders who comprise our Corporate Board gather to assess our district's current state and future direction. This year, the Corporate Board gathered on Feb. 24 in the Great Northern Building's conference center for this purpose.

The meeting's agenda was structured around the district's "operating concept," M-V-P (Mission, Value, People). The Corporate Board recently ratified this concept along with the St. Paul District's guiding principles and enduring district priorities. In short, our priorities convey what we do, and our principles convey how we do it (our organizational culture).

While the letter P is last in our M-V-P acronym, we always lead our agenda with People First, and that starts with safety. We discussed two leading indicators that signal a strong safety culture and work environment: the Position Hazard Analysis and our "Good Catch" program. Our leaders plan to boost our investment in Position Hazard Analyses during the upcoming appraisal period, and we also committed to increase communication about the Good Catch program – what it is, what it does and how to participate. We

also established a personal security focus area to coincide with our future office move, with the goal of empowering our office-based staff with best practices to remain safe in a metro office environment.

Also regarding our office move, the Corporate Board discussed the current occupancy schedule and actions needed to prepare for the move to the First National Bank Building. We anticipate occupancy will begin in mid-July and conclude in mid-August of this year. Upcoming e-mails and online availability sessions will outline instructions to help everyone get ready in these next few months.

Calendar year 2021 was the first year of following through with our MVP People First Plan that aligns with our MVP People First Strategy. Overall, the 2021 plan was successful, and we achieved many key goals including updating our telework, work schedules, and merit promotion policies, reestablishing our Special Emphasis Program Committee, and supporting our teammates and their families throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We also discussed key draft initiatives for the 2022 plan and anticipate sharing it district-wide in the coming weeks.

Turning to the M in M-V-P (Mission), funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was front and center with our discussions. Congress appropriated about \$17 billion of the \$1.2 trillion act for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the fiscal year 2022 workplan. Of that, about \$5 billion was designated for projects across the Mississippi Valley Division, with \$533 million to support St. Paul District programs and projects.

In St. Paul, the big news from this once in a generation infrastructure investment was construction funding for our three major flood risk reduction projects in the Fargo-Moorhead area (\$437 million), Minot, North Dakota (\$61.5 million), and Arcadia, Wisconsin (\$5.3 million). For Fargo-Moorhead and Minot, these resources will fund the projects to completion. Most importantly, with these resources, people from these communities will benefit from flood risk reduction infrastructure years sooner than originally thought – for these communities, the infrastructure act is a game-changer.

The Upper Mississippi River's Navigation Ecosystem Sustainability Program, shared among the St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis



Districts, received \$829 million for the program's first two construction projects: fish passage at Lock and Dam 22 (Rock Island District), and a 1,200-foot lock at Lock and Dam 25 (St. Louis District). These projects will lead to a series of modernization investments in the Upper Mississippi for many years to come.

New Orleans District received a

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total of \$2.6 billion in both the infrastructure act and other supplemental disaster relief appropriations. This workload is more than a single district can handle in a timely manner. Accordingly, all six Mississippi Valley Division districts will regionally deliver a large portion of this workload, either by taking responsibility for entire projects or providing essential planning, environmental, real estate and other technical cross-cutting support to the portfolio.

To support the New Orleans District, the St. Paul District is directly responsible for the \$8 million Upper Barataria Basin project pre-construction engineering and design. This project will provide hurricane and storm surge reduction measures throughout portions of seven parishes. Structural features include levees and floodwalls along a 30-mile reach and a barge gate.

During the Corporate Board gathering, we discussed staffing needs and delivery methods to accomplish this important and engaging work. For several months, we have worked through restructuring within the Engineering and Construction

Division and have also aggressively pursued a staff growth plan throughout the district. We are making positive strides in this area, and we track and report staff growth status updates frequently with Mississippi Valley Division leadership.

The V in M-V-P (Value) is all about preparing for the future so we are ready and able to provide relevant public service, whatever the challenges may be. In January 2020, our leadership team developed a 2020-2030 10-year strategic plan comprised of eight strategic initiatives. Investing in these initiatives will help posture St. Paul District for an uncertain future, particularly as we accomplish workload that has consumed much of our capability over the last decade (e.g. the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Project).

Our initiatives focus on shaping a world-class workforce, resilient navigation, rapid project delivery for low-cost program authorities, expanding our hydraulics and hydrology technical expertise, developing more robust vertical construction design capabilities, sharing unique innovative financing knowledge, and broadening our role with integrated watershed resource management and water-

shed planning.

A Corporate Board member champions each of the strategic initiatives. During the gathering, they provided an assessment of progress to date, recommendations for edits, and a forecast of things to come.

Additionally, we discussed approaches for human capital management planning. “Human capital” represents the public service value that results from our people’s experience, knowledge and abilities, and human capital management is the collection of organizational practices related to the acquisition, management and development

of the people who comprise our workforce. We plan to advance our human capital management planning in the coming months to meet our organizational needs for the next 3-5 years.

In summary, the recent Corporate Board gathering was very productive and time well spent. We closed the meeting reflecting on the caliber of people who serve in the St. Paul District, and all the senior leaders expressed gratitude and appreciation for their talents and contributions they make each day. I could not agree more. Because of all of you, our future is bright! Thanks for all you do!



Harper's Hero: Ferguson reunites dog with owner

Story by Melanie Peterson

What seemed to be a normal occurrence, proved to be something much different for lock and dam operator Jeff Ferguson when his dog alerted him to something unusual in the distance.

“Cora usually barks at the fox den near the lock and dam operations building,” Ferguson said. “But this was different, it was a small, dark figure that looked like a dog.”

The head operator at Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam took to social media to search lost dogs in Minneapolis. In his search, he stumbled across a photo of Harper, a pug/Boston-terrier mix with dark coloring that matched the dog Ferguson spotted at the dam. Harper had been inside an SUV when it was stolen from Hudson, Wisconsin. While the car was found and the suspect was apprehended, Harper was still missing for 28 days before Ferguson and Cora found her. A Facebook group, Harper's Heroes, garnered over 2,500 followers that were eagerly awaiting news of Harper.

Ferguson immediately contacted the dog's owner, Justin Inman.

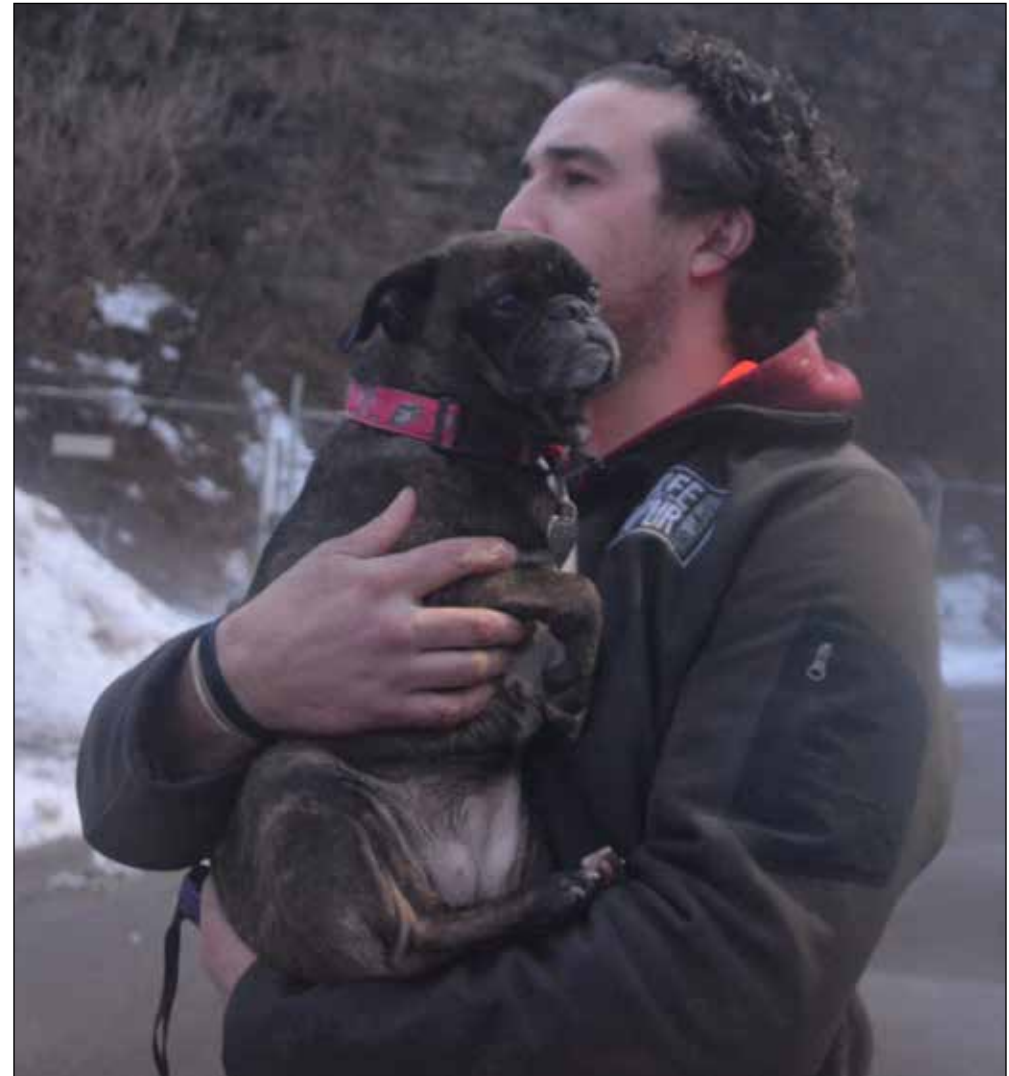
“I don't want to get your hopes up, but I have a dog back here that looks an awful lot like yours,” Ferguson said to the owner. Inman took a chance and drove out to Minneapolis to meet Ferguson.

“I just brought the flashlight up and shined right on Harper's face,” Inman said, “I mean, I've been waiting 28 days for this moment to happen.”

Inman immediately took Harper to the vet where she was deemed okay other than being underweight.

“When we got home, it was pretty much lights out for the next two days,” Inman continued. The story was picked up by Fox 9 News, who interviewed Ferguson and Inman.

Ferguson said he was grateful that Cora alerted him something was on the cliff; he rewarded his dog with a ribeye steak. He said, “I'm just glad we were able to find Harper's owner and that she's home safe and sound now.”



Justin Inman, Harper's owner, holds Harper, the dog that was found at Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam in Minneapolis. USACE photo by Melanie Peterson

Construction ramps up for the Eastern Area Office

Story by Melanie Peterson

It may be off season for navigation, but it's on season for the Eastern Area Office as they ramp up construction. "There's two major contracts we have going on," said Scott Baker, Winona resident engineer. "We have the anchorage contract, which is about \$9 million, and then we have the mooring bitt contract that was awarded for \$20 million."

Anchorage

The anchorage contract is for Lock and Dams 5A, 8 and 10 in Fountain City, Wisconsin; Genoa, Wisconsin; and Guttenberg, Iowa, respectively. New, stronger anchorages are being put on to prepare for new, heavier miter gates. To meet current standards, the newly installed gates will be

50% heavier than the old gates. Anchorages are to a miter gate what a hinge is to a door, Baker explained.

The work began in late November when navigation season came to a close, and the contractor has been working 5-6 days a week with 12-hour shifts ever since.

The new anchorages themselves are first fabricated at a machine shop – Steward Machine in Birmingham, Alabama. The machine shop has been working 24 hours a day for 7 days a week to maintain their schedule of delivering a total of 18 anchorages to three locks. The subcontractor sent six of their welders from La Crosse, Wisconsin, to assist in this effort before the navigation season opens in March.

One of the challenges is that the lock and dam concrete is more than 90 years old, and it is in variable condition, Baker explained. Despite its age, the concrete is in good condition for the new anchorages to be installed, Baker assured. Replacing the anchorage involves drilling down in the

concrete 14 feet below the surface, installing 2-inch anchor rods and then grouting in place – providing a bond between the anchor rods and the existing concrete. The new anchorages are then set on the anchor rods, bolted in place and then the whole anchorage assembly is grouted as well to bring it flush with existing concrete.

In addition to setbacks from workload, the ongoing pandemic and delivery problems, working in winter has posed its own unique set of challenges. "There are a lot of safety issues in the winter to consider from the cold temperatures to high winds up to 50 miles per hour," Baker said.

Tow rail mooring bitts

The second major contract for the Eastern Area Office is the tow rail mooring bitt contract at Lock and Dams 4 and 7 in Alma, Wisconsin, and La Crescent, Minnesota. Work includes removing the top 4 feet on the upper guide wall.

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Construction progresses on the Lock and Dam 7 tow rails in La Crescent, Minnesota, Feb. 8. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

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A mooring bitt is a device that tows attach to that assist when a tow is pulled out of a chamber. As the tow goes upstream, the mooring bitt guides the barges close to the wall to keep it under control. “We need something very strong because bad weather conditions and high water can put a lot of force on those barges and pull it toward the dam. We want to make sure we have a secure sys-

tem that operates smoothly and is safe for the lock operators and operations staff,” Baker said.

“With both contracts underway, we have a great team staying busy this winter to ensure we meet all the requirements for the safety of our crew and facilities,” Baker said.

Teamwork

Working simultaneously on two

contracts provides a great learning process and mentoring opportunity for newer employees, Baker said.

“The biggest learning curve is problem solving,” he said. “Understanding there’s always going to be issues and learning to manage them the best we can and communicate with the contractor

and each other is really a team effort.”

Teamwork and communication are the key to success of this dual-contract operation, he added. “I can’t be at every site, so I expect everyone to be responsible and, in the end, successful and proud of the work they’ve done.”

Mike Weiers, subcontractor of J.F. Brennan, grouts the anchor rods at Lock and Dam 5A in Fountain City, Wisconsin. USACE courtesy photo



John Carlson, SEH senior electrical engineer, and Scott Baker, St. Paul District Winona resident engineer, discuss the concrete cores required from the electrical trenches to the two new upstream miter anchorages at Lock and Dam 5A in Fountain City, Wisconsin. USACE courtesy photo



Survey team sets the stage for engineering solutions

Story by Patrick Moes

From Minot, North Dakota, to Guttenberg, Iowa, and countless sites and cities in between, the St. Paul District survey team can often be seen negotiating terrain and weather elements to gather critical data.

The information the team collects is used for multiple purposes from defining property lines to helping identify locations for future projects, said Paul Johnson, St. Paul District survey team chief. He said the team basically gathers measurements for the surface of Earth – both horizontal and vertical elevations. It's these precise measurements that are critical to developing flood risk management solutions, Johnson added.

It's the need for these measurements that recently brought Johnson and his colleague, Miray Welle, to Lake Elmo, Minnesota, a neighborhood just east of St. Paul, Minnesota. Maj. Nick Vottero, St. Paul District project manager, said the St. Paul District is currently working with the watershed district on a flood mitigation study. The watershed encom-

passes nine landlocked lakes and ponds within the community, Vottero said. He added that the residents have experienced historically high-water levels over the past several years.

The team was hiking through fields with temperatures hovering around 20 degrees as they looked for culverts and other hidden locations beneath a blanket of snow. For Johnson, the weather wasn't too bad. In fact, he said it was 'pleasant.' He was quick to add that there are plenty of days where the weather doesn't climb above zero. When the temperature drops that low,

Johnson said the work continues but sometimes requires an occasional coffee break to warm up. He added that regardless of the temperature, the survey team is always focused on the job.

Johnson, a seasoned veteran having worked for the Corps of Engineers for nearly 30 years, said the work was very familiar

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Paul Johnson, survey team chief, sets up survey equipment in Lake Elmo, Minnesota, Jan. 11. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

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to him given he's surveyed most of the St. Paul District's territory. Of all the projects and locations, he said the Gantenbein Project, located east of Lock and Dam 3, near Diamond Bluff, Wisconsin, is the one that stands out the most.

He said the surveys were ordered to help identify locations for a future service road in the marshy backwaters of the Mississippi River. "Between the poison ivy, the mosquitoes, the mud and the difficult access, it was memorable," Johnson said with a smirk.

Welle added "that was just during the summer, winter was worse."

Regardless of the conditions, whether frigid temperatures and snow or mosquito infested fields, the district's survey team is always up for a challenge, Johnson said. The team is typically in the field 70-80% of the year. He added that in addition to his team, the district also has a survey team out of the Fountain City Service Base in Fountain City, Wisconsin, that also does hydrographic surveys of the Mississippi River. "We can basically survey anything above or below the water," Johnson said. "Every project begins and ends with a survey."

"Between the poison ivy, the mosquitoes, the mud and the difficult access, it was memorable."

-Paul Johnson
survey team chief



Miray Welle, engineering technician, records data points for a survey in Lake Elmo, Minnesota, Jan. 11. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Mississippi River Headwaters reservoir drawdowns nearly complete

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District water managers, along with park rangers at each of the six reservoirs in northern Minnesota, are collaboratively working to make necessary water level adjustments ahead of the spring snowmelt.

Jim Noren, St. Paul District hydrologist in charge of the headwaters reservoirs water levels,

said the primary goal is lowering the reservoir levels to gain storage capacity by March 1. He said the team can make necessary adjustments, if needed, after that but the initial goal is to reach the target levels before the flood threat. The Corps' headwaters reservoirs include Leech Lake, near Federal Dam, Minnesota; Lake Winnibigoshish, near Deer

River, Minnesota; Pokegama Lake, near Grand Rapids, Minnesota; Big Sandy Lake, near McGregor, Minnesota; Cross Lake, near Crosslake, Minnesota; and Gull Lake, near Brainerd, Minnesota.

Noren said the drawdowns are all about coordination among the water management engineers, park rangers, survey technicians, and partner organizations, such as the National Weather Service and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. "Communication is key to getting the reservoirs drawn down to the right levels based on current conditions," Noren said. "All the stakeholders bring valuable information to the decision process and help make the process as smooth as possible."

For Brian Turner, Gull Lake Dam and Recreation Area site manager, the winter snow surveys are a way of gathering information about the amount of snow, and more importantly, the amount of water contained within the snow-pack. Turner said the information,

known as snow water equivalent, or SWE, is then shared with Noren and others in a coordinated effort to manage the reservoir system in minimize flood threats to the region.

The surveys are simple, Turner said. With a nearly 3-foot silver tube around 2 inches in diameter, he pushes the tube into the snow until he reaches the ground. After a quick scraping of the soil, the snow is then pushed into a container where it is weighed to determine the SWE. He said they usually take around three samples and average them to get an indication of the amount of moisture in each area. Turner said he and the park rangers at the other sites routinely collect the information.

Once he receives the information from all the sites within the headwaters, Noren said he reviews it and makes necessary adjustments in accordance with the operational plan for the system. "It's critical to evaluate the possible consequences any

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Brian Turner, Gull Lake Dam and Recreation Area site manager, adjusts the dam gates at Gull Lake Dam, near Brainerd, Minnesota, Dec. 21, 2021. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

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gate movement at a dam has for each reservoir, but also the reservoirs and municipalities downstream, such as Aitkin, Minnesota, Noren said.

Noren added that the reservoir levels are in good shape at this point in the season, and the team is coordinating directly with partner agencies ahead of the snowmelt to ensure everyone is prepared to do what they can to reduce flood risk.

“At this time, the watershed’s snow and frost conditions indicates an average spring melt for the Headwaters of the Mississippi River,” Noren said. “However, we must stay watchful because the timing and magnitude of the runoff can dramatically change based on the weather conditions we see in the next few months.”

For the most up-to-date river conditions and forecasts, check out the NWS North Central River Forecast Center [here](#).



Shawn Weissenfluh, natural resources specialist, conducts a snow survey at Leech Lake Recreation Area near Federal Dam, Minnesota, Dec. 21, 2021. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Patrick Harding: the maestro of property management

Story by Melanie Peterson

Patrick Harding, a supply technician, began his career with the St. Paul District in 1991, originally in the contracting division as a clerk/typist before starting in logistics. Before he came to the Corps, Harding went to Saint Paul College for a six-month bookkeeping and clerical course and then worked temporary jobs for the Ramsey Action Programs, Public Employees Retirement Association and St. Paul Water and Utilities. He has been a staple to the logistics office for the past 26 years, according to Mike McGarvey, chief of logistics.

“During this time, Patrick has proven himself to be one of the district’s most dedicated, hard working, respectful, customer-oriented employees who is kind, caring and always willing to help customers resolve any property issues they may have,” McGarvey said.

During Harding’s 26 years with the logistics office, the St. Paul District has achieved 100% property accountability. McGarvey largely attributes this to Harding’s dedication. “Patrick has done an outstanding job ensuring the district completes 100% property inventories each fiscal year for our \$80 million property book items. I know of no other Corps em-



Patrick Harding, supply technician. USACE photo by Emily Chavolla

ployee, or district, that can say they have a 26-year, 100% property book inventory track record like Patrick,” McGarvey said.

Harding said what he enjoys about his job is steady employment and coworkers that are fun and that respect him for what he does. “He also has the greatest collection of 80s music (and some 70s throw-back days) than any person I have ever known, and any day Patrick is at work he plays music all day,” McGarvey said.

Winter maintenance work foundation of upcoming navigation season

Story by Patrick Moes

The St. Paul District is near the finish line in its winter maintenance projects on the Mississippi River.

The construction projects vary in scope but are all focused on safety and improving navigation ahead of the upcoming shipping season, said Jim Rand, St. Paul District locks and dams chief.

Rand said the Mississippi River navigation channel is vital to the nation's economy and national security. He added that two of the current winter maintenance projects will also improve lock safety for both Corps of Engineers lock operators and navigation employees.

Lock and Dam 4, in Alma, Wisconsin, is one of the locks undergoing winter maintenance to improve the lock safety. The lock is one of seven locks that is receiving an upgraded tow rail system to safely tow boats upriver. The system sits on a rail and helps move barges out of the lock chamber. Rand said that a 15-barge tow needs to be separated, or cut, at each lock

due to size constraints within the lock chamber. He added that the lock chamber can only support six barges and the tow boat at the same time. If the complete tow has more than six barges, it needs to be separated during the lockages and then connected once all of the vessels pass through the lock. The tow rail system ensures remaining barges separated from the tow are safely secured on the lock wall while the tow boat and remaining barges complete the second lockage.

Kim Warshaw, project manager in charge of the maintenance work, said the project is all about safety – for both the Corps of Engineers staff and navigation crews. She said the work in Alma and an additional effort at Lock and Dam 7, near La Crescent, Minnesota, are a part of a \$20.5 million contract that includes repairs at Lock and Dam 5 near Minnesota City, Minnesota; Lock and Dam 5A, near Fountain City, Wisconsin; Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wisconsin, and Lock and Dam 9, near Lynxville, Wisconsin. Warshaw said a separate contract

was awarded to Kraemer North America, out of Plain, Wisconsin, for tow rail rehabilitation at Lock and Dam 6, located near Trempealeau, Wisconsin.

Warshaw said the construction projects are replacing a tow rail system that was originally built in the 1950s and 1960s. "Like anything else, these locks require routine maintenance to ensure

they continue performing as designed," she said.

The required maintenance is necessary to ensure the system continues to safely move bulk commodities to regional and national markets. "Maintaining the Mississippi River navigation channel

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Kim Warshaw, project manager, reads project notes at Lock and Dam 7, near La Crescent, Minnesota, Feb. 8. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

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provides significant savings to shippers and is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transportation,” Warshaw said.

Disrupting the barge shipping season has a huge impact on the shipping industry, she added. A one-day maintenance delay at Lock and Dam 6 could cost the shipping industry nearly \$40,000; a three-day delay could cost approximately \$350,000 and a

five-day delay could cost almost \$775,000.

Warsaw said there were 1,636 commercial lockages at Lock and Dam 4 in 2021. “The commercial lockages accounted for 7.9 million tons of commodities,” she said. “You would need approximately 71,000 rail cars or 315,000 semi-trucks to move the same amount of material.”

The winter maintenance completion is scheduled for mid-March, Warshaw said.



Work continues on the tow rails at Lock and Dam 4 in Alma, Wisconsin, Feb. 9. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



Col. Karl Jansen, district commander, signs the district work schedules policy, Nov. 23 USACE courtesy photo

New work policy offers more flexibility

Story by Melanie Peterson

Col. Karl Jansen, district commander, recently signed a revised work schedule policy. This regulation outlines the full range of alternate work schedules (flexible and compressed) that will be available to most staff.

“This regulation, in addition to the recently revised telework program, represents the foundation for our workplace transformation focus and future post-pandemic work environment,” Jansen said.

“Supporting a healthy life-work balance enables our people to be all they can be in service to the nation and further exemplifies St. Paul District as an employer of choice and one of the Corps of Engineers’ Best Places to Work.”

The policy can be found [here](#).

Ski trail provides winter recreation opportunity with a view

Story by Patrick Moes

Amid the rolling hills and pine trees covered in a blanket of snow overlooking Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, North Dakota, lies a cross-country ski trail seldom seen across the region.

The ski trail, 5 kilometers in length, is one of the unique winter recreation amenities at the St. Paul District's Lake Ashtabula. Scott Tichy, Lake Ashtabula lead park ranger, said the trail is the only one that he is aware of within the Mississippi Valley Division. He said that while North Dakota is prone to cold

weather, snow and blizzards, the community still likes to get outside and recreate. "Recreation doesn't stop just because it's winter in this part of the world," he said. "Our visitors want to come out and recreate, and we try to accommodate those folks."

The ski trail, located within the Eggert's Landing campground on the east side of the lake, is a quiet area during the winter with an occasional deer or rabbit running atop the snow, or an owl or eagle flying overhead. With the

annual wintery white blanket on the ground usually from early November until early April, Tichy said the long snow season makes it a perfect location for cross-country skiing. He added that the Lake Ashtabula park rangers groom the trail at least once a week for both skate skiing and classical skiing to ensure it's safe for visitors.

For Tichy, the passion for cross-country skiing started at an early age. He grew up racing and participated in the Minnesota State High School cross-country ski tournament three times before moving on to ski for the University of Minnesota. Wanting to share that passion for winter recreation at Lake Ashtabula, Tichy said he started thinking of options. "Whenever I look at providing a new recreation opportunity, I start by looking across the region to see whether another agency is already providing that opportunity," said Tichy. In reviewing cross-country ski opportunities, he said he realized that there were limited opportunities in North Dakota with the closest trail more than 30 miles away.

He said developing the trail was relatively easy since it was on

frozen ground and covered existing hiking trails and service roads. In the 20 years since the team started grooming the trail, Tichy said he's witnessed the interest in the cross-country skiing increase over time. He said one of the added benefits of doing this has been the opportunity to use the grooming equipment to create a trail for the North Dakota Winter Olympics, which are annually held in Valley City. "Anytime you can partner with somebody else is special," he said. "To be able to help that community...you are not going to find a group of athletes that are more appreciative of the support you give them. They work as hard as any other athlete does at what they want to do, and to be asked to help make that experience better for them is really an honor for us."

In addition to cross-country skiing, Tichy said snowmobiling, ice fishing, birding and snowshoeing are a few other options for winter recreation at Lake Ashtabula. He added that anyone wanting more information on these opportunities to include where the fish are biting should just give the Lake Ashtabula staff a call.



Scott Tichy, Lake Ashtabula lead park ranger, grooms the cross-country ski trails at Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, North Dakota, Feb. 17. USACE photo by Patrick Moes

Corps continues preparations for upcoming building move

Story by Shannon Bauer

District staff are working hard, preparing for the upcoming move to the First National Bank building.

Maj. Nick Vottero, district move coordinator, said that the project has remained on schedule to this point in large part due to the great work by the movement teams.

“The contributions of Mike McGarvey [logistics] leading the movement team; Vanessa Alberto [planning], Shannon Bauer [public affairs] and Emily Chavolla [visual information] developing the artwork plan; Ozzie Melendez [information technology] ensuring IT support throughout the move; Kim Warshaw [project management] overseeing critical contracts; and countless others have been invaluable to the success of the move,” Vottero said.

Construction began in the new building in December and it is anticipated that employees will begin moving, floor-by-floor this July. Guidance will be provided to employees in March on how to pack and label items in individual offices and cubicles. Additionally,

all employees will telework full time in April, while their cubicles are dismantled and reinstalled in the new building.

Employees should not start packing their personal cubicles or offices until they receive the guidance, but they should start reducing their footprint by taking personal items home and going through files and disposing of items that are no longer needed. Personal items, such as plants, will not be moved, and employees will not be reimbursed for items that are damaged or lost during the move.

Vottero said when employees move into the new building, they should expect their nameplate on a cube and all their personal property inside it. Instructions will be sent out on how to disassemble and reassemble phones, docking stations and monitors.

“We want to make this move as convenient for employees as possible,” he said. “The goal is for employees to have a functional workspace immediately upon arrival.”

Prior to employee arrivals, common areas and conference rooms will be set up, new chairs and

appliances will be delivered, and most of the artwork will be installed.



Building progress continues at the First National Bank building in St. Paul, Minnesota. USACE courtesy photo

Park ranger saves man from thin ice

Story by Melanie Peterson

When the dispatch call came through that there was a man in distress on the ice, Scott Tichy knew what to do.

“This is what we train for, to be responders to people in need,” said Scott Tichy, Lake Ashtabula lead park ranger.

The 29-year park ranger veteran immediately responded with his ice rescue equipment. When he arrived at the scene, he saw a man on the ice in an area that is known to have thin ice. Tichy donned his ice rescue suit as the deputy sheriff arrived on the scene and manned the line while Tichy walked on the ice.

“I fully anticipated I was going to go through the ice,” Tichy said.

Tichy was able to drag the man to thicker ice, where the sheriff met him and helped the effort. The man had frostbite on his feet and was taken away in an ambulance.

Certified for ice rescue, Tichy explained the ice suit allows its wearer to float and stay warm to facilitate a rescue for someone who is on thin ice or has fallen into the water. The yellow, full-bodied suit is 100% insulated and waterproof.

Ice safety conditions vary widely depending on the region and time of the year, Tichy cautions. He said you can check with local bait shops, local officials, lock and dam operators and park rangers to find out current ice conditions. They do a good job of keeping people safe on the facilities.

“Always use extreme caution when you go on the ice and never, ever assume that any ice is 100% safe,” he said.

When asked about the incident, Tichy said, “Our operations folks - park rangers, lock and dam folks - they do a good job of keeping the people that come to our facilities safe. We all do this. It was my turn this time, but there’s other folks that do great things every single day. Safety is everyone’s responsibility.”



Scott Tichy, park ranger, shows off the ice rescue suit at Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, North Dakota, Jan. 20. USACE photo by Chris Botz

Corps and Kindred, North Dakota, break ground on sanitary sewer project

Story by George Stringham

The St. Paul District and Kindred, North Dakota, celebrated the commencement of a sanitary sewer upgrade and expansion project for the city in a groundbreaking ceremony at the city's wastewater treatment facility Oct. 1, 2021.

"As a civil engineer, I can appreciate the type of infrastructure that's behind the scenes that citizens don't see," stated Col.

Karl Jansen, St. Paul District commander, during the ceremony. "That makes their lives better, and when we can roll up our sleeves and work hard and solve something going back seven years, I think they'd be proud to know that they have leaders like you, the council, and a great reputable engineering firm working on their behalf."

The project, covered under the

Corps' Environmental Infrastructure Assistance Program, includes the construction of new wastewater lagoons, upgrades to the existing main sanitary sewer lift station, installation of new sanitary sewer force main and decommissioning of existing wastewater lagoons.

"Most importantly there are people behind the scenes that are the unsung heroes of the community," Jansen added, "Most people don't even know what these employees are preventing on a day-to-day basis for the environment they live and work in."

The sanitary sewer system improvements will increase the city's sanitary sewer service capacity, while remaining in compliance with environmental water quality rules and minimizing by-passes of untreated wastewater and associated health risks. The project has a total cost of approximately \$8 million, of which \$5.45 million will be eligible for federal funding.

The St. Paul District's environmental infrastructure programs assist rural communities with



Col. Karl Jansen, district commander, and Kevin Wilson, deputy district engineer, discuss Kindred's aging sanitary lift station with the city's consultant, Brandon Oye, Oct. 1, 2021. USACE photo by Michelle Prosser

building, designing and/or restoring environmentally friendly water supply and wastewater treatment systems. As of 2021, the district has assisted more than 50 communities in building 70 projects totaling over \$80 million.



St. Paul District Commander Col. Karl Jansen, Deputy District Engineer Kevin Wilson, join Kindred, North Dakota's mayor and several city council members to celebrate the city's sanitary sewer project groundbreaking Oct. 1. USACE photo by Michelle Prosser

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



December
Daniel Adams
*Engineering and
Construction*



January
Mike Holzer
Operations





NAVIGATION

640K cubic yards

dredged river sand provided for beneficial use:

- habitat projects
- municipal developments
- cattle bedding
- road maintenance

1,055,000 cubic yards dredged from 45 different dredging jobs

13 tons of goods

passed through Lock 10

- 2,132 commercial vessels passed through lock 10
- 33,736 total lockages at MVP locks

443 surveys

completed by survey crew covering 31,162 acres

RECREATION

165K guests at campsites

- 851,230 day use recreation visitors
- 31,400 volunteer hours worked
- fee revenues totaled \$1,278,362

ENGINEERING & CONSTRUCTION

placed **\$120M** in construction [highest ever for MVP]

- Provided engineering support to 33 USACE districts and centers

EMERGENCY MGMT

102 deployments

4 overseas + 98 disaster response

SAFETY

100% new staff: four new employees

REGULATORY

Wetland Actions Authorized

3,700 permit actions processed

24% increase in efficiency

Reduced the average number of days for permit processing by 13 days

Wetland Mitigation Banks

10 mitigation banks approved

with approximately 400 projected credits

OFFICE OF COUNSEL



34 FOIA requests processed

- Over 450 pages of information

CPAC

103 new hires

17 retirements



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

\$243M obligated funds

Tribal Partnerships

5 active TPP feasibility studies



1st ever

water-related TPP planning study agreement

- 2nd ever TPP design and implementation project partnership agreement (Corps-wide)
- \$1.24M executed in TPP funding for our 7 total ongoing TPP efforts

Around the District



(Above) Bobber the Water Safety Dog teaches ice safety to kids at Cross Lake Recreation Area, in Crosslake, Minnesota, Jan. 11. USACE courtesy photo. (Below) Holiday lights light up the Cross Lake Dam in Crosslake, Minnesota, Dec. 20, 2021. USACE photo by Patrick Moes



(Above) Hunter Simonson competes in an ice pick race to teach ice safety in Hill City, Minnesota. USACE courtesy photo. (Below) Brandon Olson and Bill Chelmowski, survey technicians, measure the ice on Lake Pepin, near Red Wing, Minnesota, Feb. 16. USACE photo by Dave Elmstrom



News and Notes

New Hires

Chris Atkins, deputy chief, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jarrett Cellini, ecologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota
Joshua Clark, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Benjamin Everson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Kathryn Fechter, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Adam Gamblin, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota
Justin Garrett, biologist, regulatory, St. Louis, Missouri
Justine Hunt, realty assistant, real estate, St. Paul, Minnesota
Melissa Johnson, administrative support assistant, operations, Grand Rapids, Minnesota
Chengho Lee, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Daniel Meden, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois
Jonathan Nygaard, survey technician, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Arash Shams, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Robert Stanick, chief of channels and harbors, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Richard Tollefson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Robert Zappia, emergency management specialist, readiness operations center, St. Paul, Minnesota
Julia Zumberge, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Promotions

Eticia Brickman, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin
Travis Burrier, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Susan Funke, cook-steward, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Calvin Halverson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota
Jason Hauser, natural resources specialist, operations, Federal Dam, Minnesota

Zachary Kimmel, navigation support chief, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Anthony Kitchen, biologist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin
Alexander Nelson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Melissa Phelps, natural resources specialist, operations, Crosslake, Minnesota
Angelita Phipps, equal employment specialist, equal employment office, St. Paul, Minnesota

Michelle Prosser, project manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Eric Rain, lock and dam operator supervisor, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Benjamin Reeser, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Lupe Santos-Jensen, equal employment manager, equal employment office, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jesse Scott, hydrologic technician, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

James Sentz, supervisory civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Kristopher Taverna, master tender operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Lenona Vierra, secretary, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota
Sam Woboril, biologist, regulatory, Stevens Point, Wisconsin
Gary Wolf, supervisory civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

News and Notes, continued

Retirements

Teri Alberico, emergency management specialist, retired Jan. 28, 2022, after 40 years of service

Dawn Brabbit, administrative support assistant, retired Dec. 30, 2021

Tom Sully, supervisory civil engineer, retired Jan. 1, 2022

Congratulations



Troy Frank, Lock and Dam 8 and his wife Alicia welcomed a new baby boy, Arlo Raymond Frank on Jan. 5. He weighed 8.8 pounds.



Collin Moratz, regional planning and environment division north, welcomed Oliver Moratz on Jan. 9, weighing 9 pounds and 3 ounces.

Taps



Anthony "Tony" Richard Basley, passed away Jan. 25. Tony was head operator at Lock and Dam 1.



John Henry McQuiston passed away Jan. 23. John worked as a Lock and Dam operator until he retired in 2018.



Leon Opatz, engineering and construction, passed away Jan. 3. He started working for the Corps in 2010.