



US Army Corps
of Engineers
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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District selects Gunderson for Hall of Fame

District Commander James Scott honored Vern Gunderson, retired captain of the Dredge William A. Thompson, as the 33rd member of the St. Paul District's select Hall of Fame during an induction ceremony at the 18th annual retirees' reunion in St. Paul on Sept. 9.

Gunderson and his wife, La Vonne, are both from Fountain City, Wis.

Gunderson began his career as a deckhand on the Dredge Thompson in 1952. He served on the Thompson from 1952 until 1991, when he retired from the Corps.

Gunderson distinguished himself as a Civil Servant of the Year in 1982 and became recognized as the Corps' leading expert on cutterhead dredging equipment and operations.

He has held Coast Guard licenses for chief engineer, pilot and master. Master and chief engineer are the two highest positions on the dredge. During his term as master, Gunderson improved the cost effectiveness and emergency response of the Dredge Thompson and changed operating procedures to protect environmental resources.



Photo by Ken Gardner

Vern Gunderson (center), retired master of the Dredge William A. Thompson, was inducted into the St. Paul District's Hall of Fame on Sept. 9. He was Civil Servant of the Year in 1982 and during his term on the dredge improved operating efficiencies and initiated procedures to protect the environment. Gunderson's wife, La Vonne, shared in the honors, presented by Col. James T. Scott.

Retirees gather for 18th annual reunion



Photo by Marc Krumholz

Roger Weaver, who recently retired as chief engineer of the Dredge Thompson, received the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from District Commander Col. James T. Scott during the retirees' reunion.



St. Paul District photo

Left to right, reunion attendees Peggy Peterson, Jacqueline Petersen and Delores Sudeith share a moment of camaraderie during the reunion, held in St. Paul on Sept. 9.

Hearing on habitat improvement project held in Trempealeau, Wis.



Photos by Peter Verstegen

Over 35 people attended an Environmental Management Program (EMP) public meeting in Trempealeau on Sept. 14 to comment on a proposed habitat improvement project at the Trempealeau National Wildlife Refuge. The objective of the project is to enhance conditions for plants, animals, and migratory waterfowl and to improve fish habitat. Don Powell (left), EMP study manager, gave a presentation and responded to questions. The Corps, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service participated.



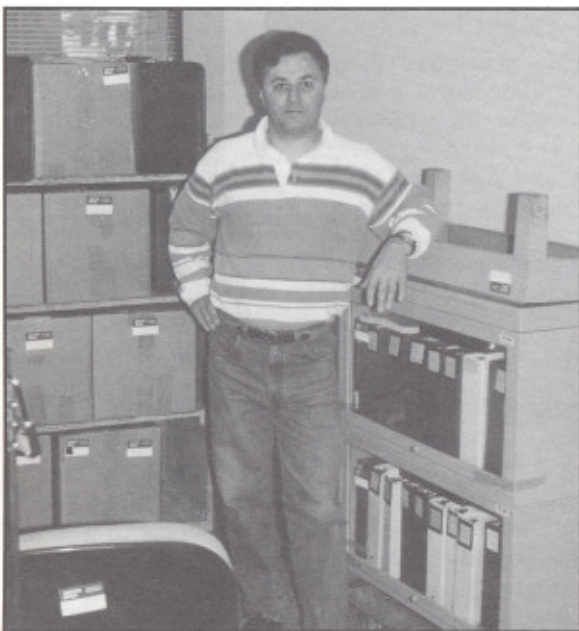
Ray Flock (left), resident engineer in Winona, Sara Sommerfeld, a project engineer, and Nathan Kathir from Design Branch attended the hearing on the Trempealeau refuge habitat improvement project. The project is part of the Upper Mississippi River EMP, an interagency effort designed to improve habitat areas along the Upper Mississippi River.

Headquarters moves to Army Engineers Centre



Photos by Ken Gardner

Demesha Tatum unpacks office supplies in the new EEO office. The EEO office is now located on the third floor of the Army Corps of Engineers Centre. Tatum is a student in the Stay-in-School Program.

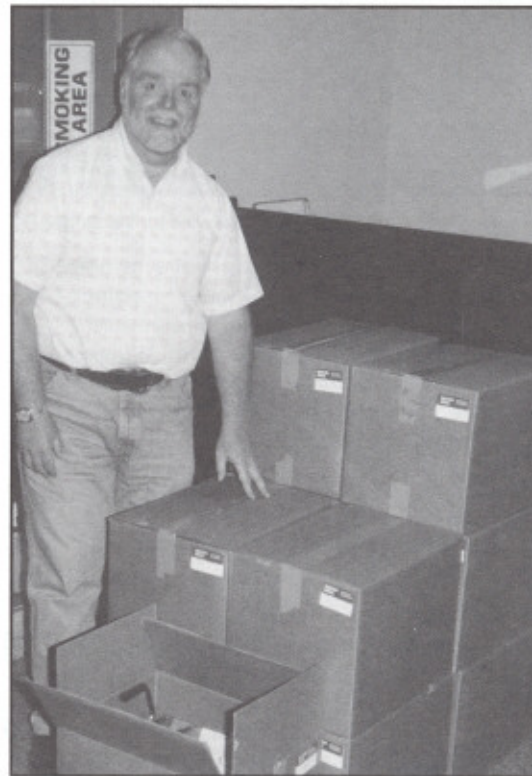


Randy Brunet, an auditor with North Central Division, begins to prepare his new office located on the third floor. He moved in Sept. 22. "This is definitely a first class facility," said Brunet.

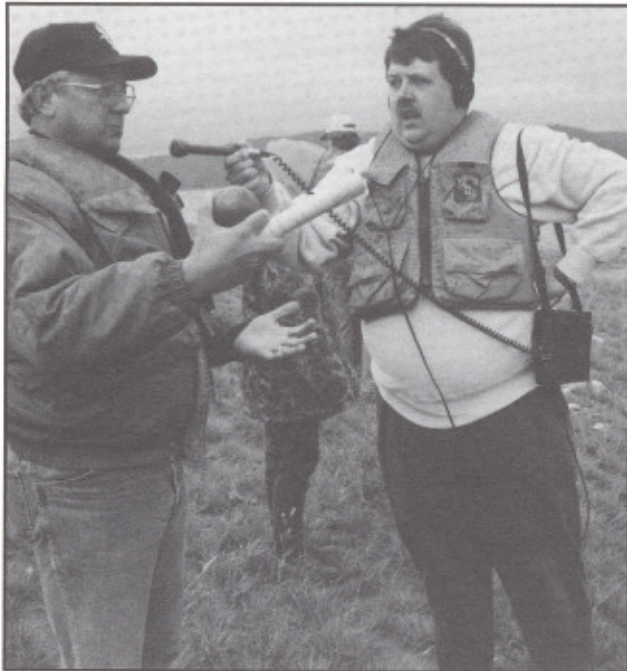
By the end of October, the district office will be at the Army Corps of Engineers Centre, 190 Fifth Street East, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1638.

The building was completely renovated for the district. The move from the Post Office began in mid-September. The bulk of the move will be complete in October, when all district offices move to their new locations in the new building.

Remodeling of the sixth floor was done October 1. Miscellaneous work on the third floor was done in early September. The systems furniture arrived for installation on September 3.



Ron Scott, chief of the Safety Office, unpacks supplies in his new third floor location. The Safety Office was among the first to move into new quarters.

*Environmental Management Program update***Pool 8 Island Project withstands the Flood of '93**

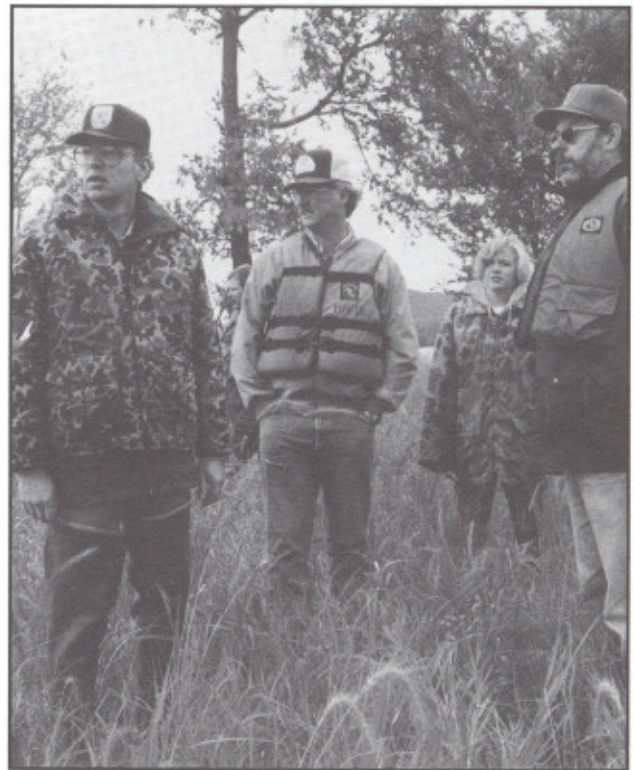
Photos by Peter Verstegen

Gary Palesh (left), the St. Paul District's project manager for the Pool 8 Islands Phase I project, explains the impact of the spring and summer floods on the project to a reporter from Wisconsin Public Radio in La Crosse. Palesh found the croquet ball near "boomerang point" on a Stage 2 Island south of Brownsville, Minn.

The Corps, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources conducted a media tour in mid-September of the Pool 8 Islands Phase I project. The tour showed the media the completed project and the impact of the summer flood on the project.

The project is located on the Wisconsin side of the Mississippi River in lower Pool 8, a few miles below Brownsville, Minnesota, on the right descending bank of the navigation channel. The project is part of the Upper Mississippi Environmental Management Program.

The \$1.9 million Pool 8 Islands Phase I project is designed to protect approximately 1,000 acres of backwater habitat from the degrading effects of wind and wave action and from flow and sediment from the main channel. The agencies chose to protect this spot because excellent aquatic vegetation beds still exist. (In areas further south in Pool 8, the aquatic plant beds



This grassy, tree-lined Stage 1 island shows the results of successful planting. The island will provide habitat for wildlife. At left is Jim Nissen from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages and operates the Pool 8 island projects built by the district. Also pictured are Arne Thomsen and Lisa Lund from the La Crosse Resident Office and Randy Devendorf from Environmental Resources Branch.

have been significantly reduced.) The project restores approximately 13,000 feet of riparian islands lost to erosion.

Facing gusty winds and drizzling rain, Gary Palesh, the project manager in Planning Division, and Jim Nissen, La Crosse District Manager for the Upper Mississippi River National Wildlife and Fish Refuge, led the 14-person tour of the project. The tour focused first on the large boomerang-shaped island constructed as part of Stage 2 of the project in 1992 and seeded and planted in early 1993.

The Stage 2 islands weathered the flood very well. For nearly two weeks, up to 1.5 feet of water overtopped the islands. Even



Photo by Ken Gardner

Plantings on Horseshoe Island, one of the Pool 8 islands, survived the floods of '93. The district and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service cooperated in May on a tree-planting project to enhance habitat for wildlife. Randy Urich (left), a forester with the Mississippi River Project Office in La Crescent, shows Don Rackow and Fred Mueller how to prune roots on Cottonwood seedlings on Horseshoe Island, one of the Pool 8 islands. Rackow and Mueller are volunteers.

though a contractor had seeded the islands about one month before the flood, erosion caused only minimal damage. The newly planted vegetation survived the flood, though the flooding did retard the growth of the planted grasses. A majority of willow and cottonwood plantings also survived.

The tour also stopped at the Stage 1 island at the head of Raft Channel. The Corps had this island restored in 1989 and seeded with grasses in 1991. This island stayed high and dry during the flood. Thick grass covers the island and willows grow naturally on the backside. The Corps, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the DNR showed the media that in a year or two, the Stage 2 islands will have vegetation cover similar to the Stage 1 islands.

The next phase of the Pool 8 Islands project (Phase II) will center on the Stoddard area. A request to begin the study is currently pending approval at Corps headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is expected that the study will begin in FY 1994.

Ruyak receives award for work in Kuwait

By Rosemarie Braatz

The Superior Civilian Service medal (see page 7) has been awarded to Jim Ruyak for his service in the reconstruction of war-devastated Kuwait. Colonel James Scott made the presentation in a ceremony at Gull Lake, where the Headwaters managers were gathered during the new district commander's introductory tour of the area.

The award, signed by the Chief of Engineers, refers to Ruyak's "direct and positive leadership" with the result that "dramatic progress was made on the critical project of restoring the Ali Al Salem Air Base, State of Kuwait."

Ruyak, who has been the Mississippi River Headwaters Area Manager for the past 12 years, has completed three tours of duty in Kuwait. Most recently, from October 1992 to March 1993, he served as resident engineer in the reconstruction of the strategic Ali Al Salem air base, which was, as Ruyak puts it, "completely trashed" by the bombing.

Supposed to have been completed between February and July, 1992, the project was considerably behind schedule -- only 20 percent complete -- when Ruyak arrived in October.

"We worked 7 days a week, 14 hours a day," Ruyak says, to bring the project to virtual completion by the time he left last March.

Reconstruction was done under three separate contracts, plus one for removal of unexploded bombs and ordnance from the base, which is only about 35 miles from the Iraqi border. Close coordination with the Kuwait air force and government was essential at all stages.

Among other "peripheral" obstacles to progress was the establishment of the air base as a collection site for ammunition being retrieved from Iraq by United Nations forces.

"Truckloads of ammunition hauled out of Baghdad were dumped and stored on the base while we were working on rebuilding it," Ruyak says.

"When Saddam acted up again last January," Ruyak says, "the air base was surrounded for security by a Saudi tank unit."

Ruyak is also the recipient of the Nation's highest civilian service award, the Exceptional Civilian Service medal, for his work during the Minot, North Dakota, flood fights of the 1970s.

Partnership Minnesota recognizes district contributions to River Resources Forum

By Dan Krumholz
chief of Maintenance Section

Editor's note: Harold Taggatz, assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division, and Dan Krumholz, the chief of Navigation Branch, represented the St. Paul District at the Partnership Minnesota awards ceremony last May.

This spring, the Partnership Minnesota organization notified the St. Paul District that the River Resource Forum was a recipient of its annual partnership award.

Partnership Minnesota exists to increase cooperative working relationships between federal, state and local government agencies for the benefit of quality service to the public. The program is coordinated and supported by an 18-member board of directors representing managers from those government agencies in Minnesota.

The River Resources Forum (RRF) is an organization of 13 state and federal agencies devoted to coordinated management of the Upper Mississippi River resources. In addition to the Corps of Engineers, other federal agencies participating include the Coast Guard, Environmental Protection Agency, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the National Park Service and the Soil Conservation Service. State agencies include the Departments of Natural Resources and Departments of Transportation for Iowa, Wisconsin and Minnesota, and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

The RRF is an outgrowth of the Great River Environmental Action Team (GREAT) study which was an

interagency study conducted between 1974 and 1980 with the objective of determining better management techniques for the Mississippi River. When the GREAT study was completed, participating agencies agreed on a cooperation and coordination process establishing the RRF. At that time the RRF was called the Channel Maintenance Forum because of its strong focus on advising the district as it implemented a long-term channel maintenance program.

In 1991, the name was changed to the River Resources Forum to reflect the increased emphasis on recreation and environmental issues in addition to channel maintenance. It was also decided at that time to reaffirm and strengthen agency commitment to this effort by entering into a formal partnering agreement.

In September 1991, the district commander joined representatives from the other 12 participating agencies in signing a written agreement which states: "We, the partners involved in management of the Mississippi River, recognize the multiple uses and benefits provided by this diverse ecosystem and are committed to work together as a trusting, cooperative team to manage the river from a resource-balanced approach in the best interest of the public."

The agreement also includes goals and procedures which further detail how the agencies should work together cooperatively.

In March 1993, the district nominated the RRF for a Partnership Minnesota Cooperative Partnership Service Award. In the application, the district explained

that the RRF provides a mechanism for agencies and interest groups to have positive communication and to work cooperatively when executing their respective programs related to the Upper Mississippi River. This partnership has improved relationships among agencies responsible for managing diverse resources on the river. It has resulted in consensus-building and streamlining of administrative procedures. Agencies have benefited by having an organized process for interagency coordination. River users benefit by having a mechanism for providing input to management of the river, and by more efficient and effective government.

The Partnership Minnesota awards ceremony was held on May 12, 1993 at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute on the University of Minnesota campus. The RRF was one of 12 partnerships recognized out of 65 nominees.

Representatives from each of the partnerships that were honored gave a brief presentation describing their program.

Harold Taggatz, assistant chief of Construction-Operations Division, who serves as the district's RRF representative and co-chairperson, and Dan Krumholz, chief of Maintenance Section, received the plaque on behalf of the St. Paul District. The RRF received 14 plaques for their agencies.

In their program, Partnership Minnesota recognized that partnerships save time and money. They make better use of limited federal and state resources, improve service to governments' common customers - the taxpayers, and enhance government productivity through synergistic activity and interdisciplinary problem solving.

On-the-Spot Awards

Programs and Project Management Division

Theresa J. Thury
Danette J. Sammon

Construction-Operations Division

Administration Branch

Dale M. Brintnall

Construction Branch

Lewis T. Riggin

Natural Resources Management Branch

Jeff R. Clauson

Jeff R. Huseby

Jeffrey A. Kapaun

Douglas R. Kelly

Randy D. Melby

Richard J. Schueneman

Scott E. Tichy

Navigation Branch

Marvin J. Althoff

Rojean E. Ashley

Thomas A. Caya

Leonard J. Kaczorowski

Christopher R. Lennon

Robert D. Long

Robert A. Turk

Regulatory Branch

Steven D. Eggers

Engineering Division

Geotechnical Hydraulics & Hydrology Branch

Stuart V. Dobberpuhl

Edward G. Eaton

Paul D. Madison

Kelsey W. Willis

Superior Civilian Service Award*

**Construction-Operations Division
Natural Resources Management Branch**

James D. Ruyak

*See feature article, page 5

Special Act Awards

Executive Office

Mary Kay Linder

**Construction-Operations Division
Navigation Branch**

Arden L. Duval

Mark E. Edlund

David W. Hawkenson

Lon P. Meixner

Kenneth R. Tschida

Planning Division

Economic-Social-Recreation Branch

Damian Yerbich

Quality Step Increase

**Construction-Operations Division
Regulatory**

Ralph J. Augustin

Obituaries

Damian Yerbich, an economist in the Planning Division, died suddenly on September 23 while on temporary duty in Fargo, North Dakota.

He was born in Bemidji, Minnesota on February 17, 1964. He began his career with the district as a

biological aid in 1987. He became a social science trainee in 1988 and entered the economist career field in 1989. Damian was a regional economist at the time of his death. He was an active outdoorsman and skilled carpenter. He had helped a number of his colleagues with home remodeling projects.

He is survived by his wife, Lisa Hedin, also with the district, and by his parents,

five brothers and five sisters, a grandmother, nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held in Minneapolis on September 27. He was 29 years old.

Retiree **Virgil Sherwood**, 80, of Ham Lake, died on November 1. He had retired in 1984 as head lock and dam operator at Upper St. Anthony Falls.

Bits & Pieces

District receives Working Parent Award

During the Week of the Working Parent, Sept. 6-10, the St. Paul District received the 1993 Working Parent Support Award "for providing employee with work and family educational programs at the worksite." Marcie Brooke, director of the Working Parent Resource Center, presented the award to Rosemarie Braatz and Jan Schwalbe. Braatz is the district's Federal Women's Program Manager; Schwalbe coordinated the Working Parent program for the district.

Toastmasters set first meeting for new Army Engineers Centre

Toastmasters invites guests to learn about the club during the November 2 kickoff meeting, tentatively set for noon in the fourth floor conference rooms A and B of the new Army Engineers Centre. Toastmasters provide a supportive environment to learn skills for public and informal speaking.

Minnesota PCA detects additional barrel site off Duluth

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has detected a second Army barrel dump site in Lake Superior near Duluth. About 300 barrels of discarded weaponry were located in mid-September near the Talmadge River. The district located the first site during a 1990 search.

The MPCA effort is being supported by \$125,000 from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

The MPCA recently resumed the search for 1,435 barrels in Lake Superior. The MPCA's goal was to locate the remaining barrel disposal sites and to perform a limited assessment of each site. The MPCA did not retrieve any barrels during this search effort. The St. Paul District has placed further assessment of the barrel sites on its 1994 work plan. The barrels contain metal scrap from classified munitions then under development at the Twin Cities Army Ammunition Plant in Arden Hills.

Winter awards event scheduled

The annual holiday party awards ceremony is scheduled for the Southview Country Club, 239 E. Mendota Rd. in West St. Paul on Friday, December 17. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Contact Greg Frankosky in Design Branch for details.

Hello

Construction-Operations Division

Randolph C. Baker, deckhand
Michael E. Derusha, deckhand
Douglas A. Girmsled, deckhand
John M. Jacobson, Sr., deckhand
John K. Kochendorfer, deckhand
Dennis J. Kupietz, deckhand
Wayne E. Piper, deckhand
Neil A. Rieck, deckhand
Murele W. Ware, food service worker
Robert A. Wildeisen, deckhand

Good-bye

Construction-Operations Division

Christopher A. Bloom, summer aid
Russell A. Buege, summer aid
John W. Christenson, lock and dam equipment mechanic
Robert D. Ducharme, summer aid
Brian M. Krause, summer aid
Jennifer L. Luther, summer aid
Corie L. Maynard, summer aid
Chad W. Osthoff, summer aid
Scott C. Pedretti, summer aid
Michael G. Stefan, summer aid
Julie L. West, office automation clerk
Christopher W. Wiggins, summer aid
Bradley D. Winge, summer aid

Planning Division

Michael T. Heinz, engineering technician



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Paul District

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Crosscurrents

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