



US Army Corps
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St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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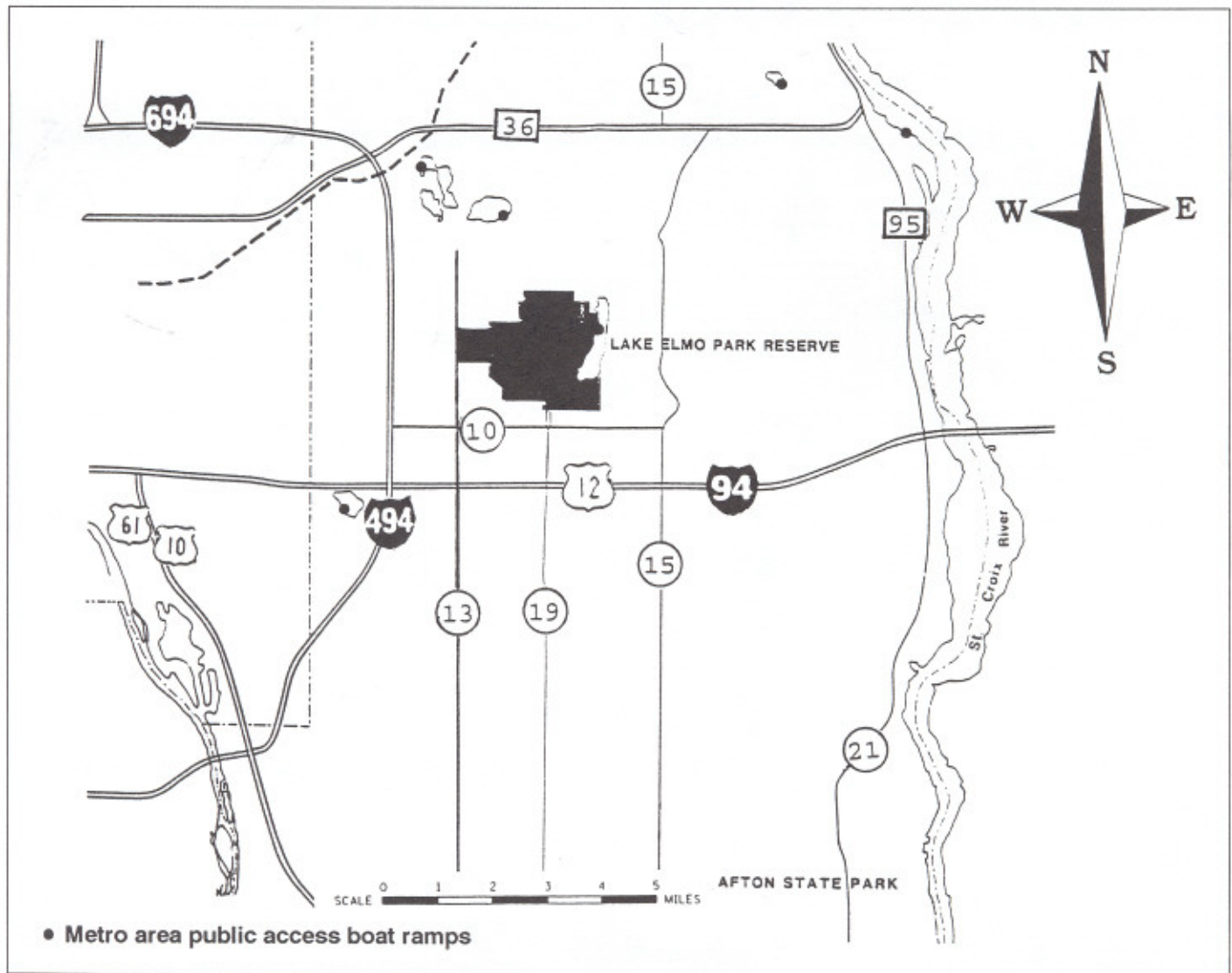
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Awards picnic set for Lake Elmo Park Reserve



This year's Corps Day Awards Ceremony Picnic is being held at the Lake Elmo Park Reserve on Thursday, June 22.

As you can see on the above map, the park's entrance lies one mile north of the junction of I-94 and County Road 19, and two miles east of junction I-694 and County Road 10.

Once in the park, a variety of activities await your entry—golf, fishing, volleyball, bingo or walking.

For those interested in the lie of the greens, the golf tournament is at Oak Glen in Stillwater. Golfers can contact Greg Eggers at 290-5607 or Terry Zien at 290-5714 to register.

Hooked on the fishing? Register for the fishing contest with Tim Yager at 290-5277.

If your idea of net-working is volleyball, register with Lisa Hedin at 290-5431.

If I-94 sounds more like a bingo combination, contact Shelley Hoff at

290-5626. Hoff will walk you through.

Through June 9, admission only (BYO food) is \$1 for ages 13 and above.

Admission for ages 13 and above is \$5. Children under age 12 are \$2 (chicken or hot dogs provided).

After June 9, prices increase by \$1, except for children under age 12.

Retirees interested in more information on the awards day ceremony and picnic may call Jan Graham at 290-5305.

Labor-management partnership established

by Linda Krueger, Human Resources

“**A** different way of doing business.” That’s how labor-management partnerships are characterized by Alan Langohr of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service in Minneapolis. Langohr recently advised representatives of the St. Paul District and National Federation of Federal Employees Local 1441 in setting up their labor-management partnership.

A partnership between parties that have traditionally been on different sides of the table may seem like a radical change, but the idea has gained popularity in both private and public sectors. Partnership was one of the key changes endorsed by the National Performance Review to help “re-invent the government.” In October 1993 President Clinton signed an executive order that encourages agencies to set up partnerships with their unions. Simply stated, partnerships mean:

- A cooperative, rather than adversarial, approach;
- Problem solving by consensus rather than bargaining; and
- More employee involvement in resolving problems.

Local 1441 President Bill Neeley, a head lock and dam operator from Lock & Dam No. 3, said, “We now have a vehicle for resolving problems before they become conflicts. It’s an investment for the future that allows labor to become involved in issues that were historically seen as management prerogatives.”

“Partnership fits perfectly with the district’s Total Army Quality effort,” commented Harold Taggatz, assistant chief of the Construction-Operations



St. Paul District photo

At left is Bill Neeley, president of Local 1441 and head operator, Lock & Dam No. 3. Harold Taggatz (center), assistant chief of Construction-Operations and Bob Stone, equipment repairman at Lock & Dam No. 3, are co-chairs of the labor-management partnership.

Division. “It emphasizes better service for customers and an improved work environment for our employees. In Con-Ops, we’ve seen partnering work very well in the construction and navigation areas. We’ve had fairly positive relations with our union in the past, and I’m confident that partnering will allow us to work together even better.”

The way the partnership was developed is a good example of partnership at work. Representatives from both sides met for several sessions to plan how to establish the partnership and to train management and union representatives.

First, they planned a six-hour workshop for site supervisors and union stewards at the Mississippi River Project Office conference in Rochester on February 1 and 2, 1995. Concerns from both supervisors and union representatives brought up at that workshop will be addressed by the

Partnership Council.

Next, the group met over a two-day period to write the Partnership Charter, which is a statement of philosophy and purpose, and the Partnership Agreement, which spells out in more detail how the partnership will work. The agreement provides for a Partnership Council composed of representatives from management and the union who will meet bi-monthly to discuss issues of general concern.

Dennis Cin, former chief of the Navigation Branch, said: “The council will be a place to discuss the larger issues that affect more than one site. But the key to a successful partnership is developing and enhancing the relationship between the steward and the supervisor at the work site. If they can solve problems right there on the spot, we can keep small problems from becoming big ones and give our supervisors and employees more control over the resolution.”

District quality satisfies local sponsors, agencies

Customers say high costs and slow project process need improvement

by Bruce Carlson, regional economist

"... this feedback shows that we have excellent people that care about doing complete, quality jobs for our customers ... It also shows that our processes are cumbersome, inefficient and too rigid."

The St. Paul District delivers high levels of satisfaction in treating customers as important members of the team, delivering quality products and services, keeping customers informed, explaining federal regulations and responsibilities, and coordinating well with other local and state agencies. This is the good news from the district's base line quality survey of external customers.

However, delivering products and services at a competitive cost, and providing timely services received lower ratings.

The results are based on a recent survey of approximately 100 St. Paul District customers to determine their level of satisfaction with specific work the district performed for them during 1994. The district sent out the survey in January and tabulated the results in March.

The effort is part of an ongoing Corps-wide customer service initiative and the government-wide National Performance Review (NPR).

"I believe this feedback shows that we have excellent people that care about doing complete, quality jobs for our customers," says Tom Heyerman, the district's Total Quality coordinator. "It also shows that our processes are cumbersome, inefficient and too rigid."

Heyerman supported the survey as an important part of the district's Total Army Quality (TAQ) strategy. "The results will be used to help select the next processes for study by district Process Action Teams (PATs)," Heyerman said. "We are getting feedback from the people we believe are best able to judge our accomplishments—people who hold a direct stake in the outcome of our

many work efforts.

"The survey reinforces our own suspicions," he continued. "It sends a message to our customers that we care and provides an opportunity for them to comment. It points out areas for improvement and establishes a base line for the district to measure improvements."

The survey focused on customers in the areas of flood damage reduction, environmental projects, and navigation-dredging. It was based on a standardized mail-back questionnaire developed by Headquarters to solicit feedback in a broad range of performance areas. Each questionnaire was customized to target a specific project or program that related to the customer.

Over 80 percent of those contacted completed the survey. Local sponsors and agency representatives were equally represented.

Flood damage reduction work was the topic for 50 percent of the responses, with environmental projects and navigation-dredging each accounting for 25 percent of the responses.

Respondents indicated their level of satisfaction in a dozen performance areas on a five-point scale, ranging from low to high satisfaction. They also stated their overall level of satisfaction, and whether the district would be their choice for work in the future.

In assessing their overall level of satisfaction, 71 percent of respondents expressed higher levels of satisfaction and 16 percent expressed lower levels of satisfaction. Most performance areas exhibited a similar pattern.

For simplicity, scores were collapsed with one and two identified as "lower" satisfaction and four and five as "higher" satisfaction. Three was left alone, as medium satisfaction.

Delivering products at a reasonable cost (31 percent higher, 28 percent lower) and providing timely services (50 percent higher,

13 percent lower) received markedly lower levels of satisfaction.

"The low level of satisfaction on cost and timeliness was not unexpected," Heyerman notes, adding that recent efforts have already been undertaken to improve these areas. "A significant effort to improve these measures has been underway in the Engineering and Planning (PE) Division since the summer of 1993. They have completed a 'Cost of Doing Business' study which resulted in the development of their 'Quality Management Plan.' The TAQ process has begun in these areas, and will focus on specific measures that present the greatest opportunity for improvement."

Efforts to improve these areas have also taken place in the Corps at the national level. Last year the Corps streamlined its Section 14 program, cutting over two years off the processing time. Section 14 is part of the Continuing Authorities Program, popularly called "small projects." Section 14 involves streambank protection, with projects ranging from \$100,000 to \$300,000.

"The Section 14 process was overhauled in July 1994," said Tom Crump, a project manager. "Our mandate is a 12-month timeframe from the initiation of the study to the award of the construction contract."

Differences were apparent in the overall levels of satisfaction between customer types. Local sponsors were generally more satisfied (84 percent higher, 9 percent lower) than agency representatives (60 percent higher, 23 percent lower).

The overall level of satisfaction also differed among service areas. Flood damage reduction projects received the highest level of overall satisfaction (88 percent higher, 7 percent lower), followed by navigation-dredging (72 percent higher, 19 percent lower), and environmental projects (40 percent higher, 30 percent lower).

In the navigation-dredging area, a number of respondents specifically commented that

the district excelled with work on the river. Four dissatisfied responses related to cost or environmental quality, and differences in agency missions.

Most of the comments about environmental projects expressed satisfaction with product quality. However, survey respondents voiced dissatisfaction with high cost, timeliness, responsiveness to local priorities, cost-sharing policies, and "overdesign" of projects.

"The costs even surprise some of us in the Corps," said Gary Palesh, Environmental Management Program (EMP) technical manager. "It can cost \$200,000 just to mobilize a hydraulic dredge."

Palesh also noted that specific issues surrounding projects can often become more complicated than people may initially expect. "When we started EMP, it was all 'mom and apple pie,' but when it comes down to choosing between different agencies' priorities, or when a project in one state affects flood levels in another state across the river, differences often arise."

The survey also helped to pinpoint specific problems that needed resolution, and individuals who wanted to be contacted to discuss particular issues. District staff members contacted about a dozen respondents to further discuss their comments, and to take action where deemed appropriate.

A comparable survey is planned for each January at the district, division, and Headquarters levels. Future surveys are expected to cover a broader range of Corps customers. For instance, separate surveys are under development for regulatory and for military customers.

Editor's note: For additional information, call Bruce Carlson at (612) 290-5252.

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Floodplain draft report released for comment

Assessment team holds final round of public meetings

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has shed light on what happened along the Lower Missouri and Upper Mississippi rivers during the summer floods of 1993.

A 400-page draft report released in April contains dozens of findings and conclusions plus discussions on floodplain, economic, hydraulic and environmental issues.

Among the many findings, the draft indicates that:

- Agricultural levees increased the flood stage by several feet in some locations;
- Restoration of floodplain wetlands along the upper Mississippi and lower Missouri rivers would have little impact on floods the magnitude of the 1993 flood;
- Corps flood control reservoirs performed well during 1993, lowering the peak flood stage by several feet in some locations;
- Implementation of strict floodplain management and zoning regulations would reduce the amount of damage caused by future floods by removing vulnerable buildings.

The floodplain assessment team gathered comments in late April in a final set of public meetings in 11 cities around the Midwest.

Congress directed the Corps of Engineers to prepare an assessment of the 1993 flood, floodplain use, floodplain management policies, existing conditions and possible alternatives for floodplain use following the 1993 flood.

More than 50 people from five Corps districts worked on the report. Participating districts included Omaha, Kansas City, St. Louis, Rock Island and St. Paul.

The final report is scheduled for release June 30, 1995.

Student shows determination to reach her goal

by Pamela Spann
Stay-in-School Program

"I'm not a party person or a workaholic. I am working toward a goal, and I'll do whatever it takes to reach it." This is how Tameko Mitchell of Information Management describes herself.

Mitchell learned about a position at the Corps through the bulletin board at Brown Institute, where she is studying local area networks (LANs) for personal computers. She has been with the St. Paul District for two months.

Mitchell is busy Monday through Friday. Her mornings are spent at the Corps, and from afternoon to



Photo by Pamela Spann

Tameko Mitchell

early evening, she is in school. Still, she maintains a job on the weekends at Camp Snoopy Amusement park in the Mall of America.

Starting in April, Mitchell will be a volunteer with the Wilder Forest Recreation Center, located in Marineon-St. Croix. She will play the role of Sojourner Truth in the

Underground Railroad, which is an independent educational workshop for school-age children.

The program is a re-enactment of the journey taken by runaway slaves in the South during the 1800s. The workshop helps children to imagine what it must have been like for slaves running for freedom and risking death to gain freedom. This will be Mitchell's first year participating.

With her busy schedule, it would seem that Mitchell's plate is full. When asked how she liked working for the Corps of Engineers so far, she answered, "I'm having fun, 'cause it's in my field. You're never truly happy unless you're working in your field doing exactly what you like to do."

Mitchell's future plans include graduating this December. After that, she plans to pursue a job in the field of personal computers.

Bits and Pieces

Six in Con-Ops move into new work

Six in Construction-Operations Division have new responsibilities, thanks to division restructuring. They are Sharonne Baylor, Dennis Cin, Melissa Morris, Tom Oksness, Dean Peterson, and Rick Rothbauer.

Baylor has transferred from Rochester and she is now permanently with the Winona Resident Office. Cin, formerly chief of Navigation Branch, is now chief of Operations Technical Support Branch.

Morris will be acting Eastern Area Engineer in Winona from April 16 to August 5, while Dean Peterson serves as the acting manager of the Mississippi River Project. For the time being, Peterson will continue to work out of the Winona office.

Oksness, formerly chief of Natural Resources Branch, has been selected as the chief of Maintenance Section and will be based in Fountain City, Wis.

Rick Rothbauer is the new chief of Management Support Branch, formerly Administration Branch. Rothbauer will be replacing Al Rosenberg, who plans to retire soon.

Regulatory briefs Congressional staffers

Ben Wopat, chief of Regulatory Branch and Mick Weburg, chief of Western Permit Section, joined their counterparts at the Natural Resources Conservation Service to brief staffers from the Minnesota Congressional

delegation in St. Paul on April 6. The purpose was to provide information on agency programs and to identify points of contacts between the agencies and congressional offices.

The briefing covered the Corps' regulatory jurisdiction, civil works boundaries, annual budgets for general investigations, construction-general, and operations and maintenance. A slide presentation illustrated the district's missions in navigation and channel maintenance, emergency operations, flood control, recreation sites, environmental programs, Continuing Authorities Programs, and other programs.

A similar briefing for the Wisconsin delegation took place in Madison on April 27.

Regulatory hosts workshop for tribes

Representatives of 12 tribes and 5 tribal associations received an overview of the Corp's regulatory program and how the district coordinates permit applications with Indian tribes. On April 12, Regulatory Branch hosted a workshop in St. Paul for Native Americans in Minnesota and Wisconsin on the Corps' federal regulatory responsibilities.

The workshop identified trust resources, such as a body of water, rice bed or burial site. The agenda included how the Corps implements its federal trust responsibilities and administers enforcement procedures.

District contractor recognized for safety

The Corps of Engineers recently recognized Edward Kraemer and Sons with the Chief of Engineers Contractor's Award for Safe Performance.

Kraemer received the award for outstanding safety on the Rochester Stage 2A construction contract. The contractor achieved 86,400 man-hours without a lost-time mishap and 200,000 miles without a motor vehicle mishap.

Kraemer maintained safety with work in a congested urban environment, extensive blasting, major excavations, and the continual hauling of over 200,000 yards of materials on city streets. Work also included continual hoisting of four to six on-site cranes.

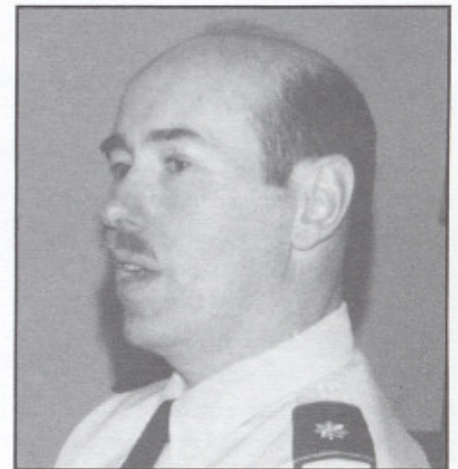
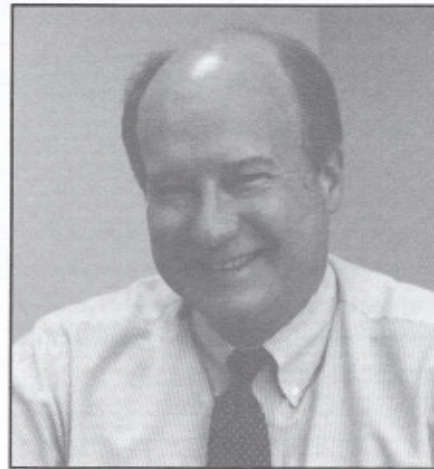
Bring Your Child to Work Day, Student Recognition week coming in June

The district's Federal Women's Program Committee will sponsor "Bring Your Child to Work Day" on June 27 as part of Student Recognition Week. Student Recognition Week begins June 26. Students Day is June 27 and the awards ceremony is June 29.



St. Paul District photos

District deputy commanders of yesterday and today



Lieutenant Colonel Bill Breyfogle, left, joins the district on June 1 as the new deputy commander. Chief of Human Resources, Lynn Harris, center, will be the acting deputy commander until Breyfogle arrives. Major Chuck Rogers, right, has been deputy since 1992. He retired this April after 20 years in the Army and will stay in Minnesota.

Buoy tending is river tending

The cover photo by Dennis Decker shows the placement of a nun buoy at the start of the navigation season on the Mississippi River.

As the March ice turned rotten on the Upper Mississippi River, a small group of Corps and Coast Guard personnel boarded the Corps tender McNamara at Fountain City. Their mission was to mark the navigation channel before the first big tows pushed up-river.

The crew of four chugged out onto the river, ready to place the first buoys at key points between Lock & Dam No. 10 and St. Paul.

For two weeks, Dennis Decker, pilot of the tender, and Jim Michels, a crane operator from the Rivers and Harbors Unit, worked with Coast Guard personnel Chris Hedrick, a storekeeper third class, and Kent Swansburg, a boatsmate third class. They placed navigation buoys at key locations. This reduces groundings and keeps tows in the navigation channel.

A well-marked channel means less churning and prop wash from tows trying to free themselves from the clutches of the river bottom.

This is the third year that the St. Paul District has provided start-up support for U.S. Coast Guard buoy tending duties.



US Army Corps of Engineers
St. Paul District

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Crosscurrents

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