



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
St. Paul District

Crosscurrents

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Planning Team earns USACE Achievement Award



St. Paul District photo

The Devils Lake Basin Planning Team (above) earned the Outstanding Planning Achievement Award - 1996. The award recognizes exceptional effort in preparing the Devils Lake contingency plan and emergency outlet plan. The lake is currently at a 125-year high. In the front row, left to right, planning team members are: Tom Raster; Tom Sully; Paul Madison; Terry Jorgenson; Pat Foley; and Al Geisen; In the second row from the

The St. Paul District earned the Outstanding Planning Achievement Award from USACE — for the second year in a row. This time, the Devils Lake Planning Team earned the Corps-wide honor for its outstanding interdisciplinary planning performance. The team developed a contingency plan and an emergency outlet plan (EOP) for Devils Lake, N.D., a closed basin with water at an historic record level.

left are: George Fortune; Michael Walker; Jenny Yager; Gary Smith; Dan Reinartz; Vicki Strickland; Virginia Gnabasik; Christine Afdahl; Jon Lyman; Karen Nagengast; Dave Tschida; and Mary Muraski. In the back row are: Bob Anfang; Randy Devendorf; Keith LeClaire; Tim Paulus; Jim Sentz; Terry Birkenstock; Marilyn Kruchten; Dave Himmerich; and Dennis Holme. Not pictured are Lori Taylor, LuAnn Hoff and Bruce Carlson.

The contingency plan presented a summary of options and consequences of dealing with high water, including raising highways, relocating homes and businesses, raising the levee protecting the City of Devils Lake, and flood insurance issues. The team also drafted an EOP that balanced engineering, environmental, cultural, and construction issues involving a lake outlet.

District presents Mississippi River Commission historic bench mark

Editor's note: COL. J.M. Wonsik gave the following remarks on August 11 to commemorate the unearthing and return of an historic bench mark to the Mississippi River Commission (MRC). He gave his presentation aboard the Motor Vessel (MV) Mississippi.

We are fortunate today to commemorate the MRC's long history in the St. Paul District and to herald its return.

Shortly after its creation in 1879, the MRC began mapping the Mississippi River and its flood plains in more detail than had ever been done. One hundred and three (103) years ago, the MRC's surveyors completed maps of the river here in St. Paul. And in 1900, they mapped the river's source at Lake Itasca.

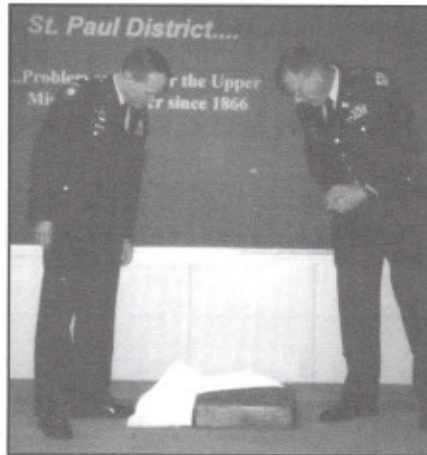


Photo by Ken Gardner

COL. Wonsik, at right, and MG Phillip R. Anderson view the MRC bench mark on board the MV Mississippi. Anderson is commander of the Mississippi Valley Division (MVD). The mark is dated 1898 and was found 54 miles down river of Lake Itasca. It is concrete with a copper post leaded into the center and weighs an estimated 80 pounds. The MVD commander serves as head of the MRC.

At various intervals, the MRC set bench marks. Some were temporary, some were called regular, and those that received the most precise measurements were called permanent bench marks. We understand that the MRC museum has sketches of such bench marks but does not have the real thing.

To commemorate our new relationship, we present this Permanent Bench Mark. The bench mark is 99 years old, having been set in 1898.

Earlier this summer, a highway crew removed this marker from the ground just west of Bemidji, Minnesota, only about 54 miles from Lake Itasca. Bull dozers probably destroyed the brass cap, which lay above ground. The bench mark itself lay about three feet underground and escaped destruction. As I mentioned to our historian, it is no Swiss time piece. Still, it is a valuable piece of time. It is a tangible reminder of the MRC's long and important history, a history that stretches from the Gulf to this great river's source.

Mississippi River Commission visits St. Paul

Members of the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) came to St. Paul to start their annual inspection trip of the Mississippi and Atchafalaya rivers aboard the Motor Vessel Mississippi. Commission members held a public meeting aboard the vessel at St. Paul on Aug. 11 and met with civic leaders in La Crosse, Wis., Aug. 12. The public meeting in St. Paul and other communities allowed members to keep in touch with local citizens and get first-hand feedback about the river.

At right, St. Paul Mayor Norm Coleman addresses commission members. See "Mississippi River Commission charter spans from the headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico," page 4.



Photo by Ken Gardner

District earns top recognitions from USACE



St. Paul District photo

Tim Bertschi (left) received the Meritorious Civilian Service Award from Lt. Gen. Joe Ballard, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, at an all-employee meeting on August 6. Ballard presented his vision for the Corps of Engineers and recognized the outstanding performance throughout the district during the Flood of '97. Bertschi's wife, Barbara, is in the middle. Bertschi acted as flood area engineer and managed the flood fight and emergency protection along the entire Red River of the North. These efforts prevented more than \$100 million in damages and protected the lives of residents in the basin.



St. Paul District photo

District Commander COL. J.M. Wonsik presented the Meritorious Civilian Service Award to Bob Post, chief of Engineering and Planning Division, at the awards picnic in June. Post was the flood executive officer who directed the district's flood-fighting effort against record-breaking flooding from February to May. Post directed advance preparations and emergency operations to protect 75 communities in Minnesota and North Dakota. Post's management helped prevent more than \$119 million in damages in three river basins in the Upper Midwest.

Corps honors Eidson for construction excellence



Tom Eidson

Tom Eidson of the St. Paul District was one of 24 recipients honored for construction excellence during 1996. Lt. General Joe Ballard, chief of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, presented the awards to Corps employees on June 24, 1997, at the Engineering and Construction Conference in Nashville, Tenn.

The Construction Management Excellence awards were presented to personnel for outstanding contributions to military or civil works construction. The awards are given to Corps district or field construction personnel for exceptional construction management.

EEO awards presented



St. Paul District photo

COL. J.M. Wonsik presented the Commanders Honorary Award for EEO Achievement this July to Joann Meier (now retired); Tom Sully, Engineering and Planning; Tony Foster, Contracting Division; and Jan Pream, Construction-Operations Division.

Reunion at Lock and Dam No. 4

by Connie S. Brantner
Office automation clerk
Lock and Dam No. 4



Editor's note: Connie Brantner performed rescue breathing to save the life of a crew member on a

tow boat last October. She received the Achievement Medal for Civilian Service at the Awards Banquet last December to honor her effort. Connie is a state-registered emergency medical technician (EMT). Here is her follow up story.

Lock and Dam No. 4 in Alma, Wis., had a very special visitor on May 5 .

About 10:30 a.m. the Motor Vessel (MV) Coop Ambassador locked through. The captain got on the radio and requested a special meeting at the lock wall.

Linda Stowell had returned. Her visit there seven months earlier had been almost fatal as she was struck to the floor of her towboat's galley with a brain aneurysm. The quick action of the lock and dam staff saved her life. She had come back to thank everyone and to meet the person who had maintained her breathing after her own body ceased to function because of the damage done by the broken blood vessel.

Tense moments passed as the tow approached the lock chamber. I

had kept in contact with Linda's family after she was taken to St. Mary's Hospital in Rochester, Minn. At first, her prognosis was unstable.

After three months, I received a letter from Linda stating that if she continued to do well she could return to work on the boats that she loved. Finally the day had arrived! Linda was standing on the deck anxiously waiting to meet me. My hands were sweating as I grasped a bouquet of flowers for her. As I made my way to the lock wall I remembered October 3, 1996 and how Linda lay lifeless.

Linda grabbed me and gave me a hug. We both found words hard to come by at first. We just stared into each others eyes. Nothing really needed to be said. The thanks flowed from her heart as she said how lucky she was to have been locking through our lock when she took ill and not on a remote stretch of the river .

We plan to have another reunion in Vandalia, Mo., where Linda lives with her family. She returned to Rochester this September for further medical treatment as the aneurysm still needs to be "drilled out."

"Sounds fun," she said. She said her life has changed forever and she knows she has been given a very special "second chance." She said that she feels great.

Linda's parting words still haunt my memory. She asked me what she said just before she lost consciousness a year ago in October. I told her she said that "her head hurt real bad." She looked at me with tears in her eyes and said those were her mother's last words to her as she held her in her arms. Her mother had died from a brain aneurysm.

Life never ceases to amaze me.

Mississippi River Commission charter spans from the headwaters to the Gulf of Mexico

Editor's note: The Mississippi Valley Division Public Affairs Office provided the following information on the Mississippi River Commission.

The Rivers and Harbors Act in June 28, 1879 established the Mississippi River Commission (MRC) to provide centralized direction in stabilizing the river and developing navigation and flood control works.

The Mississippi River has the third largest drainage basin in the world. It drains 41 percent of the land area of the 48 contiguous states of the United States and parts of two Canadian provinces. The basin covers more than 1.2 million square miles.

The 1879 law placed the commission under the direction of what is now the Secretary of the Army. The secretary was to assign Corps of Engineers personnel and equipment to enable the commission to carry out its responsibilities.

The enabling legislation provided for three officers from the Corps of Engineers, one of them its president; one member each from the Coast Guard and Geodetic Survey; and three civilians, two of whom must be civil engineers. All members would be nominated by the President of the United States and subject to confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

This seven-member executive committee oversees these missions:

- Direct and complete surveys of the river from the Head of Passes, near its mouth, to its headwaters;

- Make additional surveys, examinations, and investigations (topographical, hydrographic, and hydrometrical) of the river and its tributaries;

- Correct, permanently locate, and deepen the channel and protect the banks;

- Improve safety and ease to navigation;

- Prevent destructive floods;

- Promote and facilitate commerce, trade, and postal service;

- Submit completed plans together with cost estimates to the Secretary the Army for transmittal to Congress; and

- Report in full upon the feasibility and probable cost of various plans to provide flood control and reliable navigation.

For the first 50 years of existence, the commission was authorized and funded to implement numerous

individual projects on the Upper Mississippi River and the Illinois River, as well as the Lower Mississippi River, and was headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri.

In 1928, the Congress authorized the Mississippi River and the Tributaries (MR&T) project. Because of the size and scope of the MR&T project, the implementation of that project quickly became the primary focus of the commission. The headquarters of the commission was relocated to Vicksburg, Mississippi, in 1929.

Mississippi River and Tributaries Project

In 1927, the greatest flood in recorded history occurred in the Lower Mississippi Valley. In the Flood Control Act of May 15, 1928, the Congress authorized a comprehensive project for control of floods and other purposes on the Lower Mississippi River and its tributaries.

This 1928 legislation provided that the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project be implemented by the MRC under the direction of the Secretary of Army and the supervision of the Chief of Engineers.

The 1928 law directed the commission to "make inspection trips of such frequency and duration as will enable it to acquire first-hand information as to conditions and problems germane to the matter of flood control within the area of its jurisdiction, and on such trips of inspection ample opportunity for hearings and suggestions shall be afforded persons affected by or interested in such problems."

The MR&T project extends more than 1,000 miles down the Mississippi River from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, to the Head of Passes below New Orleans, Louisiana, and covers an area of 123,000 square miles.

Inspection Trips

As part of its charter, the MRC occasionally conducts inspections of the Upper Mississippi River and the MR&T project.

One inspection trip is normally in the spring during the high-water season, and the other inspection is in the late summer or early fall when the river is normally low.

The Commander of the Lower Mississippi Valley Division has traditionally been appointed as President of the Mississippi River Commission.

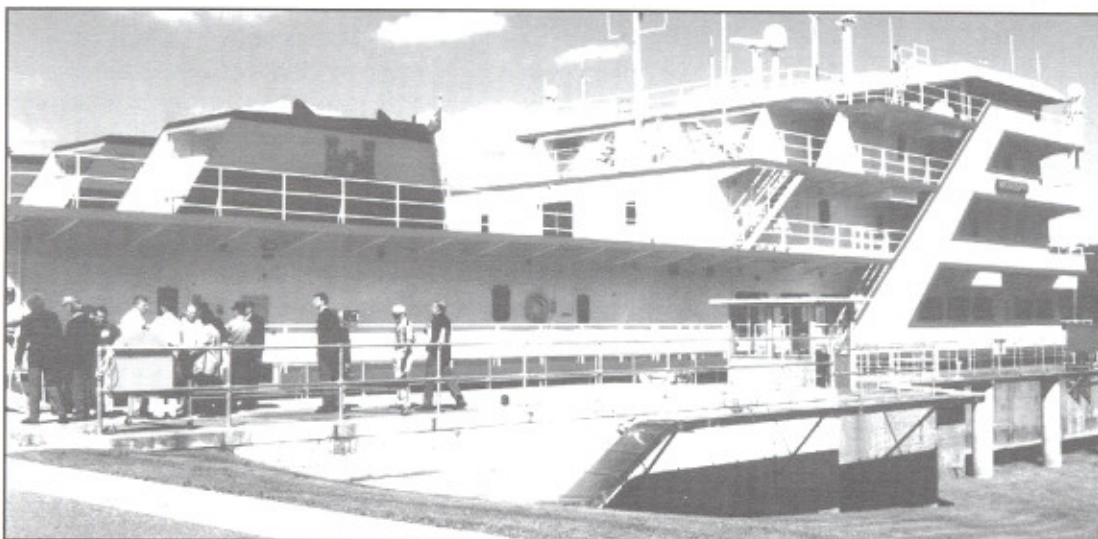


Photo by Ken Gardner

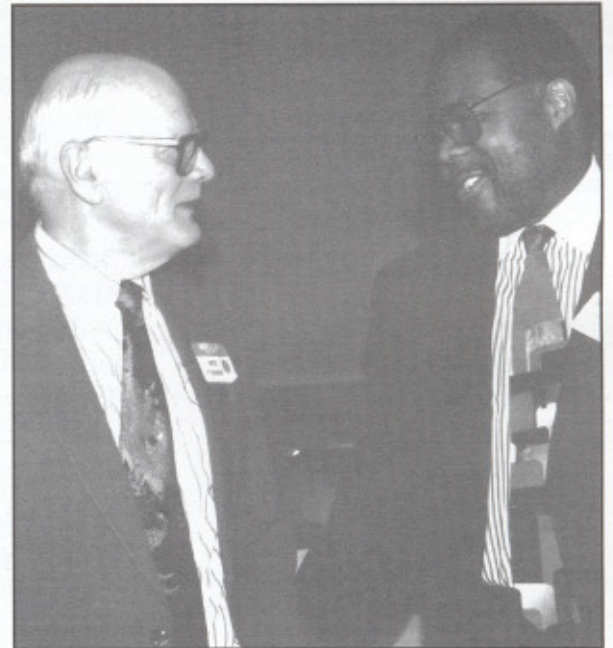
The Mississippi River Commission brought the largest tow boat made in the U.S. to the St. Paul District this August. The MV Mississippi docked at Fountain City, Wis., for an employee open house held August 8 and arrived in St. Paul on August 9. Members of the commission use the boat for periodic river inspection tours.

70 attend 22nd annual retirees reunion in St. Paul



Photos by Peter Versteegen

Seventy people attended the 22nd annual retirees' reunion in St. Paul on September 4. Above, retiree Wayne Knott received a certificate of appreciation commemorating his pioneering work at the San Juan (Puerto Rico) Area Office in the early 1970s. Knott was head of the Water Resources Planning Group there from 1974-76. LTC Breyfogle presented the award.



Above are Pete Fischer (left) and Charles Foye. Fischer is the retired chief of Engineering Division and Foye worked in Human Resources from 1978 to 1988 as chief Employee and Labor Management Relations.



At left are Lois Hawkinson (seated), retired chief of the old Contracting Office, and Ann Allen, retired chief of Budget, Manpower and Management Branch in Resource Management.

History rises to the surface

by Julie West, Public Affairs

History is rising to the surface in Lake Superior's Chequamegon Bay (pronounced sha-WOM-a-gun). Along the shores of Ashland and Bayfield Counties, logs harvested over 100 years ago are being recovered from the bottom of the bay, where they sank while waiting for processing in lumber mills along the shoreline. The cold temperatures (35 degrees F to 37 degrees F) and low oxygen levels at the bottom of Lake Superior preserved the wood in almost perfect condition.

Superior Water Logged Lumber Company, (SWLLC), along with a few smaller logging companies, will recover the logs from different sites in Chequamegon Bay, after they receive permits from the Corps of Engineers. Permits are needed from the Corps when any work is done in a navigable water of the U.S., such as Lake Superior. Scott Mitchen, of SWLLC, discovered the logs while diving for a sunken shipwreck. In 1992, he founded the company, after learning of a market for the wood. Interest in the logs has come from artisans and wood crafters, who make musical instruments or replicas of antique furniture, and other lumber companies, who make veneer from the logs. The logs are cut from old growth trees estimated to be least 200 years old at the time of cutting. Looking at them and seeing the ax marks is looking at the work of loggers who cut them by hand - over one hundred years ago. You can see where the ax, held by the

logger's hands and swung from his shoulders, hit the tree.

The logs are intriguing because of another reason — the species found on the bed of Lake Superior are rarely found today. Elm, which has almost been wiped out by disease, is among the red oak, sugar maples, yellow birch, and white pine. The appearance of the wood, with its fine grain and few knots, sets it apart from today's trees. The logs have 30 to 40 growth rings per inch, where today's trees may have only three or four rings. This means that the trees grew slowly and straight while reaching for the sun in the forest. The appearance makes the wood especially desirable for veneer and musical instruments. The logs are priced according to what can be made from them, and range (per log) from \$400 for board to \$4,000 for veneer.

While the beauty and available market for the wood is unquestionable, the recovery has raised a lot of questions. In late May, a public hearing was held by the Corps of Engineers in Washburn, Wis., to hear the opinions of those interested and involved with the recovery process.

During the hearing, several parties spoke in favor of the project, citing increased economic activity for

Ashland and the revival of history as benefits. However, there were several parties voicing their concerns over the project, including the potential to re-suspend contaminated sediments near the intake for Ashland's drinking water.

The Red Cliff Band of the Lake Superior Chippewa Indians stated their concerns about the possible detrimental effects logging could have on their fish and fish-food habitat and their subsistence and commercial fishing. The tribe is also concerned with the effects logging will have on their recreational areas, and cultural and spiritual ties to the lake.

The SWLLC, stating they are an environmentally concerned company, have agreed not to remove logs immediately off of reservation land.

The logs will be mechanically removed one by one, in order to disturb as little sediment as possible. Detected by sonar, the logs will be picked up by a large crane with a claw-like attachment and placed in a barge. From there, the logs go to the lumber mill for processing, finally completing a journey that was interrupted 100 years ago.

Second Edition of 'Wetland Plants and Plant Communities' released this August

"Wetland Plants and Plant Communities," Second Edition, was released this August. The updated book is coauthored by Steve D. Eggers in Regulatory Branch and Donald M. Reed, the chief biologist for the Southeastern Wisconsin Planning Commission. The new version contains 30 additional wetland species. A more durable vinyl cover and stronger binding make the new volume appropriate for use as a field guide. Color photographs and ink drawings describe and illustrate the plant communities and plant species. The St. Paul District Library (190 E. 5th St., St. Paul, MN 55101) offers the book for sale at \$11, with \$2 shipping at book rate or \$4 at first class.

Bits and Pieces

'Winter Solitude' exhibited at state fair



Photo by Peter Versteegen

Judges at the Minnesota State Fair accepted "Winter Solitude" by Karen Nagengast for exhibit in the fine arts competition during the fair this August. Her entry was among 343 accepted out of 1280. She used a variety of computer software applications to add special lighting effects. Nagengast is a landscape architect in Design Branch.

Jane Stone receives FEEA scholarship

Jane Stone, wife of Bob Stone, an equipment repairer at Lock and Dam No. 3, received a \$1000 scholarship from the Federal Employee Education and Assistance (FEEA) Fund this September.

"Your academic record, your community service and your essay were all outstanding," wrote Steve Bauer, executive director.

The essay question that Stone and others addressed was: How should government set the balance between combating civil violence and guaranteeing civil liberty?

She attends Augsburg College in Minneapolis. Her major is elementary education and she is student teaching in Hastings as part of her major. She is an honors candidate and expects to graduate this December.

Needy family moves into refurbished dam tender's house

This September a needy family of four moved into a former dam tender's residence from the project at White Rock Dam near Wheaton, Minn. The district excessed the house to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) which made it available to a non-profit community action agency (CAP) in Elbow Lake, Minn. The house was constructed in 1940. HUD and the CAP agency paid to move and restore the house.



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Crosscurrents

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