



US Army Corps  
of Engineers®  
San Francisco District

SPN

# Surveyor



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## Saving a species

*Inside the district's fish hatchery*

*Biologists from the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission tag a female coho salmon at the Don Clausen Warm Springs Hatchery. Several agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District, are working to restore coho to the Russian River Watershed. (Story on page 8)*

# COMMANDER'S CORNER

## Campaign, Implementation, Operation

**Good to Great!**

*A team of doers!*

**We make it happen!**

By Lt. Col. Laurence M. Farrell  
San Francisco District Commander

Executing our civil mission, managing water resources, human resources and fiscal resources while improving employee, sponsor and stakeholder relations is what we do every day.

It is how we do it that will move our district from good to great.

Greatness is an attitude. The key is being efficient and effective while remaining cognizant the never-ending process is the connective purpose we all share.

We are the doers.

We have synchronized our mission with Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the South Pacific Division.

In doing so, we have developed district initiatives to support the division's 12 Regional Key Tasks that support the USACE Campaign Plan to efficiently and effectively execute our future missions.

To illustrate the vertical connectivity and synchronization, below are examples of our district team providing its support to USACE's Campaign Plan and the division's 12 Regional Key Tasks.

**Goal 1: Deliver USACE support to combat stability and disaster operations through forward deployed and reach**



**back capability.**

We accomplish this goal by executing our civil response mission; staffing, training and preparing our response teams for deployment. We had more than 2.5 percent of our strength deploy in support of Overseas Contingency Operations such as Operation Emerging Dawn and Enduring Freedom and efforts to protect the nation from natural disasters.

**Goal 2: Deliver enduring and essential water resource solutions through collaboration with partners and stakeholders.**

Our district team supports this goal by executing the regional civil works program with a collaborative approach to regional water resource challenges focused on the long-term management strategies of the

Bay-Delta ecosystem; climate change; and the Klamath, Russian, San Lorenzo and Pajaro watersheds.

Coyote Dam at Lake Mendocino and Warm Springs Dam at Lake Sonoma provide the twofold mission of providing flood management protection, aquatic resources for our strategic partners like Sonoma County Water Agency, and recreational opportunities for millions of Bay Area residents.

The Bay Model and Visitor Center is a Bay Area icon that receives 150,000 visitors annually. It is one of nine regional visitor centers throughout the Corps of Engineers.

Additionally, we plan, design, construct and maintain integrated sustainable civil works projects, dredging and debris removal operations, dam safety and recreation operations and develop strategic partnerships. From dredging the Oakland Harbor to a depth of 50 feet to restoring wetlands at the former Hamilton Army Air Field, district employees' work supports increased commerce and environmental stewardship.

Further, our Regulatory Program helps protect our nation's aquatic resources through consultation, permitting and enforcement actions under the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act.

**Goal 3: Deliver innovative resilient sustainable solutions to the Armed Forces and the Nation.**

As the district capitalizes on delivering sustainable civil works infrastructure, we seize opportunities to develop interagency partnerships and solutions for other federal organizations like the U.S. Army Reserve 63rd Regional Support and the Veterans

Continued next page

### District Commander

Lt. Col. Laurence M. Farrell

### Chief, Public Affairs

J.D. Hardesty  
[j.d.hardesty@usace.army.mil](mailto:j.d.hardesty@usace.army.mil)

### Staff Contributors

Joe Barison  
[joe.barison@usace.army.mil](mailto:joe.barison@usace.army.mil)

Brandon Beach  
[brandon.a.beach@usace.army.mil](mailto:brandon.a.beach@usace.army.mil)



## SPN Surveyor

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### *Surveyor* staff recognized at journalism contest

By Brandon Beach  
District Public Affairs Office

Staff writers for the *SPN Surveyor* won five individual awards at the 2009 Herbert A. Kassner Journalism Competition, the most of any USACE district.

This year, over 200 entries were submitted across 15 different print categories. Judging took place at USACE Headquarters on Feb. 17.

District Public Affairs Chief J.D. Hardesty took third place in photo-journalism for his coverage of the Moffett Field groundbreaking ceremony last year.

In the news story category, Deputy Public Affairs Officer Joe Barison received an honorable mention for his story on the Oakland Inner-Harbor Canal Project. Brandon Beach, also a staff writer, took third place in the sports and feature story categories.

Contributing as a stringer, Jonathan Guerrero, a district project planner, received an honorable mention for his feature story on the SPN dive team.

Awardees will receive a certificate and letter signed by the Chief of Public Affairs.

### Correction

In the Jan/Feb 2010 edition of *SPN Surveyor*, Erik Romani was incorrectly identified on page 14 as a debris collection worker. He is a marine machinery mechanic.

continued ...

Affairs Medical Center while directly supporting America's warfighters.

We are the regional lead in helping local Veterans Affairs establish world-class facilities for America's veterans. The District is currently managing an estimated \$63 million in vertical construction, seismic upgrades and infrastructure investment as part of our interagency support.

The district is teaming to build the \$76 million Armed Forces Reserve Center/Regional Readiness Sustainment Command Headquarters, a 270,000-square-foot fa-

cility for the 63rd RSC and the California National Guard that will house 14 different military units and provide support to Soldiers across seven southwestern states.

The district is sharpening its engineering and technical methodology while incorporating Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. Additionally, we are integrating solar construction into sustainable energy initiatives.

**Goal 4: Build and cultivate a competent, disciplined and resilient team to deliver high-quality solutions.**

By standardizing business processes, communicating key strategic and trans-

parent messages that promote a common regional picture, we are successfully strengthening and aligning our messages to tell the district's story.

We continue to fine tune our Human Capital Plan with workload analysis and leveling coupled with developing a decision matrix which empowers our workforce by delegating decision-making to the lowest level. The district is also implementing the USACE Quality Management System to optimize efficiencies vertically as well as regionally.

The journey from good to great is a never-ending process led by all of you.

# Cultural

## *San Francisco District, Pomo tribe partner for cultural preservation*

**By J.D. Hardesty**

*Chief, Public Affairs*

Ancient lands of the Dry Creek Rancheria Band of Pomo Indians changed with the construction of Warm Springs Dam.

The dam provides flood protection for downstream residents along Dry Creek and the Russian River.

The Pomo Indians and the Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District recently signed an agreement bridging water storage, flood protection and recreation with the tribe's cultural preservation efforts.

"It is like going home," said Harvey Hopkins, chairman for the tribe. "We were removed from our homeland, but now, in some sense, we are bringing it back for our cultural use ... we are going home."

San Francisco District leadership and the tribe are currently discussing how to provide the best support while providing respect and privacy for the tribe.

"The agreement is just the right thing to do," said San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. Laurence M. Farrell. "Throughout the district's footprint, we build civil works partnerships to improve the quality of life for our

# Preservation

neighbors. This partnership improves the quality of life of our tribal neighbors and provides an opportunity for cultural preservation.”

Going home to former tribal lands means more to the Pomo than just visiting the footsteps of their grandfathers.

“Returning to our historical tribal lands helps us teach our history and restore our culture to our youth,” Hopkins said. “It returns respect to our people.”

Hopkins explained how returning to former Pomo lands restores such cultural heritage and traditions as growing sedge for basket weaving, building a brush arbor for council meetings and establishing a sacred area to perform dances and other cultural uses.

“We can gather and cook acorns, harvest our sedge beds, mentor our youth on the Pomo ways and reestablish our traditions,” he said. “So we can feel free ... we are home again.”



J.D. Hardesty



Courtesy Dry Creek Rancheria of the Pomo Indians

**Top: Pomo Tribal and District leadership discuss how a partnership agreement helps our neighbors restore tribal heritage, native customs and cultural traditions.**

**Middle: Pomo Indians planted sedge near Lake Sonoma that is harvested to make baskets.**

**Bottom: A model of a brush arbor was used to illustrate how Pomo tribal leaders would reestablish cultural heritage as part of the partnership agreement.**

**Background: Lake Sonoma**



J.D. Hardesty



Construction workers drill into logs placed along the bank of the Guadalupe River in San Jose, Calif., in order to secure them by tying them together with steel cable. Following a severe weather event late last year, the logs were added by the Corps to protect the bank against future soil erosion.

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## PROJECT UPDATE

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### *Record storm impacts Corps' project in San Jose*

Story & photos by **Brandon Beach**  
*District Public Affairs Office*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District is repairing damages to one of its construction projects in San Jose, Calif., after a major single-day storm caused heavy flooding of the Guadalupe River late last year.

More than two inches of rain dropped on Oct. 13, making it the strongest October storm to hit San Jose in 47 years. The unforeseen extra water came less than one week after the district had wrapped up a six-month habitat restoration project aimed at widening a 1,800-foot section of the channel.

"Ideally, after you complete the construction of a channel, you like to give it time to settle in," said Joel Pliskin, the San Francisco District project manager.

Much of the soil that was used to shape the new bank experienced heavy erosion by the flood. What remained after the flood though were valuable clues into understanding the behavior of the river.

"One silver lining in all this was our

geomorphology people were able to collect a lot of data and see how the channel naturally wanted to form," said Pliskin. "A lot of times with restoration projects of this kind you have to take an adaptive management approach."

With Mother Nature as the guide, project designers went back to the drawing board to redesign parts of the bank. Many protective control features such as logs and root wads were added to the plans.

"They are for stopping the rush of water against the bank," said Robert Kwan, the project's chief engineer. "They help prevent soil erosion."

During last year's extended construction phase, the district temporarily diverted the river around the project site using a pipeline and a batch of pumps. The river was reinstated shortly before the Oct. 13 storm hit. For this brief repair project, construction teams will not have the luxury of a dry site, as the annual migration of fish to the South Bay shores has begun.

Despite the temporary setback to the Corps' efforts to revitalize the Guadalupe



Root wads line the bank of the Guadalupe River.

River, not all was lost by the flood.

"Although it was unexpected and led to extra costs, I'm convinced it will lead to a better project in the long run," said Pliskin.

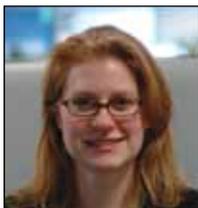
# Data analysts boost district's GIS capabilities

By Brandon Beach

District Public Affairs Office

Backed by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act monies, the San Francisco District has joined a Corps of Engineers-wide effort to catalogue its enormous library of navigation and coastal information into a single integrated geodatabase.

The \$4.9 million contract was awarded last year to Northrup Grumman. The contract provides USACE districts with two full-time contractors brought on to compile the vast array of coastal data sets into a central repository known as the Navigation and Coastal Data Bank. The two individuals detailed to SPN are Alyssa King and Dan Mack, both employees of Northrup Grumman.



King



Mack

“If a district needed to jump start its enterprise GIS, this is the chance,” said Nancy Ferris, manager of SPN’s eCoastal program. “Now we have people like Dan and Alyssa to find all of this scattered data, compile it, scrub it and move it into the database.”

Initial data sets include national coastal mapping products, channel framework, disposal sites, structure as-builts and legacy dredging data, to name a few.

“You can take this NCDB data as a stand-alone database and display it in any enterprise GIS system,” said Ferris.

Leading the overall NCDB initiative is the Mobile District’s Spatial Data Branch. Currently, 22 coastal USACE districts are participating in this project. Plans call for integrating NCDB into eCoastal, which is an enterprise GIS that offers a pallet of geospatial tools for coastal analysis. It was installed two years ago as a district asset and will eventually be offered in a Web-based format.

“Because it will have a Web interface, people internally who don’t know how to use GIS can look at data,” said Ferris



King

The GIS map above displays various vector data that identifies such areas as channel framework, disposal areas, shoal areas and wetland delineation. It is an example of the type of coastal data that planners will be able to access in the district’s Navigation and Coastal Data Bank.

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*Studies this year are showing that the bay is losing sediment.*

**Nancy Ferris**  
**SPN eCoastal Project Manager**

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Externally as well, individual districts that may have projects that extend across multiple jurisdictional boundaries will be able to share recent and historic project information.

“Both San Francisco and Sacramento [districts] for example have rivers that they share, so they will often trade responsibilities for project management and technical work in those areas,” said Ferris.

One tool that is already providing insight into the sediment makeup of the San Francisco Bay is eCoastal’s Sediment Budget Tool. Every year, up to five mil-

lion cubic yards of sediment is dredged from the bay.

“Studies this year are showing, with the science to back it up, that the bay is losing sediment,” said Ferris. “The sediment that has been historically coming down from the Gold Rush Era is drying up. That could make us face new problems.”

Such findings raise the question of what is the best approach toward managing the bay’s dredged material. Currently, the Corps’ Dredged Material Management Office maintains a 40-40-20 disposal plan, meaning 40 percent of the bay’s dredged material goes toward beneficial re-use projects, 40 percent to ocean disposal and 20 percent to in-bay disposal.

“There may be additional opportunities for scientific research for looking at the data that we gather through eCoastal and NCDB to see where is the sediment coming from, where are we placing it and is this the best thing for the environment and our projects,” said Ferris.

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For more about NCDB and eCoastal, visit [ecoastal.usace.army.mil](http://ecoastal.usace.army.mil).



# Restoring Coho to the Russian River

Story & photos by **Brandon Beach**  
*District Public Affairs Office*

**B**en White, a biologist with the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, examines in the palm of his hand a small red fish egg squeezed from the vent of an ovulating female coho salmon.

“Yeah, she’s going to be a spawn early,” says White. He and fellow biologist Rory Taylor, along with Wes Hartman, a fisheries technician, and Brett Wilson, a California Department of Fish and Game senior hatchery supervisor, are at the Don Clausen Warm Springs Hatchery Jan. 20 scanning female coho to determine which ones are ready to spawn.

The fish, the facility and the biologists are all part of a million dollar multi-agency recovery effort set up to restore coho to the Russian River.

“In 2001, we knew we needed to start bringing in fish,” said White. “We collected a couple 100 fish each year to start our source population here at

the hatchery.”

They made it three years. By 2004, finding coho in the 1485-square-mile large Russian River Watershed was “few and far between,” said White. “We were lucky we started when we did.”

It would be the start of the Russian River Coho Captive Broodstock Program at Warm Springs Hatchery, a facility entirely funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District.

“Basically what you see here are the last remaining wild fish of the Russian River Watershed brought into captivity,” said White.

Coho spawn from December to January. It is during this period that biologists will strip eggs from females, mix them with male sperm and monitor their growth in incubation dishes. Selecting which male to pair with which female comes down to a highly-crafted breeding matrix. Each female is spawned with up to four males.

“Since we are dealing with such a

small source population, a lot of these fish are closely related to each other,” said White. “What we are trying to do is avoid inbreeding as much as possible and maximize genetic variation.”

It is the young of this captured source population that is eventually stocked back into the tributaries that historically had coho. This is the beginning of a three-year maturation cycle for coho.

“They spend one year in fresh water, two years in the ocean, and then they return as three-year old fish,” said White. “Our hope is that these fish return to the same streams that we put them in and spawn on their own. We’re not trying to create a hatchery run of fish.”

Since its inception, the program has completed six spawning cycles and released nearly 300,000 juveniles back into the Russian River.

“Our goal is to re-establish a self-sustaining wild population,” said Wilson. “If we do our jobs well, hopefully in 10 to 15 years we won’t have a job.”



## About the hatchery

The Don Clausen Fish Hatchery was constructed in 1980 to mitigate for the loss of spawning habitat and nursery areas for anadromous salmon and steelhead rainbow trout. This habitat was blocked by the construction of Warm Springs Dam at Lake Sonoma which is located on Dry Creek, a tributary to the Russian River, 10 miles northwest of the town of Healdsburg.

Warm Springs Hatchery is 100 percent funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and maintained and managed by the California Department of Fish and Game's hatchery system. The hatchery is one part of the Milt Brandt Visitor Center run by the Corps of Engineers which covers the biological, cultural and anthropological natural history of the Dry Creek Valley. Two hundred thousand people annually visit the hatchery and visitor center.

*[Inset photo] Rory Taylor, a biologist with the Pacific States Marine Commission, checks a tray of coho salmon alevin at the Warm Springs Hatchery.*

## How the expanded FOIA act applies to us

“In our democracy, the Freedom of Information Act is the most prominent expression of a profound national commitment to ensuring an open Government.”

-- President Obama, Jan. 21, 2009

Story by Joe Barison  
District Public Affairs Office

On his first full day in office, President Obama signed a memorandum that expanded the Freedom of Information Act. Traditionally, a new president's first official actions call attention to the administration's highest priorities. In this case, the U.S. Government's accountability and transparency are among those priorities.

Recently, Lt. Gen. R. L. Van Antwerp, USACE chief of engineers, provided the Corps with implementation guidance for the president's FOIA policy. “I want to express my firm commitment to improved operation of the USACE FOIA Program,” Lt. Gen. Van Antwerp stated in his memorandum to Corps leadership.

### Changes to FOIA

“The president wants us to get out more information, more quickly,” said Assistant



Clunies-Ross

District Counsel Ian Clunies-Ross, who is our district's FOIA officer. “He wants there to be a presumption of disclosure — the attitude that we disclose unless we have a good reason not to.”

Now, at the president's direction, federal agencies must make more discretionary releases than previously.

“Just because you [an agency] can withhold information does not mean you should. You should be asking what harm it [the information release] would do,” said Clunies-Ross.

FOIA had already required making some federal information available without a request. For example, final agency decisions and information repeatedly requested under FOIA have routinely been made available to the public. Releasing information more quickly involves an increase in technology usage, primarily the Internet.

### What It Means To You

The “more” and “faster” information-re-

Public Law 94-409  
94th Congress

### An Act

To provide that meetings of Government agencies shall be open to the public, and for other purposes.

Sept. 13, 1976  
[S. 5]

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That this Act may be cited as the “Government in the Sunshine Act”.

Government in the Sunshine Act.  
5 USC 552b note.

### DECLARATION OF POLICY

SEC. 2. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the United States that the public is entitled to the fullest practicable information regarding the decisionmaking processes of the Federal Government. It is the

5 USC 552b note.

Public Law 94-409, or the Freedom of Information Act, establishes U.S. citizens' legal right to obtain information from the federal government. It was expanded last year under President Obama.

Under the current policy, our personal comments may be released as part of a larger information release request.

lease aspects of President Obama's expansion of FOIA have direct implications for everyone in our district.

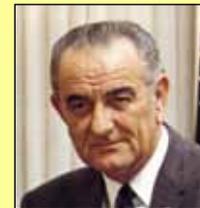
Let's look at the “more,” the policy to release more information than previously. Simply put, pre-decision documents, including e-mails, may have been withheld from public release only a year ago. Today, under certain conditions, these same communications have an increased chance of being made public.

The president is also calling for partial releases, in which a report or e-mail is made public with exempted and potentially harmful wording lined out. Consider, for example, that you are e-mailing with a colleague about a Corps project. In your e-mail, you digress to discuss weekend plans or other personal matters. Under the current policy, your personal comments may be released as part of a larger information-release request.

However, some personal information is still withheld to comply with the Privacy Act. But even the removal of your personal

### About FOIA

The Freedom of Information Act is a federal law enacted by President Lyndon Johnson's signature in 1966. The act established U.S. citizens' legal right to obtain information from the federal government about themselves and about how the government does business.



Johnson

FOIA, combined with the Privacy Act of 1974, limits the release of information only in specifically prescribed instances of national security and individual privacy.

FOIA applies only to the federal government and not to state or local governments, nor to private companies and organizations. However, other laws may provide for release of information by local agencies and private companies.

-- Excerpt from wikipedia.com

identification, to protect your privacy, creates a very real burden on Office of Counsel to examine, assess and remove this personal information. This is not to imply

Continued on page 12

March/April 2010

## Employee Profile: Arijs Rakstins

# District's top civilian reflects on 31-year career

Story & photo by Joe Barison  
District Public Affairs Office

The professional story of Arijs Rakstins is the story of a district leader who holds the dual positions of deputy for Program & Project Management and chief of the Programs and Project Management Division. Serving in these two highly responsible positions simultaneously is easier said than done.

As the civilian deputy, Rakstins leads the San Francisco District civilian workforce, and as deputy for Programs and Project Management, he manages the execution of civil works in the district.

"The biggest challenge in being the civilian deputy is in overseeing the ethical position and standards of the Corps," said Rakstins. "PPMD is more technical; the DPM role is to ensure the federal interest is maintained."

The personal story of Arijs Rakstins is a story that begins by the bay — the San Francisco Bay. As a child of the '60s growing up in the San Francisco Bay Area, the future San Francisco District leader was drawn to water — swimming in the bay, appreciating wetlands — and to caring about the environment.

Following his graduation from the University of California at Berkeley in environmental studies, Rakstins enrolled in the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Why would a California boy choose a school in the middle of the country?

"I was interested in fisheries biology, and I was impressed with the University of Wisconsin's program. The water resources program had been in place for quite awhile, and it was multidisciplinary," Rakstins said. One of his professors would be Art Hasler, the researcher who discovered how salmon find their way upstream.

At the University of Wisconsin, he earned a master's degree in water resources management with an emphasis in civil and environmental engineering. "I took the engineering courses because I was becoming more interested in solutions and practical application than in pure research," Rakstins said. Then he added, with a smile, "I was also tired of always smelling like fish."

His first chance to create solutions was with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He had submitted applications to the Corps and to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but the Corps' San Francisco District made the first offer. It was 1978, and he started to work as a study manager, the position that pre-dates to-



courtesy



**Arijs Rakstins, far right, is the San Francisco District's highest-ranking civilian official. Rakstins holds two key positions in the district as illustrated by the leadership chart. During his 31-year career, Rakstins has briefed many distinguished military leaders including Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, above left.**

day's project manager.

"I took the offer in part because it was a return to the Bay Area, where my parents were, the place that I felt was home," he said.

After six years in the district, Rakstins was hired as a South Pacific Division engineering review manager, performing technical reviews of engineering projects for all three of the division's districts — San Francisco, Los Angeles and Sacramento (Albuquerque District had not yet become part of the South Pacific Division). After two years, he returned to the San Francisco District as assistant chief of the Planning and Engineering Division. That division was the forerunner of today's Engineering and Technical Services Division and did not yet include a construction branch.

Five years later, he became the district's deputy for project management, a position he would hold for the next 10 years.

Eventually, Rakstins said, "I was looking for career progression, something new. And my career moves weren't necessarily for the pay." The next career move did not include a pay raise; rather, he moved laterally to become chief of the new ETS Division (which now included a construction branch). On the subject of pay, Rakstins quotes his mentor, Jay Soper, who was the district's executive engineer. "Don't take a new job just for the money. But if it has more responsibility, make sure it has more money."

Three years later, in 2004, the district com-

mander moved Rakstins back to his old job — DPM. "He looked at my resume and decided that I could contribute as his civilian deputy. But he also wanted me to be chief of the Programs and Project Management Division. So I became both. And that's what my jobs are today," he said.

In a 31-year career, Rakstins has seen dramatic changes in the workplace, with evolving technology in computers, the Internet and e-mail.

"The main difference [between then and now] is the requirement to make decisions almost instantly. It's a change in culture. For engineers and scientists, there's very little time to study and contemplate," he said.

On the other hand, some things have not changed. "Seeing new people come into the Corps and progress into positions of responsibility is still the most satisfying part of my work."

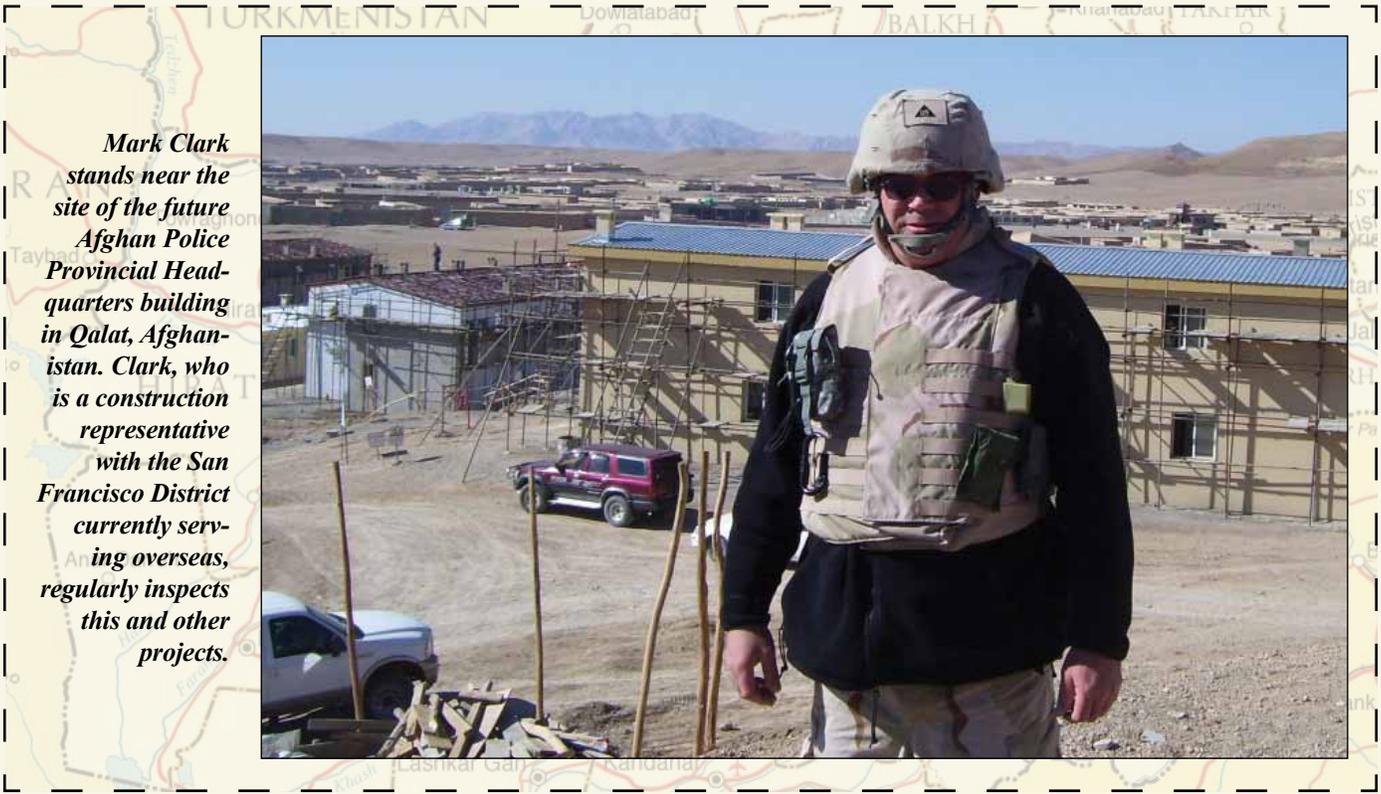
Outside of the Corps, Rakstins has volunteered for the past 15 years in support of youth soccer — organizing the playing fields, recruiting other volunteers and, up until recently, coaching.

Still, with all his accomplishments, district executive Rakstins' career is still in full swing. Asked whether there could be yet another job, another change of assignment, just around the corner, Rakstins said it appears not. "I have the job I've always wanted in the location I've always wanted."



Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations

# Postcard from Qalat, Afghanistan



*Mark Clark stands near the site of the future Afghan Police Provincial Headquarters building in Qalat, Afghanistan. Clark, who is a construction representative with the San Francisco District currently serving overseas, regularly inspects this and other projects.*

## Many new faces join district at start of '10



**Lisa Andes**  
Civil Engineer  
Engineering Branch



**Steve Rohner**  
Drift Collection Worker  
Navigation Branch



**Victoria Plummer**  
Office Automation Clerk  
Readiness Branch



**Peter Straub**  
Environmental Protection Specialist  
Regulatory Division



**Steve Kilmon**  
Hydro Survey Section Chief  
Construction Branch



**Steve Shelton**  
Budget Analyst  
Plans & Programs Branch

FOIA continued from page 10

that we cannot communicate with friends at work; but keeping business communication separate from personal communication has become even more important.

The "faster" requirement means that Office of Counsel will sometimes have to make

complex decisions under time pressure. If you receive an OC request for information, it is, therefore, more important than ever before that you respond quickly.

Your delay, even for the best-intentioned reasons, could start a domino effect of delays, which would be counter to the president's and the chief of engineers'

intents.

Perhaps the importance of all of our roles in this expanded FOIA is put into a real-world perspective if we put ourselves in the place of the citizen who is requesting information under FOIA. Wouldn't each of us want our own FOIA request to be processed fully and fast?

# Lake Mendocino park ranger displays heroism in saving boater's life

By Laura Smith

Special to SPN Surveyor

On Feb. 12, 2010, Cody Max, a resident of Redwood Valley, launched his canoe at the North Boat Ramp at Lake Mendocino. He paddled to the middle of the lake, 400 yards from Winery Point, where he stopped and reached for a second oar in the back of the canoe. As Max moved to the rear, the canoe tipped, and he lost his balance falling into the cold 50-degree water.

The canoe quickly filled with water, and the life jacket he had brought along was floating nearby. He had neglected to put it on and now struggled to get it over his shoulders.

At about the same time, Wayne Shull, a San Francisco District park ranger, was launching his boat at the South Boat Ramp. He was headed out onto the lake to remove logs that had floated down the river during the recent storms.

After working for more than an hour, Shull noticed something moving in the distance, about 600 yards away.

"When I first looked across the lake and saw something in the water, I thought it was debris, maybe a log floating from down the river. Then it started changing shape and moving, so I wanted to take a closer look," said Shull. "When I got closer, I could see the front of a canoe come out of the water and stand up vertically, so I knew whoever was in the water was trying to right the boat."

Shull called out. "Then I heard, 'Is that you, Wayne?' I took a look and saw it was my friend Cody, who I hadn't seen in about nine years."

Shull told Max he was there to help him and asked if he was injured. Max said he was just cold.

Shull helped his friend into

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As he got closer, he saw a man shivering in the water.

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the boat, gave him a blanket and secured the canoe. He then took him back to the North Ramp and helped him place the canoe onto his vehicle. Shull checked Max's condition one last time and determined he was safe to drive home.

The following week, Max visited the park office to thank Shull and the staff at Lake Mendocino. Max described the events from that day to the staff and said that when Shull pulled up in the boat, he felt as if an angel was watching over him.

Max is very lucky that Shull was on the lake that Friday, as they were the only two vessels on the water.

"Cody was about 400 yards from the nearest shore, in 51-degree water, and already fatigued. I don't want to think about what would have happened if no one had come along," Shull said.

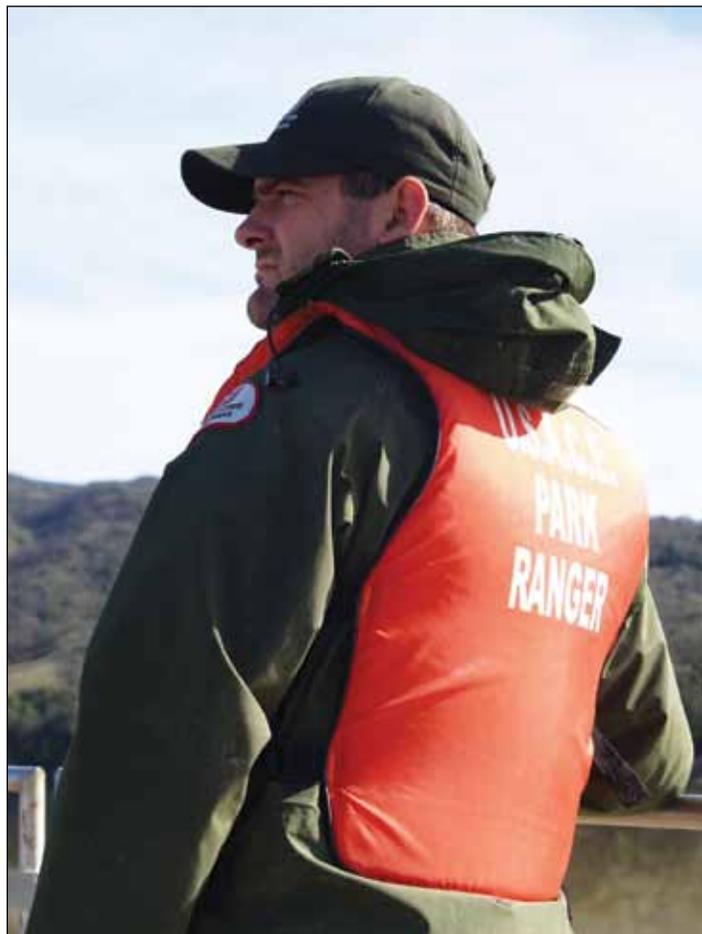
According to Shull, this experience contains important safety lessons.

"One, don't go out by yourself. Two, know your vessel and your capabilities. Three, keep your life jacket on. And four, let someone know where you're going whenever you go boating, hiking or camping."

Congratulations are in order to Park Ranger Wayne Shull for a job well done.

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*Both Smith and Williams (photo credit) are San Francisco District park rangers at Lake Mendocino. Additional reporting of this incident was done by Joe Barison.*



Michelle Williams

Wayne Shull, a USACE park ranger at Lake Mendocino, reacted quickly to save a drowning victim from possible death while on patrol Feb. 12.

## District bids farewell to tech editor

By Joe Barison

District Public Affairs

San Francisco District colleagues from the Environmental Branch gathered Jan. 14 to honor Cindy Vangilder as she retired from federal service. Maj. Sam Volkman, district deputy commander, was the first speaker. "I'm losing an ally, someone who I could count on for support. We hear a lot about 'good to great.' Cindy made this place great. She was a linchpin and instrumental."

Vangilder, looking back at her years with the dis-



trict, said, "The best part of working for the Corps was the people. You come to the government to work to make a difference."



# Big wint

## Debris team clears

Story & photos by Brandon Beach  
District Public Affairs Office

A series of January storms in the San Francisco Bay Area brought heavy rains and record amounts of debris unseen in over a decade. “This is the most [debris] I have seen in a long time,” said Joe McCormick, captain of the *Raccoon*, a debris removal boat operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, San Francisco District. “This is very similar to 1997. Back then, we had a long drought period, followed by very serious rains and then warmer temperatures. We’ve got a lot of water coming down right now.”

What McCormick is referring to are the climate patterns that point to a possible El Niño. The last one to hit North America was in 1997. Whether or not this is in fact the start of an El Niño year is any forecaster’s guess. What the current round of storms means for the Bay Area is lots of debris flushed in by flooded streams and creeks.

# er catch

## area storm hazards

“We area picking up on average 25 to 30 tons of debris every day,” said McCormick. “Some of it presents a real hazard to navigation.”

*Racoon* crewmembers use a steel net at the bow of the boat to catch floating pieces and a crane to lift out heavy objects such as large trees from the water. McCormick said that over a two-week span in mid-January, crewmembers were working 12-hour shifts seven days a week.

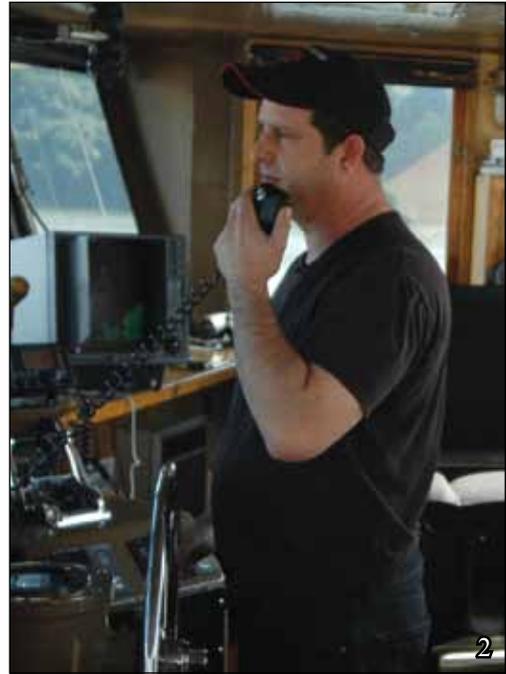
“This is one of the hardest working boats on the bay,” said McCormick. “Every day, we got out and put a dent in this huge mess.”

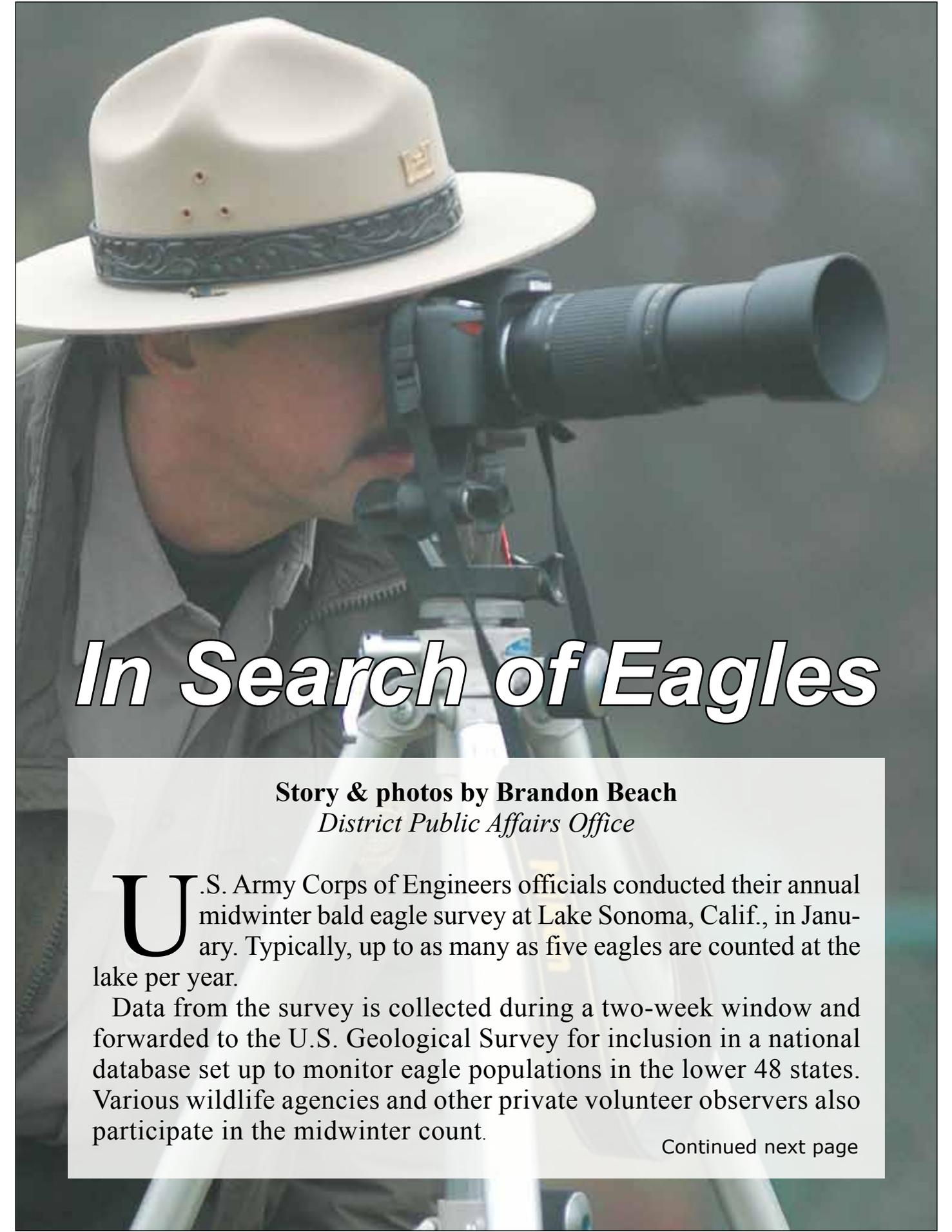
*[Inset] Erik Ramoni, a marine machinery mechanic, steadies a steel net loaded with debris Jan. 26.*

*[1] Ramoni, right, and Paul Tietjen, a drift collection worker, place hooks on the boat’s crane.*

*[2] Captain Joe McCormick uses the boat’s radio.*

*[3] David Whedon, team leader, signals to the crane operator.*





# *In Search of Eagles*

**Story & photos by Brandon Beach**  
*District Public Affairs Office*

**U**.S. Army Corps of Engineers officials conducted their annual midwinter bald eagle survey at Lake Sonoma, Calif., in January. Typically, up to as many as five eagles are counted at the lake per year.

Data from the survey is collected during a two-week window and forwarded to the U.S. Geological Survey for inclusion in a national database set up to monitor eagle populations in the lower 48 states. Various wildlife agencies and other private volunteer observers also participate in the midwinter count.

Continued next page



## Lake Sonoma joins nationwide midwinter bald eagle survey

continued ...

The survey was first held in 1979 by the National Wildlife Federation. Back then, bald eagles were in a fight to stay alive.

“At that time, we had just a few 100 bald eagles nesting in the lower 48 states,” said Wade Eakle, an ecologist with the USACE South Pacific Division, who worked with Joe Lishka, a USACE San Francisco District park ranger, and Dr. Monte Kiven, a nationally-recognized expert on raptor management, in completing the bald eagle count at Lake Sonoma.

Widespread use of DDT and other pesticides in the 1950s and 60s led to infertility in eagles. The effects of such chemicals were eventually discovered, and a ban was placed on their use in 1972.

“Eagles today are no longer laying thin-shelled eggs,” said Kiven, a biology professor at Santa Rosa Junior

*[Left] Joe Lishka, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park ranger, conducts the midwinter bald eagle survey at Lake Sonoma, Calif., Jan. 8. Coordinated by the U.S. Geological Survey and USACE, the annual survey is held nationwide in 48 states. It was started in 1979.*

*[Top] A bald eagle is spotted near the park entrance at Lake Sonoma.*

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With its lakes and parks, USACE has always played a key role in the recovery and conservation of bald eagles across the U.S.

**Wade Eakle**  
*Ecologist, Corps of Engineers*

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College. “That has a lot to do with their reproductive success.”

Wildlife experts estimate that up to 6,000 nesting pairs of bald eagles live in the continental U.S. today.

At Lake Sonoma, park rangers are aware of one nesting pair of adult eagles that have been residents of the 2,700-acre lake since at least 2001, the year they were first discovered.

“They are here year-round,” said Lishka. “They alternate between two nesting sites. It’s typical for eagles to have more than one nest.”

Other bald eagles migrate seasonal-

ly to Lake Sonoma, some traveling as far as the northwesternmost province of Canada.

“We know this because [U.S.] Fish & Wildlife Service has branded some of these eagles, and they return year after year,” said Kiven.

With plentiful food options like fish and small mammals, Lake Sonoma and its surrounding forest areas provide “critical habitat for eagles,” said Eakle. “With its lakes and parks, [USACE] has always played a key role in the recovery and conservation of bald eagles across the U.S.”

Data collected from this year’s survey will be used to conduct a 25-year trend analysis of wintering bald eagle populations in the continental U.S.

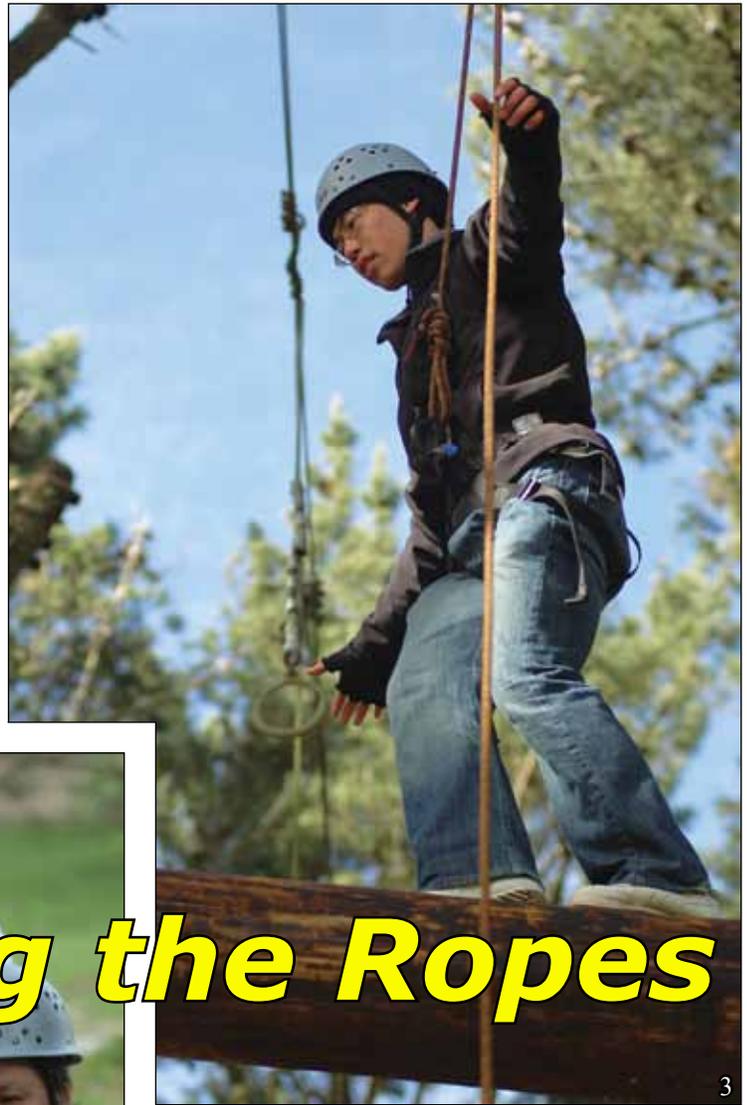
The eagle was declared an endangered species in 1967. In 1995, it was reclassified to the less-severe “threatened” list as its numbers began to rebound, and, in 2007, it was completely delisted.

“Eagles have recovered,” said Eakle. “It’s important now to monitor their population post de-listing to make sure they don’t start declining back towards extinction like it did 40 years ago.”

*For more on the history of the bald eagle, visit [www.baldeagleinfo.com](http://www.baldeagleinfo.com).*



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# Learning the Ropes



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## Leadership program seeks new heights

Story & photos by **Brandon Beach**  
*District Public Affairs Office*

The SPN Leadership Development Program kicked off its 10-month curriculum with a visit to the Fort Miley Adventure Challenge Course in San Francisco Feb. 11.

This year, 14 employees have signed on for LDP Tier II. The pro-

gram consists of monthly professional lectures, team-building activities and a final group project. Along the way, employees learn about leadership and team dynamics.

For its group project, this year's LDP class has chosen to research virtual meeting technology and ways to implement it into the district. They will present their findings to the Corporate Board in October.



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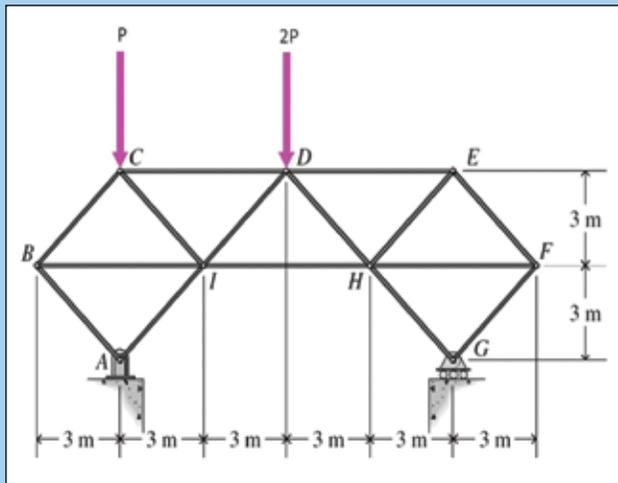
[1] Matthew Young, left, and Irene Lee, right, assist Laura Smith as she begins her climb. [2] Carmen Cheung slides along two ropes. [3] Robert Yang finds his balance. [4] Ben Snyder leaps off a telephone pole. [5] Members of this year's LDP Tier II team are (left to right, back row to front) Laura Smith, James Zoulas, Ben Snyder, Anthony Galvan, Judith Lutz, Matthew Young, Yosef Ahmadi, Robert Yang, Clare Polansky, Carmen Cheung, Irene Lee, Tessa Bernhardt, Mary Cheng and Brandon Beach.

# ENGINEERING CHALLENGE

Take on the engineering challenge in this month's SPN Surveyor. The first to solve this mathematical puzzler will receive a commander's coin, with the results being published in the May/June 2010 issue.

## The Problem

**Normal Stress.** The members of the truss in the figure below each have 120 mm x 120 mm wood cross section. If maximum normal stress in tension, in any member, is not to exceed 16 MPa, determine the maximum load  $P$  that can be applied to the truss. Assume that member  $HI$  is the critical compression member.



This challenge was submitted by Lt. Col. Joe Hanus, a professor of civil engineering at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

Prefabricated wooden trusses with nailed plate joints are stacked near a construction site. (Photo courtesy of Riisipuuro)

Submit your answers via e-mail to John Jacobson at [John-H-Jacobson@usace.army.mil](mailto:John-H-Jacobson@usace.army.mil).

## Answers to last issue's challenge

In the last issue of SPN Surveyor, readers were asked to answer four questions relating to construction contracts. The answers are listed below. There was no winner for this challenge.

- [1] 40% of \$20m is \$12m. Schedule is not a factor in determining EV, nor is actual budget (Actual Cost).
- [2]  $EV = \text{Percent Complete} \times \text{Budget at Completion}$ .  $EV = 80\%$  of contract value
- [3] Under a unit price contract and as long as the project is on schedule, the Percent Schedule and the Percent Complete (work) could be the same. Mobilization, admin, and closing costs could all make this not exactly true.
- [4] Depends on what is negotiated between the ACO and ktr.

# WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

## Federal civil engineer keynotes district's Women's History luncheon



By **Brandon Beach**  
*District Public Affairs Office*

**M**ilada Pajczkowski, a senior civil engineer with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, was this year's guest speaker at the Women's History Month luncheon March 11.

Pajczkowski, a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley and boardmember of the Society of Women Engineers Golden Gate Chapter, presented the topic, "Lessons Learned as a Woman in Engineering." More than 20 district employees were in attendance.

The event was hosted by the district's Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

*[Left] Milada Pajczkowski answers questions during a Women's History Month luncheon March 11.*

## About the Women's History Project

The National Women's History Project, founded in 1980, is an educational nonprofit organization.

The NWHP is known nationally as the only clearinghouse providing information and training in multicultural women's history for educators, community organizations, and parents — for anyone wanting to expand their understanding of women contributions to U. S. history.

For more on this organization, visit NWHP online at [www.nwhp.org](http://www.nwhp.org).

## Proclamation salutes women's achievement

By **Barack Obama**  
*U.S. President*

Countless women have steered the course of our history, and their stories are ones of steadfast determination. From reaching for the ballot box to breaking barriers on athletic fields and battlefields, American women have stood resolute in the face of adversity and overcome obstacles to realize their full measure of success. Women's History Month is an

*This year's theme ...*

### Writing Women Back into History

opportunity for us to recognize the contributions women have made to our Nation, and to honor those who blazed trails for women's empowerment and equality.

Women from all walks of life have improved their communities and our Nation. Sylvia Mendez and her family stood up for her right to an education and catalyzed the desegregation of our schools. Starting as a caseworker in city government, Dr. Dorothy Height has dedicated her life to building a more just society. One of our young

heroes, Caroline Moore, contributed to advances in astronomy by discovering a supernova at age 14.

When women like these reach their potential, our country as a whole prospers. That is the duty of our Government — not to guarantee success, but to ensure all Americans can achieve it. ...

As we move forward, we must correct persisting inequalities. Women comprise over 50 percent of our population but hold fewer than 17 percent of our congressional seats. More than half our college students are female, yet when they graduate, their male classmates still receive higher pay on average for the same work. Women also hold disproportionately fewer science and engineering jobs. ... By increasing women's participation in these fields, we will foster a new generation of innovators to follow in the footsteps of the three American women selected as 2009 Nobel Laureates.

This month, let us carry forth the legacy of our mothers and grandmothers. As we honor the women who have shaped our Nation, we must remember that we are tasked with writing the next chapter of women's history. Only if we teach our daughters that no obstacle is too great for them, that no ceiling can block their ascent, will we inspire them to reach for their highest aspirations and achieve true equality. ...

## NWHP celebrates 30-year milestone



It often seems that the history of women is written with invisible ink. Even when recognized in their own times, women are often not included in the history books.

When we began our work in the early eighties, the topic of women's history was limited to college curricula, and even there it languished. At that time, less than three percent of the content of teacher training textbooks mentioned the contributions of women and when included, women were usually written in as mere footnotes.

Today, when you search the Internet with the words "women's + history + month," you'll find more than 40,500,000 citations. These extraordinary numbers give testimony to the tireless work of thousands of individuals, organizations, and institutions to write women back into history.