



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
San Francisco District

SPN Surveyor

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Dredging done in Oakland

Page 4

U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, Port of Oakland Executive Director Omar Benjamin and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Pacific Division Commander Col. (P) Rock Donahue congratulate the Corps-Port team that completed the Oakland Harbor -50 Deepening Project during a Sept. 18 ceremony at the Middle Harbor Shoreline Park in Oakland, Calif. (Photo by Brandon Beach)

COMMANDER'S CORNER

Sucesses linked to adage 'change is good'

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

Change means different things to different people. Some people fear change as we grow accustomed to our routines. But some of us seek change and see it as an opportunity to excel and make life better.

Col. (P) Rock Donahue, our division commander, seeks change. He talks passionately about the division going from good to great. And our San Francisco District seeks change. We will leverage organizational, cultural and personal change to lift our excellent district to new heights.

Organizational change consists of changing the composition or structure of the organization. I acknowledge that there is an unknown element in this type of change, but we must face the reality that we cannot know the outcome if we do not do the experiment.

For example, Programs and Project Management Division (PPMD) Chief Arijis Rakstins and Branch Chief Dave Patterson are creating a new P2 Management Section. Up until now, project task assignments and scheduling, using our P2 project and workload scheduling program, were decentralized among project managers who are supported by project management specialists. Because of the immense variability allowed by P2, as well as our companion financial management sys-



tem (i.e., CEFMS), people would use different terms for the same idea. Two PMs, sitting 10 feet apart, might use "hydraulics" and "hydrology" when the same meaning is intended. Such confusion of task names affects task scheduling and budgeting, sometimes resulting in mistakes and delays for P2 and CEFMS users. The PPMD organizational change should resolve the problem through improved business communication.

Engineering and Technical Services (ETS) Division Chief Jake Jacobson and Engineering Branch Chief Herb Cheong are leading an organizational change to separate the Geo-Sciences Section into a

separate Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Section and Geotechnical Section. The current Geo-Sciences Section has grown considerably due to the importance of dam and levee safety, as well as an increasing need for GIS technology in all our modeling work and for sharing GIS information with others in a standard federal format. ETS Division Engineering Branch will meet these increased demands by forming a new and distinct Geo-Sciences Section under the leadership of Dan Specht. Currently, Geo-Sciences is a subset of the Geotechnical Section under Mark Goodhue. It now will be distinct.

Operations and Readiness Division Chief Mike Dillabough reorganized his organization when dam-safety responsibility was transferred from the Sacramento District to ours. Mike is also planning changes as water-management responsibilities transfer from Sacramento to us over the next three years. San Francisco District will be taking responsibility for managing the flood-control pools behind our Warm Springs, Coyote and Del Valle Dams.

Cultural change is how we do things. You can change your organizational culture by changing how you do something – by doing something better. Our district's practicing engineering is not new. However, I am making a cultural change by directing our district to do more vertical engineering.

Continued next page

District Commander

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Security Alert

Employees urged to safeguard CAC cards

Department of the Army Release

There have recently been several incidents of personnel photocopying their Common Access Card for various reasons on a national level. It is a violation of Title 18, U.S. Code Part I, Chapter 33, Section 701 to photocopy a U.S. government identification card.

Although it is a very common practice to furnish U.S. government ID cards, including CAC cards, to verify military affiliation or identity, it is actually punishable by both fine and imprisonment to photocopy the identification card.

It is recommended that if an establishment or individual insists upon photocopying the identification card, a non-U.S. government card (such as a state or other form of photo identification) be provided. ...

Military and government agencies that require a photocopy of a military ID card (i.e. Tricare / Veterans Administration) do so "FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY" therefore should not be grouped into "commercial establishments." ...

The information contained on and in the CAC is your personal identification and further information. It is your responsibility to safeguard your CAC card.

For more information on the Dept. of Defense-issued Common Access Card, visit www.cac.mil.

continued ...

As examples of vertical engineering, we are performing the San Francisco VA Medical Center's electrical and seismic upgrades, as well as constructing a new VA building in Sausalito. We are constructing a new Army Reserve office building at Moffett Field. And we are planning and managing construction at Napa Creek, which will include awarding approximately \$60 million in ARRA, stimulus-funded contracts.

Personal change consists of individu-

al adaptation and development to make yourself even better, even more skilled, as a person. In football, legendary quarterback Brett Favre's personal change is an interesting example. Favre could have stayed with his longtime Green Bay Packers team, but a series of personal decisions led to him playing quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings. Some experts are saying he is playing better than he did before this personal change.

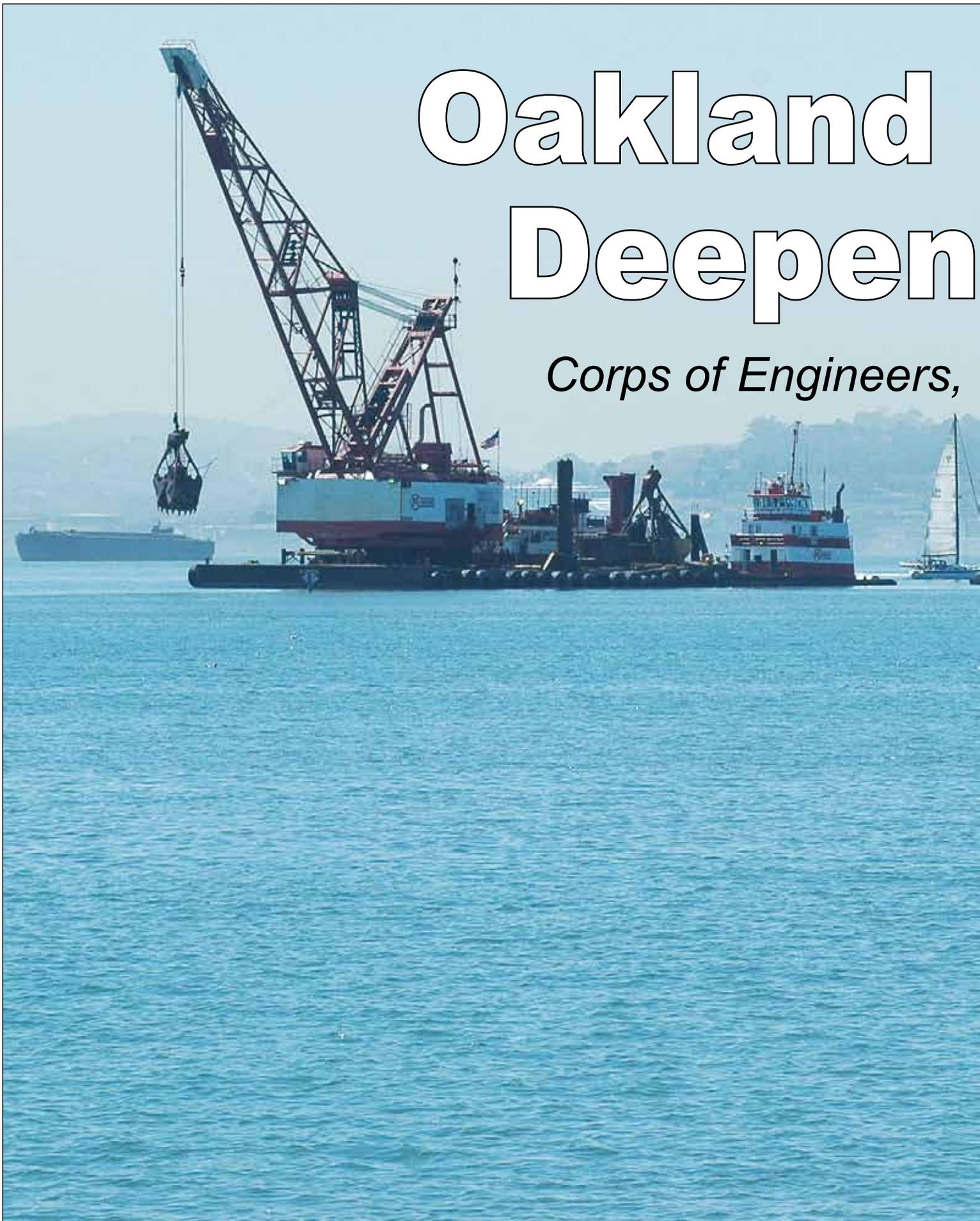
Most of us can find at least one area in which to make beneficial changes. We can, for instance, advance our edu-

cations through pursuing the next academic degree or professional certification. We can start a moderate exercise routine and take care to eat healthy foods. We can become involved in our communities by volunteering, joining an action group and giving to charity.

Change is not only good, but it is a part of life. Change prevents us from being static. More than that, change is the very nature of life and will happen whether we wish it or not. Since change is all around us, I suggest it makes good sense to lead that change.

Oakland Deepen

Corps of Engineers,



Harbor ing Project

Port of Oakland mark -50 milestone

Story & photos by Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

It took removing more than 12 million cubic yards of ocean sediment, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finally found bottom - minus 50 feet at Oakland Harbor.

With tomorrow's ships being built bigger, the new depth means that the nation's fifth busiest container port now offers more room.

It's a major milestone for the San Francisco District and the Port of Oakland that was celebrated Sept. 18 in a project-completion ceremony at the Middle Harbor Shoreline Park.

"It strengthens our position as a global gateway," said Omar Benjamin, the port's executive director. "Moving goods through our seaport translates to billions of dollars in economic activity."

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Last year alone, 1,928 vessels passed through the port carrying cargo valued at \$33 billion, according to the port's Web site. Naturally, more dollars create more jobs.

"Nearly 450,000 jobs in California are related in some way to the amount of cargo that comes into Oakland," said U.S. Congresswoman Barbara Lee, who represents the East Bay's Ninth District, in her remarks. "It [Port of Oakland] has become one of the most important economic engines in the Bay Area."

Timeline to -50

Back in 1996, talk had begun of overhauling the port. A new generation of super-sized ships were on the horizon, some as big as three football fields in length. The port needed to enlarge or risk losing customers.

It started with -42 feet in 1998. Expanding the Inner Harbor Turning Basin, which is the place where boats make right-angled turns, was completed in 2003. Then came -46 in 2005.

"When we were digging to -42, the Port already knew it needed to get down to -50," said Dave Doak, the District's project manager. "The plan was to catch this new wave of ships."

With a benefit-to-cost ratio of nearly 11 to 1, "there was no reason not to build," said Doak. "But it wasn't until 2005 that our project became considered a national priority."

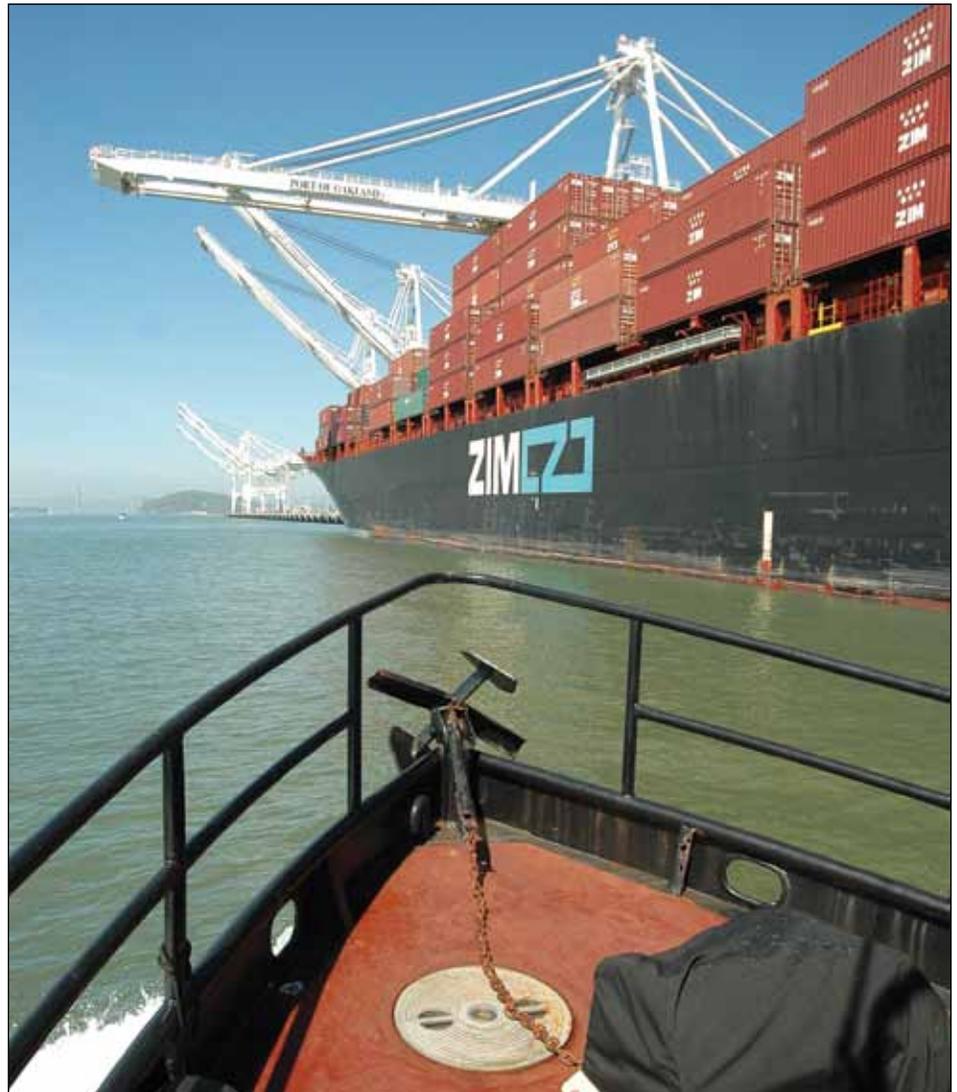
With the project federally reprioritized, finding the funds to pay for the project's \$432 million price tag was made easier. Federal dollars tipped as high as \$244 million during the 12-year project cycle. The rest was locally funded by the port.

This year, -50 feet was reached due in part to a \$6.8 million boost from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Environmental Enhancement

With dredging comes dredged material, a valuable resource used to restore environmental habitats. From the project's early inception, the idea was to put material from the deepening project to reuse.

One of the recipients of the project's



A container ship sits docked at the Port of Oakland earlier this year. In 2008, 1,928 vessels of this type passed through the nation's fifth busiest container port carrying cargo valued at \$33 billion.

It [Port of Oakland] has become one of the most important economic engines in the Bay Area.

**Barbara Lee
U.S. Congresswoman**

harbor-bottom sediment was in Novato, Calif., where the District is seeking to restore nearly a thousand acres of wetlands at the former Hamilton Army Airfield. A second location where three

million cubic yards of the project's by-product was deposited was at the Montezuma Wetlands, an 1,800-acre privately-sponsored area near Suisun Bay.

In Oakland, a 188-acre area of the harbor was made into a shallow-water habitat using six million cubic yards of material. Home to such endangered birds as the California Least Tern and California Brown Pelican, the habitat is now called the Middle Harbor Enhancement Area. It served as the backdrop to the project completion-ceremony.

"Putting this material to use means we have more nurseries for our fish and more sanctuaries for our birds that have been dependent on the Bay environment for thousands of years," said Nadine Hitchcock, deputy executive officer for the California State Coastal Conservancy.

In the end, making room for big-

ger ships came not only as a benefit to California's economy but to Bay Area habitats dependent on dredged material to grow.

"I join you in thanking the Army Corps of Engineers and the many partners, stakeholders and elected officials who made this day possible," wrote House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, in a letter read by a member of her staff during the ceremony. "The deeper channel will help

The plan was to catch this new wave of ships.

Dave Doak
District Project Manager

ensure that the Port will remain one of the Bay Area's economic powerhouses."

Accolades

The following remarks were said during the Sept. 18 project-celebration ceremony:

- "Everyone working for the Port of Oakland and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should take pride in the completion of this project," said Jo-Ellen Darcy, Assistant Secretary of the Army



[Above] Six million cubic yards of dredged material were used to restore 188 acres at the Port of Oakland. This new shallow-water habitat is called the Middle Harbor Enhancement Area.

[Below] Freight trucks line up outside the entrance to the Port of Oakland.

(Civil Works), during her remarks.

- "We celebrate here today thanks to an unprecedented spirit of partnership," said Col. (P) Rock Donahue, commander of the Corps' South Pacific Division. "Government, industry and environmental interests cooperated to overcome obstacles to funding, cost and schedule. That spirit is what will sustain us as problem solvers on the San Francisco Bay in challenging times ahead."

- "We are truly grateful of our mutually-beneficial partnership with the Corps

of Engineers," said Viktor Uno, president of the Oakland Board of Port Commissioners. "They have been reliable and responsive partners throughout this enormous and challenging endeavor."

- "I want to thank the leadership and staff at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers who have been critical to this project," said Hitchcock. "Not only have they had to keep this project on budget and on schedule, but they had to coordinate with Hamilton to accept this dredged material. It was a tremendous effort."





Brandon Beach

In spring, these shoots of Curly Dock, found in many vernal pool areas on Travis Air Force Base, will start to flower. The base is set to begin an 18-month construction project to upgrade one of its major runways, including replacing approach lights, like the one in the photo's background.

PROJECT UPDATE

Corps, Travis Air Base work to minimize wetland impacts

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — San Francisco District recently issued a permit to the Department of the Air Force, as plans are set to upgrade a major runway at Travis Air Force Base in Fairfield, Calif.

The 18-month project calls for demolishing the existing 10,995-foot long, 300-foot wide runway, which is one of two runways at Travis. In its place will be a slimmer 10,995-foot long, 150-foot wide runway equipped with new approach lights, paved shoulders and an underdrain system. That's the easy part.

Not so easy are the more than eight acres of vernal pool wetland habitat directly on or near the project site. As Air Force planners drew up initial project specs, permanent impacts to these habitats, considered a vital ecosystem to various federally-threatened and endangered species like the California tiger salamander, seemed unavoidable.

Under the Corps' no-net loss to wetlands policy, any impacts would require restoring the loss by mitigation, an oftentimes costly endeavor.

"Mitigation for just one-tenth of an acre can be in the tens of thousands [of dollars]," said Bryan Matsumoto, a project manager in the San Francisco District's Regulatory Division.

The question soon became: "Is there a way to minimize these impacts?" said David Musselwhite, chief of the 60th Civil Engineer Squadron Asset Management Flight on Travis. "They [contractor] had this big wide zone, and we wanted to try to narrow it."

Musselwhite consulted with the district's Regulatory Division on steps to change the project's construction methods.

Though not apparent in the dry fall months, vernal pools appear dramatically different in spring, as water collects in low spots making grasses green and flowers bloom. It's also not the best time to drive in heavy machinery.

Uprooting approach lights with large backhoe loaders in fall when the ground is relatively dried up was agreed upon. Initially too, machine operators were given 150 feet of space to work in. That space was reduced to 20 feet on either side of the approach lights. Other changes to the plans involved the location of access roads and contractor staging areas.

"We took it [the plan] and minimized the footprint that they were allowed to construct in," said Musselwhite.

The changes have resulted in less impact to the base's wetland areas.

"We were able to work with them and refine the project description to get the impacts down to temporary impacts," said Matsumoto.

Travis Air Force Base operates two major runways. While the 21L/03R runway will be closed until 2010, all incoming and outgoing flights will use the base's second runway. Getting this project off the ground is a top priority for Air Force planners.

"This is a very high DoD [Department of Defense] project," said Cmdr. Jason Zeta, resident construction officer of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command on Travis. "Every mission is impacted by this runway at least Pacific-wide."

With all the comings and goings at one of the nation's busiest military airports, not to be overlooked, said Musselwhite, are the many acres of environmental habitat on the base.

"All of our ecological issues are wetlands. Without our wetlands, none of our species here are protected," he said.

District team showcases Corps' environmental efforts

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Several members of the District's Environmental Section A attended the 9th Biennial State of the San Francisco Estuary Conference in September.

The three-day conference in Oakland's Marriott City Center brought together a diverse lineup of speakers to discuss the health of one of California's most complex environmental systems. Serving as the gateway for water passage into the Pacific Ocean, the San Francisco Estuary is also the area that more than seven million people call home.

This year's theme of "Our Actions, Our Estuary" focused on the "responsibility we share in sustaining a healthy estuary," as stated on the conference Web site.

Conference attendees learned more about the Corps' own environmental actions through an informational booth that was set up by members of the District's Environmental Section A.

The District's efforts to restore nearly a thousand acres of coastal wetlands at the former Hamilton Army Airfield in Novato, Calif., was featured in a three- by six-and-a-half-foot poster that was designed



Brandon Beach

Members of Environmental Section A Tessa Bernhardt, far left, Bonnie Hulkower, middle, and Bill Brostoff, far right, talk with conference attendees at the Oakland Marriott City Center Sept. 29.

The perception was
always we were just
a bunch of engineers.
That's not so today.

Cynthia Jo Fowler
Environmental Section A

by Cynthia Jo Fowler. It was submitted in the conference's poster contest.

With a steady flow of foot traffic to the team's booth, the fact that the Corps received so much interest at an environmental conference came as no surprise.

"It just shows we [Corps of Engineers] are more aligned with this community than in the past," said Fowler. "The perception was always we were just a bunch of engineers. That's not so today."

For more information on this conference, visit www.sfestuary.org.

Corps permits new tidewater aquatic center in Oakland

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

East Bay Regional Park District broke ground in August as construction is set to begin on the new \$4 million Tidewater Aquatic Center.

The 12,300 square-foot boathouse complex, which will be home to the Oakland Strokes junior rowing club, will occupy a space along the estuary of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline in Oakland.

Since the project is within a federal channel and the Corps' jurisdiction, a permit was required by the District's Regu-

latory Division.

"The topography of this area is some of the best in the world, and we want to find ways to access it," said Pat O'Brien, EBRPD general manager.

Not only does the estuary offer an ideal recreational outlet for young rowers, but it is also home to thousands of migratory birds, including the endangered California clapper rail, and many fish species.

Members of the Oakland Strokes junior rowing club row along the estuary at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline during the Aug. 28 ground-breaking ceremony.



Brandon Beach

EMPLOYEE NEWS

Focus is on 'bigger picture' in District's leadership program

By Brandon Beach

District Public Affairs Office

For most people, becoming a leader takes time. That's why the Army Corps of Engineers annually offers its 10-month Leadership Development Program.

"People evolve differently," said Jeff Ide, chief of the San Francisco District's Civil Design Section. "[LDP] is a way of looking at that bigger picture of yourself."

This year, seven members of the District's workforce graduated from the program. Fifteen are signed up for 2010.

LDP consists for the most part of monthly professional lectures, team-building exercises and a final group project. One month, participants might learn how to organize a meeting. The next might be how to prepare for an on-camera news interview. The idea is to place participants in real on-the-job situations and let them grow.

"It takes people out of their comfort zone," said Ide, the District's LDP curriculum specialist since 2006. "It gives you an opportunity to speak if you've never had the chance to speak up before."

Finding that voice is the first step. Applying it is naturally the second.

For Jake Jacobson, the District's LDP director and chief of the District's Engineering & Technical Services Division, leadership is important across the board.

"We need it at every level in our organization," he said. "[LDP] helps you understand not only your individual strengths but how to use them in a team environment for success."

No person works alone, at least that's the concept at the Corps.

"All of our projects are executed in a team environment," said Jacobson. "[LDP] ties directly into our own business practice."



Joe Barison

Arijs Rakstins, second row far left, chief of Programs and Project Management Division, Jake Jacobson, second row far right, chief of Engineering and Technical Services Division, and Jeff Ide, first row far left, chief of Civil Design Section, join members of the District's 2009 LDP II graduating class. They are pictured first to second row left to right: Jamie Yu, Jessica Soto, Legese Abebe, Patrick Sing, Yelena Oselskaya, Karen Rippey and James Mazza.

All of our projects are executed in a team environment. [LDP] ties directly into our own business practice.

Jake Jacobson
District LDP Director

LDP is open to all District employees. Applications are accepted in July, and the program starts in January. There are two tiers. LDP II is taught by the District, and

LDP III is run by the Division. This year, three employees from the San Francisco District graduated from the South Pacific Division's LDP III.

Though it is not required, completing LDP II is recommended before applying for LDP III, which takes a regional perspective on leadership.

"We'd like people to go incrementally," said Ide. "That way when they are selected for LDP III, they hit the road running."

Ide should know. He is a graduate of LDP III and attributes his promotion in 2006 to the program.

"I wouldn't be sitting in the supervisor's position if I didn't go through LDP," he said. "Though it's not a prerequisite, having experienced LDP will undoubtedly help in any management environment."

2009 LDP II Graduates

Legese Abebe
James Mazza
Yelena Oselskaya
Karen Rippey
Patrick Sing
Jessica Soto
Jamie Yu

2010 Incoming LDP II Class

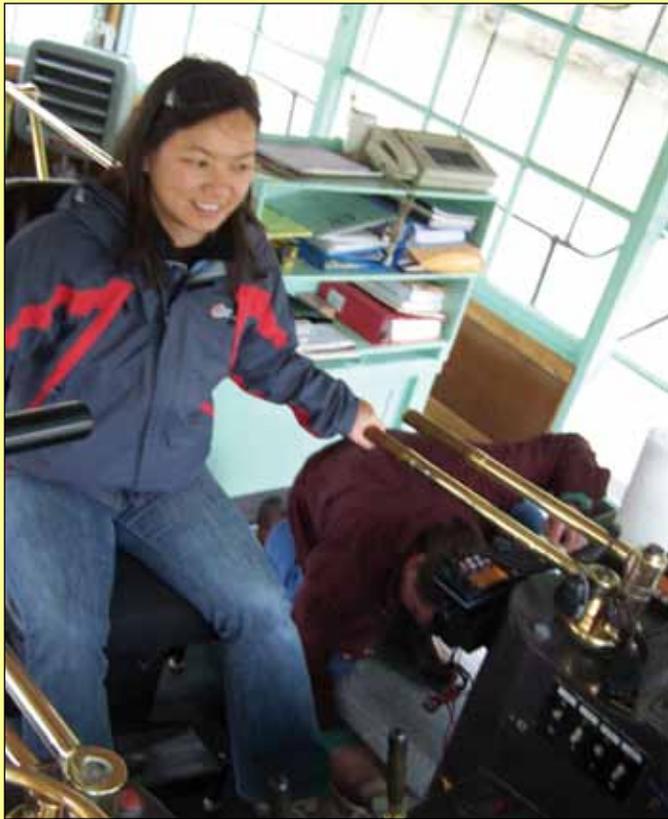
Yosef Ahmadi
Brandon Beach
Tessa Bernhardt
Mary Cheng
Carmen Cheung
Anthony Galvan
Bethany Hackenjos
Irene Lee

Judith Lutz (SPD)
Clare Polansky
Laura Smith
Benjamin Snyder
Robert Yang
Matthew Young
James Zoulas

LPD III (Division-level)

Nancy Ferris (09 Graduate)
Hatim Mustafa (09 Graduate)
Joel Pliskin (09 Graduate)
Allison Bremner (New)
Caleb Conn (New)

Judy Sheen: *Navigating a successful career in the Corps*



Jacob Walsdorf, USACE Galveston District

By Joe Barison
District Public Affairs Office

Why would a San Francisco District water-resources plan formulation specialist with over seven years of successful Corps experience, graduation from the Leadership Development Program, and a Ph.D. in biology from the University of California at Berkeley want to take on the challenges of the year-long Planning Associates (PA) Training Program?

That person is Judy Sheen of our district's Planning Branch of the Engineering and Technical Services Division. The P.A. Training Pro-

Judy Sheen takes a turn piloting a tugboat along the Kanawha River (a tributary to the Ohio River) during her Inland Navigation course, hosted by the USACE Lakes and Rivers Division.

This is invaluable for anyone who wants a career in planning in the Corps.

Judy Sheen
P.A. Program Graduate

gram is the singular forum offered by the Corps for planners to receive journeyman-level training. Moreover, the training is a national program in which participants visit every USACE division, learning about missions not found in their home division. According to Sheen, the program gives graduates an increased feeling of Corps family and new relationships with Corps leadership.

"The P.A. Program made me

Continued next page

Many new faces join District team in Fall 2009



Taylor Wilkins
Hydrographic Surveyor
Construction Branch



Andrew Smith
FCIP Civil Engineer
Engineering Branch



Dillie Rapley
Engineering Technician
Construction Branch



Valentina Caperton
Internal Review Officer
Internal Review Section



Facundo Funes
Project Manager
Programs & Project Mgt Division



Anthony Galvan
FCIP Civil Engineer
Construction Branch



Don Simmons
Contract Specialist
Contracting Division



Glen Mitchell
Project Manager
Programs & Project Mgt Division



1st Lt. Jonathan Parot
Hydrographic Survey Section XO
Construction Branch



William Angeloni, Jr.
Project Manager
Programs & Project Mgt Division

District 'called up' by Reserves

By Joe Barison
District Public Affairs Office

“Call up the Reserves!” This well-known call for support has been sounded from Army headquarters to Hollywood’s movies and all points in between.

Now, thanks to the Personnel Force Innovation (PFI) Program, a U.S. Department of Defense initiative, reservists can “call up” military agencies for interesting jobs. Our district has called up seven Army reservists and National Guard soldiers to fill a variety of positions.

Maj. David Kaulfers, who is working as assistant to the chief, Programs and Project Management Division, is our district’s PFI coordinator.

Maj. Kaulfers explained the need for the PFI Program. “A lot of active-duty soldiers have been deployed [for U.S. Contingency Operations] instead of staying stateside. After 9/11, reservists on active duty increased exponentially. You know, a large portion of our forces in Iraq were reservists or National Guard.”

As a result of the deployments, some professional jobs in military agencies back home went unfilled.

Along with Maj. Kaulfers, reservists Lt. Col. Don Davis, 1st Lt. Matt Brauer, 1st Lt. Jonathan Parot, Master Sgt. Wayne Brandt, Master Sgt. Lam Van Tran and Staff Sgt. Gregory McCoy have joined our district team, filling key professional positions.

Maj. Kaulfers sees benefits to hiring reservists.

“If you bring a soldier on duty, you are guaranteed to get someone who knows the military culture and who has a proven performance record,” he said.

Meet the District’s PFI team



Lt. Col. Donald K. Davis, Project Engineer

Hometown: Berkeley, Calif.

“I came to the San Francisco District to have a final tour of duty in the area where I expect to retire from uniformed service.” **



Maj. David Kaulfers, Assistant to the Chief, Programs and Project Management Division

Hometown: Richmond, Va.

“I wanted to work for the largest civil engineering organization in the world.”



1st Lt. Matt Brauer, Operations Officer

Hometown: Manitowoc, Wis.

“Desire to strengthen my skill set in reconstruction projects and management by learning Corps of Engineers processes and procedures.”



1st Lt. Jonathan Parot, Project Officer

Hometown: San Diego, Calif.

“I wanted to gain valuable experience and share my skills with the Corps of Engineers.”



Master Sgt. Wayne C. Brandt, District Security Manager and Senior Noncommissioned Officer

Hometown: Chicago, Ill.

“I thought it would mark a nice finale to my military career.”



Master Sgt. Lam Tran, Operations Noncommissioned Officer

Hometown: Newark, Calif.

“... to work in a wide range of professions that support and sustain the environment for the nation and to provide direct support during emergency operations in response to disasters.”



Staff Sgt. Gregory McCoy, District Construction Safety Noncommissioned Officer

Hometown: Petaluma, Calif.

“Being a proud native son of the Bay Area, I am honored to work with the group dedicated to preserving it.”

** Reservists were asked why they chose to join the San Francisco District.

Continued from previous page

excited to have a career in the Corps. That’s something you just can’t get by earning a degree,” Sheen said.

USACE resurrected the Planning Associates Training Program for precisely what Sheen described – the need to train the next generation of planning leaders. “It’s not just about learning the curriculum,” Sheen said. “It’s about developing a team as part of the planning community of practice.”

Since the program’s reactivation, 60 planning associates have graduated under the leadership of Harry Kitch, deputy chief of planning for the Corps.

While the training program participant clearly earns professional benefits, the participant’s district also gains. During the year-long program, participants conduct monthly home-office back briefs following each formal training session.

As Sheen pointed out, “My projects benefited by my having more knowledge of technical requirements and how those requirements and policies are changing.”

Tom Kendall, chief of the SF District Planning Branch, agrees. “Judy’s home-office back briefs were exemplary and helped spread the knowledge. This is an important accomplishment that places her within an elite group of planners Corps-wide.”

Sheen’s access to critical information is now enhanced as the program fostered working relationships with the Corps-wide planning community’s key members. This access allows Sheen and her fellow planning associates to get information to help to resolve important technical and policy issues. The pay-off is in bringing a new dimension of planning expertise back to the home district and beyond.

“She will be even more effective now in

her role as a regional plan-formulation specialist given her investment in this program,” Kendall said.

Sheen, too, views the training benefits as ongoing, recalling that, “At the graduation awards, some saw the program as ending. I saw it as taking the best part of the program with us.”

Reflecting on the entire experience, Sheen believes that virtually anyone in any of the Planning Branch sections and any project manager working on planning studies would benefit from the program.

“I would encourage everyone [in these categories] who has the ability to participate in this program to do so. I will guarantee you will not regret going through this program. This is invaluable for anyone who wants a career in planning in the Corps.”

In Afghanistan with Robin Liffmann

Hello from Kabul,

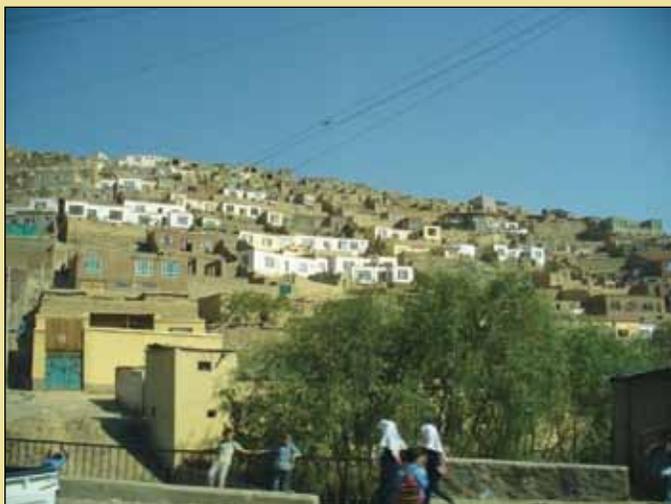
I've arrived safe and sound and have been in-country for four days now—just starting to feel better from jet lag, high altitude and bustling around.

There was a full week of intense (and I mean intense) trainings and briefings in Virginia at TAC [Transatlantic Program Center] to get our team ready to deploy—fitting with uniforms and gear, training and drills with our gas masks, first aid trainings (such as for gaping wounds and loss of limbs), dealing with IEDs [Improvised Explosive Device], being taken hostage, etc. I wouldn't have been surprised if some people got cold feet and opted out (but besides some apprehension, no one did).

The group going to Iraq left a few days earlier than the Afghanistan team (we had a couple more days of trainings), but we got a day off and spent it in DC sightseeing. We have a great group, although some of us are shipping out to other parts of the country in the next couple of days.

I'm not sure how different it is now from when Fari [Tabatabai, chief of the District's Environmental Section A] was here, but it is very crowded in the Qalaa compound, and it resembles a prison. We have very tight security and have to completely gear up and go through security checks to cross the street to the military base opposite us. I'm getting used to wearing the 30 plus lbs. of Kevlar plus uniform and boots to cross the road. I've probably lost a few pounds just from perspiring!

But there had been a vehicle explosion next to our compound a week before our arrival that caused damage and



Robin Liffmann

This photo was taken while driving with staff members through Kabul.



courtesy

Robin Liffmann, a San Francisco District project manager, deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan, in support of the nation's Overseas Contingency Operations on Aug. 16, 2009.

some injuries (burst ear drums and concussion) within Qalaa and a lot of damage outside (and a big crater), so security was tightened up.

But the work is very interesting (I'm finally getting to the reason I'm here) and fast paced—a lot of work but not enough people. I'm currently a project manager in O&M primarily serving the Afghan National Army (ANA) and the Afghan National Police (ANP).

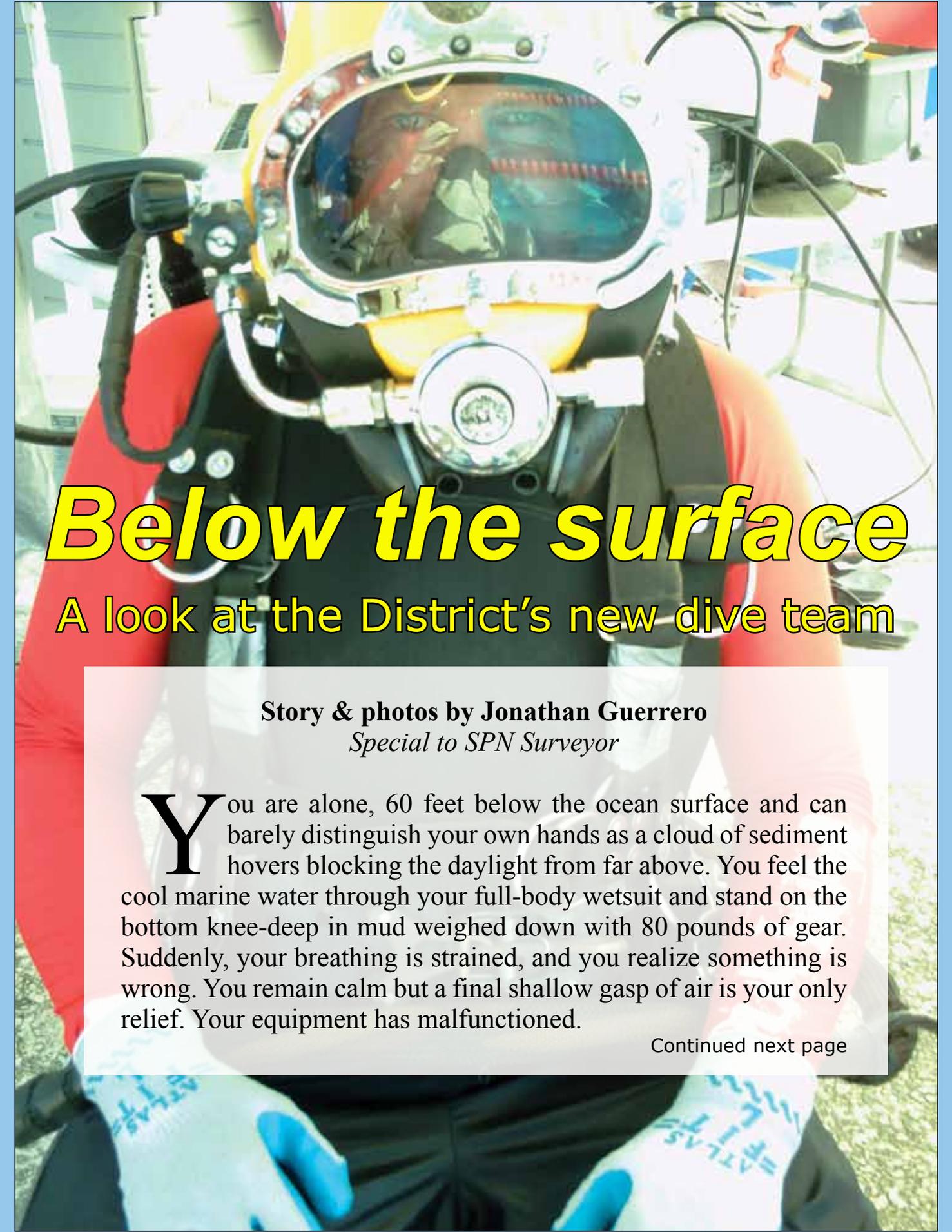
I really like the work and will have the opportunity to get out on site visits fairly often (at least once a week or more). However, the DPM may put me in water resources (also with a lot of outside travel). There is some on-going discussion between sections about who will get me—so at least I know I'll have the productive work I was hoping for!

Somewhere within my work schedule, I'll be getting my driving certification—I just have to go out with a staff sergeant and drive around outside the walls to practice driving fast, stopping quickly, maneuvering, etc. and will be taking the two-day medical aid course, so I can be certified to assist the medic (or be the medic if no one else is around). I have this need to be prepared for any contingency.

Hope all is well back at home—I do miss everyone but have to admit that I'm really enjoying this adventure and the amazing work that I'll get to do!

Regards,

Robin



Below the surface

A look at the District's new dive team

Story & photos by Jonathan Guerrero
Special to SPN Surveyor

You are alone, 60 feet below the ocean surface and can barely distinguish your own hands as a cloud of sediment hovers blocking the daylight from far above. You feel the cool marine water through your full-body wetsuit and stand on the bottom knee-deep in mud weighed down with 80 pounds of gear. Suddenly, your breathing is strained, and you realize something is wrong. You remain calm but a final shallow gasp of air is your only relief. Your equipment has malfunctioned.

Continued next page

continued ...

This scenario was one of many open-water training drills the San Francisco District Dive team as well as others from around the country overcame during the three-week Worker Diver Certification program at the Advanced Underwater Education Center in Key West, Fla.

In addition to the open-water training, divers were tested on the fundamentals in technical areas such as: diving physics, decompression sickness, gas toxicity, underwater tools, USACE diving regulations, thermal stress, equipment operation and underwater inspection.

Following the death of a USACE diver in 2005, new protocols and guidelines were added to ensure the safety of all members involved. There are many hazards associated with each dive requiring thorough preparation for basic issues such as the equipment, job environment and emergency evacuation measures, to complex problems including the amount of time a diver can remain beneath the surface due to nitrogen build up in the bloodstream.

The health of the members on your team is your primary objective as you work together to execute a mission. While a diver may work alone beneath the surface, they are in the hands of their teammates far above who maintain their tether and air, supervise, operate communications and stand by to deploy should an accident occur.

Midway through the course, trainees



Trainees work to raise a sunken school bus out of the water during one of the course's training scenarios. The class, part of the USACE Prospect curriculum, was taught at Key West, Fla.

The SPN team is the only USACE dive team in the West.

found themselves pulling an unconscious diver out of the water and preparing them for evacuation by helicopter after a hypothetical accident occurred. The training scenario forced the team to draw upon lessons learned during the course including dispensing oxygen, diagnosing the injury, briefing EMT and clearing the landing zone. Having an actual helicopter and EMT personnel from the nearby hospital made the frightening scenario come to life.

As a cumulative test of the skills acquired during the course, trainees were challenged to raise a sunken school bus stuck 40 feet below in the underwater training facility and extract it in preparation for maintenance dredging.

All steps, from devising a plan, surveying, rigging and final removal were developed and executed as a team. Using chains, lifting balloons and muscle, the class effectively extracted the bus.

Greg Altman, Brian Becker, Jeremiah Brazil, Derrick Dunlap, Jonathan Guerrero, Blair Jackson and Eric Joliffe from the newly activated San Francisco Dive team successfully completed the Worker Diver certification process.

The SPN team is the only USACE dive team in the West and will assist the four districts of the South Pacific Division with inspections of breakwaters, bridges, levees, dams, locks, environmental surveys and dredging hydro-surveying beginning January 2010.

Guerrero is a project planner with the District's Engineering & Technical Services Division.

For more information on the SPN Dive Team, contact Derrick Dunlap, deputy chief of Operations & Readiness Division, at 415-503-6772.



A.R. Smith

Jonathan Guerrero, above, gives the A-OK sign as he surfaces from the pool at the Advanced Underwater Education Center, while Brian Becker, previous page, prepares to enter the water.

AROUND THE DISTRICT

SPN, SPD retirees gather for luncheon in San Francisco

By Brandon Beach

District Public Affairs Office

They tell the story of the Corps — people such as William Angeloni, Jr., Norman Swenson and Deanna Wong, who helped build the Corps as it is today.

In September, they had the chance to meet at the Corps' annual retiree luncheon, held at the Marines Memorial Hotel in San Francisco. More than 60 District and Division retirees attended.

"It was a great place to work," said Angeloni, recalling his 40 years of Federal service at the San Francisco District. He retired in 1996 as Chief of Planning/Engineering. "Where else could you work on 42 ton dolos like we did in Crescent City, [Calif.] Where else could you work on big projects like that?"

While some came to swap engineering war stories [dolos are concrete blocks used to protect harbour walls from sea forces], others came just to see old friends.

"I liked the people. I miss being around them," said Wong, who retired in 1996 after 42 years at the South Pacific Division's Information Management Branch. "I think of them often."

Swenson, a Corps econo-



Brandon Beach

San Francisco District Executive Secretary Terry Reyes, right, greets Yvonne Tom, a former budget analyst with the District's Programs and Project Management Division, at the start of the Sept. 24 retiree luncheon.

I liked the people. I miss being around them. I think of them often.

Deanna Wong
SPN Retiree

mist who retired in 1993, dug out from his closet a faded red Emergency Operations jacket, which he wore to the luncheon. It was a reminder of the work he and others did in Los Angeles in the 1980s to repair channels when severe rains caused them to overflow.

"I've always kept it as a memento," he said.

The two-and-a-half hour luncheon ended with State of the Division and District addresses by Col. (P) Rock Dona-

hue, SPD commander, and Maj. Sam Volkman, SPN deputy commander.

"We never want to lose our linkage to the past," said Donahue to audience members. "Thank you for your tremendous service to the Corps."

Following Donahue, Volkman discussed the District's end-of-the-year status report.

"For the first time in 21 years, we were green in our execution," he said, to which the comment was met with applause.

Several district employees take on running 'challenge'

By Brandon Beach

District Public Affairs Office

Under the backdrop of such San Francisco landmarks as the Golden Gate Bridge and Alcatraz Island, several district employees competed Sept. 16 in the J.P. Morgan Corporate Challenge at the stunning, yet wind-swept, Crissy Field.

The co-ed team of Tessa Bernhardt, Jessica Burton Evans, Brandon Beach

and Maj. Sam Volkman, the District's Deputy Commander, finished the 3.5-mile looped course, which led runners out to Fort Point National Historic Site and back, in a combined time of 1:37:49. It earned them a 13th-place finish out of the 85 San Francisco-based corporate teams in the field.

This was the 33rd running of the Corporate Challenge Series. Twelve other cities, including Boston, New York, Chicago, and Frankfurt, Germany, host similar events. Winners of each race earn a trip to Johan-

nesburg, South Africa, to compete in the series championship. More than 5,000 runners competed in San Francisco this year alone.

A record 242,510 participants from 7,380 companies took part globally last year, according to the event's official website.

For more information on the Corporate Challenge, visit www.jpmorganchasecc.com.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Baseball museum founder keynotes District event

By Brandon Beach

District Public Affairs Office

In 1999, Major League Baseball marked the last 100 years with its All-Century Team, a tribute to the league's greatest players. The all-star lineup included such ballpark legends as Babe Ruth, Hank Aaron and Willie Mayes.

Not on the list though was a Puerto Rican player by the name of Roberto Clemente, who led the Pittsburgh Pirates to World Series wins in 1960 and 1971. It was a snub that angered many Latino baseball fans including Gabriel Avila, Jr., founder of the Hispanic Heritage Baseball Hall of Fame Museum.

"By excluding his name, I became urgent," said Avila during remarks at this year's District-sponsored National Hispanic Heritage Month luncheon Sept. 23. "He's probably one of the greatest baseball players to ever live. I wanted to create an organization that would not



Brandon Beach

San Francisco District Deputy Commander Maj. Sam Volkman presents a certificate of appreciation to Gabriel Avila, Jr., following his address at the District's Hispanic Heritage Month luncheon Sept. 23.

only honor him but honor the legacy of all these other players that had been forgotten."

Preserving the history of Hispanic baseball players like Clemente has been the work of Avila now for more than a decade. It is this same message of Hispanic achievement that the

Nation recognizes every year in September. This year's NHHM campaign theme is "Embracing the Fierce Urgency of Now!"

"We have been involved in the urgency of now since the very inception of this country," said Avila. "We have had generals. We have had our sports

heroes. We have had our astronauts. We have had our politicians. However, we need to do more."

Doing more is a message that Avila embodies in his own life. Not only does he oversee the museum's operations, traveling to countless baseball stadiums every year, but he also works as a military services coordinator for the Veteran's Affairs Medical Center in Palo Alto, Calif., where he helps veterans afflicted with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and other serious brain injuries.

Following his remarks, Avila was presented with certificates of appreciation by Maj. Sam Volkman, the District's Deputy Commander, and Malcolm Seisay, the District's Equal Employment Opportunity program manager.

For more about the Hispanic Heritage Baseball Museum, visit www.hispanicbaseballmuseum.com.

Around the lakes

[Left] Park Manager Kevin Heape patrols Lake Mendocino Oct. 2.

[Above] Warm Springs Dam, a 3,000-foot wide earthen dam at Lake Sonoma, was built by the Corps in 1982.

[Right] Lake Mendocino is home to the long-necked Western Grebe and other birds.

photos by Brandon Beach

Federal health-plan selection open season set to begin

By Joe Barison

District Public Affairs Office

Open season for federal health-plan selection will be Nov. 9 through Dec. 14, 2009. During this time, civilian federal employees have the opportunity to make changes in health insurance that could have an important impact on their lives.

Certainly there is no shortage of information on open season and the myriad of plans offered. Quite the contrary, the lists, summaries and charts can be overwhelming. Some employees keep their health plan only because the open-season decision process seems too complex.

To sort through the 2009 Federal Benefits Open Season, Civilian Personnel Advisory Center's Aaron Larsen talked with this writer. Larsen is not only a USACE human resources specialist with nine years of experience in federal benefits, but he has switched his own health plan as a result of a family change. Larsen now has to make yet another health-plan selection, as his plan ends its No. Calif. coverage. Their conversation begins:

Surveyor: Every year, we hear that open season is coming. What exactly is "open season?"

Larsen: Open season is a chance for all eligible federal employees to make changes, to switch health plans. The open season is for health insurance, and dental and vision plans – and for Flexible Spending Accounts. Every year, HR (Human Resources Department) will send out



Warren Byrd, USACE Sacramento District

Aaron Larsen is a human resource specialist with the Sacramento District.

major changes, cost changes, whether a plan is even still available. For example, Pacific Care is no longer providing coverage for No. Calif. Any changes an employee makes would be effective the first pay period in January 2010.

Surveyor: What are the main factors a federal employee should consider in deciding whether to change plans?

Larsen: First of all, on www.opm.gov you can find a plan-comparison tool. It compares up to four different plans at once.

Surveyor: Aaron, you've worked in HR for nine years, advising employees. But you've had to make these same decisions for yourself. What do you personally look at?

Larsen: The factors I personally look at are quality (Who do the plans rank in member satisfaction?), rates (What will the cost be for the next year?)

and benefits (What are the catastrophic limits per family? How much will I have to pay – the co-pays – for doctors visits? What are the percentages the plan pays for different services? What is the amount of the deductible?). I also look at pharmaceutical prices. How does the plan pay for generic versus brand-name drugs? Can I get prescriptions by mail order?

Surveyor: I understand you changed health plans during a recent open season. Why did you make a change?

Larsen: I got married, and we had a baby. This affected my own health-care situation. Prior, in fact for many years, I had a well-known HMO. They provided everything I needed. Of course, I had to use only their doctors. But with a child, we wanted some more choices, like with a pediatrician.

Surveyor: So what change did you and your family make?

Larsen: We switched to Pacific Care, where we could choose our own doctors and other providers, including a pediatrician. The premium costs \$5.00 more per pay period, but the co-pay for each doctor visit was \$15 less than the HMO. With my wife and child and me, we came out ahead.

Surveyor: But as you said, Pacific Care is discontinuing its coverage in No. Calif.

Larsen: Yes, exactly. So we're taking a careful look at the other plans this open season.

Surveyor: Aaron, do you have any other advice for Corps employees as they look at their health-plan options this next open season?

Larsen: Two things. At the HMO, I had the standard plan. I could have chosen the higher option, with better coverage, but it would have cost more. That's one more thing someone ought to consider – What standard and higher options offer, and is it worth it [the extra cost] to you? Also, always check out the plan brochure online. Each plan has a brochure that has a page "How We Changed for 2010." Even if you know the plan now, they might be making an important change for next year.

If you have any questions on the 2009 Federal Benefits Open Season or deciding on a health plan, contact Aaron Larsen (Aaron.M.Larsen@usace.army.mil or 916-557-6901) or Marcy Reyes (Marcelina.Reyes@usace.army.mil or 916-557-5130).



Combined Federal Campaign
2009 Giving Season for CA Federal employees
www.cfcnocal.com

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 Jan/Feb 2010 issue.

The Problem

You are conducting a field inspection at the newly-paved motor pool for the 63rd Regional Support Center at Moffett Field. The Army Corps of Engineers has moved away from providing quality control, QC, and acceptance testing, to more quality oversight and quality assurance. With this change, the QC and acceptance testing has been shifted to the contractor. It is believed that the more a contractor knows about the product they produce, the greater the level of awareness they have about its attributes, with an improvement in quality. However, as an owner, it is still necessary to have some confidence that the acceptance testing performed by the contractor is valid.

To do this, statistics can be used to compare a large number of contractor test results, to a small number of owner test results. In the production of Hot Mix Asphalt, the percentage of fines (material passing the number 200 sieve) is an important material property. Too many fines may result in not enough liquid asphalt in the mix and lead to durability problems. Too little fines may result in too much liquid asphalt in the mix which can result in rutting of the pavement.

Given the following scenario that could apply to one of our paving jobs at Moffet or one of the lakes, the Contractor has determined the percentage of fines as listed below. The Contracting Officer has ordered additional testing to assist in verifying the Contractor's results, in accordance with United Facility Guide Specification — Division 32 Section 32 12 16 Hot Mix Asphalt for Roads. Using the Student's t-test with a 1% significance level, does the Contractor's test results differ from the Contracting Officer's test results.



- Number of Contractor Tests, $N_c=11$
- Average fines for Contractor, $X_c=10.00$
- Standard Deviation for Contractor Results, $s_c=1.11$
- Number of Owner's Tests, $N_o=4$
- Average fines for Owner, $X_o=7.10$
- Standard Deviation for Contractor Results, $s_o=1.08$

Additional question: What do you call a t-party with more than 30 people?

This month's engineering problem was submitted by Maj. David Kaulfers, Assistant to the Chief, Programs and Project Management Division.

Submit your answers via e-mail to John Jacobson at John.H.Jacobson@usace.army.mil.

Congratulations to last issue's winner!

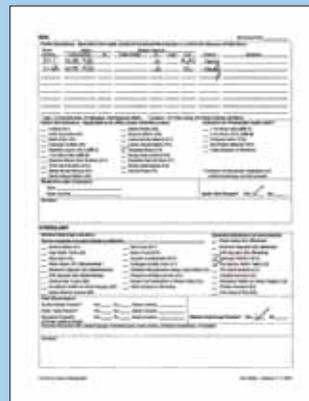


Brandon Beach

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. Laurence M. Farrell, left, presents a commander's coin to Sahrye Cohen, a regulatory project manager and winner of the Surveyor's Sept/Oct Engineering Challenge.

The Answer

In the last issue of the SPN Surveyor, readers were asked to conduct a field wetland delineation for a potential development site. A PDF copy of Sahrye's solution may be found on the District's SharePoint site at <https://kme/usace/army.mil/SPD/SPN/default.aspx> under SPN Surveyor Archives.





1

Coastal Cleanup

District employees, families volunteer at Angel Island, remove some 300 pounds of debris



3



2

[1] More than 35 San Francisco District volunteers hauled out an estimated 200 pounds of trash and 100 lbs. of recycled material from Angel Island during the Calif. Coastal Cleanup Sept. 19. [2] Steve Chesser, SPN dredging program manager, fills up trash bags on Angel Island. [3] Marty Plisch, a District drift collection worker, right, Jennifer Alper, middle, and Phoebe Plisch, 8, help pick up trash Sept. 19. (Photos by A.R. Smith)

The San Francisco District wishes to thank the many volunteers who came out in support of a cleaner California coastline.