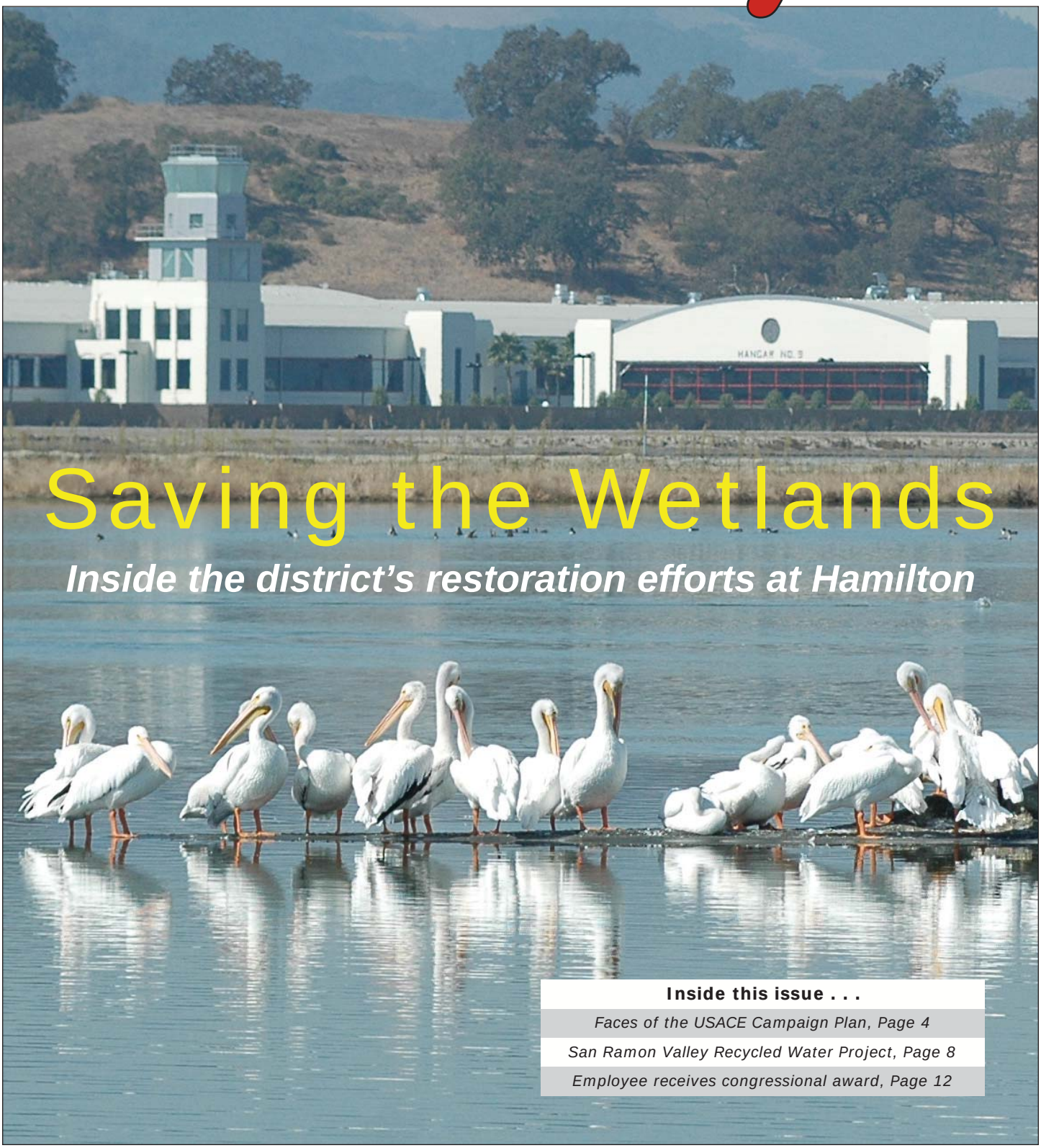
Published by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — San Francisco District

US Army Corps of Engineers ®
San Francisco District

Jan/Feb 2011
Vol. 3, Issue 1

SPN Surveyor

www.spn.usace.army.mil



Saving the Wetlands

Inside the district's restoration efforts at Hamilton

Inside this issue . . .

Faces of the USACE Campaign Plan, Page 4
San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project, Page 8
Employee receives congressional award, Page 12

District moves from ***Good to Great*** *with* ***My Plan***

By Lt. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro
San Francisco District Commander

For years, the Corps' focus has remained Relevant, Ready, Responsive and Reliable.

In 2009, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leadership developed the Campaign Plan and asked "What will YOU do to make USACE GREAT?

Today, our district employees are moving from Good to Great by answering the USACE question with a two-word answer — My Plan.

What does this all mean?

As a district, the San Francisco District Corporate Board began developing our FY11 strategic goals in October. We reviewed our 60-day assessment that we presented to Brig. Gen. Rock Donahue and Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp. It was essentially a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) that identified our current situation and environment. The division chiefs synchronized those assessments with the USACE Campaign Goals and the South Pacific Division's Implementation Plan in order to develop our FY11 District Support Tasks. These FY11 tasks are simply our goals or targets that should guide the district toward continued future "greatness."

As each division chief continues to refine the FY11 targets for their respective organizations, I have asked them to post their goals in their respective conference rooms. The FY11 targets will also be uploaded on the SPN SharePoint site as they are approved by the corporate board. Division chiefs are lastly setting their organizational azimuth by tying their Total Army Performance Evaluation System (TAPES) objectives to these FY11 targets.

Simply stated, as we move from Good to Great, we are attempting to create improvements in our organization that are beyond our day-to-day job descriptions.

How does this affect the workforce?

First, ask to see your division chief's OPLAN objectives and TAPES. Ask if you can help him/her achieve those FY11 goals! Developing your TAPES or "My Plan" tied to your supervisor's TAPES is how we all should seamlessly tie into and row together.

My Plan defines what each employee will do to make USACE GREAT as each employee's objectives are intertwined with the supervisor, providing solutions for our future (see "Faces of the Campaign Plan," pages 4-5).

While this may seem like a daunting task, let me assure you that most of our employees have been traveling down the road from good to great since the Campaign Plan was announced.

1 District employees like Robin Liffmann, Dan Dykstra, Kenneth Brown, Dennis Griffin, 1st Lt. Jonathon Parot, Glen Mitchell, Chuck Ingraham, Mark Clark, Marty Plitsch and so many others have deployed in support of a full-spectrum of Overseas Contingency Operations.

2 Olivia Grate, serving as our Family Readiness Network Coordinator, is helping to educate employees and their Families on family support programs and resources.

3 Bill Brostoff, Al Paniccia and their Long-Term Management Strategy teammates are streamlining dredging operations; Ken Danielson, Joe McCormick and the drift collection crews keep shipping lanes safe; and Kevin Heape, Merle Griffin, Craig Conner and Paul Schimelfenyg focus on improving levee and recreation safety operations.

4 Irene Lee and Widdy Criner are increasing the competencies in the Program and Project Management Division by bringing in Project Management Professional (PMP) Certification training. Irene Lee is further expanding our PM competencies by hosting brown-bag lunches that benchmark current projects against

Continued next page

District Commander
Lt. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro

Chief, Public Affairs
J.D. Hardesty
j.d.hardesty@usace.army.mil

Staff Contributors
Brandon Beach
brandon.a.beach@usace.army.mil

Ryan McClymont
ryan.j.mcclymont@usace.army.mil

US Army Corps of Engineers
San Francisco District

SPN Surveyor

SPN Surveyor is an unofficial publication published under the provisions of AR 360-1 for the Department of Defense, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — San Francisco District, its diverse workforce and stakeholders. Contents of SPN Surveyor are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. SPN Surveyor is a bimonthly publication distributed via e-mail and made available at www.spn.usace.army.mil. The editorial content of this publication is prepared, edited, provided and approved and published by the USACE San Francisco District Public Affairs Office, 1455 Market Street, San Francisco, Calif., 94103-1398; telephone (415) 503-6804; fax (415) 503-6690. The appearance of advertising in this publication, including inserts or supplements, does not constitute endorsement of the products or services advertised by the U.S. Army. Everything advertised in this publication will be made available for purchase, use or patronage without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, marital status, physical handicap, political affiliation or any other non-merit factor of the purchaser, user or patron. If a violation or rejection of this equal opportunity policy by an advertiser is confirmed, the publisher will refuse to print advertising from that source until the violation is corrected.

Table of Contents

PROJECTS & EVENTS

Faces of the USACE Campaign Plan 5

Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel Project: Endangered species monitored during dredging operations 6

San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project: District completes construction of new pump station 8

SPN announces new natural resource manager 9

Feature: Hamilton Restoration Project aims to convert former Army airfield into wetlands 10

PEOPLE & DEPARTMENTS

District employee receives congressional award 12

Dredging program manager retires after 33 years 13

Onward and Upward: How to plan for your retirement 13

eCoastal Update: Data analysts reach project milestone 14

Chinese delegation visits district 15

RESPONSE & SUPPORT

In Iraq with district engineer Moni Grewal 16

Advertisement: Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations 17

Postcard from Glen Mitchell in Iraq 17

SPN ACTIVITIES

Photo Feature: District hosts holiday luncheon 18

Engineering Challenge 19

Equal Employment Opportunity News: District EEO manager retires and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observance 20

On the cover

A group of pelicans congregates in one of the seasonal wetland areas that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District has created in the last few years at Hamilton. Formerly a U.S. Army airfield, the project site is currently being restored to its previous wetland habitat. (Photo by Brandon Beach)

How USACE is transforming

By Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp
USACE Commanding General

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is marching forward with a Campaign Plan to transform the way we do business.

These are historic times in our Nation and in the world, and the Corps will play a pivotal role in helping shape America's future.

The Corps will grow stronger and become a great organization by delivering superior performance, setting the standard for our profession, making a positive impact on the Nation and other nations, and building to last, as evidenced by the strength of our team — educated, trained, experienced, and certified professionals.

We will deliver superior performance every time through disciplined people, thought and action. We will use the Campaign Plan to establish our priorities, focus our transformation initiatives, measure and guide our progress, and adapt to the needs of the future.

My intent is for the Corps to be *one disciplined team* — in thought, word, and action — and to meet our commitments by saying what we will do, and doing what we say.

Corner continued ...

the Project Management Institute's Project Management Body of Knowledge.

5 Terry Marks and Project Develop Teams for the Pajaro, Llagas, Russian, San Lorenzo and Klamath rivers continue to engineer watershed solutions.

6 Cameron Johnson is issuing two new Regional General Permits to reduce backlogs in the regulatory permit applications this FY.

7 Syed Burney and Tim Kelleher are increasing USACE's Quality Management System implementation to standardize excellence.

As you can see, we have taken large strides down the road toward greatness. Develop your own My Plan with your supervisor to keep the District on its path towards "Great."

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Campaign Plan

Victoria Plummer *Automation Clerk*

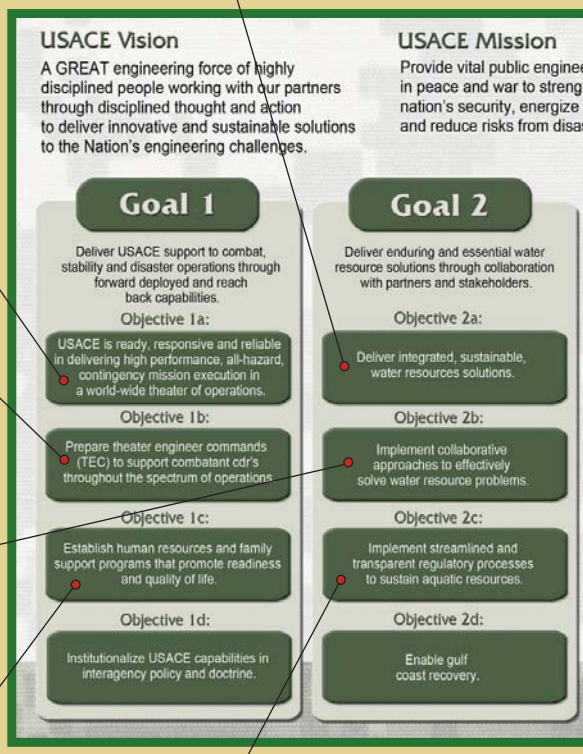
"I maintain ENGLink to track the approval process of personnel volunteering for Overseas Contingency Operations and emergency response deployments. From auto-notifying e-mails to keeping Operations and Readiness Emergency Section supervisors and employees informed, I supervise — from cradle to grave — the tracking and monitoring of employees during deployment."

Marty Plisch *Drift Collection Worker*

"With ferry boats, coast guard and commercial cargo vessels totaling more than 100,000 trips annually across the bay, plus a myriad of recreational boaters sailing, fishing and boating from numerous ports, our District's debris teams remove over 1,100 tons of floating debris, helping to keep shipping lanes open for public and private agencies and avoiding more than $10 million in estimated damages for our stakeholders and partners."

Carmen Cheung *Civil Engineer*

"I am deploying to support our Overseas Contingency Operations to gain experience working overseas, providing geotechnical support and design while providing a service to my country. Beyond the financial rewards, the opportunity will help me broaden and improve my skill sets while providing a challenge by working on fast-tracked design and construction projects. Additionally, I will be able to meet new people and be exposed to different cultures and surroundings."



Allison Bremner *Environmental Planner*

"As an environmental manager for the Oakland O&M project, I am also a member of the Long-Term Management Strategy team developing plans for dredging and dredged material placement in San Francisco Bay. Through the LTMS, we bring all resource agencies and stakeholders together to develop common, program-wide goals that maximize beneficial reuse of dredged material while minimizing environmental impacts from dredging projects."

Harry Durrie *Supervisory Executive Assistant*

"The District's Family Readiness Group (part of the South Pacific Division's Family Readiness Network) is coordinating Family Support Programs and Resources to educate our Families on available services. The District's Family Readiness Network is developing educational opportunities on Army Casualty Assistance and Army Family Action Plan programs. We are also developing All-Hazards and Continuity of Operations plans to support our workforce serving home and abroad."

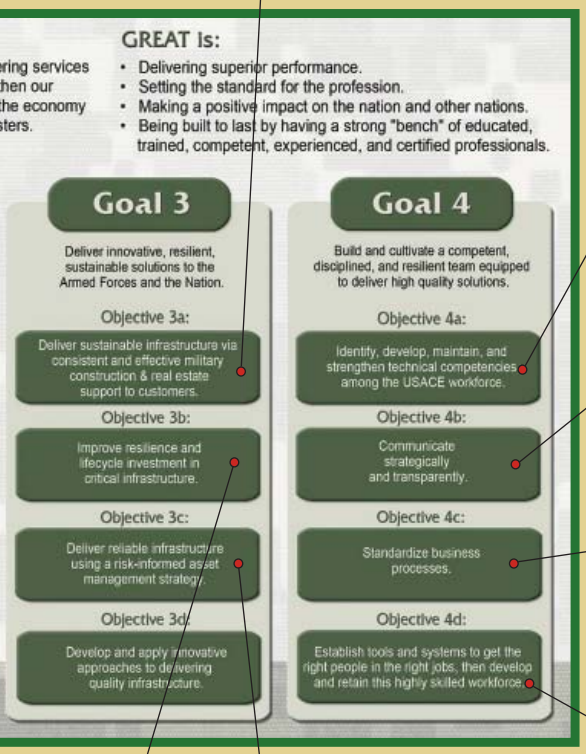
Sahyre Cohen *Regulatory Manager*

"I contribute to the Campaign Plan by implementing the National Regulatory Performance Measures, providing permit compliance checks and building good working relationships with our customers and stakeholders by streamlining processes to ensure that applications are completed and processed within 60 days."

How do you make USACE GREAT?

Facundo Funes *Project Manager*

"We attend quarterly VISN21 meetings with Veterans Affairs facility project managers to provide in-person project updates and discuss future opportunities. We are coordinating with Sacramento and Honolulu districts to encourage more open discussions and to serve as the regional lead district for VISN21 at the program level. Additionally, Sacramento and San Francisco are developing a similar relationship with the National Park Service."



GREAT Is:

- Delivering superior performance.
- Setting the standard for the profession.
- Making a positive impact on the nation and other nations.
- Being built to last by having a strong "bench" of educated, trained, competent, experienced, and certified professionals.

Goal 3

Deliver innovative, resilient, sustainable solutions to the Armed Forces and the Nation.

Objective 3a: Deliver sustainable infrastructure via consistent and effective military construction & real estate support to customers.

Objective 3b: Improve resilience and lifecycle investment in critical infrastructure.

Objective 3c: Deliver reliable infrastructure using a risk-informed asset management strategy.

Objective 3d: Develop and apply innovative approaches to delivering quality infrastructure.

Goal 4

Build and cultivate a competent, disciplined, and resilient team equipped to deliver high quality solutions.

Objective 4a: Identify, develop, maintain, and strengthen technical competencies among the USACE workforce.

Objective 4b: Communicate strategically and transparently.

Objective 4c: Standardize business processes.

Objective 4d: Establish tools and systems to get the right people in the right jobs, then develop and retain this highly skilled workforce.

Jamie Yu *Civil Engineer*

"Caleb Conn, Bonnie Hulkower, Irene Lee, Robert Yang, and I are establishing a sustainability steering committee — Green Team — in SPN to focus on developing and implementing sustainable business processes and practices. The team will focus on educating, involving and empowering Corps employees to increase their effort towards sustainability everywhere, including at home and in the workplace. We are currently developing a Project Management Plan to present to senior leaders."

Brandon Beach *Public Affairs Specialist*

"I provide public affairs and communication planning support to Project Delivery Teams such as the San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project. I manage our district's two command information publications, *SPN Surveyor* and *The Market Street Bridge*, while covering a wide range of programs, activities and events that promote the common regional picture while telling the Corps' story to better inform our customers, business partners and the public."

Syed Burney *Quality Manager*

"Working as the San Francisco District Quality Manager and QMS Manager, I am continuing to educate our workforce on QMS while emphasizing the importance of the QMS system and processes and the benefits of using a uniform platform for executing projects. Developing and implementing process improvements, resolving any issues or problems and validating corrective action plans supports the Regional ISO Certification Program."

MSG Lam Tran *Operations NCO*

"The District continues to process maintenance business process through FEM to include generating Work Order tracking, Build Job plans and Preventive Maintenance records as the FEM national utilization plan is being published. Currently, I'm extracting data from the FEM database to formulate Work Order reporting on FEM usage for each district and extracting Asset records in FEM to incorporate into the national Pilot program."

Olivia Grate *Workforce Development Manager*

"We are streamlining our on-boarding processes as part of our Human Capital Plan to recruit and retain our new hires. On-boarding is how we welcome new employees. We provide them a Welcome Book, sponsorship memos and points of contact for questions before they arrive. Our one-stop in-processing system completes the on-boarding process and makes each new employee's first experience a positive experience."

Working to protect marine life

Endangered species monitored during dredging

Story & photo by Ryan McClymont
District Public Affairs Office

One of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's 2010-2011 Campaign Plan goals is to "deliver enduring and essential water resource solutions through collaboration with partners and stakeholders." The San Francisco District's Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel Dredging and Entrainment Monitoring Project is leading the way in meeting this goal.

The project uses a hydraulic cutter head dredge which gathers sediment from the bottom of the channel. The sediment is then carried away from the dredge through a pipeline where it is safely deposited offshore at the Roberts I and II placement sites. The intent of this project is to ensure the safe navigation of the Stockton Deep Water Ship Channel and to improve the economic efficiency in the movement of goods from the San Francisco Bay to Stockton in an environmentally sustainable manner.

The environmental impact of dredging operations requires close regulation and comprehensive regional environmental impact assessments. After assessment, it was discovered that several fish species protected by the Endangered Species Act could be affected, to include longfin smelt, Delta smelt, green sturgeon and salmonids.

"The purpose of entrainment monitoring is to see if we entrain any of the protected species during dredging to prevent their harm, injury or death," said Cynthia Fowler, a district environmental planner.

Entrainment monitoring rotates between trawling in front of the dredge site prior to dredging, followed by a day of monitoring the entrainment screen to see which fish species are actually being entrained. There is a strong correlation between the type of fish caught during trawling and those entrained the next day. If no endangered species are caught in the trawl, it is a good indication that dredging will not harm any of the endangered fish species. This cycle allows the San Francisco District to continue dredging, while working with partner agencies to mitigate environmental impacts to endangered fish species.

[Photo] A biologist with Mari-Gold Environmental Consulting, a Corps of Engineers contractor, monitors the entrainment process.

District completes construction of new pump station

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Recycled water got a big boost last month in San Ramon, Calif., as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District completed construction of a new pump station just off Bollinger Canyon Road.

The station was officially handed over to the two project sponsors, Dublin San Ramon Services District (DSRSD) and East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), to begin operating in the area.

SPN engineers worked closely with officials from DSRSD and EBMUD to design a pump station that could carry up to 2,500 gallons of water per minute. Additionally, 6,500 feet of pipeline was installed.

"The pump station and pipeline are critical components of the San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project. The completion of the pump station and pipeline not only provides redundancy in the transmission system, but it also allows EBMUD to immediately connect customer sites that are part of the initial phase of the project," said Florence Wedington, an associate civil engineer and EBMUD's SRVRWP program manager. "The partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers provided the necessary funding to allow EBMUD to move forward with construction of the project."

One of the most challenging aspects of the project proved to be the area's geography. As the name suggests, Bollinger Canyon Road is not flat.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District completed construction of a new pump station in San Ramon that is capable of carrying up to 2,500 gallons of water per minute. The facility is one part of the San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project. (Photos by Gerardo Prado)

"We had 184 feet of elevation change to deal with in tying in the new pipeline to the existing system at the top of the hill," said John Morrill, a quality control superintendent with JMR Construction Corp., the project's contractor.

The new station also needed to be operated remotely seven miles away from a control center in Pleasanton. That meant installing an antenna at the pump station capable of sending signals to a transceiver at an EBMUD-owned reservoir, with the signals relayed to the recycled water treatment facility in Pleasanton. This two-way talk will act as a means of maintaining pressure in the system and proper levels at the recycled water reservoir.

The new pump station is one piece of the larger San Ramon Valley Recycled Water Project (SRVRWP), which began in 1995 and envisions eight pump stations, five reservoirs, a water treatment facility and more than 100 miles of distribution pipeline carrying water from Pleasanton to Danville.

The initial phase of this multi-phase project came online partially in February 2006. The project currently delivers more than four million gallons of recycled non-potable water per day, which is used for irrigation.

By the end of 2009, the SRVRWP was serving more than 200 customer sites in Dublin and San Ramon, including parks, golf courses, greenbelts and roadways.

The San Francisco District's portion of the project includes the construction

The new underground pump station resides in a business park just off Bollinger Canyon Road.

Continued next page

of the pump station off Bollinger Canyon Road and 8-14 miles of pipeline. Additional work to construct pipeline is currently underway in the cities of Danville, Blackhawk and San Ramon. These projects are expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

History of Recycled Water in CA

California has been using recycled water since the late 1800s, when it was first used for agriculture irrigation. Municipal recycled water use in the state started in San Francisco's Golden Gate Park in 1929.

There are currently more than 5,000 sites in California that use recycled water, including the San Francisco 49ers' practice fields in Santa Clara; hundreds of golf courses including Pebble Beach and Spyglass Hill; and numerous oil refineries for industrial application.

For facts about the San Ramon Valley Recycled Project, visit www.ebmud.com.

Maintaining the proper pressure in the system can be controlled either on-site or remotely.

SPN announces new natural resource manager

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Charlie Fenwick, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers park ranger at Lake Sonoma, was promoted as the district's natural resource manager.

Fenwick is a 27-year veteran of the federal service and has worked in more than 10 federal parks. Since 2001, while working for the Department of Interior, he served as a park manager in positions of increasing complexity and responsibility.

Fenwick is an award winning interpreter, cooperating association manager and a highly-decorated park manager for the federal parks service. Fenwick's office is located at Lake Sonoma.

The district's previous natural resource manager was Nancy Rogers.

Charlie Fenwick, far right, helps a father and daughter plant a coastal live oak during last year's Earth Day activities at Lake Sonoma. (Photo courtesy of USACE Lake Sonoma staff)

facebook

San Francisco District, US Army Corps of Engineers Like

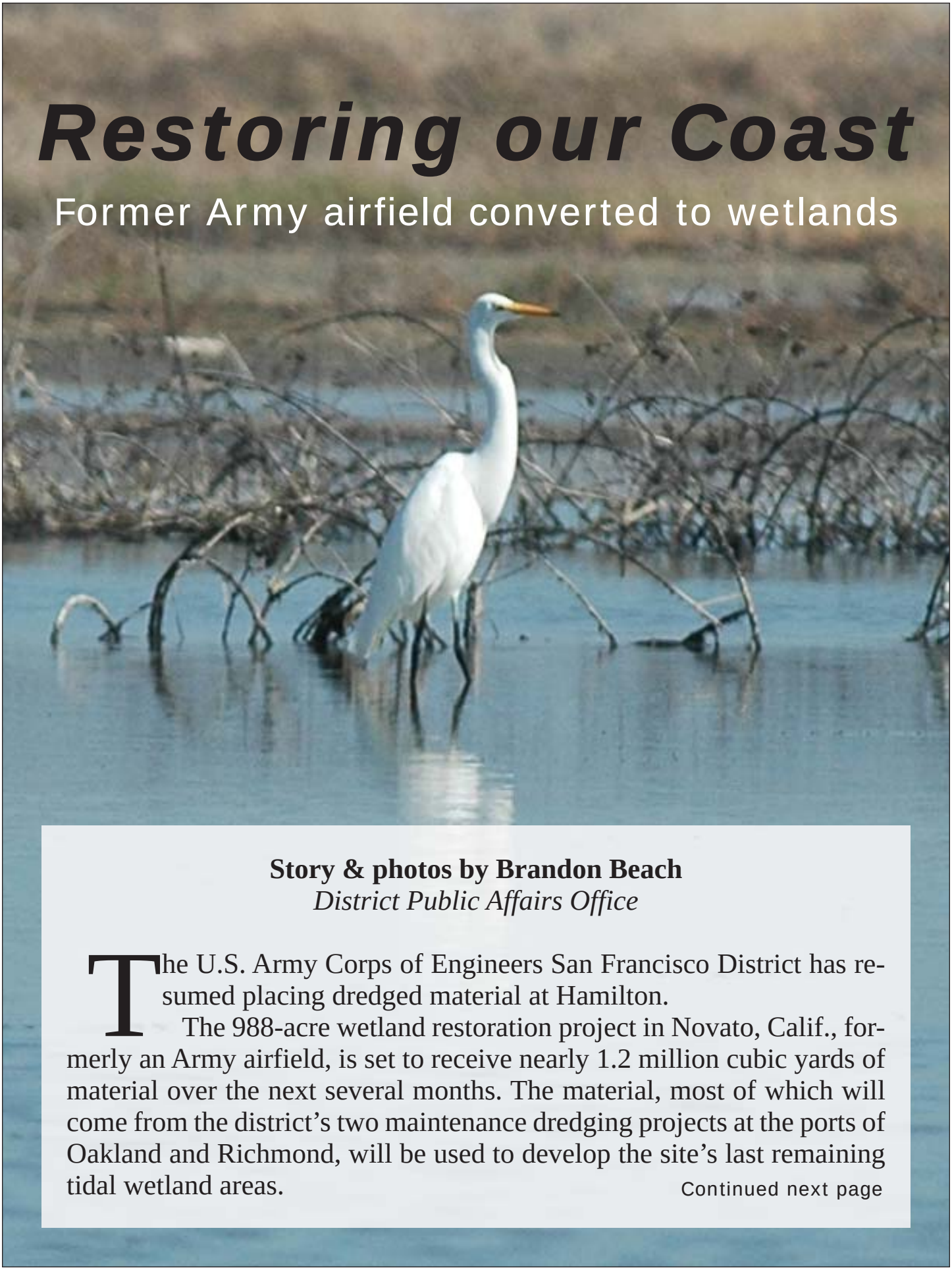
Wall Info Photos Discussions Boxes

Visit SPN on Facebook

www.spn.usace.army.mil

Restoring our Coast

Former Army airfield converted to wetlands



Story & photos by Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District has resumed placing dredged material at Hamilton.

The 988-acre wetland restoration project in Novato, Calif., formerly an Army airfield, is set to receive nearly 1.2 million cubic yards of material over the next several months. The material, most of which will come from the district's two maintenance dredging projects at the ports of Oakland and Richmond, will be used to develop the site's last remaining tidal wetland areas.

Continued next page

continued ...

Under the Corps' current 60/40 disposal policy, 60 percent of the bay's dredged material is slated for ocean disposal and upland placement, like that at Hamilton, with 40 percent going to in-bay disposal.

"The idea is to get as much dredged material upland for beneficial reuse as possible," said Robin Liffmann, project manager for Hamilton.

The last time the Corps placed dredged material here was back in 2009. Approximately, 4.3 million cubic yards of material was used from the district's Oakland Harbor Navigation Improvement Project, which deepened the port there from a depth of minus-42 feet to -50 feet.

The idea is to get as much dredged material upland for beneficial reuse.

Robin Liffmann
SPN Project Manager

A system of pumps and pipelines has been set up to move dredged material across the project site.

One of the key components to restoring coastal wetlands is dredged material. It serves as the foundation for building the kind of typography conducive to growing plants and attracting wildlife.

"We are essentially using the mud to raise the elevation of the site, which would happen naturally if we breached it, but it would take decades longer," said Eric Jolliffe, a district biologist for the project. "The tidal marsh area is critical for a couple of endangered species — the salt marsh harvest mouse and the [California] clapper rail. So there's an advantage to creating this site as fast as possible."

In order to speed up the process, the Corps recently contracted with Manson Construction Company and The Dutra Group to establish a temporary offloader a few miles from shore where barges can unload their cargoes of dredged material. The system then slurries the material and moves it to different areas of the project site using a complex system of booster pumps, sub-stations and miles of pipeline.

"It is capable of placing 15,000 cubic yards of material per day on site," said Dave Doak, a district engineer for the project.

With dredged material placement complete in the seasonal wetland areas, the Corps is now focusing on filling the larger tidal parcel in the site's northwest section. Work is also being done to finish a wildlife corridor that will serve as a pathway for wildlife moving between the bay fringe, the Las Galinas property in the south and the freshwater areas in the west.

"Most restorations have a levee right up against the marsh," said Jolliffe. "The wildlife corridor will be 300-feet wide with a very gradual slope, almost imperceptible, to maximize the area of transition between wetland and upland. This transition is a rare type of habitat, and there will be a whole series of plants that grow just in that zone."

The Corps plans to propagate most of these transitional native plants, such as oak, buckeye, coyote bush and snowberry, on-site. A contract is in place to refurbish a former water treatment facility into a plant nursery.

With these types of restorations, time is a critical component. A nursery in close proximity to the project site allows biologists to grow native plants and get them in the ground more quickly.

"You avoid an invasion of plants you really don't want," said Liffmann. "The point is to set it up with the plants you want, so it will be sustainable in the future."

Helping that cause will not only be the Corps and its two partner agencies — the California State Coastal Conservancy and the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission — but also the local community.

"The idea is to get the public involved and provide volunteer opportunities," said Liffmann. "With a project like this, it absolutely has to be a team effort."

This former water treatment facility will be refurbished into an on-site nursery for plant propagation.

For more information on the Hamilton Project, visit www.spn.usace.army.mil.

District employee receives congressional award

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Sahrye Cohen, a San Francisco District regulatory manager, was awarded a Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition by Congressman Mike Thompson (D-Napa Valley) for her work on the Rutherford Reach Restoration Project.

Cohen was responsible for issuing the 10-year individual permit to proceed with a project that aims to stabilize nearly five miles of eroding stream bank along the Napa River. Located between Zinfandel Lane and Oakville Cross Road, the project area is home to over 23 local vineyards.

"It's a large cooperative project that has a lot of landowners and is possibly indicative of future projects along the Napa and Russian Rivers," said Cohen. "It's a change from everybody doing their own individual projects along rivers, to having one larger strategy."

That strategy initially involved asking local landowners to give up nearly 20 acres of land in order to widen the river.

Laurie Monarres

SPN's Sahrye Cohen inspects a project site.

Sahrye Cohen

The Rutherford Reach Restoration Project aims to stablize nearly five miles of eroding stream bank running along the Napa River. The project area is home to over 23 local vineyards.

The river was eroding so much that the State listed it for a Total Maximum Daily Load for sediment.

Sahrye Cohen
SPN Regulatory Manager

"Streams have a kind of equilibrium. They reach a phase where the flood plain is sufficient to contain the water," said Cohen. "When you have land uses that either generate more water going into the river or constrain the banks in some way, the only place the river can go is deeper."

As much as 15 feet of this section of the river has been eliminated by land use since the 1970s. Once a critical spawning area for Chinook salmon and steelhead, the river has seen a significant drop in fish populations over the decades.

"The river was eroding so much that the State [of California] listed it for a Total Maxiumum Daily Load [TMDL] for sediment," said Cohen.

Impaired waters are listed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act. TMDL is a calculation of the maximum amount of pollutant that a body of water can receive and still meet water quality standards, according to the EPA website.

Last year, the Rutherford Dust Society completed repairs on 1.3 miles of river bank. The project is currently on hold due to the start of the fish spawning season. The next construction window opens in June 2011.

For more information on the Rutherford Reach Restoration Project, visit www.napawatersheds.org and click on "Planning/Projects."

District's dredging program manager retires after 33 yrs

By Ryan McClymont
District Public Affairs Office

Steve Chesser, Dredging Program Manager for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District, retired last month after 33 years of government service.

A native of Palatka, FL, Chesser earned a bachelor's degree in Geology and a master's degree in Oceanography before joining the Corps. He started his career at the Portland District working in regulatory to support emergency work after the eruption of Mount Saint Helens. He eventually moved into an engineering position where he worked on coastal projects in Oregon for 25 years before moving to SPN.

Chesser

One of the reasons he chose the Corps was for the security of a lifetime job, and the biggest change he has seen over the years is how the Corps handles the environmental impacts of its projects, saying "we are a very green organization compared to 20 years ago."

In regards to his service he said, "It's not something where I have a lot of plaques on the wall, it's the personal rewards and the people I have worked with and worked for over the years."

As he transitions into retirement, he plans to enjoy his free time and to keep in touch with friends he has made at the Corps. His advice to new employees is that the "Corps is a great place to start, enjoy the work and the people you work with."

Regional program seeks mentors

By Daria Mazey
Special to "SPN Surveyor"

Would you like to mentor new employees? How do we create and pass along a strong culture for our district and USACE? Well, it starts with people. The Chief has challenged us to move this organization from good to great. When you think about it, this is a profound challenge. A good way to facilitate personal and organizational improvement is through mentoring.

Our mentoring program is going strong, with more than 30 active pairs. But in order to continue being able to place those who wish with suitable matches, we need more available mentors.

If you are interested in sharing your professional and institutional knowledge or if you are interested in finding a mentor, please let me know. I'm here to answer any questions you have and to help get you going in a great mentoring pair. It's like matchmaking for your career.

Mazey is the lead coordinator of the district's Mentoring Program. She may be reached at 415-503-6856.

Learn more about the program online at https://kme.usace.army.mil/SPD/HQs/RBD/BMD/Mentoring/default.aspx

Onward and Upward

How to reach your retirement goals

By Emily Long
Special to "SPN Surveyor"

Workers joining the federal government have a lot to think about when they first start their jobs — new colleagues, unfamiliar office space and decisions about health benefits and investing for retirement. But sorting out benefits doesn't have to be a hassle if they do some research and ask the right questions.

New employees should consider planning for retirement during the onboarding process, said John Grobe, president of consulting firm Federal Career Experts. It's important that they understand how much of their retirement income will come from their Federal Employees Retirement System pension and Social Security, he said.

"Once they understand that, they will hopefully realize the importance of setting money aside on their own — that they know how much is dependent on them," he said.

Young employees must be careful not to ignore retirement savings in favor of other big expenses like buying a home and their children's education, according to Grobe. The bank won't provide loans for retirement investments, so employees should put aside money constantly and let time work for them, he said. Contributing 5 percent of pay to the Thrift Savings Plan is the gold standard because the government will match that amount, he said.

"Any new employee should put in 5 percent," he noted. "If they don't, they're giving up free money."

When it comes to health insurance, new hires should do their homework and use agency resources, said Walton Francis, author of "Consumer's Checkbook Guide to Health Plans for Federal Employees and Annuitants." For example, many agencies offer subscriptions to the print or online versions of the Checkbook, which outlines FEHBP plans and procedures.

"There are lots of plan options and people should look and think a little bit outside the box," he said.

For new and young employees, Francis recommends high deductibles and consumer-driven plans because they have robust catastrophic event protection, free physicals and offer workers bang for their buck. The Kaiser Standard Option and Blue Cross Basic also are likely to be good buys, he said.

Francis and Grobe agreed that new hires should take advantage of agency-sponsored seminars and briefing sessions on topics like health benefits and planning for retirement, though they cautioned employees might have to conduct extra research and ask questions to get the information they need.

"Use a little initiative, check things out, don't assume that just because you went to a seminar and they didn't say much there's not much that could have been said," Francis said.

Some agencies will offer half-day training sessions or a series of seminars, while others simply have an "information dump," Grobe noted. Employees would benefit most from sessions on the importance of contributing to the TSP, the deals available through the Federal Employees' Group Life Insurance Program, and the ins and outs of open season for changing health benefits,

Continued on page 15

eCoastal Update

Data analysts reach project milestone

The illustration above shows an oblique view of the Richmond Navigation Channel. It is a product of the National Channel Framework that GIS analysts on the Navigation and Coastal Data Bank Project created while working with the district's Hydrosurvey Section. (Courtesy of Alyssa King)

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Alyssa King and Dan Mack were recognized last month by the San Francisco District for their work on eCoastal and the Navigation and Coastal Data Bank.

King

Mack

Since Aug. 2009, King and Mack, both of whom are employed by Northrup Grumman, have been working closely with SPN's Geographic Information Systems Section to compile a vast array of coastal data sets into the NCDB database. Their contract ended Dec. 31.

"The [NCDB] effort has focused heavily on data pertaining to dredging, navigation and coastal structures," said Nancy Ferry, manager of SPN's eCoastal program.

> *I don't know what we would have had eCoastal-wise without them.*
>
> **Nancy Ferris**
> ***SPN eCoastal Project Manager***

Leading the overall NCDB initiative has been 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.

"You can take this NCDB data as a stand-alone database and display it in any enterprise GIS systems," said Ferris. "Because it will have a Web interface, people internally who don't know how to use GIS can look at the data."

Externally as well, individual districts who may have projects that extend across multiple jurisdictional boundaries can now share this open-source 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.

The project was backed by American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, with a $4.9 million contract awarded last year to Northrup Grum-

Continued next page

eCoastal continued ...

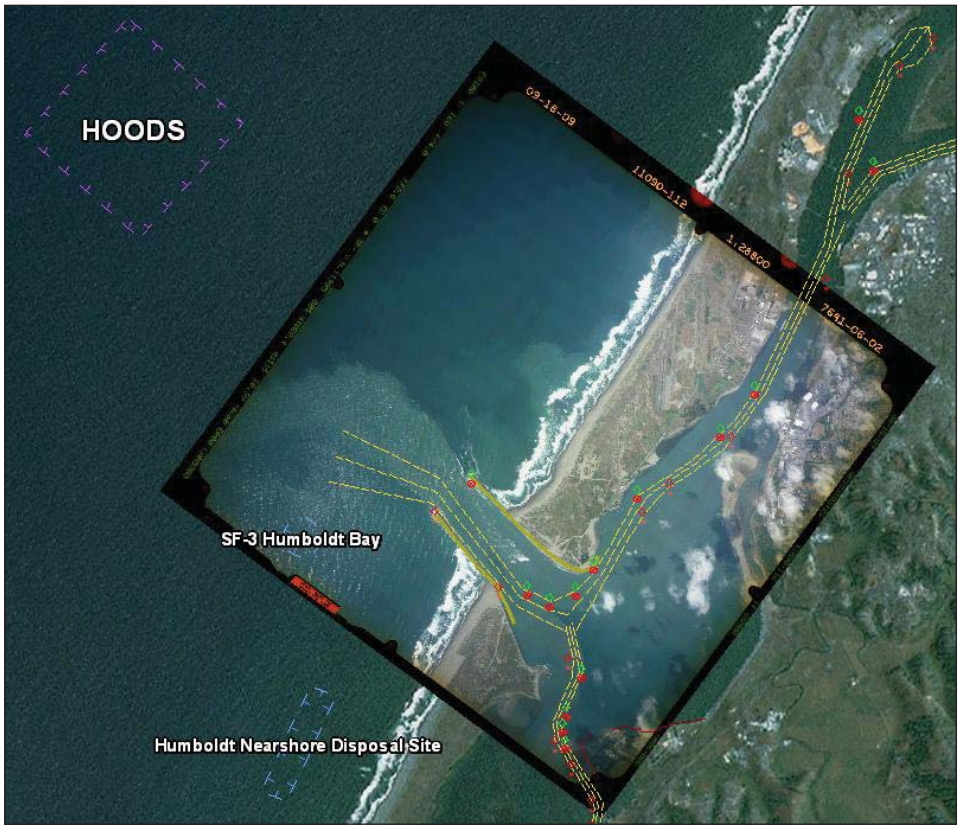
man, to provide USACE districts with two full-time contractors.

"I don't know what we would have had eCoastal-wise without them. They were just fantastic," said Ferris. "Now, we will receive a database of information that can go directly into eCoastal."

With still more work to be done on the district's eCoastal Intranet site, SPN recently secured the services of King for at least one more year through a locally-funded task order. King will continue to collect data for the district on the quantity, cost and placement of dredged material, as well as historic hydro-survey information.

"We are also looking into a new project to create a database of sediment sample data to support both environmental permitting and geotechnical work," said Ferris.

For more about NCDB and eCoastal, visit www.ecoastal.usace.army.mil.



The illustration above depicts the channel lines, beacons, buoys and offshore disposal sites at Humbolt Bay Harbor. It is an example of the type of coastal data that planners will be able to access through the district's Navigation and Coastal Data Bank. (Courtesy of Alyssa King)

Chinese delegation visits SPN

San Francisco District Deputy Commander Sam Volkman and S. T. Su of the South Pacific Division briefed 20 delegates of China's Office of South-to-North Water Diversion Project on the Corps' water management and civil works programs Dec. 6.

Retirement continued ...

but the quality depends on the expertise of the person conducting the seminar, he said. The best thing a manager could do for a new employee is to serve as a benefits mentor, he added.

Long is a staff writer for Government Executive, a biweekly business magazine.

New employees at SPN

Sandra Dowdy
Paralegal
Office of Counsel

Kenneth Samples
Marine Machinery Mechanic
Operations & Readiness Division

Supporting Overseas Contingency Operations

In Iraq with district engineer Moni Grewal

Hello from Baghdad,

I'm working as the Resident Engineer for Taji Resident Office under the Bagdad Area Office. Upon my arrival, I was assigned to oversee a total of 15 projects at an estimated cost value of $78 million.

Each month we have been closing out/completing projects and are now down to 13 projects with five of those expected to close out by the end of this month, leaving only eight remaining to be completed tentatively by March 2011 — just in time for my end of tour.

As you can see it is extremely busy here and much work needs to be done. Below are a list of some of the projects which I'm involved in and have either closed out or are working to close-out within the next three months.

Depot Distribution Command Operation Project

The purpose of this project is to build two large warehouses for storage of International and Humvee repair parts. Each warehouse was over 49,000 square feet with 7.3 meter-high shelving units and 36 roof skylights, along with an office area. A ribbon cutting ceremony held Nov. 2, 2010.

Joint Repair Command Project

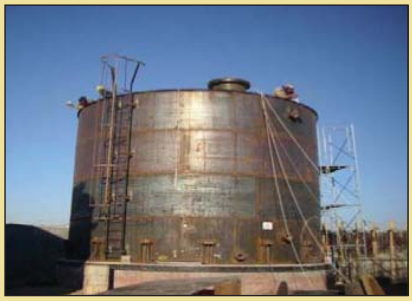
This project aims to build four extremely large warehouses for storage of goods ranging from repair parts to medical supplies. Three of the warehouses are approximately 200,000 square feet with shelving units and roof skylights, and the remaining one is approximately 49,000 ft² and will be used as a medical warehouse. These warehouses are expected to be completed by February 2011.

Taji Mi-17 Hangar and Maintenance Facility

The purpose of this project is to build a 2-story 8,360-square-meter hangar, office and maintenance complex with adjoining offices and maintenance spaces constructed out of a pre-engineered building (PEB) construction.

The hangar has a minimum 14-meter center height clearance with two buildings on each side and a 70-meter clearance span.

Taji Bulk Fuel Storage Facility



The purpose of this project is to construct a bulk fuel facility and laboratory consisting of four above-ground steel JP-8 storage tanks (190,000 liter/50,000 gallon), one JP-8 truck offload system, two JP-8 truck fill-stands, fuel pumps, filter separators, a diesel storage tank, diesel truck offload system, diesel truck fill-stand, paved roads, concrete-paved truck hardstands with spill containment, fuel truck parking area, sunshade canopies over truck hardstands, a building to house the Fuel Operations Facility, security fencing, potable water, sewer, power and communications systems.

Nine-story Air Traffic Control Tower

This project consists of the design and construction of a nine-story air traffic control tower, all associated utilities and infrastructure including site work, fire protection/suppression, fire pump building, water storage and distribution, sewage collection systems, primary power and backup power generation and distribution, communications infrastructure, access roads and a parking area located at Taji Air Base.

The air traffic control tower will be a minimum of nine levels high, including the prefabricated ATC Cab (Level 9). Levels 1 (ground) through 8 will each be approximately 57 square meters (614 square feet) net area.

"A great asset to the Iraqi people"

Most of these projects are mainly built for the Iraqi Military — both Army and Air Force. However, not only will the Iraqi Military benefit from these facilities but also the Iraqi people as a whole.

The local national engineers are also obtaining some great experience while working on the construction phase of these projects that will be of a great asset to the Iraqi people.

Regards,

Moni

SUPPORTING OVERSEAS CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS

Team,

District employees continue to support the Corps' Overseas Contingency Operations. For those interested in one of these rewarding assignments:

- *Begin by discussing OCO opportunities with your supervisor.*
- *View the updated vacancy list at: https://kme.usace.army.mil/SPD/HQs/EX/EM/Deployment/Manning%20Reports/Forms/AllItems.aspx*
- *Complete Volunteer Worksheet in ENGLink (use your Login name and Oracle password).*
- *Update information on your ENGLink Personal Data Sheet.*
- *Send a note to Sandra Eudy, South Pacific Division deployment coordinator with a copy of your resume (cc: Duke Roberts).*

There are currently positions open for:

Accountants
Administrative Support Assistant/Spec.
Architects

Assistant Deputy DPM
Attorneys
Budget Officers
Chief, O&M Branch
Civil Engineers
Construction Rep/QA
Contract Scheduler
Contracting Specialists/Officers
Cost Estimators
Customer Service Liaison
Deputy District Engineer
PM Engineer Technicians
Environmental Engineers
Facilities Managers
GIS/Cartographic/Geographer, Spec.
Human Resource Specialist
Information Management Specialist
Intelligence Specialists
Internal Review Specialists
Mechanical Engineers
Office Engineers
P2 Program Analyst
Program Analysts
Project Engineers
Project Manager-MILCON
Project Managers
Public Affairs Specialists/Officers
Realty Specialists
Resident Engineers
Safety Specialists
Security Managers
Senior Project Managers
Travel Coordination Specialist
Workforce Management Specialist

How do you picture your support?

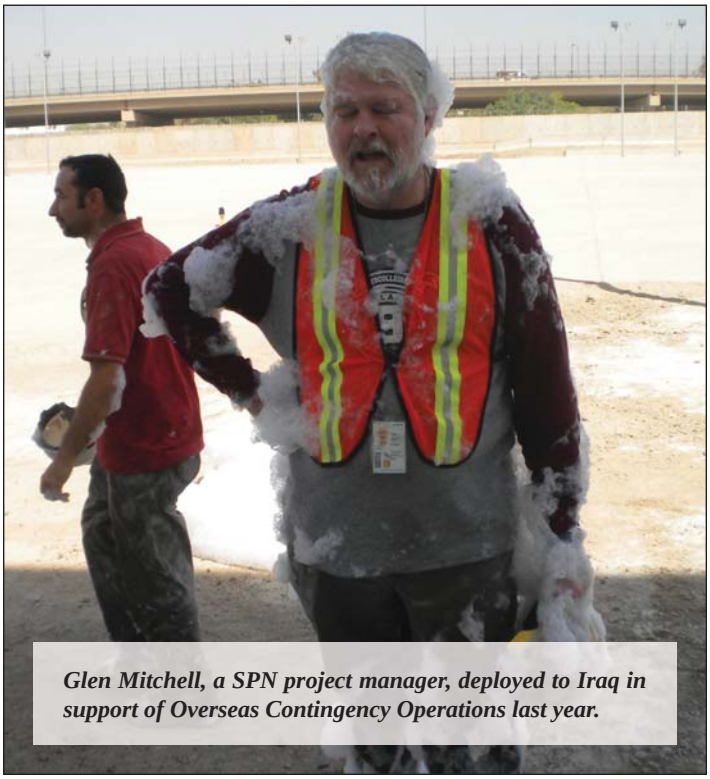
HOW DO YOU PICTURE YOUR SUPPORT?

Hello from Victory Base Complex:

The first picture [above] was taken while I was in the maintenance bay at the Landing Zone Fernandez site overseeing a test of the fire suppression foam system.

The second was taken about 20 minutes later after wadding out through foam that was well over my head!

Glen



Glen Mitchell, a SPN project manager, deployed to Iraq in support of Overseas Contingency Operations last year.

More than 100 San Francisco District employees rang in the holiday season with an afternoon luncheon Dec. 8. Held at the district's headquarters building on Market Street, the two-hour event was capped with live music, an international buffet and appearances by Mr. and Mrs. Claus. It was hosted by the district's Activities Council.

[1] Jack Kerns, on drums, and Carol Coleman, on jingle stick, provide some holiday music during a district-wide afternoon luncheon Dec. 8 . [2] Facundo Funes, right, Alex DiCiro and her brother, Rod, draw numbers from a construction hat during the door prize giveaway event. [3] Employees sit down to eat. The event was catered by Ted's Market. [4] Shirley Turnbo, left, and Mei Lee, right, pose with Rodney Mitchell as Mr. Claus. (Photos by Brandon Beach)

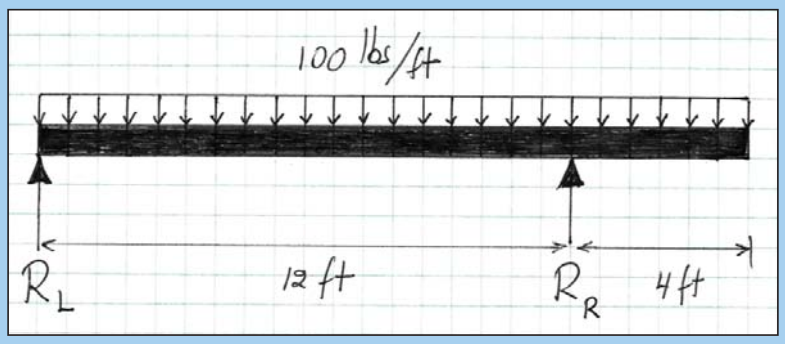
The District Commander thanks the members of the Activities Council and the many volunteers for making this a truly special event.

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 March/April issue.

The Problem

1. ***Draw the shear and bending moment diagrams for the following beam.***



a. ***Show reactions.***

b. ***Show the maximum shear and bending moment values and the points of zero shear and max moment along x axis.***

Note: Use 2 decimal places for calculations.

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

(This challenge was submitted by Ricardo Galdamez.)

San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. Torrey A. DiCiro, left, presents a commander's coin to Blair Jackson, a SPN civil engineer and winner of the Surveyor's Nov/Dec Engineering Challenge.

Answer to last issue's challenge

In the last issue of SPN Surveyor, readers were asked to answer seven questions related to a vertical curve problem. Here's how Blair answered them.

[1] 749.64'
[2] 746.84'
[3] 87
[4] 743.24'
[5] 3.60'
[6] 0.225'
[7] 746.44'

District's EEO manager retires following 33 years of service

Story & photo by Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs Office

Malcolm Seisay, who started his career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1994 when he joined the San Francisco District as its Equal Employment Opportunity manager, retired last month from federal service.

Recently, he had the chance to reflect on some of the changes he has seen with respect to workplace diversity during his 16-year tenure at SPN.

"In terms of representation of women and minorities, it is increasing, especially here at the San Francisco District," said Seisay. "When I came to the district in 1994, we had a workforce of 887 employees. At that time, you didn't see many women or minorities in grades 13 or above. We had GS-12s, but not much else," said Seisay. "Now, we have women and minorities in these supervisory positions. Everybody has equal rights to compete for jobs. That's a big change."

Before Seisay joined the San Francisco District, he got his start in the EEO arena as a Department of the Army intern at the 6th Area Support Group in Stuttgart, Germany. He left southern Germany in 1989 for a position at the Presidio, a military base in San Francisco, where he worked as a complaints manager until the base closed in 1992.

A native of Sierra Leone, a country in West Africa, Seisay came to the United States in his mid-20s to study political science at Hampton University in Virginia. In April, he will return to Sierra Leone to help celebrate the country's 50th independence anniversary.

Malcolm Seisay, left, SPN's EEO manager, shares a story during his official retirement ceremony Dec. 15 as Arijs Rakstins, chief of the district's Programs and Project Management Division, looks on.

Though retirement will be bittersweet for Seisay, what he will miss most are the people he worked with at SPN and the EEO challenges still left to tackle.

"I'm truly blessed to have had the opportunity to serve in this great organization with such outstanding and dedicated professionals, he said. "We have come a long way in terms of diversity, but we still have a long way to go."

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

USF professor to speak at district's MLK observance

District PAO

The San Francisco District Equal Employment Opportunity Office will host a Martin Luther King, Jr. recognition ceremony Jan. 13, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., in the 9th floor conference room on 1455 Market Street.

The guest speaker will be Dr. Oba T'Shaka, a professor of Black Studies at San Francisco State University.

Since the 1960s, T'Shaka has been an active figure in Black freedom movements throughout the U.S. Here in the Bay Area, he was chair of the San Francisco Chapter of CORE (Congress of Racial Equality), a civil rights group.

He is the author of five books including "The Art of Leadership" and "The Political Legacy of Malcolm X."

Save the date:
Jan. 13, 2011
11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

History of MLK National Holiday

By Shmuel Ross and David Johnson

It took 15 years to create the federal Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. Congressman John Conyers, a Democrat from Michigan, first introduced legislation for a commemorative holiday four days after King was assassinated in 1968. After the bill became stalled, petitions endorsing the holiday containing six million names were submitted to Congress.

Public pressure for the holiday mounted during the 1982 and 1983 civil rights marches in Washington. Congress passed the holiday legislation in 1983, which was then signed into law by President Ronald Reagan. A compromise moving the holiday from Jan. 15, King's birthday, which was considered too close to Christmas and New Year's, to the third Monday in January helped overcome opposition to the law.

A number of states resisted celebrating the holiday. Some opponents said King did not deserve his own holiday — contending that the entire civil rights movement rather than one individual, however instrumental, should be honored. Several southern states include celebrations for various Confederate generals on that day. Arizona voters approved the holiday in 1992 after a tourist boycott. In 1999, New Hampshire changed the name of Civil Rights Day to Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. (*www.infoplease.com)*