



SPN SURVEYOR

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Saving a species

District working to preserve endangered salmon



COMMANDER'S CORNER

District welcomes new commander, new fiscal year

By Lt. Col. John D. Cunningham
San Francisco District Commander

It's been more than four months since I took command of the San Francisco District, and the time has flown by! It's just an indication of just how busy all of us have become with projects that are playing an increasingly vital role in some of California's and the nation's most important priorities, everything from reducing the effects of sea level rise to environmental restoration.

But it goes without saying that I come to work each day excited to lead a team working on projects that only the Corps and our non-federal partners are uniquely qualified to carry out. Every day, what we do is playing an increasingly essential role in everything from making sure that billions of dollars in commerce can safely transit the Bay to protecting huge stretches of shoreline from flooding.



This is a district that has already established a great reputation within the Corps and among the public for the quality work we deliver and that will continue to be my goal over the next two years as commander. We do

face on-going challenges including an always difficult recruiting environment, a less than robust appropriation for navigation and regulatory, as well as the fact that we operate in a region with the nation's highest construction costs.

However, I believe the San Francisco District's demonstrated expertise and professionalism puts us on an excellent footing to work through these issues and to continue delivering world class engineering and technical services. Key to that will be leading a mission that encourages cohesive teams to operate with established trust in a culture in which all employees are valued, while also developing leaders and empowering them to make risk-based decisions. All of this will reinforce our already strong brand.

With such a dedicated workforce as I have found in San Francisco, I believe we are well positioned for continued success as we enter the new fiscal year and look ahead to 2020.

SPN SURVEYOR

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Corps' SF District changes leaders

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

Leadership of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District changed June 28 when Lt. Col. John D. Cunningham was sworn in as the district's 56th commander.

At a military ceremony at the Bay Model Visitor Center in Sausalito, Lt. Col. Travis J. Rayfield relinquished command of the district he had led since 2017. Cunningham assumed command after having most recently served as deputy commander of the Portland, Oregon district. He received his U.S. Army commission in 2002 and has served in leadership and staff positions in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Republic of Korea and multiple locations in the United States.



Lt. Col. John Cunningham, left, accepts the SPN guidon from Brig. Gen. Kimberly Colloton, South Pacific Division commander, during a change of command ceremony.

Cunningham was born in Houston, Texas and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the United States Military Academy at West Point and a Master of Science degree in Power Systems Engineering from the University of Texas.

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District News

New deputy commander joins district front office



Maj. Stephanie Radford, new deputy district commander, takes a moment to snap a selfie while onboard the M/V Dillard, the district's command and control vessel.

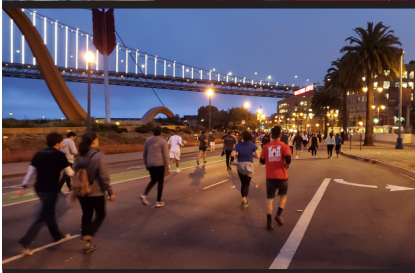
By Nick Simeone
District Public Affairs

Maj. Stephanie Radford arrived in the San Francisco District only four months ago and has already concluded that this assignment will be one of the most beneficial in her Army career. Perhaps that could be because, as she admits, being second in charge in the small San Francisco District has come with a steep learning curve. “I see the commander’s mission as my top priority, making sure that he has what he needs and then taking care of our people, making sure we are staffed to meet the programs and missions we have,” Radford said, which is really another way of describing how she oversees the daily functioning of the District, including “making sure we are properly following processes and meeting regulations and making sure the Corps is meeting the standards that the Army sets out for us.”

Quite a workload for a district that

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2019 JP Morgan Corporate Challenge



By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

Under the backdrop of AT&T Park and McCovey Cove, six San Francisco District employees competed in the J.P. Morgan Corporate Challenge Sept. 4. Held annually in the city, this year’s “challenge” started at the Lot A parking area near the iconic baseball stadium by the bay. The 3.5-mile loop course led runners through parts of China Basin, over Lefty O-Doul Bridge on 3rd Street and around the ballpark and back. This year’s race finished at the Chase Center, the new arena for the Golden State Warriors. SPN has participated in the charity run event 10 years in a row. This was the 35th running of the Corporate Challenge Series, with 12 cities hosting similar events. A record 10,500 participants raced in San Francisco representing 385 companies. Proceeds from the race go to support the Warriors Community Foundation.

Agency biologists work to preserve endangered salmon

By Nick Simeone
District Public Affairs

An extensive effort is underway across coastal regions of Northern California to save the state's endangered coho salmon, a species that has come close to extinction experts say, because of a range of issues including development, overfishing, logging and prolonged drought, circumstances that are challenging environmentalists determined to restore the most vulnerable and sensitive of the salmon species.

In Sonoma County in 2001, less than a dozen adult coho salmon returned from the ocean to spawn in local waterways. And despite extensive efforts to restore and improve aquatic habitat for coho in neighboring Mendocino County, those numbers have not increased significantly either. "There are just not enough adults returning and spawning successfully," said Ben White, a fisheries biologist at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Don Clausen Fish Hatchery in the Sonoma town of Geyserville.

The hatchery is now partnered with a variety of government agencies and conservation groups on a project designed to increase the number of coho salmon in Northern California waterways. "I think these fish are getting hit extra hard because of things like drought, all the water diversions going on, all the stress on our landscapes from development and urbanization," coupled with the coho's short and rigid lifespan, said White.

After having success raising wild coho from the Russian River watershed, the Corps is now tapping two decades-worth of salmon rearing experience to revive



Fisheries biologists with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Mendocino Redwood Company work to collect wild coho from the Navarro River Sept. 10.

"I think we can make a difference. I feel we have a community that's really involved."

Ben White
SPN Lead Fisheries Biologist

coho in next door Mendocino County. Recently, White and others waded into the Garcia and Navarro Rivers to collect more than 200 juvenile coho which will be raised to adulthood in sprawling tanks at the Don Clausen hatchery before being released back into local waterways to spawn naturally on their own. The effort to restore endangered



Ben White sorts through a bucket of wild salmon and steelhead on the Navarro River Sept. 10.

coho is compounded by the fact that the species by nature has a very high mortality rate. "If we pull in 250 fish from the wild as juveniles,

you would only expect two or three of those to make it back from the ocean as an adult based on their survival in the wild," said White, "whereas, if you bring them to our facility, I have an 85-90 percent survival rate to adulthood, so I can return over 200 fish to the wild to spawn naturally."

Research conducted by the National Marine Fisheries Service had shown that when coho salmon populations are severely depleted, inbreeding results, further affecting the livelihood of the species. To prevent that, DNA testing will be conducted while the fish are in captivity to identify compatible mates based on their relatedness to one another. When ready, the coho will be released

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SPN's Dillard teams with Coast Guard for helo ops

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

A team of Alameda, Calif.-based U.S. Coast Guard rescue swimmers joined San Francisco District crewmembers onboard the M/V John A.B. Dillard Jr, a command and control vessel, to conduct night training exercises Oct. 29. The team rehearsed a range of water rescue operations and scenarios including securing a rescue raft deployed from a Coast Guard helicopter.

Dillard Captain Kixon Meyer skillfully maneuvered his vessel through choppy waters, as the exercises were conducted several miles beyond the Golden Gate Bridge under the cover of darkness.



Salmon continued

back into the Garcia River watershed with suitable spawning partners to breed naturally in the wild, while at the same time improving genetic diversity among the population.

Given that the Corps' fish hatchery in Geyserville has been able to help restore endangered coho populations there, White is optimistic about improving Mendocino's stock. "I think we can make a difference. I feel like

we have a community that's really involved. You don't want to wait until the fish are gone."

The project is a partnership with NOAA, the state of California and several conservation groups including the Nature Conservancy, the Conservation Fund as well as private landowners.

SPN Fisheries Biologist Bradley Stokes prepares the coho collected from the Navarro River for transport to the Warm Springs Hatchery at Lake Sonoma Sept. 10.





SPN joins Valley Water for groundbreaking event

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Aug. 28 in Morgan Hill, Calif., as Valley Water kicked off the start of construction for the Upper Llagas Creek Flood Protection Project. The multi-benefit project includes channel modifications, replacement of road crossings, and habitat enhancement providing flood protection to more than 1,100 homes, 500 businesses, and 1,300 acres of agricultural land. Federal, state and local officials, including San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. John Cunningham, were on hand to commemorate the milestone.

“This is yet another example of the commitment that the San Francisco District and Valley Water share in safeguarding our communities,” said Cunningham.

The District’s Regulatory Division received a permit application from Valley Water in 2014 and soon began a long road to finalize an environmental impact statement for the project. This required holding a series of public meetings to collect input from the community, addressing questions and concerns, as well as consulting with other resource agencies in order to complete and circulate the draft EIS one year later.

Learn more about the project at www.valleywater.org/upperllagas



Lt. Col. John Cunningham, above, San Francisco District commander, meets with Norma Camacho, CEO of Valley Water, Aug. 28, as well as U.S. Representative Zoe Lofgren, below, during a groundbreaking ceremony in Morgan Hill, Calif.



IN THE COMMUNITY

SPN employees volunteer for Angel Island cleanup

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

At Angel Island, San Francisco District volunteers hauled out an estimated 600 pounds of trash and recyclables during the annual California Coastal Cleanup Sept. 21. More than 50 volunteers signed up for the Saturday work, boarding the district-operated vessel M/V John A.B. Dillard, Jr., at 8 a.m. for a 20-minute voyage across the Bay, with views of Alcatraz, Golden Gate Bridge and the San Francisco skyline. The half-mile beach on Angel

Island was one of more than 800 sites where cleanups took place in a state-wide volunteer effort. Serving every year as the Coastal Cleanup volunteer coordinator for Marin County was SPN Park Ranger Joanne Jarvis. Overall across the state, cleanups took place at beaches, rivers, creeks and parks with more than 80,000 volunteers joining the effort. It's one of California's biggest volunteer events.

This half-mile beach on Angel Island near San Francisco was one of more than 800 sites where cleanups took place in a state-wide volunteer effort Sept. 21. (Photo by Larry Quintana)



Radford continued



Radford and Allison Conn, San Francisco District executive assistant, help set up the Corps's emergency response booth at this year's Fleet Week Humanitarian Village in San Francisco.



Simeone



Work has been completed by the San Francisco District on a in San Jose that was damaged during storms last winter. A quarter ton of rocks were poured into the area to protect the embankment, in a project similar to what the Corps completed in Pleasanton, Calif., earlier because of storm damage there. Both projects fall under the PL 84-99 authority, which allows the Corps to supplement local communities in their efforts to repair levees damaged by storms.

now has its largest budget in years to go along with an expanding list of high profile projects affecting hundreds of thousands of residents across the Bay Area and being closely watched by those in the highest reaches of government. All of which requires the ability to “balance the needs of each chief while figuring out how much work you have this year to balance with how many people you need to keep the business model going.”

After graduating from West Point, Radford began her Army career in the

36th Engineer Group at Fort Benning, GA, then went on to serve as an engineering planner in South Korea as well as a lead civil design engineer in Iraq. Of course life and work in San Francisco is much different than being deployed overseas, but she said the basics are the same, except “I don’t have the same abilities I had in the Army of being able to knock on someone’s door but the same care is there for wanting our team to feel they want to come to work and that we are all part of the same family with a wonderful mission.”

POSTCARD FROM IRAQ

SPN budget analyst shares deployment experience

By **Tricia Carr**
Special to SPN Surveyor

My normal day is: 1st thing every day is Daily PERSTAT — account for all TFE personnel stationed at Taji, Al Alasad, Erbil, U3 and Kuwait, as well as other sites that they travel to for projects ... as well as incoming and outgoing personnel and any travel scheduled for the day. There is a report for the local management team, one for the base Command team and one for TAD. After that, it is wherever my e-mails take me, LOL!!!

Manage the IMD and work with TAD recruitment for new taskers based on the workload and budget restraint (coordinate with the DPM). Although we have authorized personnel, our current strength is based on mission needs. Communicate with incom-



ing personnel for pre-deployment requirements — I work with the Iraqi and Kuwait Embassy to acquire the VISA (and renew VISA's and passports). Logistics and billeting is done by other sections.

Track and process awards to include creating the PR&C's for monetary awards (for military



Photos courtesy of USACE Middle East District

Tricia Carr, a SPN budget analyst currently deployed to the Corps' Middle East District, begins her day with a cup of coffee and big to-do list. Learn about Tricia's schedule and life away from home in her postcard to the District.

"I should be home in February and back to work in March. Thank you for reaching out to inquire on how I am doing."

Tricia Carr
San Francisco District Budget Analyst

& civilians), processing R&R travel, tracking and submitting for foreign entitlements, processing time sheets with all supporting documents, ensuring travel vouchers are completed (correctly — easier to do them myself), tracking DPMAPS status, in processing & out processing

all employees. Schedule Command and Senior staff travel, travel for command and volunteer curtailments and for emergency leaves (thank goodness I only had one to process to date).

Provide daily reports to the XO and weekly reports to the Commander. Although this job is not mine

back home, I have learned so much and have all new respect for Olivia [Grate]'s position. I know she does a lot more for a lot more people, but she makes "herding cats" (administratively) look easy! LOL!!

I should be home in February and back to work



in March. Thank you for reaching out to inquire on how I am doing :-)

-Tricia