



SPN SURVEYOR

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Moving Dirt at Shoreline

Agencies prepare for levee construction in the South Bay

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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Saying farewell to a "great Army civilian workforce"

After two years, Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield ends his command as Chief Engineer of the San Francisco District this month, having led it through some of the worst natural disasters in California's history while overseeing some of the district's biggest projects in years. The SPN Surveyor sat down with him recently and asked him to reflect on his tour of duty.

SURVEYOR: What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as San Francisco District commander?

RAYFIELD: What I'm most proud of is being able to represent the District and be the outward face of what a lot of great people do. Not every District commander can come in and have their senior civilians rally behind them. I was able to communicate a vision that was good enough that people were able to rally around it and deliver.

SURVEYOR: And what would you say were your biggest challenges?



RAYFIELD: The biggest challenge is having great work and great people who decide to leave the District and go other places. In my time, we switched out the majority of the senior leadership which has been a major challenge. However, we were still able to get projects from the federal study stage

to implementation seamlessly which is a testament to the dedication of the great Army civilian workforce that we have here in San Francisco. Just look for example at the environmental restoration we're doing in the Russian River watershed and the flood mitigation along the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline,

where we have a project underway that will protect millions of Bay Area residents from the risk of sea level rise and tidal flooding.

SURVEYOR: You were in charge during California's worst wildfires in 2017 and 2018.

RAYFIELD: And we were a severely impacted district. We were making calls on people not coming to work because of smoke inhalation and hazards on their transportation routes. Many of our employees were involved in the massive debris removal operation and later deployed to respond to severe flooding in Southern California. Some were even sent further afield to respond to a series of devastating hurricanes around the country. Here in the District, it was tough to go up to the areas affected by the wildfires as the face of the agency that's hauling away debris and watch people return to their homes that in some cases have been in families for

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SPN hosts *Bring Your Child to Work Day*

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

San Francisco District hosted its version of National Bring Your Child To Work Day on April 26 with a kids town hall with Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Kevin McCormick, arts & crafts activities, a scavenger hunt and a pizza party.

Children learned about the Corps and its diverse set of missions by watching a short video in the HQ conference room at 450 Golden Gate Ave, followed by a question and answer session led by McCormick.

Then it was time to build towers alongside their parents using pasta and marshmallows. Kids met their parent's co-work-



Children are all smiles as they build towers using pasta and sticky marshmallows, one of the many activities set up across the district during Bring Your Child to Work Day at SPN.

ers during a scavenger hunt, toured offices and got a first-hand look at their parent's life away from home. The event was one of many hosted across USACE.

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2019 Grand Prix Sailing in San Francisco Bay



By Larry Quintana
District Public Affairs

Crewmembers from the M/V John A.B. Dillard, Jr., a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District emergency response vessel, assisted event organizers of the 2019 Grand Prix Sailing competition May 4-5, held in San Francisco's Marina Green. Six nations competed including Team USA (shown in left and top left photos). The M/V Dillard crew, led by Captain Kixon Meyer, monitored the race course for any hazardous debris, as well as worked in tandem with the U.S. Coast Guard to provide security. In the end, after five rounds of high-speed racing, it was Australia that claimed victory.

District News

Portland District's deputy commander set to lead SPN



Lt. Col. John Cunningham, incoming SPN commander, meets with Kixon Meyer, M/V Dillard captain, during an area of operations tour in April. He also met with project partners, including George Jacob, below, Bay.org president.

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

Lt. Col. John Cunningham, deputy commander of the USACE Portland District, is set to lead the San Francisco District, following a change of command ceremony scheduled for June 28, 10 a.m., at the Bay Model Visitor Center.

Cunningham will replace Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield, commander for the past two years. Rayfield is headed from the West Coast to the East Coast and will join the office of Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, USACE commanding general, to serve as the executive officer.

Not a complete stranger to the Bay Area, Cunningham got a first-hand look at the district during a week-long area of operations tour in April. The tour provided a snapshot of the district's top project priorities including the South SF Bay Shoreline Project and Ports of San Francisco and Oakland.



On the cover

A loader operator piles dirt in Alviso, Calif., May 7. The fill material is being stockpiled at the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project site and will serve as a critical building block for future levee construction in the area. The project aims to bolster dikes in a densely populated region of Silicon Valley, parts of which are below sea level, while also restoring habitat. (Photo by Brandon Beach)

Preparation underway for levee construction in Alviso

By **Brandon Beach**
District Public Affairs

Ground is moving in Alviso, Calif., and it's not an earthquake. The first fleet of delivery trucks arrived May 7 at the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge, home to the South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project, to off-load thousands of cubic yards of dirt, material which will be later used for future levee construction in the area.

More than a decade in the making, the \$177-million project aims to bolster dikes in a densely-populated region of Silicon Valley, parts of which are below sea level, while also restoring habitat in what will be the largest wetland restoration project west of the Mississippi.

When complete, the project will create four miles of levees, 2,800 acres of tidal marsh habitat and a vast network of recreational trails. Partnering with the Corps on a project of this scale are a number of local, state and national agencies including Valley Water, California State Coastal Conservancy, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Santa Clara County Parks, and the City of San Jose.

Moving dirt at this early stage in the project timeline serves as the "foundation for success," said Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield, San Francisco District commander. "This is a critical step in the development of a project that will ultimately safeguard the local community and critical infrastructure [in the South Bay]."

Valley Water District 3 Director Richard Santos, a native of Alviso, echoed that sen-



timent saying, "This [project] is needed to prevent devastating flooding from sea level rise and coastal flooding."

Next step for project managers is teeing up and awarding a construction contract to begin levee construction later this year. In the meantime, the daily comings and goings of delivery trucks are a visible sign of the path forward.

"This is one of the best days of the job. After many years of reviewing documents and having meetings and conference calls, we get out on site and see dirt moving," said Anne Morkill, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service complex manager at the 30,000-acre Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge.

For more information on the project, visit www.southbayshoreline.org.



Rayfield continued

generations only to find a hole in the ground where the house once stood. The scale of that disaster was immense.

SURVEYOR: What was the most difficult part about being commander?

RAYFIELD: The hardest part is always trying to do the right thing. I came in and I said I'm going to try to make decisions which will be in the interests of the District five years from now with what we know today. That's really the

"That's really the mantra of what I've tried to do, represent the people well and try to do the right thing."

Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield
San Francisco District Commander

mantra of what I've tried to do, represent the people well and try to do the right thing. That's the same advice I am going to give my successor. Most people

choose to be public servants for a reason. As commander, you are here to represent them and they in turn will be able to tee-up great decisions for leadership.

I've been surrounded by great Army civilians who give me continuity. If they're doing their jobs right, generally you'll feel pretty good about what you're doing.



EMPLOYEE PROFILE

SPN project manager finds leadership along the trail

By Nick Simeone
District Public Affairs

It's a subject that has launched countless books: What is it that best prepares someone for leadership and success and the ability to inspire others? For Lt. Col. David Kaulfers, who has managed the San Francisco District's highest priority project for the past three years, leading a hike through several hundred miles in the wilderness has had as much to do with unlocking that secret as commanding troops in battle.

After seven years with the District, Kaulfers is preparing for his next assignment with the Corps, overseeing military construction in Afghanistan, and looking back on his time in California, "living the dream," as all those who bump into him in the hallways of 450 Golden Gate know he is fond of saying.

Part of that dream, and part of what has helped him develop the skills he believes are necessary to lead and motivate others on critical projects didn't come about on the job, but through another more personal goal that had long been on his bucket list: hiking California's John Muir Trail, a more than 200-mile trek through the Sierra Nevadas beginning at Yosemite

"Putting together a plan to hike the trail is just like being a project manager."

Lt. Col. David Kaulfers
SPN Project Manager

ite National Park and ending at Mount Whitney, the highest peak in the continental United States. "Putting together a plan to hike the trail is just like being a project manager. It's all about scope, schedule and budget," said Kaulfers, who has led the District's South San Francisco Bay Shoreline Project, a massive undertaking designed to protect some of California's most valuable real estate from flooding and predicted sea level rise. It is also the largest wetland restoration project west of the Mississippi.

Last year, he led several adults and five Boy Scouts on a path that covered 243 miles in 21 days, over areas so remote that the group at times went for days without seeing anyone else. It's a journey that required a tremendous amount of planning, organizing, training and preparing for a multitude



Lt. Col. David Kaulfers, far left, takes a group photo atop Forrester Pass (elevation 13,200), one of the many stops along the 243-mile John Muir Trail.

of unpredictable contingencies, from bad weather to sickness to injury. Cell phones were useless. Great training, he found, for leading a multi-million dollar project for the district that, when completed, will affect the lives of millions of Bay Area residents. "You had to look at

"You had to look at each portion of the trail and plan for every possible scenario."

each portion of the trail and plan for every possible scenario and in locations where it could take days to return to civilization," he said. "What would you do if you needed to get assistance? How would you resupply? Where were you going to sleep, get water, what would you do in the event of an emergency?"

It was an experience he likens to his time as a company commander when his National Guard unit was activated and sent to Iraq at the height of the war in 2004. "A deployment

gives people an opportunity to really show who they are because you're under a microscope. The same thing with the John Muir Trail," said Kaulfers. "Whether it's an Army deployment or a long back-packing trip, those things are personality amplifiers and you really get to see who's who."

It's those characteristics, he said, that led to success on the Shoreline project. "If you don't have the right people to deliver a project, you're not going to get it off the ground, and if you don't have the right people to do a backpacking trip like this, you're not going to be successful." So don't be afraid, the engineer in him tells others, to attempt what might seem like a bridge too far. "Do things that other people don't want to do but also take advantage of opportunities because they might not be presented to you again."



The group reaches the John Muir Memorial Shelter, aka Muir Hut. Summer 2019





Dry Creek Project

Full speed ahead for habitat enhancement

By Brandon Beach
District Public Affairs

The San Francisco District and Sonoma Water completed another phase of environmental restoration along Dry Creek near Healdsburg, a significant milestone for habitat restoration and conservation alike. Earth Day took on added significance during a ribbon-cutting ceremony April 22 and the signing of a design agreement that laid the groundwork for more work along the Russian River watershed where conditions have been created by the Corps and its partners that will allow for the spawning of endangered salmon in a portion of Dry Creek. "It's just one of the many environmental restoration projects the Corps is working on in the region," said San Francisco District Commander Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield, who, along with South Pacific Division Commander Brig. Gen. Kimberly Colloton and representatives of Sonoma Water, were among those attending the ceremony.



Brig. Gen. Kimberly Colloton, above, and Sonoma County Supervisor James Gore, below, give their remarks.



Congressman Jared Huffman, above, discussed the significance of the Dry Creek Project, while Lt. Col. Travis Rayfield, left, signed the design agreement laying the groundwork for future habitat enhancement in the watershed.





Coast Guard K9 unit trains with Dillard crew

The U.S. Coast Guard's bomb-detecting canines braved vertigo March 22 when handlers put them to the test high above the San Francisco Bay, as part of an exercise to deploy from helicopters.

The training session was held on board the M/V John A. B. Dillard, Jr., a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers San Francisco District emergency operations vessel. Each dog was equipped with protective eye and ear wear, as well as a custom-made harness for helicopter deployments of this type. Two dogs, Feco and Rickey, successfully took part in the training. (Reporting by Brandon Beach)



Congratulations to our district award winners



5 Years

Myla Ablog
Nicole Anaya
Daniel Breen
Tony Candotti
Brian Hubel
Tony McCoy
Stephen Willis

10 Years

Legese Abebe
Sahrye Cohen
Iris Gallegos
Jim Mazza
Roberta Morgenstern
Jaime O'Halloran

15 Years

Brandon Beach
Joselito Canoy

Joél Flannery

Anthony Hewitt
Gregory Jones
James Lee
Michele Lopez
Sharon Wong
Gregory Jones

20 Years

John Dane
Martin Fahning

25 Years

Janice Lera-Chan
Louis Morehead
Shelah Sweatt
Tawny Tran

30 Years

Paul Chen
Daniel Finklea
David Franzen
Eric Jolliffe
Lisa Kwong
Lorraine Louie
Binh Polizatto
Kerry Tam
Kathleen Ungvarsky

35 Years

John Conway
Sherman Fong
Thomas Quinn

40 Years

Magdalena Ramos
Duke Roberts

District Team Award

Dry Creek CAP Team

New Employee of the Year

Taylor Baughn

Engineer of the Year

Legese Abebe

Commander's Leadership Award

Tessa Beach

Employee of the Year

Keith Hess

Division Employees of the Year

Joél Flannery
Programs & Project Management
Brian Hubel
Engineering, Planning & Construction
Sarah Firestone
Regulatory
Mary Fronck
Contracting
Ali Carmody
Office of Counsel
Olivia Grate
Executive Office
Adrian Humphrey
Resource Management
Dustin Rose
Operations & Readiness



Courtesy

The Portland District hopper dredge Yaquina, shown here in a 2010 photo, conducted emergency dredging operations at Humboldt Harbor in May.

USACE dredge tackles shoaling at Humboldt Harbor

By Nick Simeone
District Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has resumed dredging Humboldt Harbor along the Pacific coast north of San Francisco, following storms this past winter that deposited so much sediment in the waterway that most mariners and commercial vessels were unable to enter the port.



Mull

In mid-May, the Corps' dredging vessel, the Yaquina, arrived to begin the effort to remove about 1.1 million cubic yards of shoal, described by San Francisco District Project Manager Peter Mull as a "tongue of sand pushing into the federal ship-

ping channel," flushed into the waterway by heavy rains during what was an unusually stormy winter. As a result, the harbor was at its shallowest point ever, forcing all deep draft traffic to be suspended. The shallow water also created waves so high that entering the harbor posed a grave danger to smaller vessels such as fishing and recreational boats, affecting the livelihood of the local community. The conditions prompted the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District to declare a state of emergency.

Another dredging vessel is set to follow the Yaquina to continue clearing the channel which accumulates sediment most winters. "We dredge annually, but the winter storms cause severe shoaling up there all the time so it's very hard to maintain that channel opening all year long," said Mull.

"We dredge annually, but winter storms cause severe shoaling up there all the time."

Peter Mull
SPN Project Manager

Complicating the situation is the fact that the nation does not have enough dredging vessels to service all of the country's major shipping channels, which affects the Corps' ability to keep Humboldt Harbor deep. The region's congressional representative, Jared Huffman, has acknowledged the "perennial shortage of dredging equipment" and has called for the government to invest in more. There are just two government-operated dredgers

along the West Coast, and one of them, the aging Essayons, has been in dry dock for repairs. Major ports in the Bay Area also require dredging and available dredgers are often diverted to what are considered to be more pressing missions elsewhere in the country. "New Orleans was calling for all dredges and that's a huge port, with one third of the nation's oil supply moving through there," said Mull.

One possible long-term solution to the chronic shoaling of Humboldt Harbor would be to realign the channel in such a way that sand is pulled away from it rather than into the waterway. But Mull said such a project would be very expensive and require a significant investment from the local community. Short of that, the Corps will continue dredging operations in order to maintain the depth of Humboldt Harbor's shipping channel.