

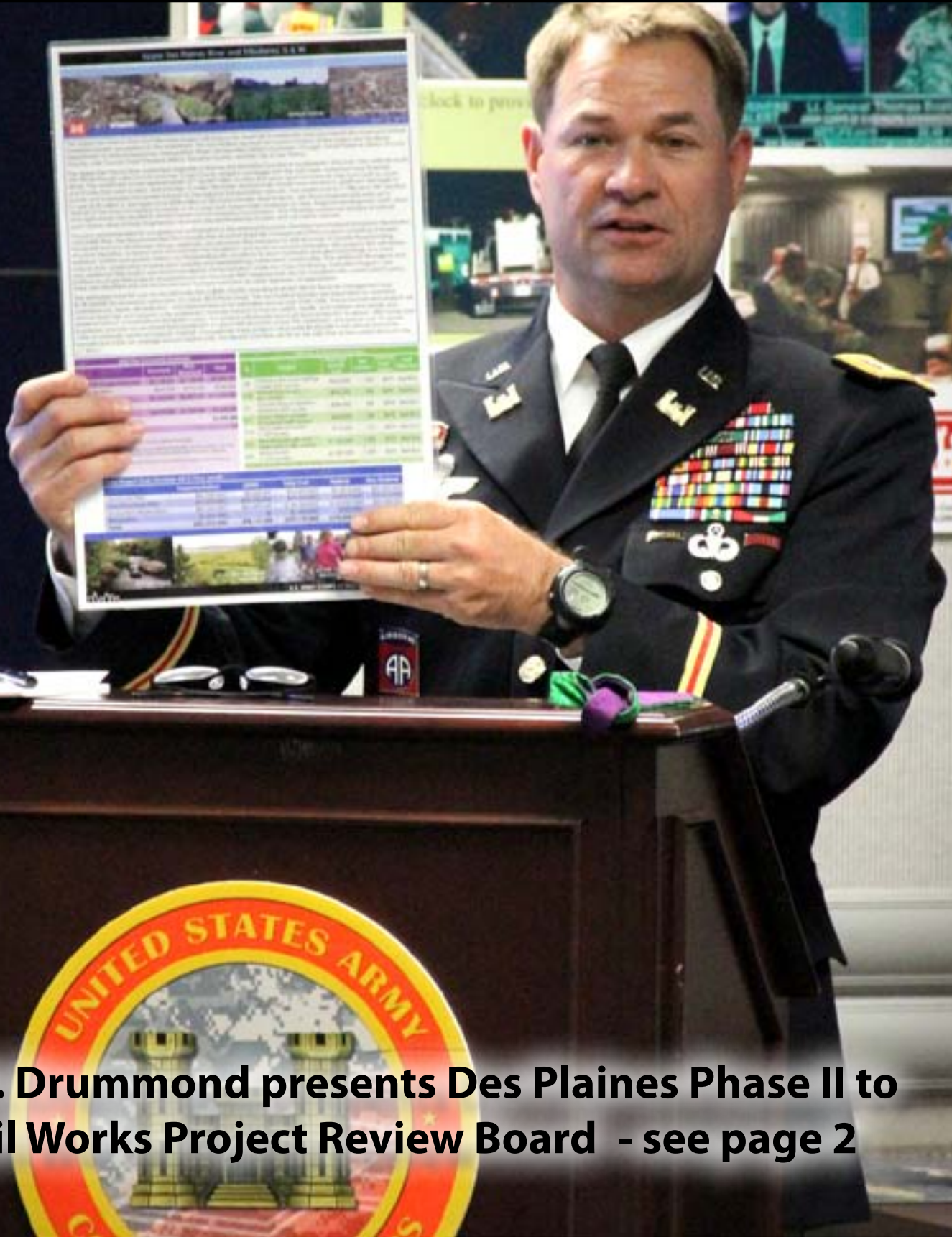


US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Chicago District

Chicago Breeze

Chicago District Newsletter

May 2014



**Col. Drummond presents Des Plaines Phase II to
Civil Works Project Review Board - see page 2**



US Army Corps
of Engineers »
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May 2014

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On the cover - Chicago District Commander Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr. presents the Upper Des Plaines River, IL & WI Flood Risk Management and Ecosystem Restoration Project to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Project Review Board, Washington, D.C., May 20, 2014.

The Project Review Board is an integral part of the internal Army Corps process. At the review board, commanders present the results of their water resources development studies and the recommendations contained in decision documents for projects that require authorization by Congress.

A message from....

Commander
Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr.



As I leave command this week, I have spent some time reflecting on all that we have accomplished together over the past three years. As a District Commander, my job is to execute and accomplish missions, while establishing processes and a vision to protect the Castle. Our district successes are also LRD successes - with a large USACE and Army branding on each.

For the first time in over 40 years, dredging is again underway at the Indiana Harbor and Canal - one of the busiest ports by tonnage and the number one area of concern in the Great Lakes. The district had been unable to dredge since 1972 due to the lack of a suitable disposal site - a problem that was resolved with the district's completion in 2011 of the Indiana Harbor Confined Disposal Facility (CDF).

The district headquarters relocated from the River Center, 111 North Canal Street, to 231 South La Salle. What a monumental task! We reduced our paperwork, and we made our workplace a sustainable leader in Chicago by winning two sustainability awards during the 2014 Chicago FEB Awards Ceremony. This was not an easy task and everyone in the LRC team stepped up and worked together to ensure our new home would project this world-class engineering team into the future.

In Sept. 2013, the Corps released for public comment "Upper Des Plaines River and Tributaries, Illinois and Wisconsin Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment, and in May 2014, the study was presented to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Review Board (CWRB) and was approved unanimously by the board. A special thanks goes out to Jeff Zuercher, Sue Davis, Dave Bucaro, Sarah Brodzinsky and Lynne Whelan for making lasting products to convince the CWRB that this was a project worthy of sending to Congress and investing millions of dollars. I was extremely proud of the entire team!

The district established the Illinois Regional Permit Program. Under this program, regional permits may be obtained for activities with minimal individual and cumulative impacts on the aquatic environment in Cook, Lake, Kane, DuPage, McHenry, and Will counties in Illinois. Our Regulatory team continues to pave the path

on many new initiatives for LRC, LRD and USACE.

We updated our unit history with a new volume covering our great work from the late 1970s to 2014. You should be seeing this both online and in book form in the next couple of months. This updated history book is an impressive testament to all the dedicated work this district has done over the last three decades.... Remember; we are the custodians of our district's history! Protect it, and honor it everyday.

During my time here, 12 district employees have deployed to support contingency and overseas operations, providing operational commanders with critical subject matter experts to aid in the construction of key infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan.

This district has played key leadership roles in several multinational and multiagency organizations, including the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, the Chicago Federal Executive Board and the Council of Colonels. Partnership is absolutely critical in transforming how USACE does business with these organizations....Please continue to be transparent in everything we do...We must remain open to new and innovative ideas.

For the first time in 57 years, Chicago District was tasked to host the 2014 Federal Employee of the Year awards event. We honored 876 awardees out of 55,000 Chicago-area federal employees. We WON the EPA Federal Green Challenge awards for Innovation and Energy and were a finalist for Agency of the Year (Hines VA Center won the Agency of the year honor due to their outstanding support to Veterans). Melvin McLaurin of the Construction Operations branch won the award for Outstanding Trades and Craft Employee, and the district had finalists in the other individual categories, they were: Kim Sabo for the John F. Kennedy Leadership Excellence Award and Patricia Gutierrez for Outstanding Administrative and Clerical Support Employee.

We formalized our school outreach under the leadership of a STEM committee and formed several new formal school partnerships, including the one with St. Laurence High School listed on the STEM page of this Breeze.

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It is published six times per year by the Public Affairs Office, Chicago District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Articles or photographic submissions are welcome and should be submitted by the 15th of each month preceding publication.

Commander's message continued

STEM will become a focus item for the Chicago area Council of Colonels in the future. We must build upon our partner agencies in the future in order to have a synchronized STEM impact in Chicago.

In January 2014, the GLMRIS Team successfully delivered to Congress the GLMRIS Report outlining a range of alternatives for preventing the inter-basin transfer of aquatic nuisance species. This is probably one of the more complex issues of our time and one requiring a great deal of coordination both within the Corps and with external partners and stakeholders. I'm extremely proud of the entire GLMRIS Team, which is lead by Dave Wethington.

We have begun construction of the new barrier I, while continuing to operate the demo barrier and barriers IIA and IIB. We will have many setbacks, but we need to try to complete this engineering feat on time, without delay – while being safe and protecting our National treasure, “The Great Lakes” from all ANS of concern.

We have completed ecosystem restoration projects at Red Mill Pond and the Chicago Botanic Garden, begun construction on several new ones, including Northerly Island and Horner Park, and are working several more, including Jackson Park - a project which is featured in this edition of the Breeze. Ecosystem restoration is a growth industry, we must help our sponsors care for the environment. I believe we have the “BEST” environmental team in the Army!

We have completed numerous infrastructure improvement projects in the Northwest Indiana area. We must work closely with our partners on Little Calumet; we need to finish this project, while ensuring the levee line is complete for all the residents it protects....it is an engineering marvel; let's not make it a financial nightmare, because we can't help our partner balance the books.

Our partners are an essential part of the district team, we cannot deliver quality projects without them. Recently, partners Arlan Juhl of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and David St. Pierre of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District travelled to Washington, DC to stand beside us at the Civil Works Review Board for Des Plaines Phase II. Several others called in to lend their support, including Cook County Forest Preserve District Superintendent Arnold Randall, Lake County Forest Preserve Executive Director Alex Kovach and Kenosha

County Director of Planning and Development Andy Buehler. That is teamwork, and that is why we must protect and nurture those relationships.

Great work continues at McCook, along the Chicago Shoreline and the list goes on and on.

Chris and I are extremely proud of this district. I exerted a lot of energy and passion on you, and you in turned delivered. As I have said, I came here to change a culture, to accomplish missions, and, in turn, you have changed me, by making me a better operational and strategic leader in executing tough and continuous Civil Works projects.

As I leave for my new assignment as the Engineer Director for NATO Training Mission – Afghanistan/ Combined Security Transition Command – Afghanistan, I know that I will look back at my time as the Chicago District Commander with a great sense of pride in our accomplishments.

You will be in great hands with Colonel and Mrs. Drew. They are simply the right team to carry this superb district into the future. Remember, we are a “Small District – but we have a BIG Mission.” Everyone must pull their weight and give 100 percent everyday. Teamwork will ensure this district remains relevant well into the future and continues to serve the citizens of the Chicago metropolitan area, just as it has been for nearly 180 years.

This is an outstanding organization. You are an amazing group of individuals, and I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve with you. I look forward to hearing great things about you and this district in the future. Essayons!

Colonel and Mrs. Frederic A. Drummond Jr, 63rd Commander of the Chicago District

Chicago District Change of Command

**Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr. will
relinquish command of the Chicago District
to Col. Christopher T. Drew:**

Friday, 30 May, 10:30 am

**Harold Washington Library, 400 State
Street, Chicago, Ill. in the Cindy Pritzker
Auditorium. This is the same facility used for
the Change of Command in both 2008 and
2011.**

**All district employees should be seated no
later than 10:15 a.m.**

Reception Information

There will be a receiving line for everyone to meet Col. Drew and his family at the District Office, 231 S. LaSalle Street, 16th floor conference rooms. The reception will begin immediately following the ceremony.

District Bids Farewell to Col. Drummond

Col. Drummond took command of the Chicago District June 30, 2011. He will leave command May 30, 2014, for an assignment as the Engineer Director for NATO Training Mission - Afghanistan/Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan.

As the Chicago District Commander, Col. Drummond led a 235 civilian and military member workforce that executed a \$196 million annual Civil Works program by accomplishing 103.6 percent of project milestones. His team provided critical services to the 3rd largest metropolitan area in the United States, covering a 5,000-square-mile area with a population of over 9.1 million in portions of Illinois and Indiana with critical regional commerce and transportation infrastructure.

As a regional leader, Col. Drummond led efforts to improve our internal business processes, while improving regional coordination between multiple Districts in the Midwestern United States.

Col. Drummond provided critical leadership in several multinational and multiagency organizations during his command, including the Asian Carp Reginal Coordinating Committee and the Chicago Federal Executive Board.

During his command, twelve district employees deployed to support contingency and overseas operations, providing operational commanders with critical subject matter experts to aid in the construction of key infrastructure in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Additionally, his efforts to grow the Secience, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) Program resulted in participation and support for more than 70 events across the Chicagoland area, including six sustained partnerships with schools reaching more than 1,200 student interested in becoming tomorrow's engineers.

Prior to joining the Chicago District, Col. Drummond served multiple tours in the 82nd Airborne Division in Operations Desert Storm/ Shield and Iraqi Freedom and assignments with U.S. Central Command, XVIII Airborne Corps ans U.S. Special Operations Command.

Col. Drummond is a native of Nebraska and is married to Christine (Hansen) formerly of Grand-Island, Neb. They have five children: Aaron, East Carolina University Graduate and CrossFit Trainer; Jessica, 2014 Florida Gulf Coast University Graduate; Matthew; Joshua; and Nicholas.



Construction complete on sewer improvement projects in Gary and Griffith



The Environmental Infrastructure Program, also known as Section 219 of the 1992 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), as amended, authorizes the Corps to assist non-Federal interests in carrying out water-related environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development projects. Such assistance may be in the form of technical, planning, and/or design assistance.

Under this authority, the Chicago District has a Calumet Region Environmental Infrastructure project for needs in Benton, Jasper, Lake, Newton and Porter counties in Indiana. These needs include development of wastewater treatment and related facilities and water supply, treatment and distribution facilities.

Ribbon cutting ceremonies this spring have marked the completion of projects in the Calumet region, including Griffith and Gary Black Oak. An event for East Chicago is scheduled for June.

April 21, the Corps, Rep. Peter Visclosky, and officials from Griffith, Ind. held a ribbon cutting ceremony to mark

the end of construction for Griffith's sewer improvement project.

"Thank you to the town of Griffith and Congressman Visclosky for inviting us out here today to mark the end of the drainage improvement project here in Griffith," Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr. said. "This project will help alleviate the storm water backup and overflow in about 40 homes."

The project, located in the southern part of Griffith along Elm and Cline avenues, separates the sanitary and storm sewage systems and helps alleviate the occasional storm water backup and overflow problems that affected the wastewater treatment plant. Work also included roadway reconstruction and the addition of curbs and gutters.

"The Town of Griffith is very appreciative of the funding Congressman Visclosky secured toward the completion of this project," Griffith Council Member Stan Dobosz said. "This project will enable the town to continue our storm-water-conveyance-infrastructure upgrade, which, in turn, will continue to alleviate the town's flooding issues."

A contract was awarded to Gough Inc. June 29, 2012, for \$842,338. The construction work started on the main roads in the winter of 2012. Construction was completed July 26, 2013, within budget and on schedule.

The stormwater interceptor project in the Black Oak section of Gary, Ind. will help reduce basement flooding in this highly-traveled and busy business section of the city.

Construction included installing approximately 1,500 linear feet of 30-inch storm sewer, and storm inlets and catch basins on the southwest side of Gary. It also included full reconstruction of 25th Avenue between Calhoun and Burr streets. The flow from this area will be drained into an existing manhole on Burr Street, which will direct the flow south.

The local sponsor for the project is the Gary Sanitary District's Storm Water Management District.

The contract was awarded to Industrial and Environmental Services of Gary, Ind., Dec. 28, 2012, for approximately

\$1.15 million. Field construction began May 2013. Construction was completed Dec. 4, 2013, with only a few minor punch list items remaining, such as final videotaping of the interior of the newly-installed storm sewer.

"Infrastructure investment is a highly-effective tool for job creation," said Visclosky. "Projects such as these support our regional economy."

Pictured (from left): Project Manager Imad Samara, Rep. Pete Visclosky, Gary Sanitary District President Richard Comer, Gary Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson, and Chicago District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin J. Lovell cut ribbon to mark the end of a sewer improvement project in Gary, Ind., May 16, 2014.

“Healthy and beautiful open space seems to always be incorporated into well thought-out park settings,” said Frank Veraldi, ecosystem planner.

And the intent for ecosystem restoration efforts at Jackson Park is a testament to this notion.

But, this is no ordinary park.

“Ultimately, the project is a giant native gardening project within a highly-urbanized environment to increase native plant species richness and abundance in order to provide fish, wildlife and migratory birds with high-quality habitat and food sources,” said Veraldi.

Jackson Park is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The project site, owned by the Chicago Park District, consists of approximately 155 acres of natural land along the western coast of Lake Michigan between 56th and 67th streets in the Hyde Park neighborhood – home to President Obama.

The land was designed in 1890 by Frederick Law Olmsted - recognized as the founder of American landscape architecture and the nation’s foremost parkmaker, according to the National Park Service.

Olmsted may most notably be known for co-designing Central Park in New York City. Some of his other Chicago projects include [Marquette Park](#), [Washington Park](#) and the [Midway Plaisance](#)- serving as a focal for merriment during the 1893 [World’s Columbian Exposition](#).

“There has been extensive coordination with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency to ensure the intent of Olmsted’s designs and features is upheld,” said Veraldi. “This project will actually enhance and beautify his designs.”

Historically, Chicago’s shoreline was lush with vast expanses of species-rich and structurally-diverse wetlands. The natural area patches within Jackson Park have the potential to provide critical pond, fringe marsh, sedge meadow, savanna and woodland habitat for locally endangered and rare fauna and areas for migratory birds to rest and forage.

“The unique characteristics of this project are maintaining native sands and hydrology present within city limits,” said Veraldi.

The biggest adversaries for ecosystem health at the site are the absence of any plants in certain patches and the dominance of invasive plant species in other unnatural patches. Native plants would provide habitat for a greater diversity of insects, fishes and birds.

The Corps released a draft study report and environmental assessment April 11, 2014, that encompassed five alternative plans to restore ecosystem integrity at Jackson Park.

All significant aspects of the Jackson Park study area’s resource problems were considered, including environmental, social, cultural, and economic effects, as well as engineering feasibility.

The National Ecosystem Restoration preferred plan that found no adverse environmental impacts includes several habitat restoration elements.

Within this plan:

Flat limestone rocks with nooks and crannies for mudpuppies to reproduce, hide and feed in would be placed.

Invasive species, such as buckthorn and black locust, would be removed within one year and immediately replaced with native species. Nonnative species not considered a threat to native ecosystems, such as Weeping Willow, would be salvaged and managed to provide shade. The Corps has consulted with the Audubon Society of Chicago to ensure migratory and residential bird habitat is maximized.

Small ponds would be developed to support rare plants; insects; and amphibians, such as the Tiger Salamander. These pools would be full in the spring and dry in the summer.

To attract rare, native birds, slight modifications to plant communities on small, isolated island habitats would allow for higher levels of solitude for breeding. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources would continue to annually stock bluegill, bass and channel catfish in the Columbia Basin as part of their Urban Fishing Program. A fish community separator would be installed to maintain uniqueness between the Columbia Basin and the East and West lagoons.

The green shade of the lagoons in the summer months would be no more since algae would be in the company of other plants.

Four native species of mussels would also be introduced to help balance algae levels and improve water clarity. The team is coordinating closely with the John G. Shedd Aquarium and Illinois Natural History Survey on the reintroduction and monitoring of native species that cannot colonize the ponds naturally.

Minor bank grading would occur on less than 10 acres to lessen dangerous slopes and expose underground water for native plants.

Plants, plants and more plants. The fringe marsh community would be filled with aquatic plants like Pickerel Weed and Iris. The sedge meadow community would have wildflowers like Marsh Marigold. Giant

trees like oaks and sycamores would dominate the canopy, while high-quality food shrubs like the New Jersey Tea would also be established.

The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative is providing over half of the funding for the project.

A contract is anticipated for award this September.

“Although certain areas of the park will be closed for a couple of years, and some trees will be removed, the resulting project on this unique and historic land would provide a lasting beneficial footprint for wildlife and the public, while still honoring its origin,” said Veraldi.

Project page: <http://1.usa.gov/1ggkxG4>

Enhancing land designed by the ‘founder of American landscape architecture’ in the President’s neighborhood

By Sarah Gross

Congressionals Tour the CAWS from Above

By Sarah Gross

What better way to gain a little perspective on the complexities of the Chicago Area Waterway System (CAWS) than from a couple thousand feet in the air?

That's precisely what Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr. and Dave Wethington, Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) program manager, wanted to portray when they led an aerial tour in an Army Blackhawk April 22.

This Congressional tour included 19 flyover locations within the CAWS, which entails approximately 78 miles of canals and modified streams, and ground visits to the Electric Barriers project site and the Brandon Road Lock and Dam.

Congressional attendees included Sen. Joe Donnelly; staff representing Senators Dick Durbin, Dan Coats, Carl Levin, and Debbie Stabenow; as well as staff representing Rep. Mike Quigley.

The purpose of the tour was to orient Congressional stakeholders with the complex, multi-use CAWS, and show potential locations for controls to prevent the transfer of aquatic nuisance species, such as Asian carp, between the Great Lakes and Mississippi River basins. Many of these locations were identified in the GLMRIS Report, which was submitted to Congress in January.

The GLMRIS Report outlines eight potential control plans – to include complete separation of the watersheds - within the CAWS to prevent the transfer of 13 aquatic nuisance fish, algae, virus, crustaceans and plants in all life stages with high or medium risk for transfer between the two basins.

"As long-term solutions are debated, I believe it's critical that we seek agreement on, then implement, common-sense short-term and medium-term solutions that can help prevent the spread of Asian carp," said Donnelly.

During the tour, current Asian carp control efforts including the electric barriers and intensive inter-agency monitoring were also discussed, primarily led by John Goss, White House Council on Environmental Quality Asian carp director.

David St. Pierre, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago executive director, also attended and provided insight on the CAWS and water quality.

Some of the alternatives in the GLMRIS Report involve placing physical barriers at different locations in the CAWS. With the implementation of this control and redirection of water, comes the potential for increased flooding to Chicago area residents and increased pollutant loads to Lake Michigan, as well as possible economic impacts to the region.

Lake Michigan and the CAWS currently serve many important uses including navigation, water supply and conveyance, flood risk management, and recreation, among others. Installation of aquatic nuisance species (ANS) controls, such as dams, in the waterway can be expected to cause adverse impacts to one or more of these uses. The GLMRIS Report evaluates the extent of these impacts likely to be caused by each of the eight alternative plans.

Measures to alleviate adverse impacts outlined in the report include: ANS treatment plants, conveyance tunnels, reservoirs and sediment remediation.

Brandon Road Lock and Dam, one of the focal points on the tour, has been identified by the GLMRIS Team as the downstream control point of the CAWS for a number of different potential alternatives; the topographic and geographic positioning of the site in the hydrology of the CAWS allows it to serve as a single point of passage for any species able to move upstream toward the Great Lakes.

Flyover points also included the largest wastewater treatment plant in the world – the Stickney Wastewater Treatment Plant, and the massive 10-billion gallon Chicago Tunnel and Reservoir Plan reservoir – McCook.

View more pictures from the tour: <http://bit.ly/1jJNWee>

A valuable document that provides perspective into regional sentiments on this issue was released in May. The GLMRIS comment summary provides a synopsis of the public dialogue following the release of the report, including opinions regarding possible future prevention actions.

More than 1,600 comments were submitted during the public comment period – Jan. 6 – March 31 - from 43 states and three Canadian provinces.

More than 98 percent of the commenters expressed support for the need to control ANS; 40 percent favored an alternative that involved some type of physical separation; and 35 percent wanted an alternative that maintained current uses of the Chicago Area Waterway System, mainly navigation.

"The summary shows the complexities inherent in the study, and that no clear consensus has been reached," said Wethington. "The Corps will continue to work with Federal, state, and local governmental and regulatory agencies as well as with non-governmental stakeholders to participate in collaborative discussions and provide input or technical assistance in advising solutions to control the spread of aquatic nuisance species."



Sen. Donnelly learns about ANS controls



STEM marches on in FY14

By Laura Vanden Berg, STEM Coordinator

The new fiscal year has brought some changes to the LRC STEM program, but our focus remains - expanding our impact on Chicagoland youth.

We’ve had a great first half of the year, and your help can keep up the momentum – the volunteers make our program possible! The year kicked off with some great events. Nikki Chaffin gave a presentation at DePaul University on her job experiences as a geographer at the Corps. Ross Hiner attended the “Intro to the Profession” event at Illinois Institute of Technology; he spoke with freshmen studying civil engineering about his career and provided advice to the students.

In January of 2014, Christel Johnson and Deidra Willis presented at two Girls4Science events, which were held at Malcolm X College and Olive Harvey College. Approximately 50 girls ranging in ages from 10 to 18 attended at each location. Christel Johnson discussed the different disciplines of engineering and performed two activities using civil and environmental engineering skills. Deidra Willis discussed USACE and performed activities that demonstrated the fundamentals of wetlands.

February brought Engineer’s week and other new events. Roberto Paredes and Vanessa Villarreal spoke to the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers at the University of Illinois at Chicago on the expectations of engineering careers. During Engineer’s week, Vanessa Villarreal and I visited our partner schools James Ward and Dixon

Elementary to talk to students and do an engineering activity with them.

To close out the month, Col.Drummond attended the official STEM Partnership agreement signing with St Laurence High School. This is LRC’s first partnership with a local high school. The signing was especially significant to Joe Schmidt, who was also in attendance; he graduated from St Laurence himself a few years back!

March was no time to slow down, and we kept the momentum going by hosting four students for job shadows - three from the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) annual job shadow day. High school students toured the Chicago Lock site for a hands-on experience. Several engineers from various departments spoke to the students about the variety of engineering work they perform. Roberto Paredes visited the Hernandez Middle School engineering club to give a presentation on USACE and engineering careers. He provided bridge-building engineering kits for students to learn concepts for their end-of-semester bridge-building project.

Additional March events included Fisheries Biologist Matt Shanks’s work as a volunteer judge for the Illinois Junior Science Academy Regional Science Fair, and my volunteer work at Expanding Your Horizons, which is an all-day hands-on event held across the country to promote girls’ interest in STEM. During that same time, eCybermission was wrapping up an annual Army-sponsored event. The

program promotes students to perform science projects and submit them for online judging, with many Corps employees volunteering as judges.

In April, 15 JROTC students from Carver and Phoenix Military academies visited the Chicago Lock for a half-day event. They participated in a presentation on USACE projects, discussion on engineering careers, a tour of the facilities and hands-on engineering activities. The team is looking forward to continue working with the local JROTC program in the future.

STEM events are posted on the LRC Facebook page and the LRC intranet calendar. New volunteers are always welcome and needed! Monthly meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of the month at 2 p.m. in the Larry Green conference room. If anyone is interested or has suggestions, they can attend a monthly meeting or contact one of the following STEM team members or me: Diedra Willis, Jeff MacDonald, Vanessa Villarreal, Paul Leffler, Khallid Maali, Rana Mishra, Roberto Paredes, Alina Samokhin, and Lynne Whelan.

A new school partnership -- St. Laurence High School



Pictured, seated from left: St. Laurence High School President Joseph Martinez, Chicago District Commander Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr. and Principal James Muting. Standing, from left: Chris Wetzel, sophomore; Brett Risley, sophomore; Sean Wedel, junior; and Tom Gainer, junior.

Feb. 27, the Chicago District signed a partnership agreement with St. Laurence High School, agreeing to work in partnership to develop, promote, and coordinate collaborative efforts between the Corps, the school, and the community in the areas of science, engineering, technology and math (STEM).

- The Chicago District STEM Pledge:
- Stress the importance of science, technology, engineering, and math.
 - Manage a successful STEM partnership.
 - Help students gain a better understanding of opportunities in STEM-related fields.
 - Offer professional development opportunities.
 - Place and mentor students in field experiences.

- The Vikings Student STEM Pledge:
- Increase motivation and awareness of STEM.
 - Prepare for tomorrow’s complex and multifaceted workforce.
 - Be proactive and identify with role models who support STEM-related activities.
 - Acquire new STEM skills for future development.



Around Town

And that's a wrap! Thanks to all of our Federal agencies, employees, nominees, performers, volunteers and attendees who joined us for the Chicago Federal Executive Board Federal Employee of the Year Awards ceremony at the Harris Theater, May 6, 2014. This year's event was hosted by the Corps.



Several Chicago District team members were nominated for this year's awards, entitled, "Shoulder to Shoulder: Working for the Nation."

Our own Melvin McLaurin, crane operator, won in the Outstanding Trades and Crafts Employee category!

View more photos from the event:
<http://bit.ly/1sv2mUX>



The highest-ranking enlisted Soldier in the Corps of Engineers and our district's incoming commander attended Chicago District 101 this spring.

Command Sgt. Maj. Karl J. Groninger, command sergeant major, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters, and incoming Chicago District Commander Col. Chris Drew toured our district's headquarters and the McCook Reservoir and Electric Barriers project sites March 20, 2014.

"Groninger met and talked with folks here at the District HQ, and out in the field where the rubber meets the road," said Chicago District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin J. Lovell.

View photos from the visit: <http://bit.ly/1dj1GyD>



The Mobile District Coredrill group traveled 930 miles to Romeoville, Ill., in one of the coldest winters on record to perform angled-borehole drilling in support of the new electric barrier project. Mobile District's electrical engineering and safety sections developed a plan to safely drill into electrified waters.

Sen. Dick Durbin; Col. Drummond; Chicago Park District General Superintendent and CEO Michael Kelly; Ald. James Cappleman, 46th ward; and Chicago Department of Transportation Commissioner Rebekah Scheinfeld speak at a Groundbreaking ceremony held Feb. 28 to announce the start of the Montrose to Irving section of the Lake Michigan shoreline protection project.



On May 22 Chicago District bid farewell to Ron Barkley, who rejoined the district in 2010 to help oversee barrier safety. He returns to retirement following nearly 35 years of service to the Corps. Pictured: Col. Drummond; Ron Barkley; Phyllis Barkley and Shamel Abou-el-Seoud.

(Below) Chicago District honored Structural Engineer Jan Plachta, April 22, retiring after more than 30 years of exceptionally-superior service to the 7th U.S. Coast Guard District, Great Lakes Naval Training Center, the Army Corps of Engineers Great Lakes and Ohio River Division, and the Army Corps of Engineers Chicago District. Pictured (from left): Jan Plachta, Barbara Plachta and Col. Frederic A. Drummond Jr.



From left, Lauren Fler, Chicago District environmental engineer; Cameron Zhang, Hong Kong-based Phoenix Satellite Television journalist; Lt. Col. Kevin Lovell, Chicago District deputy commander; Phoenix Satellite Television cameraman. Phoenix Satellite Television interviewed Lovell and Fler at Millennium Park, Chicago, March 7, 2014, for an upcoming documentary entitled, "Chicago goes to war with Asian carp."

PICNIC

Friday
June 27, 2014
9:00 AM

Brezina Woods Forest Preserve Grove #2
LaGrange Road just south of Cermak
Westchester, Illinois

Bring Your Own Food
or
Let Us Do the Cooking!

LUNCH

Fully Prepared Picnic Lunch
2 Burgers or 3 Hotdogs - \$10
Includes Pop, Chips, Sides, Condiments, Dessert



From the North: Take I-294 South to I-290 East to Mannheim Road (Rt. 45) South. Continue south on Mannheim to park entrance.

From the South: Take I-294 North to Ogden Avenue East. Go east to LaGrange Road (Rt. 45). Go north on LaGrange to park entrance.

From the East: Take I-290 West to Mannheim Road (Rt. 45) South. Go south on Mannheim to park entrance.

From the West: Take I-88 East to I-290 East to Mannheim Road (Rt. 45) South. Continue south on Mannheim to park entrance.