

Falls City Engineer

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U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
LOUISVILLE DISTRICT



***Lock operator
ties the knot at
Cannelton***

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Falls City Engineer

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On the cover: Janet Merritt weds Elvin Barks in a first-of-its-kind ceremony at Cannelton Locks and Dam.



Please conserve:
Think before you print.

Commander's Comments

There is still much uncertainty about the months ahead as the government comes to grips with the current fiscal climate. I'd like to keep you up-to-date to both prepare you for the future and allay your concerns.

First, we've currently been prohibited from extending term and temporary employees beyond their current "Not To Exceed Date" without seeking an exception from Headquarters and providing information that the position is mission critical. This order affects 27 employees in the district. In the last 18 months, I've placed myself as approving authority for all new hires in the district and now that authority has been retained by the Chief of Engineers, Lt. Gen. Bostick. To hire a new employee from outside the Army or outside the commuting area I must get permission from Headquarters without exception. Finally, I've curtailed all training that isn't required for professional licensure or mission safety. Many of you have training in your Individual Development Plans, and unfortunately that will be postponed until the current environment is remedied. We will complete a few courses that are already paid for, but by and large, training will stop unless it is critical.

There are many rumors about potential furloughs of government employees, but at this time they are simply rumors. I have received no directive or plan that says a furlough is going to occur. Since much of our work is project funded, furloughs that affect other elements of the Army may not affect the Corps or Louisville District in the same manner, and may not affect us at all. If this situation changes, I'll be sure to let you know.

You may have heard of mock-Reductions In Force (RIF) in districts outside of our division. While these have occurred, they are a result of a loss of program dollars without a corresponding staff reduction in those districts. They are not a reaction to sequestration, the fiscal cliff, or other national mandate. Here in Louisville, our staff levels have been dropping



Col. Luke T. Leonard
Commander and District Engineer
Louisville District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

through attrition for the last 18 months, and our workload projections are in line with our staffing plans. There is no plan to conduct a RIF here in Louisville.

Because of the delays in getting appropriations bills signed, we do anticipate a delay in seeing FY14 projects awarded. This is not a new phenomenon though, as we've had the same situation in FY11 and FY12. It is impossible to project what 2014 projects will get funded, and this ultimately drives most of our staffing decisions. Barring the unexpected loss of a major project, I'm comfortable that 2014 will be much like 2013 in terms of staffing.

As good stewards of the taxpayers' money, now more than ever it is important to keep an eye on reducing costs where possible. It will be harder in the coming months to get travel approved, to purchase new computers, and we are keeping a much closer eye on overhead expenses, but you all have proven that you can still be productive through lean times.

Building Strong!

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Louisville District rolls out Aquatic Nuisance Species report

Carol Labashosky, public affairs

The Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District held a public meeting for the Eagle Marsh Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS) Controls Report at the Allen County Public Library in Fort Wayne, Ind., Dec. 4. The Eagle Marsh ANS Controls Report is an interim Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study (GLMRIS) report, which concludes that the threat of interbasin spread of ANS across Eagle Marsh warrants prompt action. Overall, the purpose of the report and the public meeting were to advance implementation of permanent preventive measures efficiently and effectively.

The Eagle Marsh Controls Report addresses a complex set of conditions in two areas: hydrologic engineering and ANS biology. Throughout the study process, the Corps reached out to federal and state natural resources agencies for data and expertise to support the study.

An interagency group met at Eagle Marsh approximately two years ago and decided that the immediate risk for spread of Asian carp into the Maumee River basin warranted quick action. Consequently, Indiana Department of Natural Resources with federal financial and technical support promptly designed and erected a temporary barrier to prevent that from happening. The report points out that ANS are not limited to the Asian carp—which often times the public assumes—but other species and an especially virulent viral hemorrhagic species virus (VHS). A permanent barrier at Eagle Marsh will have to consider interbasin transfer of multiple ANS.

During the open house, easels with large graphic depictions of the alternatives



Jack Sweeney

The Army Corps of Engineers helps the public understand Aquatic Nuisance Species (ANS).

were on display in the foyer and Louisville staff answered questions from the public. Following the open house, Louisville District Commander Col. Luke Leonard opened the meeting and introduced John Goss, White House Council on Environmental Quality. Goss described the overall study efforts and his role as the Chairman of the Asian Carp Regional Coordinating Committee, a team of federal, state and local agencies working together to prevent Asian carp from establishing populations in the Great Lakes. Leonard recognized all the stakeholders who contributed to the study.

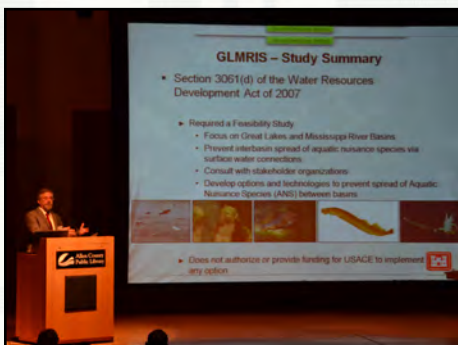
Program Manager Jack Drolet, Lakes and Rivers Division (LRD), provided an overview of GLMRIS and other aquatic pathways under study along the basin divide. Louisville District project team members who presented were Project Engineer Bonnie Jennings, Project Engineer Mike Saffran, LRD; Biologist Jesse Helton; Hydraulic Engineer Ken Lamkin; and Drolet. The team described in detail the ANS of concern and gave a short synopsis of each of the nine alternatives. The presentation highlighted the project with visuals, maps, photographs, descriptions and identification of the species that pose threats. Fifty members of the public attended the meeting, which was broadcast on the Internet for those who could not attend.

Handouts and links to resources such as the project web sites, social media sites and newsletters about ANS and GLMRIS were provided. “The goal here is to continue to communicate our on-going work,” said Drolet.

A question and answer session moderated by Goss followed the briefing. “Questions mainly focused on several desirable alternatives that provided hydrologic separation between the two basins while maintaining the visual aesthetics of Eagle Marsh,” said Nate Moulder, project manager.

A few comments requested that the Corps consider potential flood impacts should any of the alternatives be implemented near the downtown area, Fort Wayne wastewater treatment plant and individual property.

A question was raised about future plans for the study, its existing authority and whether additional legislation and funds would be needed from Congress to continue. The Corps’ consensus was that authority and appropriation along with the designation of a local sponsor might be in order to continue the project.



Jack Sweeney

Jack Drolet, LRD program manager for invasive species, presents on the Great Lakes and Mississippi River Interbasin Study.

See how they grow

American chestnut seedlings introduced at Louisville District lakes

Keith Chasteen, operations division

On Nov. 20, 2012, vegetation in the Louisville District became a little more diverse with the planting of American chestnut trees at Carr Creek Lake in Sassafras, Ky., and Green River Lake in Campbellsville, Ky. Each lake received eight tree seedlings from the Kentucky Chapter of The American Chestnut Foundation (TACF).

A national memorandum of understanding exists between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and TACF, which facilitates opportunities such as the establishment of the display planting at each of these lakes. The value of TACF's contribution of these trees to the lakes is \$2,000.00.

The American chestnut, which made up a quarter of the trees in Appalachia, was virtually wiped out in the early 1900s when a blight was brought to the United States on imported Chinese chestnut trees. Recent decades have seen organizations working to restore the population by cross-breeding American chestnut trees with the blight-resistant Chinese chestnut.

The display plantings at Carr Creek and Green River lakes, both in the vicinity of the lake project offices, will serve as an opportunity to share the history of



Green River Lake staff members Tyler Royce, Lori Brewster, Larry Lemmon, David Wethington, Andrea O'Bryan and Jim Goode stand next to a newly-planted chestnut tree.

Keith Chasteen

the American chestnut tree, tell about the devastation caused by the introduction of chestnut blight to the United States and to let visitors know that efforts are ongoing to restore this tree to the forests of the eastern U.S.

Dr. Anne Bobigian, an active TACF volunteer in the Louisville area, provided half of the trees from a test orchard in Oldham County, Ky.

"KY-TACF is delighted to implement a partnership with the Corps of Engineers in Kentucky in re-introducing Americans to the American chestnut," said Bobigian. "The American chestnut was almost a lost part of our heritage. Even conservationists and outdoor people can be surprised at the number of trees that the chapters of the American Chestnut Foundation have located and that we have successfully created a 'Restoration Chestnut' to begin testing for durable blight resistance. These trees will give people the opportunity to observe American chestnut trees directly."

"To see this tree is to admire it," she added, "and for some, it will be like recapturing a memory from the past. We hope some people will even be moved to join

the effort for restoration of this foundation species to the Eastern forest. There is still plenty of rewarding work left to do, now that we are part way there."

The other eight trees were provided by KY-TACF President Lynn Garrison. Garrison, along with other TACF volunteers, recently visited Carr Creek Lake to evaluate several sites as potential chestnut orchards. Recommendations of several of the sites visited were that they would provide excellent locations as "mother tree" orchards. These orchards provide space for the transplanting of root sprouts from surrounding forests, which then makes them accessible for pollination in the TACF breeding programs. From these trees, localized genetics will be preserved as blight resistance is bred into them. Future offspring will be the used to repopulate forests throughout the chestnut's native range.

Additional information on American chestnut trees and efforts to save it can be found at the TACF website: www.acf.org.



Jordan Hall, The Troublesome Creek Times

Louisville District park ranger Kevin Wright and James Madden, forest ranger, Kentucky Division of Forestry, plant an American chestnut tree at Carr Creek Lake.

Corps completes Fire Fighting and Rescue Training Facility at Fort Campbell

The Fort Campbell Fire Department now has a new place to prepare for emergencies after the completion of a newly constructed Fire Fighting and Rescue Training Facility at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The \$1.8 million project, managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Louisville District, features a multi-purpose helicopter trainer known as the A-500 Chinook Fire Trainer, a three-story control building, and a 2,000 gallon liquid propane tank.

“The whole facility allows the fire department to train using many different real-life scenarios to help prepare them,” said Cliff Hoelzer, Project Architect.

The A-500 Chinook Fire Trainer is the first of its kind produced by Kidde Fire Trainers out of New Jersey. The helicopter trainer will enable the fire department to train fighting fires with any combination of engine, gear box, cockpit and cabin fires.

The three-story building, fabricated in Kansas by WHP, features include rappel anchors, stairs, ladders, exterior doors and windows, an access hatch to mimic a residential attic, sprinklers and more.

“This building enables the fire department to fight fires in a one, two and three-story fire scenario with many different



Fort Campbell Resident Office

The Fort Campbell Fire Department trains for multiple scenarios at its new Fire Fighting and Rescue Training Facility, which features a Chinook Fire trainer and a three-story building.

variations available,” said Cecil Whitehouse, Construction Representative.

The project, constructed by Semper-Tek/Intersteel Inc., of Lexington, Ky., was completed October 18—43 days ahead of the occupancy date so that the fire department could start using the facility.

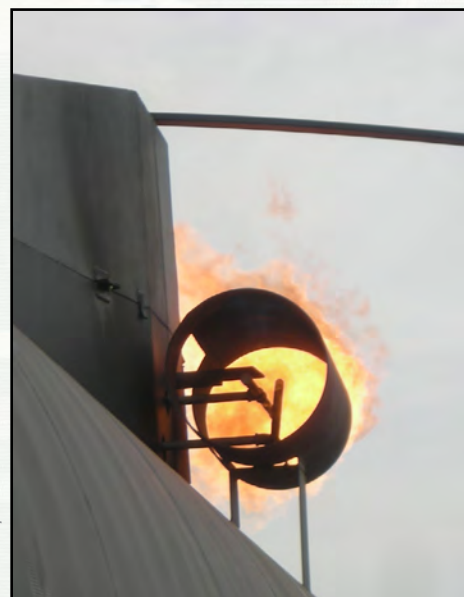
“The Fort Campbell Fire Department, USACE, and the contractor all worked

well with each other in making timely decisions to quickly resolve any issues that arose,” said Jerry Chandler, Project Engineer. “This project was excellent,” he said. “It couldn’t have been completed were it not for the efforts of all persons involved.”



Fort Campbell Resident Office

A three-story building at the facility include rappel anchors, stairs, ladders, exterior doors and windows, an access hatch to mimic a residential attic, sprinklers and more. One, two and three-story fire scenarios can be enacted.



Fort Campbell Resident Office

The A-500 Chinook Fire Trainer allows firefighters to train to fight engine, gear box, cockpit and cabin fires.

Lock operator ties the knot at Cannelton

Katie Newton, public affairs

When planning a wedding, most brides wouldn't think of sharing the day with their co-workers, but long-time Corps employee and bride-to-be Janet Merritt thought sharing the special ceremony with her Corps family was the perfect idea.

Merritt, a 20-year employee of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District, who has spent the last decade at Cannelton Locks and Dam tied the knot with her groom, Elvin Barks, during the annual office holiday party on Dec. 12.

"It was just instant how it all came together," said Merritt. "We had talked about getting married on Dec. 12, 2012, but it was a Wednesday. While we were planning the holiday party, co-workers suggested just having the ceremony here during the party." Immediately, the coordination began.

"I was concerned about having the ceremony at the employee get-together, but everybody was very receptive to the idea and has been so wonderful," said Merritt.

"The fact that Janet wants to get married here just solidifies the fact that we are a family," said Navigation Assistant Pennie Cason. "Everybody loves to come to work here every day."

The groom echoed those sentiments



Janet Merritt weds Elvin Barks in a first-of-its-kind ceremony at Cannelton Locks and Dam.

Katie Newton

and said he supported the bride's idea for a non-traditional wedding from the start. "She spends so much time here that this finally gave me a chance to steal her from the river for a while," said Barks.

"My job and these people mean so much to me that it was special to have it here," said Merritt.

On the big day the locks operated as normal as the Leonard L. Whittington tow, loaded with coal, moved down the Ohio River. Inside the lock office everybody pitched in and gave a hand to prepare for the holiday feast and nuptials—even the maintenance men scurried around to find straight pins for the bride while others offered up decorations for the cake table.

"It was all hands on deck," said Merritt.

The atmosphere was much like a family reunion with lots of joking and a warm welcome for Corps retirees who gathered for the event. "She said she just wanted a simple ceremony with her friends, so here we are," said Janice Alexander, lock and dam operator.

The ceremony, which took place on 12-12-12 at precisely 12:12 p.m. marked history for the Louisville District as the first employee to be wed on the lock wall. Between the two lock chambers at Cannelton, Tell City Clerk-Treasurer Jenny Richter officiated the wedding ceremony of Mr. and Mrs. Barks.

Among the 30 employees and retirees, the bride's sister, Elaine Bell, and Cannel-

ton Lockmaster Kenny Schaefer stood as witnesses.

Merritt and Barks' love story began seven years ago when they were best friends, but somewhere along the way it turned into more. "He was my best friend," said Merritt. "I never ever thought there would be a romance."

The newlyweds reside in Corydon, Ind., on Barks' farm and celebrated their honeymoon in Kona, Hawaii.

"We were pleased that Janet and Elvin chose to share their special day at Cannelton Locks and Dam," said Schaefer. "It was the perfect day for all as it signified a new beginning for them, and an end to Janet's successful career with the Corps. Janet plans to retire within the next few months, and she will be missed. What a glorious historical time for all of us to share with our extended Corps family."

Editor's Note: Janet Merritt was on annual leave the day of her wedding.



Mr. and Mrs. Barks cut the cake during their wedding celebration at Cannelton Locks and Dam Dec. 12.

Katie Newton



Katie Newton