

# TOWER TIMES

November/December 2022

TRIBAL RELATIONS

YEAR IN REVIEW

RESEARCH RAMPS UP

AROUND THE  
DISTRICT



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers** ®  
Rock Island District

## Mission

The Rock Island District's mission is to deliver vital engineering and water resource solutions in collaboration with our partners to secure our Nation, reduce disaster risk and enhance quality of life, providing value to the region and Nation.

## Vision

A premier public service, engineering organization of trusted, talented professionals delivering innovative and sustainable solutions to the region and Nation.

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# TOWER TIMES

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### *On the Cover*

Yukon Curtis, Construction Control Representative, shows Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist, contracting documents for the rehabilitation of Coal Creek Drainage and Levee District near Beardstown, Illinois.

*Photo by Kelcy Hanson*

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## As Banner Year Closes, Keep Safety Focused

One of the District's busiest years on record is coming to a close with more historic work on the horizon. Typically, as this is the year's final edition, I would use this space to reflect but I believe this Tower Times is chock full of reflection on the past year. Additionally, I hosted a town hall with our senior leaders in November at which we used the opportunity to highlight our historic year in review.

I could write pages of how proud I am of this District and everything it has accomplished and will continue to tackle in the coming years and beyond. But, I'd like to focus the collective attention on our absolute top priority – the health and safety of our team members!

Much of what this team does has inherent risks. From the work done at our locks and dams to the office staff supporting the field sites, there are dangers that must be recognized and constantly mitigated. As the commander, the district's safety program is my ultimate responsibility and I take it very seriously. Thanks to outstanding leaders and teams going back several years, I have the privilege and advantage to be a member of a District with a strong culture of safe work practices and coworkers looking out for each other and the public we serve. In fact, your focus on safety has led to a first for USACE.

In November, after nearly five years of review, the Rock Island District became the first District in MVD and second USACE (to a district with a drastically smaller operations portfolio) to complete Stage 3 of the Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System. Completing all three stages of CE-SOHMS is a heavy lift in itself but being the first district of our kind to do so is a real feather in the this team's cap.

Rock Island District began the CE-SOHMS process in 2016. Stage 1 focused on building the road map through the development of the safety processes and plans we use today. Following the road map, the District then focused on distributing and executing these developed processes and plans to all levels of the workforce. The effectiveness of this stage was measured by employees' overall knowledge and understanding of the program and the program's self-sustainability. Completion of Stage 3 indicates we are fully integrated into the safety culture of the organization and striving for continuous improvement.

Being first to complete the CE-SOHMS stages means Rock Island District will be counted on to lead USACE going forward with a continued focus on the pillars laid out within CE-SOHMS. It also means our District may be scrutinized more as a leader in safety, and we should welcome that visibility as a driver to always improve. I challenge all of you to be diligent in your work practices with a keen eye toward making our workplace as safe as possible. We have safety specialists, collateral duty safety officers, and site safety inspectors whose job it is to ensure safe work environments, but it takes every single member of the team. The safety culture that this District has worked hard to cultivate is the responsibility of every teammate, from the junior engineering intern to the most senior leader. Let's maintain our commitment and continue proving that achieving Stage 3 of CE-SOHMS isn't just a piece of paper, but fully reflects our expertise and commitment to eliminating risks, fighting complacency, and ensuring safety for our most important resource, our PEOPLE.

CE-SOHMS gave our District a measuring stick which has been helpful to gage the effectiveness of our safety programs. Mitigating risks at work is critical to our District's success but falls flat if those kind of efforts are not also transferred to our personal lives. A safe work environment means nothing if our teammates are sidelined, or worse, injured because of an off-duty accident.

My safety message for today is to please take care when you are not at work. This time of year, with winter weather and other hazards presenting, be sure you are considering the risks, planning for



Col. Jesse T. Curry  
District Commander


*Continued on page 4*

## COMMANDER'S COLUMN (Continued)

how to mitigate or eliminate those risks, and taking actions to protect yourself and those you care about. Whether you are driving in icy/snowy conditions or recreating in the winter wonderland, be mindful of your environment and plan for all scenarios. Winter driving is among the riskiest off-duty activity for us in the Midwest, but our confidence with driving in winter conditions can sometimes create complacency and acceptance of unnecessary risk. Think about the conditions before you drive and consider the risks. No project or mission that we support while on duty, or activity or destination while off duty is worth injury or loss of life.

As mentioned, this is the final edition of the Tower Times for 2022. I would be remiss if I didn't take this opportunity to wish you and your families a joyous holiday season and a happy new year. I hope to see as many of you as possible to convey those wishes personally but for those I don't see, please enjoy this time with your family and friends. A lot of work has been accomplished over the past 12 months and I can think of no other workforce more deserving of some time off. What better time of year to do that than the holidays. I have encouraged all supervisors to ensure their employees are given the latitude they need to take leave and truly be OFF work.

Finally, I recognize that not all of our teammates will have the ability to step away from the responsibilities we (and the Nation) count on them for. We have many employees who support operations that are 24 hours a day, seven days a week with no holidays. Let's keep those folks in our thoughts as well as the hundreds of thousands of first responders and military members who may not be able to be home with their families this holiday season. Their sacrifices are worth our immeasurable and collective appreciation.

It's an honor to command the Rock Island District. Thanks for all you did in 2022 and all you will do in the future. Remember that although we have many responsibilities, in many locations, and at many levels, we accomplish everything we do because **WE ARE ONE DISTRICT** and along with the rest of MVD and the Corps, we will **CONTINUE BUILDING STRONG!** 

COL Jesse T. Curry  
50th Commander of the Rock Island District  
US Army Corps of Engineers



### Last Issue's Winner



Answer : Illinois Waterway Project Office - Old Garage  
Winner: Mike Wildey

**Can you name where this photo was taken?**

If so, send your answer to [Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil) to be featured in the next issue of the Tower Times.



# BUILDING TRIBAL RELATIONS KEY TO PROJECT SUCCESS

By Frances Candelaria, Public Affairs Specialist

**W**hen the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plans a project, it is important to get the necessary steps in place before, during and after implementation. Depending on the project, meeting with indigenous tribes is an important step in gathering input and ensuring the protection and preservation of natural and cultural resources. This is vital to the process and completion of a project.

"It is important to develop and maintain the working relationships between representatives of a federal agency and tribes with areas of interest overlapping the jurisdiction of that agency," explained Kelsey Myers, Ph.D., RPA District Archeologist & Tribal Liaison who works for the Environmental Planning Branch of the Regional Planning and Environmental Division – North at USACE Rock Island District. "This allows agencies to meet the requirements of federal laws and fulfill the trust responsibility of the United States government to federally-recognized tribes as sovereign nations."

Brant Vollman, Archeologist with the Rock Island District's Regulatory Division, explained the importance of working with tribes.

"For the tribes, this is their culture; they have a whole different mindset in how they approach these things," stated Vollman. "It brings another perspective to the table that we don't have. I reach out to a lot of different people when I work on a regulatory project. Obviously we look at the applicant, but we have to also look at the bigger picture and so the


benefit for us is that we get that other view to put into our project."

Myers stated the process for meeting requirements of federal projects and preserving tribal sovereignty, heritage and resources is much more effective when the interests of both USACE and tribes are considered.

"Understanding other cultures, is so important," Vollman added. "Our current focus is trying to build our relationships, and for our district, it's different because a lot of our tribes are not resident. We are dealing with their ancestral lands."

According to Vollman, the Iowa, Osage, Muskwaki, Miami, and others were in the Rock Island District at one time or passed through the area years ago. Our district does not share space with them the way other districts do however it is important to remind people that there were other cultures before us that had a big influence on the area.

The Rock Island District works with many different tribes, "Depending on the area in which a project is located, there may be as few as one tribe or upwards of 45 tribes included in consultation correspondence," said Myers. "Because all tribes were removed historically from the Rock Island District, except

the Sac and Fox Tribes of the Mississippi in Iowa (Meskwaki), and those who remain are not on federal land, our consultation involves development of a list of interested parties for each locality. These are determined by the tribes themselves in consultation, based on treaty cessions, oral histories, and other sources of information." 

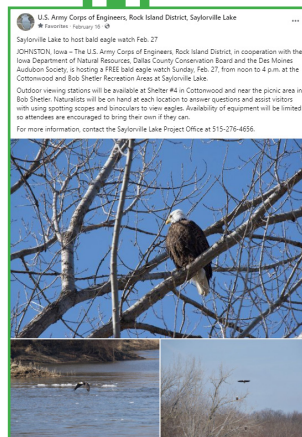
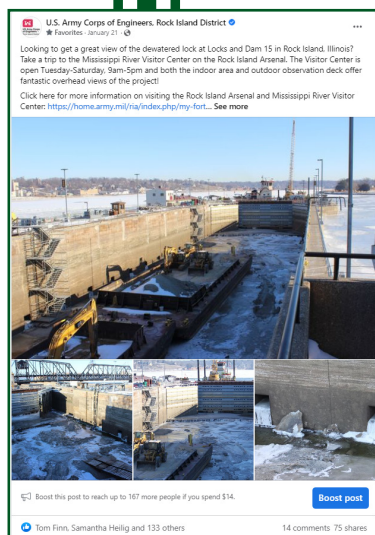
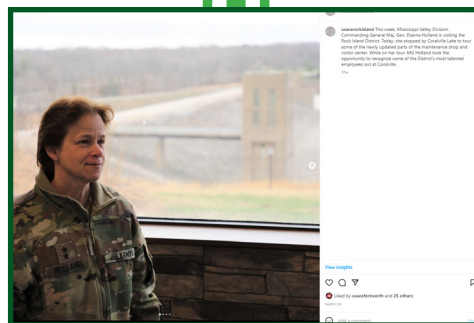
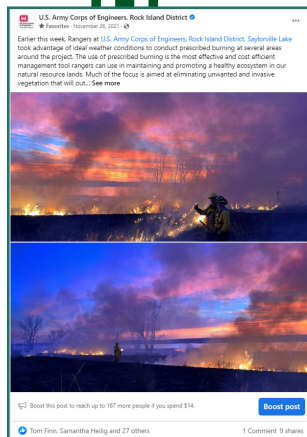


**Members of the USACE Rock Island District gathered with tribal representatives earlier this year at the 2022 Iowa Tribal Summit. Photo provided by Iowa Department of Transportation**

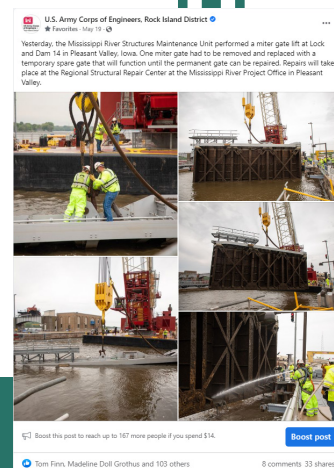


# YEAR IN REVIEW ACCORDING TO SOCIAL

By Jim Finn, Public Affairs Specialist

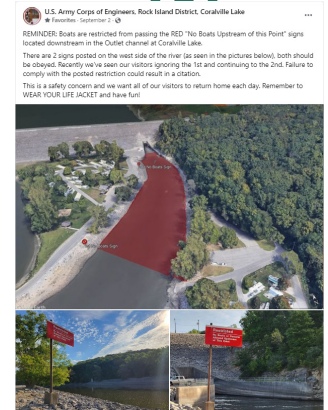
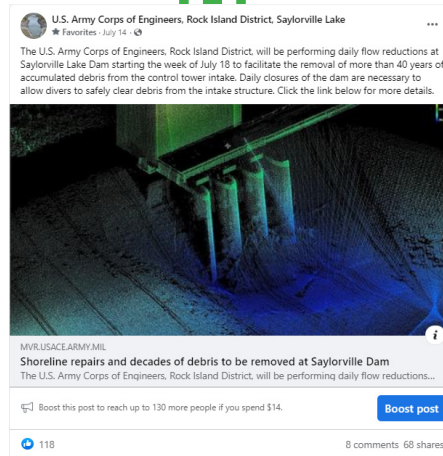
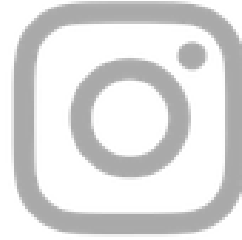
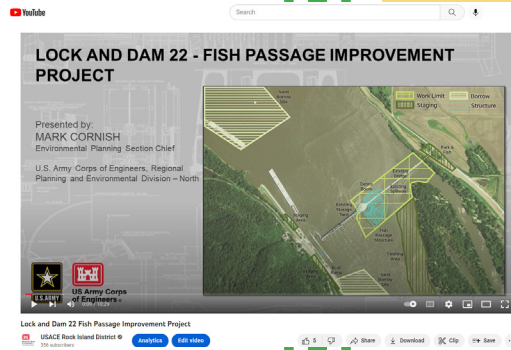


Reached  
nearly 1.9  
MILLION  
people  
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platforms!



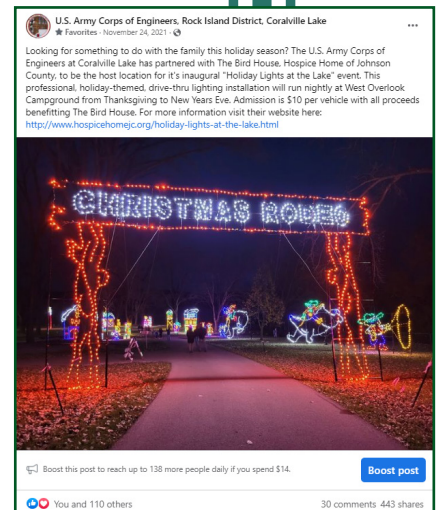
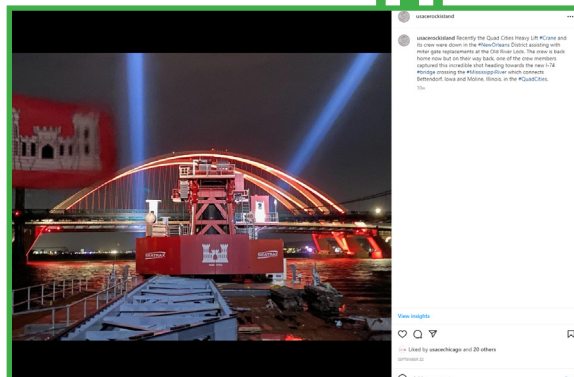


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countries!**





# RESEARCH RAMPS UP AT LOCK AND DAM 22

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

The fish passage slated for construction at Lock and Dam 22 near Saverton, Missouri, will be the first of five authorized fish passage structures to be built on the Mississippi River as part of the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program (NESP). Its purpose is to allow fish greater access to upstream river and tributary habitats and it is also to learn how to design future fishways by careful monitoring and adaptive management.

"The fish passage is the first of its kind on the Mississippi River. As we look at how this is going to impact the ecosystem here at Lock and Dam 22, it will also provide us an example to continue research and study, to determine how this is going to benefit the ecosystem up and down the entire river and other river basins across the country. The impact this one project could have, could be nationwide or even global," said U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District Commander Col. Jesse Curry.

In October, representatives from a number of federal agencies gathered at Lock and Dam 22 to see firsthand the research already being implemented at the site. To gather information about where fish migrate on the Mississippi River, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has been on site at the lock and dam tagging over 300 fish over the past year and setting up a receiver grid to record fish movements.

"It's really neat the type of data we can garner from this type of work," explained Kevin Haupt, lead Fisheries Biologist and Principal Investigator for the

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services. "We get the fish, we keep them in as good of condition as we can, we reduce stress as much as we can, we perform a simple incision, put the tag in their gut cavity, sew the



**U.S. Geological Survey employees perform minor surgery to insert monitoring tags in fish to monitor movement on the Mississippi River. Photo by Kelcy Hanson**

fish up and we let them go."

After the fish are tagged with transmitters, information is gathered by a series of receivers placed all along the river's shoreline. When a tagged fish swims near one of the receivers, information is 'pinged' and sent to the research team.

"What we're doing with fish passage provides






us the opportunity to create more places for fish and aquatic animals to have access to increase and enhance that ecosystem resilience,” said Mark Gaikowski, director of the U.S. Geological Survey’s Upper Midwest Environmental Sciences Center. “That is critical for us as we move into the future and we understand how climate change is going to impact the amount of water, the timing of water, flows of water and how fish and aquatic animals are going to have to interact with fish passage to respond and maintain their presence in the ecosystem.”

Once constructed, the fish passage will include a rock ramp designed to imitate a natural river, a bridge for pedestrian and vehicle access, water control structures (stoplogs), and fixed debris boom for debris and ice protection. The fish passage will benefit over

30 species of fish and restore the connection between river pools above and below Lock and Dam 22. The fishway will serve as a spawning ground for species requiring rock and gravel spawning habitat and increase migration capabilities of native fish species.

“I’m really excited about the intent of this project, which is a learning project,” said Mark Cornish, senior biologist with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “We have the opportunity to understand fish movement in the Upper Mississippi River in a way that we’ve never been able to in the past.”

Although this project is fully federal-funded by USACE, many natural resource agencies and the science community as a whole will benefit from the research that will be conducted at this site. 

## REACHING THE “RUNNING” STAGE OF SAFETY CULTURE

By Nate Gorham, Safety Manager

Some employees may have heard the Rock Island District recently became fully implemented in the Corps of Engineers, Safety and Occupational Health Management System (CE-SOHMS). Reaching this level of the program – where we are not just executing the process but are improving upon it – is an accomplishment that could not have been achieved by the Safety Office and leadership alone.


The path to full CE-SOHMS implementation began as a required regulation in 2016 to fully integrate CE-SOHMS into all USACE business operations. It has been a very long road that has taken roughly six years to complete. The path took us through three stages which could be compared to crawling, walking and running methodologies. Now that we have reached the running stage, our goal will be to continuously refine our safety program and look for ways to improve. Achieving this standing and reaching the running stage of implementation hasn’t been easy. Each phase was lengthy, and it took the effort of the entire District to meet our goal.

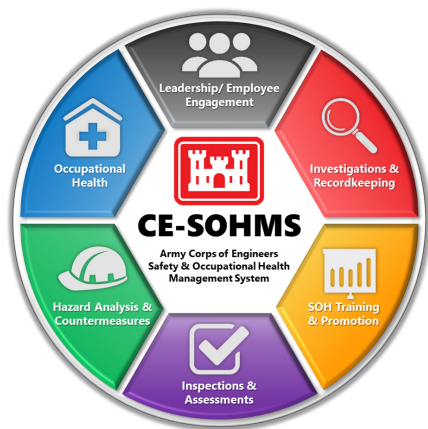
I will be the first to admit I was skeptical when we started this program, but now I can truly say CE-SOHMS is more than simply following regulations. It’s a change in our safety culture, and we made significant improvements to our safety program along the way. For example, we now use trending data,

such as near misses and assessment findings, to make our programs proactive rather than reactive. We can successfully make adjustments before injuries happen, instead of waiting for an injury to make meaningful safety changes.

As we continue to strive or “run” towards continuous improvement to our safety program, keep in mind that we will never be perfect and we can’t become complacent. The District’s safety program doesn’t belong to the Safety Office or even to the

Commander. We are all responsible for the ongoing safety of our programs, and completing this milestone is an achievement that belongs to every employee in our District.

Congratulations to all of you on an amazing job. We should all be proud of this accomplishment! 





# PROTECTING LIVELIHOODS THROUGH THE USACE LEVEE REHABILITATION PROGRAM

By Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist

For those living and working behind a levee system on a large river like the Illinois Waterway, a major flood can be catastrophic. The economic impact of a levee breach can be tremendous, destroying or disabling businesses, crippling critical infrastructure, and causing untold property damage costing millions, sometimes billions, of dollars to repair.

Chet Esther, a longtime landowner, farmer, and business operator, who lives along the Illinois Waterway near Beardstown, Illinois, is all too familiar with flooding and the destruction it can cause. Esther, along with his sons and their families, lives and works

inside an area known as the Coal Creek Drainage and Levee District.

Esther has served as a commissioner for the Coal Creek Drainage and Levee District for more than 40 years and when major flooding in 2019 caused severe erosion to the system, he knew costly repairs were needed. Thanks to the Public Law 84-99 Rehabilitation Program, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, was able to contract repairs to a four-mile stretch of the damaged levee.

“Without the Corps’ help, we would not have been able to fix our levee,” said Esther. “It was a multimillion-dollar project that we just could not have done.”

Public Law 84-99 is an authority allowing USACE to provide direct and technical assistance to tribal, state and local governments prior to, during, and after a flood event. Due to the significant amount of



Construction Control Representative, Yukon Curtis, stands with Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist, on the recently rehabilitated Coal Creek Levee near Beardstown, Illinois. Photo by Kelcy Hanson



soil that eroded from the Coal Creek levee during the flood, a massive amount of fill was needed to make the repairs.

According to Yukon Curtis, USACE Construction Control Representative for the project, “the project took around six months to complete, and the contractor worked 10 hours a day, six days a week with up to 10 dump trucks each day to move the amount of soil needed to repair the damage.”

The 6,300-acre district, protected by a 12-mile-long earthen levee, primarily houses agricultural land but it also includes portions of three state highways, part of the town of Frederick, and a storage facility capable of holding up to six million bushels of grain.

Landowners living within the district are taxed

each year. This money covers energy costs and maintenance of the district’s pumphouse but was insufficient to cover large-scale costs for physical

repairs. Through the PL 84-99 Rehabilitation Program, federal and non-federal flood risk management projects that are active in the program, like Coal Creek, may be eligible to receive critical repair assistance for rehabilitation when damaged or destroyed by floods.

According to Esther, getting started with the PL 84-99 Rehabilitation Program was “a little bit painful” because it

required getting all the i’s dotted and t’s crossed, but in the end, it was the right decision because it allowed them to receive critical repairs to their levee, protecting the livelihoods of those living and working in the area. 📺



**Contract employees excavate soil from nearby creek bed for rehabilitation of the Coal Creek Levee. Photo by Kelcy Hanson**





# OPSEC AWARENESS

Provided by Steve Caudle, Security Specialist, Security and Law Enforcement

## OPSEC! (Operations Security: What it is, and What You Can do About It)

**Y**ou may not have heard, but January is Department of the Army OPSEC Awareness Month and even if you had, you might not be familiar with what OPSEC means, or why it is important to you. The simple explanation is that OPSEC, which stands for Operations Security, is about protecting unclassified information, even seemingly harmless details, from adversaries that could use it against us and keep the District from completing its mission. For example, when a maintenance fleet is moving to multiple locations on a river, it is necessary for them to share information about schedule and supply needs with community partners. Although these details might appear low threat, information such as dates and times when these government vessels are scheduled to arrive at public harbors could be critical to an adversary. Limiting these types of details to people with a need-to-know, like the harbormaster, is one way we can prevent our fleet from being targeted by criminals or even worse, terrorists.

### The 5 Big OPSEC Rules:

#### **1. Remember: You Could Be a Target**

No matter your role or function within the organization, every employee could be a target. We are a natural target for all sorts of attacks — from garden-variety cybercriminals to competitive spying (sounds dramatic, but it's real!). That said, it doesn't really matter what industry you're in. If you have any sensitive, proprietary information at all (and let's face it, most employees do), then you could very well be a target. This is a good thing to always keep in mind.

#### **2. Remain Vigilant**

Employees are advised to always remain vigilant, especially regarding unexpected communications. If you receive a communication from an unknown source, proceed with caution. If something seems suspicious, report it. The motto is: See Something, Say Something. It is the responsibility of each user to defend the USACE network against cyber-attacks. If you receive a SPAM email, inadvertently click any malicious links within the email, report it by calling 866-52-2348 immediately. Do not forward sketchy emails to anyone. By following good security practices and having protections in place we are creating a culture of skepticism where employees feel comfortable checking twice before clicking a link or responding to a request for sensitive information, and you'll have a much more secure organization overall.

#### **3. Use Technology to Keep Private Information Private**

Some aspects of OPSEC cross over into the more traditional "information security" realm. Specifically, we recommend employees enable two-factor authentication, when possible, for all services and to use a password manager like KeePass. To gain access to KeePass visit the USACE App Portal (<https://app-portal.usace.army.mil/ESD>) then search KeePass to request the password manager software. Two-factor authentication makes it much more difficult for cybercriminals to hack their way into your systems, and a password manager makes it far less likely that employees will use the same password for everything. Both measures are simple to implement, have a relatively low impact on workflow, and will go a long way toward keeping your information secure.

#### **4. Watch What You Say, Where, and To Whom**

OPSEC often comes into play in public settings. For example, if members of your team are discussing work-related matters at a nearby lunch spot, during a conference, or over a beer, odds are that someone could overhear. As they say, loose lips can sink ships, so make sure you don't discuss sensitive company information while out in public.



This includes:

- Customer names and details
- New products or plans
- Intellectual property
- Private news
- Competitive strategies
- etc.

Many OPSEC missteps can be avoided by being more aware of your surroundings and the context in which you are speaking such as, what you're saying, where you are, who you're speaking to, and who might overhear. It's a good idea to go over the "no-no's" for your specific company during onboarding and to remind employees of them periodically.

### 5. Think Before You Post

In the age of ubiquitous internet access and rampant social media posting, it has never been easier to accidentally share information. Photos are a common source of trouble in the world of OPSEC today. Take the following image for example, displaying login information behind the individuals:



Oops. The moral of the story is, think twice before you post. If you're considering posting an image, make sure it doesn't include sensitive information. If you're thinking about posting something work-related, consider how someone at another organization or a cybercriminal might interpret your post and whether they might be able to glean sensitive information. When in doubt, leave it out.

### OPSEC is Tough, But You Are Tougher


As with many areas of security, the key is toughening up both your technological and human defenses. The more you and your team understands what operational security means and how to go about it, the less likely they are to make a misstep that could cost you.

With the five OPSEC best practices above, you should be well on your way to preventing loose lips from sinking the ship — and that means smoother sailing for everyone. 

# LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, LEVEL 2 KICKOFF



**R**ock Island District kicked off its fiscal year 2023 Leadership Development Program, Level 2 in late October with more than a dozen applicants selected for participation. Employees chosen for this year's program include: Mahmoud Alafif, Mark Bohne, Steven Bothell, Alexander Campbell, Bethany Hoster, Steven Klemme, Micki Meier, Kelsey Myers, Matthew Quinn, Anton Stork, Kathleen Sullivan, Heng-Wei Tsai, Jesse Westphal and Cory Wildermuth. District Commander Col. Jesse Curry met with participants and their selected mentors on the day of the kickoff to stress the importance of leadership development and talk with them about the value it brings to the District and the USACE organization.

During the course of the nine-month program, participants will have the opportunity to engage with District leadership at a number of events and monthly training sessions will be facilitated by Organizational Development Consultant, Dr. Randy Richards, on topics such as emotional intelligence, leading change, strategic thinking, conflict resolution, deep listening, and communication inquiry and dialogue. Additional training will be provided through site visits and deep-dive teambuilding exercises. 



# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

By Kelcy Hanson, Editor

## Heng-Wei (David) Tsai Civil Engineer



Civil Engineer, Heng-Wei (David) Tsai, started his career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District in January 2017. He spent the first two years working in Engineering and Construction Division's Hydraulics Branch before moving on to a position in the Geotechnical Investigations and Materials Section where he now also serves as a technical lead for the District's Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Program.

Tsai's journey to becoming an engineer, and a USACE employee, began in Taipei, Taiwan, where he lived for much of his youth. His father, who had graduated from the University of Iowa, was a firm believer that the United States, and specifically Iowa, had the best opportunities for higher education. As a result, Tsai traveled to the U.S. during his junior year of

high school with his mother and went on to enroll in his father's alma mater where he earned a master's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering.

Tsai's experience with UAS, more commonly referred to as drones, dates back to 2016 when he was developing his master's dissertation on snow fences. He used drones throughout his studies to gather data and measure the effectiveness of fence variables without causing disturbance to the snow. Skills he gained during these tests proved to be valuable when the Rock Island District became one of the first USACE Districts to start a UAS Program.

"I was excited to be given the opportunity to play an integral part in designing the UAS Program from the ground up," said Tsai. "I was able to present the Program to the District, Division and Headquarters levels to assist other Army branches of service to develop their own UAS programs and our UAS Program has now been used to support many enterprise-level aviation projects that I'm proud of."

Through training provided by the District, Tsai is currently licensed as a Federal Aviation Administration Part 107 and USACE certified remote pilot and remote pilot instructor. Being the UAS technical lead for the Rock Island District, he has more than 100 flights and has covered more than 3,000 acres within the District's jurisdiction.

"As a UAS subject matter expert, I really enjoy researching, utilizing, developing and distributing standard operating procedures, professional standards and guidance, project scope of work, scheduling and budgeting to enhance the Rock Island District's capability," he said.

In the fall, Tsai got the chance to take his UAS skills to a new level when he deployed to the Emergency Field Office in Sarasota, Florida. The mission was to support FEMA and the state of Florida in Hurricane Ian recovery efforts including the temporary blue roof, infrastructure assessments and debris cleanup.



**Civil Engineer, David Tsai, prepares a drone for flight.** Photo provided by David Tsai

*Continued on page 15*



For the blue roof mission, the UAS team captured 23,000 acres of storm damaged areas which were not captured by manned aircraft or assessment teams on the ground. The team also went to Sanibel Island and Fort Meyers Beach where they conducted infrastructure assessments. Because of the significant amount of damage and debris in many areas, it was difficult to visually see or was unsafe to personally assess. For the first time, UAS was used to fly in between the structures to assess damages and collect the needed data.

It was also the first time that USACE Aviation deployed fleets of different types of UAS to map, inspect and survey such a large area for hurricane response. In the past, this technology had been used to do a pop-up check in an area of need but not to survey a large area. These new methods saved a significant amount of time and data could easily be transferred to those who needed it in various areas.

"I was extremely grateful to be nominated to be the USACE enterprise-level aviation subject matter expert and fortunate to work and lead teams of talented and professional USACE Aviation Cadre

team members to support Hurricane Ian Recovery," said Tsai.


The team successfully flew fixed-wing aircrafts and multi-rotor unmanned aerial vehicles in support of the mission. Tsai said the most important duty during his deployment was to provide a safe flying environment for the team so they could collect data to support the mission and help the community. Multiple agencies and broadcast news companies were flying UAS during recovery and Tsai coordinated all flights with the FEMA Air Space Manager and FAA facility in controlled air space to



**A drone pilot's view of hurricane damage from an unmanned aircraft system control device.**

*Photo by Patrick Moes*

reduce risks in the response area.

This pioneering technology will be used and applied in the future for emergency response efforts such as post hurricane devastation, wildfires, tornadoes, flood fight, and much more. It could be used by USACE and other emergency response organizations to further improve damage assessment, provide more timely response and create better response plans. 

## 3-D DRONE IMAGERY PORTAL



David Tsai and the team of Rock Island District Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) pilots have created a portal where employees have access to 3-D models and data that's been collected by drones. The site includes content from lock and dams, levees, dredge material placement sites, and more. It was the first UAS portal to be created within a USACE district and is now serving as an example for other districts to emulate.

Information about the Rock Island District Aviation Program and the UAS portal may be found on their website: <https://geoportal.mvr.usace.army.mil/b5portal/apps/sites/#/rock-island-district-aviation-program>



# VOLUNTEERS VITAL TO DISTRICT MISSIONS

By Sam Heilig, Public Affairs Specialist

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is one of the nation's federal leaders in outdoor and water-based recreation. Volunteers are critical when it comes to operating and maintaining the recreation areas. Each year, thousands of people volunteer across the country serving as park and campground hosts, staffing visitor centers, conducting programs, cleaning shorelines, restoring fish and wildlife habitat, maintaining park trails and facilities, and more.


"Volunteers are essential to the operations and maintenance of our projects," said Jeff Rose, Operations Project Manager for the USACE Rock Island District's Des Moines River Area. "We have volunteers who donate their time, talents and services in our recreation and environmental stewardship programs."

In fiscal year 2022, the Rock Island District was supported by nearly 575 volunteers across its lake and river projects. With a combined total of more than

46,000 service hours, these volunteers provided work valued at close to \$1.4 million.

"With limited permanent staff and budgets, we are able to accomplish so much more operations and maintenance because of our great volunteers," said Rose. "The number of hours and the dollar value of their services speak volumes to just how important volunteers are to us. We value every single one of them."

Becoming a USACE volunteer is a relatively simple process

and opportunities are available year-round in many areas of the country. An interagency volunteer portal, which houses opportunities with the Department of Interior, Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, and Department of Defense, is available online at: [www.volunteer.gov](http://www.volunteer.gov). Volunteers can also call 1-800-VOL-TEER to learn more. 



**The group of 2022 volunteers at the Lake Red Rock gather together. Photo taken by Tracy Spry**



**(Left) Visitor center volunteer, Ellie Marchant, welcomes visitors to the facility at Lake Red Rock. (Above) Volunteers, Dan and Sara Havens stand outside the Whitebreast Campground fee attendant booth at Lake Red Rock. Photos taken by Tracy Spry**





# TRAINING TIDBITS

## Training Links

TED: [Total Employee Development](#)  
Training Opportunities: [Training - Training Opportunities](#)  
Leadership Development Training: [Training - Leadership Training](#)  
DAU: [DAU Home](#)  
ALMS: [EAMS-A Single Sign-On](#)  
CES: [CHRTAS](#)  
Army eLearning: [Skillsoft - US Army Login \(skillport.com\)](#)  
PROSPECT: [ULC Course Schedule](#)

## Training Due Date

30 June 2023 -  
Mandatory Training for  
ALL employees

## Prospect

- » FY23 Allocations are set
- » If you received a seat, you have been marked funded in TED
- » If you did not receive a seat and would like one, please work with your supervisor and office training coordinator to send in a request.

FY23 PROSPECT Course Schedule:  
<https://ulc.usace.army.mil/CrsSchedule-NewFY.aspx>

## Coming SOON

- » SHARP Training 9-13 Jan.
- » FY23 Training Guidance
- » LDP1 Launch 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. FY23
- » FY23 Mandatory Training
- » Supervisor Workshops Sessions
- » DEIA Training 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr.

## Supervisors Corner

- » **Supervisor Resources located here:**  
[Supervisor Resources \(dps.mil\)](#)
- » **Supervisor Development Course (SDC)** – Supervisors should now be auto enrolled and receive an email on how to access the training
- » **New Supervisor 101 Course** - Supervisors should be auto enrolled in this new mandated course at 8 months in their supervisory role. Supervisors will then have 4 months to complete the 10-hour online course.

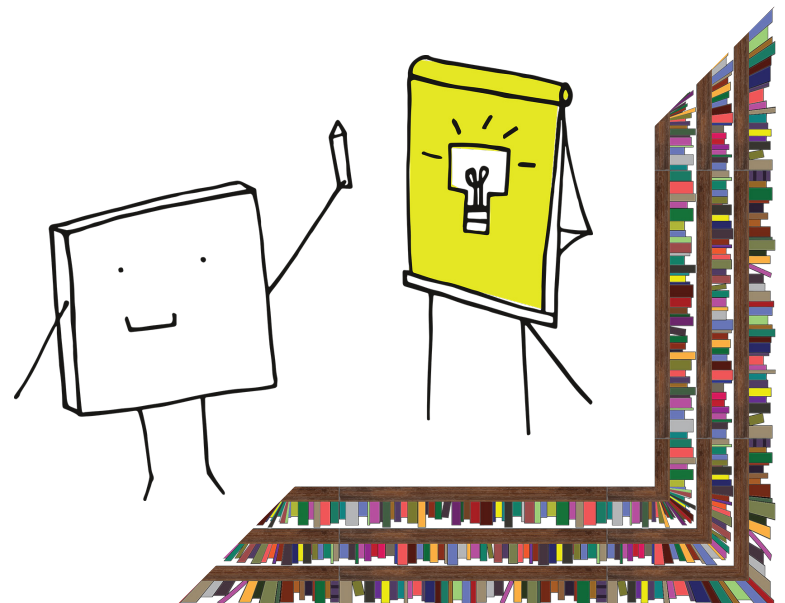
Academic Degree Training: Process guidance can be found here.  
[FY22 Training - All Documents \(army.mil\)](#)

Office training coordinators are always the first point of contact for employee training and development needs.

### New Employee SHARP Training Schedule:

To participate new employees must request in TED:  
Course Number: MAN-SHARP-NE-23  
Vendor: USACE MVR Mandatory

25 Jan 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
22 Feb 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
29 Mar 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
26 Apr 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
31 May 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
28 Jun 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
26 Jul 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
30 Aug 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)
27 Sep 23,	1400-1500 EST	(Change)





# AROUND THE DISTRICT

## EMPLOYEES OF THE MONTH

### CONGRATULATIONS



Congratulations to Allison and Joe Longeville on the birth of their son Ren Alan Longeville, on Oct. 28. Ren weighed in at 8 pounds, 8 ounces.



Congratulations to Mahmoud and Wafa Alafif on the birth of their daughter, Joori Alafif, on Nov. 18. Joori weighed in at 7 pounds, 7 ounces and 17.5 inches long.

### AUGUST -- *Troy Venner*

Troy worked extensively with Eastern Area Construction Office to identify new office space that met their needs in Peoria, Illinois. He worked to maintain a strong working relationship with the prospective landlord to ensure that the selected space remained available.



### SEPTEMBER -- *Martha Cox*

Martha negotiated the acquisition of two tracts of land needed for the Illinois Waterway Dredge Material Management Plan at Mackinaw. She worked diligently to ensure two offers to sell were fully executed and funds were obligated by the end of the fiscal year.



### RETIREMENTS

**Michael Ryan**, Operator at Lock and Dam 14, retired Oct. 22, after dedicating over 43 years of service to the federal government.

Please send family news to [Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil](mailto:Kelcy.C.Hanson@usace.army.mil) to be included in the next issue of the *Tower Times*.

### OCTOBER -- *Steve Harney*

Steve demonstrated exceptional performance of duties as Coralville Lake's electrician. His outstanding work ensured the annual "Holiday Lights at the Lake" charity event will have power for the holiday season. This special event is expected to attract over 10,000 vehicles!





# 2022 NEW EMPLOYEES

**The Rock Island District welcomed a total of 93 employees in calendar year 2022. The following is a listing of our newest team members and their positions:**

Stamper, Jeffrey	CIVIL ENGINEER	Griffin, Michael	CIVIL ENGINEER
Norgard, Brian	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)	Schlabowske, Carli	STUDENT TRAINEE
Lewis, Casey	GENERAL BIOLOGIST	Simon, Alexander	STUDENT TRAINEE
Graham, Gregor	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Lee, Andrew	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Sink, Joshua	MAINTENANCE WORKER (MVO)	Welzenbach, Lindsay	SUPPORT SERVICES SPECIALIST
Copeland, Justin	CIVIL ENGINEER	Head, Keagen	STUDENT TRAINEE
Joers, Frederick	CIVIL ENGINEER	Wilson, Cheyenne	PARK RANGER
Messerschmidt, Steven	MAINTENANCE MECHANIC (MVO)	Nelson, Douglas	APPRAISER
Jones, Noah	CIVIL ENGINEER	Thomas, Julie	REALTY SPECIALIST
Schaer, Craig	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Graham, Gavin	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)
Gregory II, Michael	LOCK AND DAM EQUIP. MECHANIC	Lewis, Kevin	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Hoeft, Kyle	LOCK AND DAM EQUIP. MECHANIC	Gant, Damon	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Laborde Rivera	CIVIL ENGINEER (GEOTECHNICAL)	Skibbe, Justin	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Carroll, Cameron	PARK RANGER	Moore, Marian	REGULATORY SPECIALIST
Sandholdt, Colby	PARK RANGER	Grissett, Joan	STAFF ACCOUNTANT
Van Der Veer, Emily	PARK RANGER	Hendricksen, Taylor	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)
Edwards, Angela	PARK RANGER	Price, Halley	STUDENT TRAINEE
Bangert, Kolton	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Olson, Ryan	MECHANICAL ENGINEER
Ditto, Darrin	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Clark, Dallas	MAINTENANCE WORKER (MVO)
Otte, I, Blaine	MAINTENANCE WORKER HELPER	Uhl, Jonathan	REALTY SPECIALIST
Christl, Sean	STUDENT TRAINEE	Adamson, Blake	MAINTENANCE WORKER
Lindke, Frederic	CONSTRUCTION CONTROL REP	Candelaria, Frances	PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST
Schabilion, Mary	PARK RANGER	Sierens, Michael	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)
Kemp, Vanessa	SUPPORT SERVICES SPECIALIST	Schulte, Bernard	CIVIL ENGINEER
Jespersen, Jillian	NATURAL RESOURCES SPECIALIST	Jacobson, Jeffrey	APPRAISER
Holder, Stephen	ELECTRICAL ENGINEER	Blazejewski, Chrystian	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Ruth, William	REGULATORY SPECIALIST	Schmidt, Rowen	REGULATORY SPECIALIST
Hamilton, Drew	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Scott, Matthew	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
McGouirk, Sean	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Zelle, Kyle	CIVIL ENGINEER (STRUCTURAL)
Christner, Jared	EQUIPMENT SPECIALIST	Mockmore, William	MAINTENANCE WORKER HELPER
Johnson, Daniel	CIVIL ENGINEER	Santiago, Yolimar,	CIVIL ENGINEER (STRUCTURAL)
Howard, Jesse	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Elmer, Benjamin	ARCHITECT
Guzlas, III, George	STUDENT TRAINEE	Hubbard, Christopher	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Oard, Faith	STUDENT TRAINEE	Neumann, William	GEOLOGIST
Beck, Mitchell	ARCHITECT	Strayer, Cassandra	SUPPORT SERVICES SPECIALIST
Poulter, William	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR	Garcia, Dante	MAINTENANCE WORKER HELPER
Dubberke, Kent	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)	Orta-Sosa, Ramuel	CIVIL ENGINEER
Gibson, Lynn	MGMT AND PROGRAM ANALYST	Laverman, Katherine	REGULATORY SPECIALIST
Peterson, Jacob	ENGINEERING TECHNICIAN (CIVIL)	Guerrero, Mitchell	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Hosford, Matthew	SUPERVISORY CIVIL ENGINEER	Iwinski, Bryce	STUDENT TRAINEE
Benac, Ryan	COMPUTER SCIENTIST	Rasmussen, Codyn	HEAVY MOBILE EQUIP. MECHANIC
Goss, Robert	REGULATORY SPECIALIST	Anderson, Morgan	GEOGRAPHER
Arguello, Dante	CIVIL ENGINEER	Shackleford, Jason	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR
Haack, Christopher	STUDENT TRAINEE	Ford, William	DIVING PROGRAM COORDINATOR
Gauley, Thomas	CIVIL ENGINEER (GEOTECHNICAL)	Vasquez, Alma	FACILITY SERVICES ASSISTANT
Tomei, Joseph	CIVIL ENGINEER (HYDRAULIC)	Dunton, Jessie	MGMT SUPPORT SPECIALIST
Brigman, Konnor	LOCK AND DAM OPERATOR		

# Welcome



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT, ROCK ISLAND  
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ROCK ISLAND, IL 61204-2004

Happy Holidays

