

Corps' Military Programs director tours Southern California Veterans Affairs projects



Photo by Stephen Baack

Dr. Christine Altendorf, center, Military Programs director for Interagency and International Services for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, tours construction sites at the VA San Diego Healthcare System Feb. 23 in La Jolla, California, alongside Col. Antoinette Gant, left, commander of the USACE South Pacific Division; Col. Julie A. Balten, second from right, Los Angeles District commander; and David Van Dorpe, right, deputy district engineer for the LA District.

BY JOHN REESE AND STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES – The director of Military Programs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Interagency and International Services traveled to Southern California Feb. 23 and 24 to meet with representatives working on three different Veterans Affairs projects. The projects are managed by the Corps' Los Angeles District.

Dr. Christine Altendorf met Feb. 23 with leaders and project managers working on the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building and adjacent parking structure at the San Diego Veterans Affairs Medical Center in La Jolla, California.

She was joined by other leaders, including Bryan Truesdell, acting chief of Interagency

and International Services; Col. Antoinette Gant, commander of the Corps' South Pacific Division; Col. Julie Balten, commander of the Corps' Los Angeles District; and Dr. Michael Brennan, executive director of Construction and Facilities Management, Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Spinal Cord Injury and Community Living Center, which had a groundbreaking ceremony June 16 and is projected to open in fall 2024, will provide care to veterans and active-duty personnel with spinal cord injuries and disorders, who live in the San Diego and Imperial counties in California, and in Arizona and southern Nevada.

The new facility, which is replacing the
'DIRECTOR' continued on Page 4

Happy Women's History Month 2022

As both a woman and your commander, I'm proud to commemorate Women's History during the month of March as we reflect on the storied contributions women have made growing USACE, our Army, and our nation – in countless recorded and unrecorded ways.



COL. ANTOINETTE GANT
SPD COMMANDER

This year's theme is "Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope" and celebrates women who historically have brought priceless gifts of service to their families, workplaces, and neighborhoods – many times at great sacrifice. And while I do agree that women are considered sacrificial by many, I'd like to offer this quote from Bethany Hamilton, a professional surfer, which I feel encapsulates women's character quite well:

"Courage, sacrifice, determination, commitment, toughness, heart, talent, guts. That's what little girls are made of. To heck with sugar and spice."

This same constitution is why women are able to hold positions in the armor, infantry, and field artillery branches in the Army and now comprise 36 percent of the Army civilian workforce. At South Pacific Division, we set a standard of excellence, encouraging the development of a qualified and demographically diverse workforce that is essential to our mission of revolutionizing our program and project delivery. Women's History Month is a great reminder that one of the ways we modernize is through our PEOPLE and a time to acknowledge that advancement of diversity plays a critical role in our success as we work to #BreakTheBias in gender and beyond.

Lastly, I'd like to invite all of you to view a short SPD Women's History Month video below. I would also encourage you to participate in Women's History Month events that are being offered through work or in your communities.

Women's History Month Video 2022:

<https://youtu.be/2cZhKq03QVs>.

Engineer Safety Gram:

Don't fall for slipping and tripping hazards

BY LOS ANGELES DISTRICT
SAFETY OFFICE

Falls always have an element of surprise. The surprise factor is what makes falls a standard comedy routine. But falls aren't at all fun when they are real. Falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injury and death. And these aren't necessarily falls from heights such as ladders or construction scaffolds. Most are falls from the same level, caused by slipping or tripping.

Falls can happen anytime and anywhere, but with winter just around the corner, it is time to also make sure we are prepared to prevent slips on ice and snow.

Here are some reminders about preventing falls:

- Keep obstructions out of walkways. These items are common causes of tripping accidents – stored materials, equipment, cables, cords, hoses, scrap, and trash.
- Keep doors and drawers of cabinets and workbenches closed.
- Clean up any spills promptly. If this is not possible, make sure there is a barricade and sign.
- Floor coverings such as carpets, mats, and tiles should be secured to prevent tripping hazards. Report any problems you find.
- Stay under the speed limit when you are walking. Don't run in your work area.
- Make sure your footwear won't trip you up. It should fit well and have low heels. Keep your shoelaces tied. The tread should be adequate for travelling safely on slippery surfaces. Keep your shoes in good repair.
- If you are carrying an item, be sure you can see over it or around it. This is especially important on stairways.
- If you slip or trip – even if you are not injured - take a moment to figure out the cause. Correct or report any hazards such as wet floors or obstacles in traffic areas.

Falls are a hazard at work any time of the year. But winter weather adds a greater element of danger:

- Report any hazardous conditions such as ice on a sidewalk or water in an entry area. It may not be your job to shovel snow or mop up spills, but it is certainly your responsibility to report hazards so they can be corrected before someone is injured.
- Outdoor walkways and steps should be kept free of ice, snow, mud, and wet leaves.
- Entrances and interior traffic areas should also be kept free of water and ice. There should be mats at the doorways to remove snow, water, and mud from footwear.
- Extra measures should be taken to ensure safe footing on sloped floor surfaces, such as ramps.
- When walking on slippery surfaces go slowly and take small steps.
- Wear shoes or boots with non-slip soles. Special footwear with cleats is available for especially slippery conditions.
- Watch your footing as you get in or out of vehicles. When climbing in or out of equipment cabs, keep a firm grip on the handholds and watch out for ice on the footholds, and mud or ice on your shoes.

Winter weather calls for extra caution when working at heights. Make sure surfaces such as ladder rungs and scaffold decks are free of ice and snow. Falls aren't funny. They cause serious injuries and death. Watch your step to prevent falls, especially in winter conditions.

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Women's History Month: Providing healing, promoting hope

Hello, SPL Team!

Women's History Month stands as a reminder of the strength the Army – and by extension, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Los Angeles District – has by having a high-quality and diverse all-volunteer force.



COL. JULIE A. BALTEN
LA DISTRICT COMMANDER

This month was exciting, particularly from an engineering perspective, as on March 9, I joined South Pacific Division Commander Col. Antoinette Gant as we commemorated Women's History Month at the Society of American Military Engineers' Women in STEM panel event near Sacramento, California. I also participated in a separate panel for high school STEM students just the day prior. Both were very inspiring.

It was an incredible experience highlighting the opportunities that exist today for women in the fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics, but it's also important to keep in mind we still have a long way to go for women's equality and gaining even more support for women in STEM careers.

Of course, STEM is only one part of commemorating Women's History Month. For the Army, the commemoration isn't complete without also

honoring the historic achievements of women Soldiers and civilians who have played a major role in defense of our nation. Women of every race, class and ethnic background have made historic contributions to the growth and strength of our Army in countless ways.

This year's observance theme is "Women providing healing, promoting hope." I encourage you to click on the names on the right to learn more about these inspiring U.S. Army women.

There are even more women whose sacrifices and contributions will undoubtedly inspire you: Click [HERE](#) to read more.

Last but not least, I invite you to learn about the Army Women's Museum in Fort Lee, Virginia. It's the world's only museum dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the contributions of women to the Army. If you ever find yourself in the area, I highly encourage you to visit; however, even if you can't be there physically, the museum offers an excellent virtual tour through their informative website at <https://awm.lee.army.mil>.

Sincerely,
Col. Julie A. Balten

Click below to learn more about these inspiring U.S. Army Women:



**HON Christine Wormuth,
Secretary of the Army**



**LTG Nadja West,
Ret. Surgeon General**



**2LT Emily J.T. Perez
(1983-2006)**



**CPT Linda Bray, First Woman
to lead a platoon in combat**



**Olympic Gold Medalist
1LT Amber English**



**Paralympic Gold Medalist
SFC Elizabeth Marks**



**The 6888th Central Postal
Directory Battalion**

See more remarkable women.

Commander emphasizes 'lines of effort' to support vision for LA District

Amidst the busyness of ensuring success for all the Los Angeles District's missions, Col. Julie Balten, commander of the LA District, has a vision for SPL's future: To be the district that delivers quality, on-time, engineering solutions to the American West; delivering a legacy with impact.

Her vision is being implemented through the development of 10 "lines of effort," also referred to as LOEs, that touch on nearly every aspect of the way SPL does business.

These LOEs are championed by LA District chiefs and supported by project delivery teams, with a



MARK D.
COHEN
OPERATIONS
DIVISION CHIEF

cross-section of expertise from across the organization.

LOEs are diverse – from better implementing the project delivery business process, to ensuring we hire, train and retain the best staff. Other LOEs focus on the way specific processes impact the delivery by certain functional areas, such as Real Estate, Environmental and Engineering.

While strategic planning, process improvement and continual learning are an ongoing part of any organization, the LA District, under Col. Balten's leadership, embarked

on a more intense effort following a recent Design Construction Evaluation (DCE) review that led to concerns about key aspects of project delivery in the District.

The LA District has a diverse portfolio of projects, and demand for our services is growing, as seen in the recent Infrastructure and Investment Jobs Act funds allocated to the LA District and the expansion of our mission via the South Pacific Border Project Management Office. Total District funding is expected to top \$1 billion in the coming years.

According to Col. Balten, getting after key processes and enhancing learning is necessary to position the LA District for suc-

cess into the future.

The commander is meeting monthly with her champions to ensure LOE success. The South Pacific Division, which is undergoing a similar strategic effort, was briefed on our progress in January.

Most of the work is expected to be completed this calendar year, but some initiatives may extend further, depending on the need.

With this effort, we're not just looking to change processes; we're looking to take the LA District to the next level.

We want everyone to be a part of creating a more enduring organization, and one that provides for individual, professional satisfaction and growth.



Photo by Stephen Baack

Leaders representing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, including Dr. Christine Altendorf, Military Programs director for Interagency and International Services for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, gather Feb. 23 for a firsthand look at construction areas at the VA San Diego Healthcare System for the new Spinal Cord Injury/Community Living Center building and adjacent parking structure, a project that the Los Angeles District is managing in close cooperation with Construction and Facilities Management, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

[‘DIRECTOR’ continued from Page 1](#)

current building at the San Diego VAMC, will be a 197,000-square-foot, four-story stand-alone structure. The current center is one of 25 spinal cord injury and disorder facilities at VA centers throughout the U.S. Each center has highly trained and experienced providers, including doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, psychologists and others, who deal with the unique problems that affect those with spinal cord injuries or disorders.

Altendorf said the key to ensuring the project is a success is maintaining strong relationships and collaboration among project stakeholders.

“We’ve got some hurdles to get through as we continue to work our different cultures between USACE and the VA, but it all boils down to relationships, partnering and collaboration – and everyone keeping in mind the final product and who this is for in mind,” Altendorf said. “There’s a lot of different partners and a

lot of different stakeholders. We just have to keep the end game in mind – and the end game is making sure we have the right facilities for our veterans.”

The site visit was an opportunity for leaders from the Corps and the VA not only to see the construction progress, but to talk through challenges, said Jennifer Rivo, project manager with the Corps LA District’s Mega Projects Division, Department of Veterans Affairs Branch. These challenges include working within a constrained construction area with minimal impact to hospital operations and veterans’ access, as well as ensuring all organizations working on the project are using the established formal lines of communication.

“There’s multiple parties that we’re working with here, so sometimes it can be a little confusing as to who should be talking to whom about what, and that ties into roles and responsibilities,” she said. “That said, I want to highlight that the communication here has gone re-

ally well with the VA and all of our partners, but we’re always trying to improve the way we communicate. It’s a huge focus for us.”

Altendorf said the Corps of Engineers has identified the San Diego VA project as one it would like to emulate for other projects.

“We also understand it’s only 5 percent complete, so there may be potential challenges to come, but so far, so good,” she said. “What we really focused on quite a bit, though, are some challenges we have at Long Beach (VA), a project that is further along. We were able to take lessons learned from some of the hurdles at Long Beach and use them here to better become a learning organization and use best practices.”

“It’s been fantastic for Dr. Altendorf to visit the Los Angeles District, especially our VA program,” said Col. Julie Balten. “We have one of the largest programs in the entire enterprise for the VA, with both Long Beach and San Diego, and soon, Greater Los Angeles.

“It’s very important that we continue to partner with (Construction and Facilities Management) and the VA, so it’s great the CFM leadership is here also to meet with Dr. Altendorf and see our programs and how we better communicate and better partner to deliver them. If we’re successful, then they’re successful. Really, the end users are veterans, who get these incredible facilities that they deserve. That’s really the end goal: to be able to turn over these quality facilities to our veterans.”

LONG BEACH, GREATER LOS ANGELES VA

Altendorf continued her LA District visit Feb. 24, as she headed to the VA Long Beach Healthcare System. The Corps’ LA District is completing mental health in-patient and outpatient facilities, as well as a Community Living Center on the campus.

There, she met with LA District program managers, along with senior LA District and VA leaders, offering guidance and support to keep the project running smoothly and efficiently. Altendorf also was joined by Dr. Christopher Castle, VA associate executive director, Office of Facilities Planning.

The meeting was followed by a tour of the busy job site, consisting of three structures being built for veteran’s mental health care needs. The first was a walkthrough of the mental health inpatient/outpatient facilities – two large, state-of-the-art structures on the VA Long Beach campus nearing completion. Both buildings are intended to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED-certified, silver or better upon completion.

She then toured the Community Living Center, noting its progress, while being briefed on updates to the project by managers, engineers and construction personnel.



Photo by Stephen Baack

Dr. Christine Altendorf (second from right), Military Programs director for Interagency and International Services for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Headquarters, tours a construction site at the VA San Diego Healthcare System Feb. 23 in La Jolla, California. At right is Justin Gay, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District Mega Projects Division chief. John Keever, division chief for the Program Execution Office, USACE South Pacific Division, stands second from left.

“We’ve been working some challenges and issues with this project for several months ... and so it was good to have our partners, which are (Construction and Facilities Management) and Veterans Affairs (Construction and Facilities Management) altogether at the table and really putting our pencils to the paper ... figuring out how to move forward, and, ultimately, doing what’s right for our veterans,” Altendorf said.

Both the two-story, 80,000-plus-square-foot mental health facilities are more than 50 percent complete, while the three-story,

181,000-thousand-square-foot Community Living Center is more than a quarter complete.

The single building that currently houses mental health services and the Community Living Center for VA Long Beach Healthcare System patients is scheduled for demolition after the replacement facilities are fully operational.

Focusing on taking care of the nation’s veterans by constructing these facilities at the VA is a top priority, Gant said. The VA Long Beach Healthcare System serves more than 50,000 veterans.

“In the end, this is all about the veterans and making sure we have a place where our veterans can be able to feel safe and get the support that they actually need, and to know the Corps of Engineers has been a part of that,” she said. “It’s absolutely fabulous, and I’m so happy that I can be a part of that as well.”

Following the visits to both VA healthcare system projects in Long Beach and San Diego, Altendorf and the team met with leaders at the Greater Los Angeles VA Healthcare System to go over upcoming plans for project work there as well.



Photo by Stephen Baack

Jenn Rivo, project manager with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Mega Projects Division, Department of Veterans Affairs Branch, talks to leaders from the Corps of Engineers and the Department of Veterans Affairs during a Feb. 23 site visit to construction areas at the VA San Diego Healthcare System in La Jolla, California.



Photo by Stephen Baack

Ivan Beckman, left, the Los Angeles District’s liaison from the Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi, has a conversation Feb. 24 with Kelly Howard, center, LA District maintenance management specialist, and Trevor Snyder, an LA District project manager, while on a tour of the LA River during his visit to various district projects.

ERDC liaison looks for potential research, development solutions at LA District

BY STEPHEN BAACK
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

LOS ANGELES – The Los Angeles District’s liaison from the Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Mississippi, met with LA District professionals Feb. 22-24 and got a close-up look at several of the district’s projects.

Ivan Beckman, a research mechanical engineer with the center’s Computational Analysis Branch and a previous commander of ERDC, talked with LA District subject-matter experts with a range of specialties, including planning, construction, regulatory, operations, engineering, coastal and environmental.

“I’m getting a feel for what type of research and development can be applied here, and lessons learned,” Beckman said. “I’ve learned a lot since I’ve been here, and I’m looking forward to taking some of those thoughts and ideas back to ERDC and see what kind of research that we’re doing that we can apply out here.”

ERDC’s mission is to help solve “our nation’s most challenging problems in civil and

military engineering, geospatial sciences, water resources, and environmental sciences for the Army, Department of Defense, civilian agencies, and our nation’s public good.”

One site Beckman visited was Prado Dam, which has already benefitted from collaboration between the LA District and ERDC in the design of the dam’s \$100-million BSNF Railroad Bridge Pier Protection Project that was officially unveiled during a May 27 ribbon-cutting ceremony. The bridge, which is equipped to handle a 30,000-cubic-foot-per-second release of water from Prado Dam, incorporated input from ERDC’s physical model to support the design.

Although the primary function of Prado Dam is flood-risk management, ERDC last year also teamed up with the Center for Western Weather and Water Extremes at UC San Diego’s Scripps Institution of Oceanography on a report published by the Forecast-Informed Reservoir Operations program, or FIRO, to find new ways to increase water-storage and conservation capabilities at the dam – especially useful during drought conditions.

During his LA District visit, Beckman

also toured the LA River with Trevor Snyder, project manager, and Kelly Howard, maintenance management specialist – examining challenges and successes from both a structural and an environmental perspective.

One environmental challenge the LA District must contend with is invasive species such as the quickly growing arundo donax reeds. Because they can grow up to 4 inches in one day, the plants can slow down the flow of the river, which presents a hazard during adverse weather events. Snyder said one goal was to learn about new ways ERDC could assist the LA District with potential alternative herbicide applications.

“The river tour was to provide Mr. Beckman knowledge about our flood-risk management projects, some of our challenges and a lot of our successes in maintaining the Los Angeles River as a flood-risk management project,” Snyder said. “I hope this gives him an idea of what are projects are like and our maintenance challenges so he can go back to ERDC and see other ways they can help support our district better.”

Corps’ LA District removes 128 tons of floatable debris from San Gabriel Riverbed during weeklong cleanup project

BY JOHN REESE
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

AZUSA, California – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District removed 128 tons of floatable debris during a cleanup of the San Gabriel River, Feb. 22-28, 2022, near Azusa. The weeklong project filled 16 40-cubic-yard dumpsters with debris that can create runoff blockage during heavy rains and cause flooding of heavily populated areas downstream.

“The floatable debris consisted of remnants of abandoned camps left behind, which can pose a serious blockage in trash racks during rain events,” said Trevor Snyder, project manager with the LA District’s Operations and Maintenance Division. “The debris washes downstream into the dams and channels, thus reducing the flood-risk management capacity of the San Gabriel River.”

The work was done by hand, so as not to disturb bird nesting and other wildlife habitats, with debris gathered directly to dumpsters or at collection points along a hardtop pedestrian/bicycle path. A light, intermittent rain created a challenging working environment, with workers scouring the riverbed between the path and the San Gabriel Mountains, carrying soggy debris through heavy vegetation, before climbing a steep concrete embankment.

Piles of dumped trash littered the area. A recurring example of debris found in the area was a large amount of Arundo Donax, or giant reed, an invasive grass that resembles bamboo and is often used to construct encampment walls and huts.

Workers also removed wood pallets, empty propane and gas cans, old tires, furniture, tarps, water cans and electronics, and even a rain-damaged, vintage arcade game that had long seen its last quarter. A total of 60 acres of riverbed was cleaned up by a crew of 15 contracted personnel, supported by two of the Corps’ LA District park rangers and a team of Azusa police officers.

“We also had interagency support from the City of Duarte, Irwindale Police Department, Los Angeles County Department of Health, Los Angeles County Department of Animal Control and the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority,” Snyder said.

Camping in the San Gabriel River is illegal and inherently dangerous, as flash flooding can occur from heavy rains further upstream. As with previous riverbed cleanups, the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority and Veterans Affairs supported the project with outreach events to assist any unhoused individuals within the 60-acre area prior to the cleanup.



Photo by John Reese

A column of vehicles park along the San Gabriel River Bikeway, as team members with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District, LA County and Azusa Police Department assemble at a location to be cleared of floatable debris Feb. 22 near Azusa, California. The weeklong cleanup by the Corps’ LA District removed 128 tons of debris along a 60-acre area. The bikeway remained open during the cleanup.

“It is our hope that through collaborative outreach with our stakeholder partners, such as LAHSA and the VA, we can elevate those individuals experiencing homelessness out of the riverbed and connect them with services to improve their lives and improve the communities that we serve,” Snyder said.

CORPS’ HISTORY WITH THE SAN GABRIEL RIVER

Two adjacent sections of the San Gabriel River managed by the LA District also were cleaned recently.

The Corps maintains more than 50 miles

of channels and levees within the San Gabriel, Los Angeles and Rio Hondo rivers, and Compton and Ballona creeks. Flood events that occurred between 1914 and 1934 were some of the most economically devastating floods the Los Angeles area historically experienced.

The Flood Control Act of 1936 (Pub. L. No. 74-738, § 5 (1936)) authorized Federal civil works flood-risk management projects for Los Angeles County, California. The Act authorized construction of flood-control structures for the Los Angeles County Drainage Area and the improvement of the San Gabriel River for the protection of metropolitan Los Angeles County.

Corps' park rangers, engineers begin initial planning for security, restoration barrier at Mojave River Dam



LA District Park Ranger Connie Chan Le, left, and LA District Biologist Jon Rishi, right, stop to take a picture of a California Poppy flower while hiking along a trail March 2 at the Mojave River Dam in San Bernardino County, California.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY DENA O'DELL
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, California – Set against the backdrop of the San Bernardino Mountains, the Mojave River Dam and its surrounding area is known for many things – its beautiful landscape filled with Joshua trees, desert flora and fauna, and the national scenic Pacific Crest Trail, an area frequented by hikers and equestrian riders.

It also has become an area recreated illegally by off-road vehicle enthusiasts, an activity prohibited in and around the dam because the area is designated as a critical habitat for endangered species.

Park rangers and engineers with the Los Angeles District traveled to the dam March 2 to begin the initial planning stages of installing a security and restoration barrier on the south side of the dam to protect endangered species and their habitats.

“The area is designated a critical habitat for the arroyo toad, but there are a couple of

other critical habitat species that we know could live in that type of habitat,” said LA District Park Ranger Henry Csaposs. “It’s an oasis, basically. It’s the only place in the desert for miles around that you can find water, and that means there’s all sorts of unique plants, animals and wildlife that come out here. And it’s really an important spot for humans, too. It’s part of the Pacific Crest Trail, which is a national scenic trail and a really valuable resource.”

Other known species that call the area home include the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher and the least Bell’s vireo, among many others.

During the site visit, the team – which consisted of park rangers, engineers and a biologist – surveyed different access points around the dam and discussed what barriers would be most suitable for each location to keep off-road vehicles out of the critical habitat areas.

Some of the barrier methods discussed included pipe and cable fencing around the perimeter, with boulders, K-rails and per-

haps other sturdy barriers positioned at key access points.

“We definitely don’t want to prevent hikers or people on horses from having access to the trails,” said LA District Park Ranger Connie Chan Le. “Our main focus is folks, who are illegally trespassing on OHVs, bikes, ATVs and any motorized vehicle, that’s really not supposed to be in this critical habitat area.”

When it comes to the arroyo toad, the species needs loose gravel and sand to breed, Chan Le said. When off-road vehicles compact the area, it hinders breeding success for the toad, which is already an endangered species.

Other issues from people driving off-road vehicles in the area, include vehicle accidents and vandalism, Csaposs added.

“We’ve had fatalities and serious vandalism caused to the dam – to the tune of millions of dollars in damage,” he said. “And the habitat – it’s really been impacted by the people driving over it. It causes erosion, it

[‘MOJAVE’ continued on Page 9](#)

LA District Biologist Jon Rishi, left, and LA District Park Ranger Henry Csaposs, right, hike along a trail March 2 at the Mojave River Dam in San Bernardino County, California.



[‘MOJAVE’ continued from Page 8](#)

kills the plants, and it makes it so the toads and other animals don’t have a place to live.”

Right now, the team is estimating a three-year time frame for construction and installation of the barriers.

“We are just in the beginning stages,” Chan Le said. “We are trying to get a picture of what our barrier plan might be. We have been in constant communication with our partners, so there might be a possibility of working with them for some of the barriers.”

Funding for the additional barriers at the dam will come from the Operations and Maintenance fiscal year 2022 work plan, with funds received through the Infrastructure and Investments Job Act.

In the interim, the park rangers want to remind off-road vehicle recreationists that not far from the dam, a huge set of legal trail

systems, managed by the U.S. Forest Service and the nonprofit Southern California Mountains Foundation, is available to them.

“They do have a huge system of legal trail systems – for the single riders, all the way up to families,” Chan Le said. “They are just beyond our property, and they provide maps, kiosks, a website, and, of course, their own staff to provide information to the public on where they can legally recreate ... There are plenty of other opportunities that are safe, legal and off the water.”

ABOUT THE MOJAVE RIVER DAM

Built in 1971, the Mojave River Dam was designed and constructed to reduce flood risk for more than 16,000 people and \$1.5 billion in property.

The LA District owns and operates 17 dams across Southern California, Arizona and Nevada that reduce the risk of flooding

for millions of people and billions of dollars in property. The dams are reviewed periodically and rated according to the age and condition of the dam and potential consequences.

The LA District’s dams range from low to very high urgency of action. Routine operation, maintenance and inspection activities are performed to ensure the dams perform as designed.

Under the Infrastructure and Investments Job Act, or IJJA, about \$1.8 million is slated to address repairs at the Mojave River Dam.

This comes on the heels of a Jan. 19 announcement by the U.S. Army that included a list of Civil Works studies, projects and programs the Corps of Engineers will implement nationwide in Fiscal Year 2022 with \$22.81 billion in supplemental funding provided in two recently enacted laws — the IJJA and the 2022 Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Corps joins Fort Irwin leaders to cut the ribbon on new library



Brig. Gen. Curt Taylor, commanding general of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, left, and Col. Jason Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, right, get some assistance cutting the ribbon signifying the grand opening of the Fort Irwin Library during a ceremony March 9 at Fort Irwin, California. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Fort Irwin Resident Office managed the construction of the facility.

BY DENA O’DELL
LOS ANGELES DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FORT IRWIN, Calif. – Representatives with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District joined Fort Irwin leaders March 9 to cut the ribbon on a new library – signifying the facility’s grand opening – at Fort Irwin.

The Corps’ LA District managed the construction of the \$6-million facility, which replaces a more than 25-year-old temporary library structure on the installation.

Brig. Gen. Curt Taylor, commanding general of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, and Col. Jason Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, kicked off the event with a Facebook Live ribbon-cutting ceremony on the corner in front of the library.

“This is a world-class opportunity for the quality of life for our families, our Soldiers and our young children in this community,” Taylor said, before cutting the ribbon.

The opening of the library is exciting, he said, as he reminisced as a teenager growing up on the installation and remembering the former wooden building

where the library was housed.

The library is just the start, Taylor said, as he looks forward to the installation’s plans to also build a community activity center, teen center and outdoor recreation facility in the future for the community.

“We will continue to invest in this community to make this a great place for Soldiers and families,” he said, “so if one of you comes back in 30 years, it will be a great place for you and your family.”

He acknowledged the hard work it takes to build a facility in the desert during a pandemic.

“I want to thank all of those who worked so hard to make this investment possible,” Taylor said. “This takes a lot of time and a lot of effort to build out here in the desert. You can ask the Corps of Engineers. It is hard to construct in the middle of a pandemic and to continue to build quality facilities for our Soldiers and families.”

The new 8,000-square-foot library is energy-efficient and LEED-Silver certified. It includes a reception center/customer service desk, reading and stack areas, a multi-purpose

room, computer stations, a children’s area, office space for staff members and a shaded courtyard, among others. It also features electronic library shelves that move back and forth by using keypads located at the end of each shelving unit. Like many of the other facilities the Corps has built at Fort Irwin, the landscape around the library incorporates low-volume irrigation methods and xeriscaping techniques.

It also is one of three locations on the installation that has public Internet access.

Maj. Kevin Stucker, deputy commander for the Corps’ LA District, was present for the ceremony on behalf of Col. Julie Balten, the Corps’ LA District commander.

“It was an honor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be a part of another great project at Fort Irwin,” Stucker said. “The new Fort Irwin Library is a massive upgrade – it is 25-percent larger and LEED-Silver certified, with a host of modern technical improvements. The library will have a positive impact that will be enjoyed by the Fort Irwin community for generations to come.”



(Above) Brisia Camarena of Fort Irwin reads the book “Pocoyo” to her daughter, Ella, March 9 at the new Fort Irwin Library at Fort Irwin, California. About 400 Fort Irwin community members checked out the new facility following a ribbon-cutting ceremony signifying its grand opening. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District’s Fort Irwin Resident Office managed the construction of the facility.



(Above) From left to right, Brig. Gen Curt Taylor, commanding general of the National Training Center at Fort Irwin; Maj. Kevin Stucker, deputy commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Los Angeles District; and Col. Jason Clarke, Fort Irwin garrison commander, pose for a picture in front of the new Fort Irwin Library – Building 333 – following a March 9 ribbon-cutting ceremony signifying the opening of the facility. The LA District’s Fort Irwin Resident Office managed the construction of the new \$6-million facility, which replaces a more than 25-year-old library on the installation.

(Below) Keneesha Ricks, standing, points out a picture in a book to her daughter, Kaliyah, center, as her two other children, clockwise from left, Timothy Tillman and Jordan Ricks, enjoy some activities in the children’s room March 9 at the new Fort Irwin Library. Also pictured is Ella Camarena, seated right.



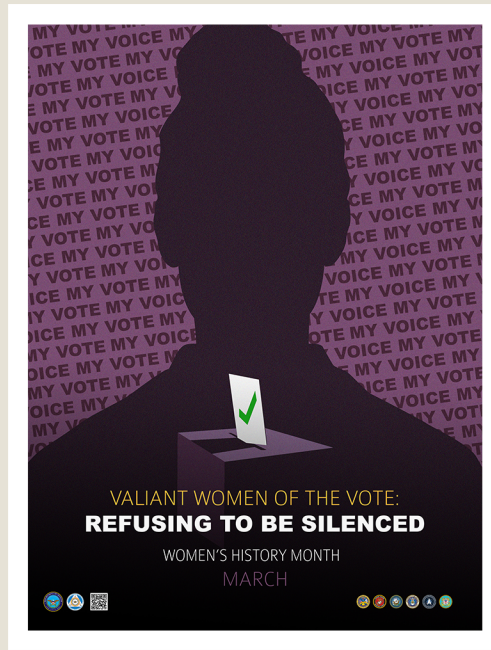
More than 400 Fort Irwin community members check out the new Fort Irwin Library March 9 following a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

CULTURAL
AWARENESS



OBSERVANCE

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH VALIANT WOMEN OF THE VOTE



FACTS

Growing out of a California small-town school event in 1978, Women's History Month honors and celebrates the struggles and achievements of women throughout American history.

In 1980, the president issued the first presidential proclamation declaring the week of March 8th as National Women's History Week. The U.S. Congress followed suit the next year, passing a resolution establishing a national celebration.

In 1987, at the request of the National Women's History Project (now called the National Women's History Alliance), Congress expanded the week to a month. Congress has issued a resolution every year since.

During Women's History Month the Department of Defense joins the nation in celebrating the vital role of women—not only in American history— but in our future.

The 2021 theme chosen by the National Women's History Alliance is: Valiant Women of the Vote: Refusing to be Silenced.

The theme reminds us that participating in elections is one of the key freedoms of American life.

Many people in countries around the world do not have the same freedom, nor did many Americans in centuries past.

No matter what you believe or whom you support, it is important to exercise your rights.

"There never will be complete equality until women themselves help to make laws and elect lawmakers." - Susan B. Anthony

