

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977

Vol. 49, No. 4 | Fall 2023

**Corps, partners, reach major
milestone in reducing flood risk to
the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area**
-Page 5



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

St. Paul District





(cover) Sanjay Bimali, civil engineer, stands at the Diversion Inlet Structure, near Horace, North Dakota, Oct. 27. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes

Crosscurrents is an unofficial publication authorized under the provisions of AR 360-1. It is published quarterly for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army or the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Articles and photography submissions are welcome. Submissions may be emailed. Submissions should be in Microsoft Word format. Photos should be at least 5 in. x 7 in. at 300 dpi.

The mission of *Crosscurrents* is to support the commander's internal information program for the St. Paul District and its stakeholders. *Crosscurrents* also serves as the commander's primary communication tool for accurately transmitting policies and command philosophy to the St. Paul District community and its customers.

District Commander	Col. Eric Swenson
Public Affairs Chief	Shannon Bauer
<i>Crosscurrents</i> editor	Melanie Peterson
Contributing authors	David Elmstrom
	Patrick Moes
	Elizabeth Stoeckmann
	Dean Zwiefel

Address all inquiries to:

Editor, *Crosscurrents*

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

332 Minnesota St., Suite E 1500

St. Paul, MN 55101

(651) 290-5679 | cemvp-pa@usace.army.mil

Contents

Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson	3
Fargo-Moorhead project receives National Academy of Construction award	4
Corps, partners, reach major milestone in reducing flood risk to the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area	5
St. Paul District awards a record amount of construction contracts	6
Corps celebrates the opening of Interstate 29 south of Exit 50	7
St. Paul District wins national small business award	8
Frauenschuh recognized with national award	9
Schneider recognized with national engineering award	10
Drayton Dam project is nearing completion	11
Corps meets with partners to push restoration projects into the future	12
Corps uses new island building technique, a first on the Upper Mississippi	13
Corps eyes Big Sandy Lake for fish data	15
Surveying the Upper Mississippi River	16
St. Paul District's deep dive on soil	17
Corps inspects levees, a shared responsibility	18
Lake Ashtabula campground gets upgrades for 2024 season	19
Karl Jansen returns to the district as deputy district engineer	20
Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP	21
Around the District	22
News and Notes	23
Length of Service Awards	25



Instagram



YouTube



X



Facebook



LinkedIn

Comments From The Top: A message from Col. Eric Swenson

Teammates,

First of all, a big THANK YOU for all the work you accomplished this summer. We made significant progress on many of our missions, but our work isn't over yet. We will continue to deliver our vital services throughout the coming winter months.

As we approach winter, we must remain vigilant. You've seen emails from me and several others reiterating the importance of SAFETY. This is something I cannot stress enough. Safety is everyone's responsibility, and it starts with YOU. Safety should be at the forefront of our minds whether we are in an office setting or working at a lock and dam on the river. We have had 64 good catches this year, which is a new district record. A big thank you to everyone who is paying attention and reporting these incidents.

Winter brings with it unique challenges and hazards that require our vigilance and preparedness. Our commitment to duty and mission success extends to ensuring

everyone's well-being in adverse weather conditions.

First and foremost, please remember the importance of layering and staying warm. Frostbite and hypothermia are real threats in cold environments, and we must take every precaution to avoid them.

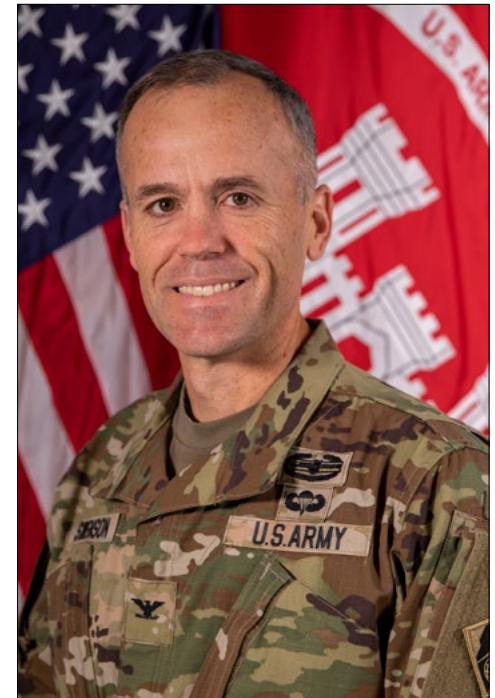
Read ahead to see some of the recent achievements of your coworkers, but I want to call attention to a very big achievement. The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project was selected as the recipient of the National Academy of Construction Recognition of Special Achievement Award. We continue marching toward completion on the Fargo-Moorhead project and we recently celebrated the completion of the Diversion Inlet Structure, a major component. A huge thank you to everyone that has worked on and continues to work on this project.

We were also honored with the Small Business Category award for 2023 at the Society of American Military Engineers'

conference. We were recognized because 94% of our awarded contract dollars went to small businesses in fiscal year 2023, which was the most in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers nationally. This is a big deal! Thank you to Christine Davis and the team for making this happen!

As navigation is winding down, our maintenance and repairs are ramping up. We are completing work at four of our locks and dams this winter, including a dewatering at Lock and Dam 2. These vital infrastructure repairs means that we will be able to provide an important service to the navigation industry. I look forward to visiting with many of you as I visit these projects.

Many of you will see a familiar face in this issue as we welcome back Karl Jansen as our Deputy for Programs and Project Management. Together, Karl and I remain steadfast in our commitment to putting PEOPLE FIRST. I hope many of you had the chance to take the recent command climate survey. These results will help us usher in changes that will con-



tribute to an environment where everyone feels welcome.

I hope to see many of you at our Holiday Awards Ceremony on December 7. We will honor our coworkers with an awards presentation and then get together for some socializing.

Respectfully,
Col. Eric Swenson

Fargo-Moorhead project receives National Academy of Construction award

Story by Shannon Bauer

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project was selected as the recipient of the National Academy of Construction, or NAC, Recognition of Special Achievement Award.

The St. Paul District and its partners, the cities of Fargo, North Dakota; Moorhead, Minnesota; and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, are working cooperatively to implement this critical project.

According to NAC, the award highlights creativity, innovation, vision, and accomplishments of practitioners in the engineering, design and construction industries. From concept to construction, the Corps and its partners consistently solved challenges on this complex project to include splitting work between the entities to allow simultaneous design and construction which expedites project completion by approximately 10 years when compared to traditional delivery methods. Additionally, as the first Corps project in the nation to leverage a public private partnership delivery model, the St. Paul District,

the cities of Fargo and Moorhead and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority are setting the example of how to deliver projects to the nation more efficiently in a resource-constrained environment. Dozens of consultants and construction firms have participated in the effort, showing the strength of the private commitment to the project.

“NAC is thrilled to select this project for our second annual Recognition of Special Achievement Award,” said Edd Gibson, NAC president and CEO. “What stood out to us when evaluating the project was the impact that it will have on both North Dakota and Minnesota, as it is truly a generational project that will help citizens of both states for decades to come. And it provides a good road map on how to innovatively address resilience and sustainability in a large civil infrastructure project. All involved are to be applauded for their dedication to improving the lives of those in this region.”

“Congratulations to our Corps teammates and our partners, the cities of Fargo, Moorhead,

and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority for this well-deserved recognition,” said Lt. Gen. Scott Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general. “In spearheading the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area flood risk management project, the St. Paul District exemplified the kind of innovation and partnership that we strive for, as we work to protect communities and engineer solutions for the nation’s toughest challenges.”

The \$3 billion federal project includes a 30-mile diversion channel. This project will provide flood risk management for nearly 260,000 people and 70 square miles of infrastructure in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, North Dakota; Horace, North Dakota; and Harwood, North Dakota, and will save the nation millions of dollars annually in flood fighting and potential flood damages.



Terry Williams, program manager, speaks at the National Academy of Construction ceremony in Boston, Massachusetts, Oct. 23. USACE courtesy photo

Corps, partners, reach major milestone in reducing flood risk to the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area

Story by Shannon Bauer

The St. Paul District celebrated the completion of the Diversion Inlet Structure, the first major piece of federal infrastructure for the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project at a dedication ceremony at Fargo City Hall, in Fargo, North Dakota, Oct. 27.

The Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project, which the Corps is building in partnership with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority, or MFDA, and the cities of Fargo, North Dakota, and Moorhead, Minnesota, includes a 30-mile-long stormwater diversion channel west of Fargo and a 22-mile-long embankment designed to temporarily stage floodwaters upstream of the Fargo-Moorhead metro area.

The project is being implemented using split delivery, in which the Corps of Engineers is building the Southern Embankment and all its associated features, and the MFDA is building the stormwater diversion channel and all its associated features. The MFDA is using a public-private partnership, or P3, to deliver the stormwater

diversion channel, which is the first time this type of contracting mechanism has been used as part of a Corps of Engineers' project. This approach, which requires the selected P3 developer to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the stormwater diversion channel for the next 30 years, has already garnered several notable awards for the Corps of Engineers and MFDA to include the 2023 National Academy of Construction's Recognition of Special Achievement Award (see story Page 4).

The Diversion Inlet Structure, located near Horace, North Dakota, is one of three gated structures that will regulate flow through the embankment and is the first of the three to be completed. It is a concrete structure with three 50-foot-wide Tainter gates that will regulate flows into a stormwater diversion channel. The Corps of Engineers awarded a \$46 million contract to Ames Construction, Inc., of Burnsville, Minnesota, to build this structure in 2016 and construction began in 2017.

Story continued on Page 6



(left to right) Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander; North Dakota Sen. John Hoeven; Michael Conner, Assistant Secretary to the Army for Civil Works; and Dr. Tim Mahoney, City of Fargo, North Dakota, mayor, unveil the Diversion Inlet Structure plaque during a ceremony at the Fargo City Hall Oct. 27. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer

Story continued from Page 5

The dedication ceremony included remarks from Sen. John Hoeven; Mr. Michael Connor, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works; representatives from the offices of Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Sen. Kevin Cramer and Sen. Tina Smith's offices; Col. Eric Swenson, district commander; and Dr. Tim Mahoney, Fargo mayor and MFDA chair.

The ceremony also included the unveiling of a dedication plaque that will be permanently installed on the structure. Swenson said, the plaque marks the "special partnership and relationships that have been created to get this far in the project."

Connor said he attended the ceremony because this project "is a big deal to the Army's civil works program overall." He said federal priorities for the civil works program include the need to innovate with the respect to building climate resilient infrastructure and the need to modernize what we build, how we build it and who we build it for. "This project is significant with moving forward with all of these priorities," he said.

Hoeven remarked that "the Diversion Inlet Structure is the hinge between the embankment and

the channel, so it really brings together what the Corps of Engineers, what the federal effort is, in terms of the embankment and the three (structures), and then the channel work, which is the public private partnership, which is really that public local/state effort. It represents the uniqueness and just the fantastic nature of this project. This is the first of its kind in the nation, and I believe it's going to be a model for many other projects around the country."

This project, once complete, will provide flood risk management for nearly 260,000 people and 70 square miles of infrastructure in the communities of Fargo, Moorhead, West Fargo, Horace, and Harwood.



St. Paul District awards a record amount of construction contracts

Story by Melanie Peterson

Fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023) was a record-breaking year for the St. Paul District. The contracting team oversaw a total of 590 contract actions which totaled \$114.4 million. There was a record amount of construction placement, which totaled \$154.5 million and 11 construction contracts were awarded. According to Kevin Henricks, chief of contracting, a construction placement is the amount of construction that was completed in a given year. "I appreciate all of the hard work and dedication to executing the mission this past fiscal year by the contracting team as well as across the entire district. I look forward to another record setting year in fiscal year 2024," said Henricks.



Construction is ongoing at McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Corps celebrates the opening of Interstate 29 south of Exit 50

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, along with the Metro Flood Diversion Authority and the North Dakota Department of Transportation, recently announced that the Interstate-29, or I-29, construction in the Oxbow, Hickson, and Bakke area in North Dakota has finished work on all lanes of traffic. The Corps opened both the northbound and southbound lanes in addition to all ramps that access the Interstate in this area.

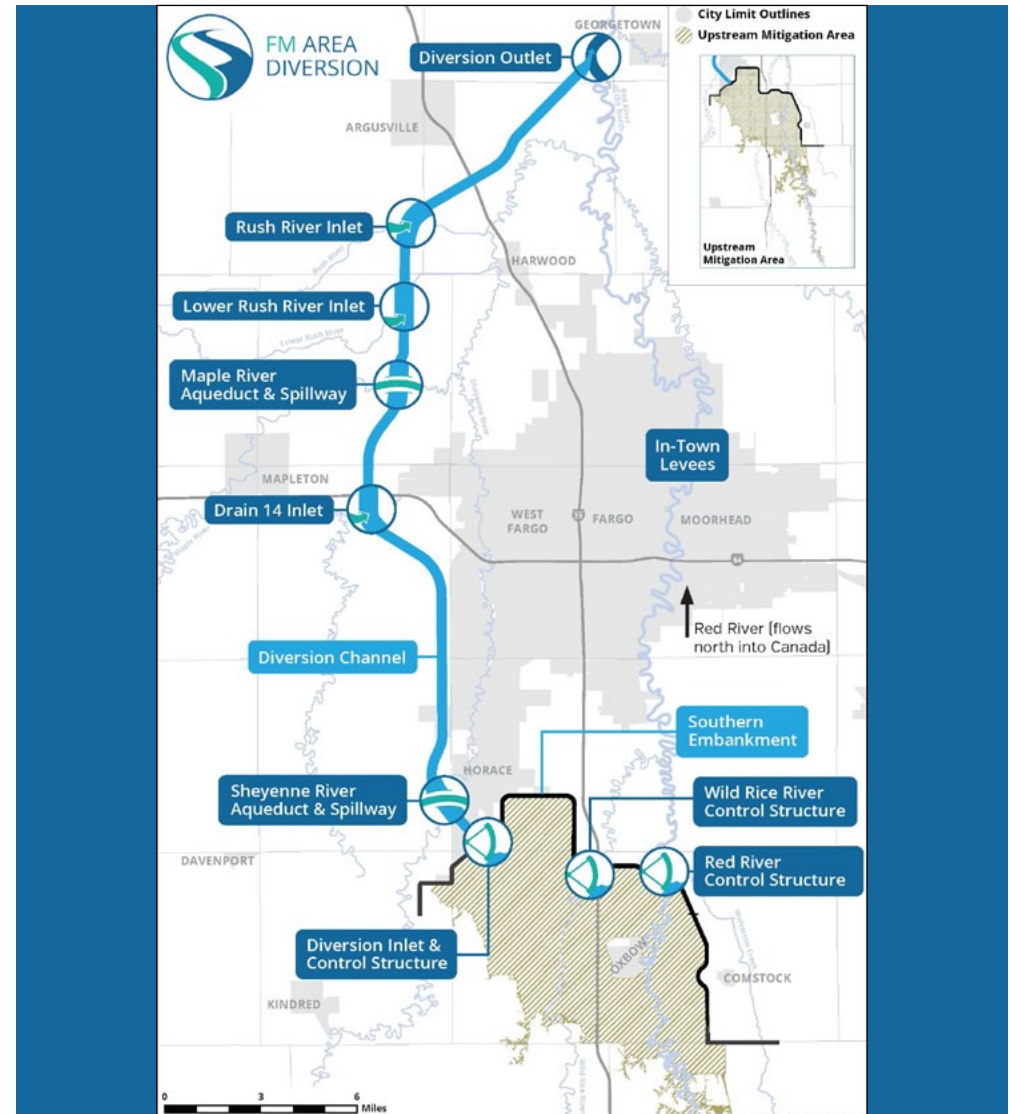
“We appreciate the residents’ patience as this vital part of the project was completed,” said Mathew Andersen, resident engineer. “The road raise will allow the interstate to stay open for residents during most flood events.”

The I-29 grade raise project is part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. It consists of a grade raise of I-29 for approximately 4 miles to bring the roadway out of the 500-year flood elevation.

The project extends from south of Exit 50 (Hickson interchange) to north of Exit 54 (Davenport/Oxbow Interchange) and includes an up-and-over where I-29 crosses the southern embankment near the Wild Rice River, bridge construction and replacement, as well as work on adjacent County Roads 18 and 81 in the vicinity of Oxbow.



The I-29 construction as part of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. Photo courtesy of the FM Area Diversion



Map of the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project. Map courtesy of the FM Area Diversion

St. Paul District wins national small business award

Story by Dave Elmstrom

The Society of American Military Engineers selected the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, as its Small Business Category award recipient for 2023 at the society's annual conference Nov. 1 in San Antonio, Texas.

The award is given to recognize exemplary efforts and accomplishments in support of overall small business contract awards and programs. The St. Paul District was recognized in part because 94% of the St. Paul District's \$114 million in awarded contract dollars went to small businesses in fiscal year 2023 (October 2022 through September 2023), which was the top in the nation for the Army Corps of Engineers.

In addition, the district launched several new initiatives designed to identify and develop small business engagement for the district. For example, the district developed a database of contractors who either submitted a proposal in the last four years or requested information, and distribute a weekly email with policy updates, networking opportunities

and that week's contract opportunities on [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

"This award is a testament to how hard our contracting office and the entire district prioritizes small businesses," said Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander. "We need a diverse and comprehensive set of private industry partners, and having these connections with so many small businesses is ultimately going to benefit our district and the taxpayers."

The St. Paul District office of small business programs is in place to ensure that small businesses have the opportunity to participate in St. Paul District acquisitions through contracts or sub-contracts. The district's program provides outreach to inform small businesses of our opportunities as well as information on how to do business with us. The district provides procurement opportunities, training and counseling businesses for success, to establish a broad base of capable suppliers to support the Army's mission.



(left to right) Lt. Gen. Scott A. Spellmon, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers commanding general; Col. Eric Swenson, St. Paul District commander; Kevin Henricks, St. Paul District contracting chief; Army Office of Small Business Programs Director Kimberly Buehler, and Command Sgt. Maj. Douglas Galick accept the Society of American Military Engineers Small Business Award, Nov. 1. San Antonio, Texas USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Frauenshuh recognized with national award

Story by Dave Elmstrom

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers national headquarters recently recognized Tammy Frauenshuh, natural resources specialist with the St. Paul District, with the 2023 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.

This award is given annually to recognize outstanding work in interpretation and environmental education at a Corps of Engineers recreational facility, based on creativity and originality, producing a positive experience for visitors and enhancing the public's understanding of the Corps.

Frauenshuh was formerly the site lead at Sandy Lake Dam and Recreation Area in McGregor, Minnesota, and was recently promoted to recreation and natural resources planner. The award recognized Frauenshuh's ability to spread the messages of environmental stewardship, recreation and flood risk management, as well as fostering of a well-rounded and innovative interpretive program.

"Tammy's contribution to the recreation and natural resource

branch mission is extensive," said Randy Urich, chief of the recreation and natural resources project office. "She takes great pride in ensuring our visitors have a safe and enjoyable experience at our recreation areas. Tammy's commitment is exemplary, and her hard work is an inspiration to everyone around her."

The idea of becoming a park ranger and the importance of interpretation took hold with Frauenshuh at a young age. As a youth, she was brought to several federal parks on a family road trip in the western United States. "We were taking a ranger guided tour of some cliff dwellings and a light bulb went off in my young mind. I realized that you could get a job showing people these amazing places and connect them with our nation's lands and waters, history, and visiting safely - what an awesome way to make a living!"

The award was named for Hiram Chittenden who was the major designer of facilities at Yellowstone National Park, and eventually oversaw the St. Paul District in 1901.



Tammy Frauenshuh, recreation and natural resources planner and recipient of the 2023 Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Schneider recognized with national engineering award

Story by Dave Elmstrom

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers national headquarters recently recognized James Schneider with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 2023 Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year Award for his commitment to excellence and contributions to the geotechnical engineering profession.

This past year, Schneider actively supported Corps of Engineers geotechnical guidance updates, negotiated software agreements, innovated by creating a script to plot pile driving records and share the data through web-based maps, and led the advanced geotechnical modeling committee.

Schneider, currently serving as the Corps of Engineers' Mississippi Valley Division regional technical specialist, has contributed greatly to the engineering profession by presenting at conferences, teaching courses, giving university lectures, contributing over 60 journal and conference publications, and serving as a reviewer for numerous scientific journals.

"James is certainly well known in the Corps of Engineers and within the geotechnical engineering profession for his technical expertise," said Jason Foss, levee safety and geotechnical design section chief and Schneider's supervisor. "It is his willingness to always help and his kind, collaborative nature that set him apart from most others."

Schneider completed his undergraduate and master's degrees at Georgia Tech, followed by four years of geotechnical engineering consulting practice in Georgia and California. He then spent five years in Australia, where he completed his PhD in geotechnical engineering, followed by a post-doctoral appointment. He taught at the University of Wisconsin – Madison before working for the Naval Facilities Engineering Systems Command in California, and finally coming to the St. Paul District in 2016.



James Schneider, Mississippi Valley Division regional technical specialist and recipient of the 2023 Timothy Skeen Geotechnics Professional of the Year Award. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Drayton Dam project is nearing completion

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Once a low-level dam, Drayton dam is now a new dam with a rock passageway that creates pools for fish to pass upstream through a unique design.

Located on the Red River near Drayton, North Dakota, the project was constructed under the Fargo-Moorhead Metro Area Flood Risk Management Project as an environmental permit requirement on the river.

“We’ve used a unique design of placing boulders in a series of ‘s-shapes’ across the river,” said Elliott Stefanik, biologist for the project. “We are carefully placing the boulders in a way that directs water flowing both overtop and between boulders in a way that promotes fish passage.”

The placement and spacing of boulders creates pools, allowing for resting spots for fish. It allows fish to seek out areas where they can swim over and between boulders to get upstream.”

The design allows the river to dissipate energy flowing downstream, reducing the drowning hazard from the previous dam.

“This is a project that the Corps is implementing through partnerships with local, state and federal agencies to improve both environmental conditions and safety,” Stefanik said.

The cities of Drayton, Fargo and Moorhead; the Metro Flood Diversion Authority; the North Dakota Game and Fish Department; the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service have also been involved in implementation.

“It’s a great opportunity for the public,” Stefanik said. “It’s one of the biggest fishery areas for the Red River. It provides a full parking lot with increased access to a new concrete fishing piers for people to fish on the upstream side as well as the existing area down below the fish passage.”

Contractors finished the bulk of the work this summer with finishing touches wrapping up next year with final landscaping and turf establishment.



(left to right) Greg Fischer, civil engineer, and Roy Lawson, lead construction representative, discuss the Drayton Dam project, near Drayton, North Dakota, Aug. 29. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann



Corps meets with partners to push restoration projects into the future

Story by Melanie Peterson

In September, the St. Paul District conducted an on-site training event with federal and state partners to look at past and ongoing island projects to determine the best path forward for restoration projects as part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, or UMRR.

Participants included representatives from the Corps and agency representatives from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as well as from the Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa departments of natural resources.

"Today is a training exercise," said Scott Baker, Winona resident engineer. "We are seeing some typical projects to talk about lessons learned, what worked well and what didn't work well, so that knowledge can be incorporated into future projects."

The team of agency representatives visited Conway Lake and Harpers Slough restoration projects, in Pool 9 of the Mississippi River, which were completed in 2022. The team also visited McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabili-

tation and Enhancement Project, an active construction project.

"These exercises are important because we're getting more money for island projects, and we have more projects now in various phases than we've ever had before," said Baker.

Baker explained that these projects are important for wildlife.

"The river is losing habitat at a very fast rate. The islands are disappearing, which has led to increasingly turbulent water and light can't get through to help the vegetation grow. That habitat and vegetation is particularly important for migratory birds," said Baker.

UMRR started in 1986 when environmentalists filed a lawsuit when Lock and Dam 27 was built, wanting environmental work done on the river. The compromise started the Environmental Management Program, which would become UMRR. It was authorized for \$200 million over a 20-year period and was reauthorized in 2006.

The program ensures the coordinated development and enhancement of the Upper Mississippi River system with a primary emphasis on habitat restoration projects and resource monitoring. In the 36-year history of the program, more than 55 habitat projects benefiting approximately

100,000 acres from Minneapolis to St. Louis, have been completed.

"I enjoy these projects in particular because you can see tangible results for future generations to enjoy the wildlife," said Baker.



(center) Scott Baker, Winona resident engineer, talks about island building in Pool 9 of the Upper Mississippi River, near Lansing, Iowa, Sept. 13. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Corps uses new island building technique, a first on the Upper Mississippi

Story by Melanie Peterson



John Henderson, project manager, talks to a group of people at McGregor Lake Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project showcases many different features, including thin layer placement shoreline stabilization, island enhancement, island building as well as habitat dredging.

Thin layer placement

Something is being done at the McGregor Lake project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, and Marquette, Iowa, that's never been done before on the Upper Mississippi River.

Thin layer placement is a technique that has historically only been used on coastal waterways. The placement at McGregor Lake marks a first for the St. Paul District and the Upper Mississippi River Restoration Program, or UMRR, for using this on an inland waterway. Thin layer placement places sand material in thin, uniform layers over eroding islands.

"It's a newer concept that we're trying to incorporate in UMRR to target a much larger area on a less intrusive scale to help raise some of these island areas into

a more suitable habitat for tree species to grow in a less impactful way than what island building has been in the past," said John Henderson, project manager.

Thin layer placement raises the forest levels to a point where it's more suitable and get the islands out of the inundation period where the trees would see harm, he explained.

"This is another tool in the toolbox," said Henderson. "We can use this in areas that are more sensitive to erosion and work around some of the limitations we have on these projects."

"We're in an unprecedented stage of habitat restoration on the Upper Mississippi River," said Henderson.

Beneficial use of river sand is a win-win

One of the highlights of the McGregor restoration project is that the sand base material is coming directly out of the channel, said Henderson. The sand is removed

Story continued on Page 14

Story continued from Page 13

from the main channel of the Upper Mississippi River. Normally, the material would have to be hauled upland to a placement site.

“Here at McGregor, we’ve beneficially used almost 500,000 cubic yards of clean river sand, which is about half of our district’s annual dredging capacity,” said Henderson. “This is a testament to how we can beneficially put together two of the Corps’ missions – maintaining the 9-foot navigation channel and habitat restoration.”

Henderson added that the project will use 200,000 cubic yards of backwater dredging material, which will help enhance backwater fisheries and improve ice fishing and other recreational opportunities.

The Upper Mississippi River Restoration program

UMRR is a federally funded and multi-agency partnership with both state and federal partners between a multitude of Upper Mississippi River agencies spanning from St. Paul, Minnesota, to the delta at the southern tip of Illinois.

The program targets the Upper Mississippi River wildlife refuge and other areas across the Upper Mississippi River to rebuild, restore, study and overall implement better practices and rehabilitate some of the islands that have seen change based on climate change, flooding and invasive species.

“UMRR is a proven program. We’ve been doing this for over 35 years in multiple states, with different projects, and thousands of acres of habitat have been restored,” said Henderson. “We have dozens of projects in the queue. We’ve learned how to work together, build relationships and continue helping the Mississippi River, whether it be studying it or enhancing it.”

The relationships are some of the most important aspects of the program according to Henderson.

“Most of us, contractors and agencies, we don’t just work on the river, we enjoy the river and enjoy the outdoors. We get to have a hand in building and improving these things that we enjoy daily. We all enjoy working together in the field. We work together and solve problems, but we enjoy the same things on the outside world,” said Henderson.



Construction at McGregor Lake Habitat Rehabilitation and Enhancement Project, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



Corps eyes Big Sandy Lake for fish data

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District, in cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, or MNDNR, is looking at fish data in and around the Big Sandy Lake system, near McGregor, Minnesota.

The Planning Assistance to States Big Sandy Lake project is a two-fold effort in tracking fish that were otherwise unmonitored.

“We’re doing two different projects at the same time. One, we’re externally tagging fish to estimate the population size of the walleye in Big Sandy Lake. Two, we’ve been implanting acoustical tags in a small number of walleye for the last three years in the lake and we’re tracking them using an acoustical array,” said Rick Bruesewitz, MNDNR area fisheries supervisor.

“Twice a year, we go out and retrieve our hydrophones, they’re receivers in the lake and surrounding system, and download the data from hearing the fish that we tagged with the acoustical tags,” Bruesewitz said.

The study is looking at how fish are moving in Big Sandy Lake and if they are able to traverse the Sandy Lake Dam and move out of the lake.

Karla Sparks, project manager, said the study began in 2019 because the MNDNR was having trouble determining why fish weren’t in Big Sandy Lake even though they were stocking the lake. They wanted to figure out where the fish were going.

It’s a team effort.

The Corps and MNDNR have partnered with Iowa State University on this effort to utilize their fish tagging expertise and data analysis.

The Corps staff at Sandy Lake Recreation Area and biologist David Potter have been an integral part of the tagging and data analysis.

The Corps and MNDNR signed a 50/50 cost-share study within the Planning Assistance to States program in January 2020. Under the program, the Corps is authorized to use its technical expertise in water and related land resource management to help states, federally recognized Indian Tribes and other eligible units of government with their water resource problems.

“The Planning Assistance to States program is a huge way to boost our resources,” Bruesewitz said.

“This program allows the Corps to help states manage their water resources,” Sparks said. “This is a great example of how the Corps can help our state partners, and hopefully it will lead to additional projects helping with the bio-

logical health of our water systems.”

According to Sparks, the study is ongoing. The final data collection is scheduled this fall, with a completed report in 2024.



Big Sandy Lake, near McGregor, Minnesota, Aug. 2. USACE St. Paul District photo by Dave Elmstrom



Surveying the Upper Mississippi River

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Paddle boats, dog park use and birdwatchers were just a few of the things Corps officials observed of river patrons during the summer months on a river well known to the city.

Evaluation of recreational use provides valuable data points for officials studying the disposition of Lower St. Anthony Falls and Lock and Dam 1, both located within the city of Minneapolis. The Mississippi River is not just a recreational resource. Barges and tows move approximately 175 million tons of freight each year on the Upper Mississippi through the navigation system.

“With the help of the National Park Service, we are observing every type of interaction with the water involving recreation,” David Potter, biologist, said. “We start from the confluence of the Mississippi River and the Minnesota River through Lock and Dam 1, through Lower St. Anthony Falls and terminating at Upper St. Anthony Falls.”

The disposition study evaluates whether it’s in the federal interest

to continue ownership of the two Minneapolis locks and dams and the maintenance associated with the Mississippi River navigation channel between the lock sites. The study will consider different scenarios for the locks and dams and other commercial navigation infrastructure while weighing the costs and benefits.

“We are able to directly get on the river and physically see the public’s interaction with the river and document activities that include fishing from shore or boat, dog walkers, wildlife viewing and watercraft use like powerboats, kayaks, canoes and sports rowing,” Potter said.

“Accounting for all users on the river allows us to quantify overall usage and value to the local economy,” Molli Naber, economist, said. “This is very important to the disposition study.”

Alternatives may include deauthorization, full or partial disposal of the locks and dams, modifications and removal. If disposal is recommended, the locks and dams or portions thereof could be

transferred out of federal ownership to a willing local, state or other federal agency.



(left to right) David Potter, biologist, and Molli Naber, economist, survey the Upper Mississippi River in Minneapolis with the help of the National Park Service as part of the ongoing disposition studies, Sept. 22. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

St. Paul District's deep dive on soil

Story by Dave Elmstrom

On a rainy day in September, a geology and water management team from the St. Paul District took off from Lock and Dam 1 with a specially designed floating drill rig. The team was digging deep into the Mississippi riverbed, looking to determine the granular size of the sediment and to collect soil samples to assess potential contamination.

The lock dates back over a century, and a lot of sediment has deposited behind the locks and dams. "We're sampling down to the depth of the pre-dam river bottom, or to bedrock, whichever comes first," said Ashley Woods, geologist.

The drill rig brought the team to spots between the three Minneapolis locks and dams (Upper St. Anthony Falls, Lower St. Anthony Falls Lock and Dam and Lock and Dam 1) and samples were collected at 39 different locations. Samples were collected as deep as 35 feet below the working barge platform.

This deep dive into the river sediment is part of the Upper St. Anthony, Lower St. Anthony and Lock and Dam 1 disposition

studies. Due to the steep drop-off in demand for commercial navigation into Minneapolis, the Corps was directed to develop and study options for the future of the three locks and dams.

That future could be keeping the status quo, or redesigning existing structures for a new purpose, but it could also involve other options, including removing the locks and dams altogether.

If the existing structures were redesigned or removed, the sediment on the river bottom would be altered, potentially moving the sediment downstream.

"These samples will be tested for gradation – the soil grainsize – in addition to chemical analysis to determine if there are environmental hazards in any of the soils," said Woods. The soil grain-size data will be factored into a river sediment transport model to predict how the river bottom may be eroded with the changing river, and where the eroded soil could be deposited further downstream.

"This testing will inform our options within the disposition study," said Dan Fasching, primary Mississippi River regulator. "We

want to explore all of our options, and these samples will provide underlying data that's going to direct the disposition study moving forward."

Fasching said this data will be paramount to help the Corps make the best-informed decision to balance the needs of the health of the local ecosystem, the safety of the community, and the stability of the existing city infrastructure.

The three Minneapolis locks are the first three steps of the navigable Mississippi River. Upper

St. Anthony has a 49-foot step, Lower St. Anthony a 25-foot step, and Lock and Dam 1 a 36-foot step. In 2014, the Water Resources Reform and Redevelopment Act directed that Upper St. Anthony Falls lock be closed. The last lockage occurred there in 2015. After that, commercial traffic in Lower St. Anthony and Lock and Dam 1 dropped significantly, leaving recreational traffic as the majority user of those locks and dams.



(left to right) Army fellow Elizabeth Post and Ashley Woods, geologist, examine river sediment samples extracted from the Mississippi River above Lock and Dam 1 in Minneapolis, Sept. 29. USACE St. Paul District photo by Dave Elmstrom

Corps inspects levees, a shared responsibility

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

West of the Twin Cities, Corps experts rate a levee system during a routine inspection to ensure communities are compliant to reduce levee failure.

Maj. John Walleser, geotechnical engineer, and Mike DeMars, structural engineer, set out to inspect a flood risk management channel located in Rochester, Minnesota.

The channel was built to help reduce the amount of flood waters in the community.

“We’re out here today to make sure that the channel is operating as it was designed and that there are no issues threatening the integrity of the structures,” Walleser said. “Whether it’s a Corps of Engineers or a non-federal entity system, we do the inspection on behalf of the community.”

As a structural engineer, DeMars says he’s look for any parts of the levee that are structural in nature such as concrete culverts, channel walls and floodwalls that may or may not need to be repaired.

“Most of the culverts, which were

the majority of the structural components of this system, were in pretty good shape,” he said.

The Corps Levee Safety Program provides technical expertise and technical assistance to the community to help them make sure their system is properly maintained.

“This is important to our district and our mission because of the life safety of our community and for the community to thrive and grow, we partner up with our local sponsors and communities to make sure that they have the resources that they need,” Walleser said.

“Floods are unpredictable, we never know when they’re going to happen or what severity and maintaining these systems will keep this infrastructure in place,” he added.

When it comes to flood risk management, the St. Paul District currently manages 98 levee systems with 100 levee segments.

The district’s civil works borders follow the edges of four river

basins – the Mississippi River, the Red River of the North, the Souris River and the Rainy River and covers an area of approximately 139,000 square miles.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Levee Safety Program was created in 2006 to assess the integrity and viability of levees and to make sure that levee systems do not present unacceptable

risks to the public, property and environment. The program is an integral component of a broad, national flood risk management effort that employs a system-wide approach to flood risk management and embraces shared responsibility.



(left to right) Maj. John Walleser, geotechnical engineer, and Mike DeMars, structural engineer, inspect a flood risk management channel in Rochester, Minnesota, Aug. 31. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Lake Ashtabula campground gets upgrades for 2024 season

Story by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Visitors patiently anticipate the construction work that will make summer camping and recreational areas more enjoyable for all users at Lake Ashtabula, near Valley City, North Dakota.

Contractors and Corps staff are upgrading electrical pedestals, water systems and lengthening, leveling and widening the campsites to accommodate newer equipment.

"It was a long time coming, but we finally received sustainability funding for upgrades in the West Crossing Campground," said Scott Tichy, supervisory park ranger for the North Dakota recreation and natural resources branch.

Built in the 1960s, the campground was originally designed for smaller, roll-light campers with no electrical service. The site accommodates 38 users.

"Over time, our users have changed the type of equipment they bring in and requirements needed, so it is important to

accommodate those larger vehicles and trailers," Tichy said.

With the help of local partners, the Barnes County Wildlife Federation and the North Dakota Game and Fish, the Corps was able to secure grant funding for a new fish cleaning station.

"This is our busiest fish cleaning facility on the lake and to have a bigger and better table for all our visitors is super exciting. The local folks that visit and use our facilities are really going to like it," Tichy said.

The campground will open again in May 2024.

"Having this inventory back in play next summer will be huge for families," he said. "I think they will be pleased to see the work we've done here at Lake Ashtabula for years to come."



(left to right) Scott Tichy, supervisory park ranger, and Landon Hill, park ranger, discuss the Lake Ashtabula campground upgrades, near Valley City, North Dakota, Aug. 31. USACE St. Paul District photo by Elizabeth Stoeckmann

Karl Jansen returns to the district as deputy district engineer

Story by Dave Elmstrom

St. Paul District employees have a familiar face making the rounds in the offices and facilities around the district. You'll have to forgive most of us for continuing to call him "Col. J" – the transition to call him Karl is a difficult one for those used to the formal titles in the military chain of command.

But, yes, Col. J, otherwise known as Karl Jansen, is back with the St. Paul District, taking on the position of Deputy for Programs and Project Management, or DPM, sometimes known as the deputy district engineer. His planned retirement from active military duty was finalized in March.

As former commander of the St. Paul District, as well as former commander of the Buffalo District, Jansen brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to his role as the top civilian engineer in the St. Paul District.

Jansen calls his return to St. Paul serendipitous. After his military retirement was final in spring, he took some time for "rest, recuperation and reflection." During that time, he spent more time at home with his two kids and wife Sarah in Lino Lakes, and volunteered

at a food bank at Stillwater Valley Outreach, but he knew he was ultimately preparing for a new career chapter post-military.

"I just decided to take some time off and reflect on what is important to me, and determine what was in the future for me," Jansen said. "I knew I wasn't going to retire permanently. I had an interest in public service, and I always had a strong interest in water resources. I just didn't know where that might take me, and I just needed a little bit of time."

And that was about the time that his predecessor Kevin Wilson stepped aside, creating an opportunity for this next chapter in his career.

"One of the reasons I wanted to come back to St. Paul was the people," he said "I had a wonderful experience getting to know everybody who works in the district. They are so committed and we are all focused on this noble purpose of serving our fellow citizens in the area of water resources. I just couldn't think of an option where I would have the same feeling as this."

Jansen says his new role comes with three different hats: 1. being division chief for programs and project management division; 2. acting as one of the senior civilian leaders exercising organizational leadership for the benefit of the entire district; and 3. serving on the command team as a close advisor to the commander.

"The purpose of this position is to deliver the program. Hands down, that is what the commander relies on the DPM to do. Synchronize and integrate the entire staff to deliver our program on-time, high quality and safely."

"Having Karl back in the St. Paul District gives us so much valuable experience," said Col. Eric Swenson, commander of the St. Paul District who took over leadership of the district when Jansen's command tenure ended. "His knowledge and background is going to be incredibly valuable not just to me as the commander, but to the entire St. Paul District."

And, sure, Jansen's military title still rolls off the tongues of his coworkers on occasion. "It's a symbol of how the district really pays respect to the office of the

commander, which is great to see," Jansen said. "A position of authority I hope doesn't define who I am. It's more about the bonds I am building. And I hope the people I am interacting with realize I'm the same person. I'm fulfilling different duties for the same ultimate purpose."



Karl Jansen, Deputy for Programs and Project Management. USACE photo by Wendy Wells

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



July

Billy Thompson

Programs and Project Management



August

Ceres Parsons

Engineering and Construction



September

Mark Angelo

Engineering and Construction



Around the District

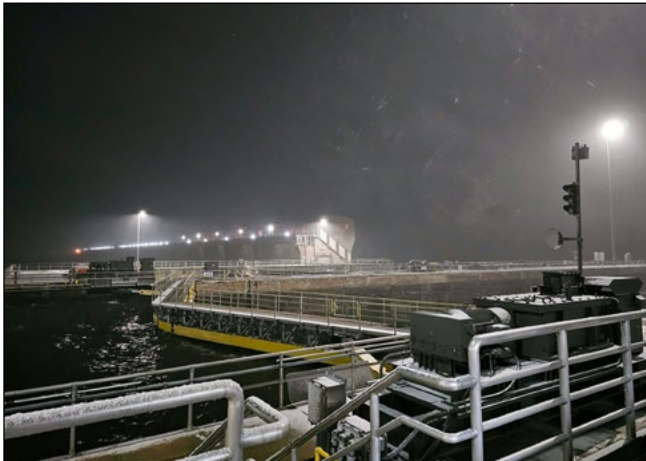


(above) Corps employees and other state and federal agency representatives, gather at McGregor Lake project as part of the Upper Mississippi River Restoration roadshow, near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, Sept. 14. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Ashley Kiley and Sara Rother, environmental section, collected acorns this week at sites along the Mississippi River, Sept. 26. These seeds will be grown into tree seedlings that will be planted back out onto the Mississippi River, Sept. 26. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.



Fall colors at Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wisconsin. USACE St. Paul District photo by Eric Dykman



(left) The first snowfall at Lock and Dam 5, near Minnesota City, Minnesota, Oct. 31. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

(right) Corps employees at Lock and Dam 8, near Genoa, Wisconsin, say farewell to Troy Frank as he moves to Lock and Dam 7, in La Crescent, Minnesota, as the lockmaster. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



News and Notes

New Hires

Peter Allen, project manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Kevin Bigalke, project manager, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Jhon Cerna, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

I-Hsuan Ho, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Karl Jansen, deputy for programs and project management, programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Karl Just, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota

Benjamin Knutson, contract specialist, contracting, St. Paul, Minnesota

Marijo Mahoney, secretary, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota

Daniel Mock, community planner, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Gavin Olson, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Reid Olson, civil engineer (geotechnical), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Jacob Reburn, maintenance worker, operations, De Soto, Wisconsin

Gabrielle Reed, geographer, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Matthew Simon, civil engineer, engineering and construction, Ramsey, Minnesota

Promotions

Vanessa Alberto, supervisory archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Adam Arnoldy, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Patrick Dowd, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Joseph Gurin, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota

Scott Haraldson, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota

Amy Heffernan, regulatory specialist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

Evan Hill, fish biologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Louis, Missouri

Bethany Hoster, supervisory biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois

Mason Huth, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Derek Ingvalson, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Fargo, North Dakota

Joseph Jandrich, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Heather Kern, cook, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Brent Lenke, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Katie Leslie, archeologist, regional planning and environment division north, St. Paul, Minnesota

Brian Lloyd, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota

Stephanie Mann, mechanical engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Meghan McKinney, regulatory systems administrator, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Bonnie Meyerhoff, program analyst, engineering and construction, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Jordan Reichel, lock and dam operator, operations, Winona, Minnesota

Jason Robinson, lock and dam operator, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

Scott Rolbiecki, master, tender, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Sara Rother, forester, operations, La Crescent, Minnesota

Kurt Schroeder, engineering technician, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

David Sudol, lock and dam operator, operations, Genoa, Wisconsin

Jeffery Stoner, lock and dam operator, operations, Minnesota City, Minnesota

Johnathan Stumm, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing,

News and Notes, continued

Minnesota

Christopher Trautman, lock and dam operator, operations, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Cody Walter, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Aung Win, electrical engineer, engineering and construction, Fargo, North Dakota

Retirements

Cynthia Calhoun-Kosiec, environmental protection assistant, regulatory, Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Keith Davenport, lock and dam operator, operations, Eastman, Wisconsin

Daniel Hentges, 2nd mate, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Lowell Moline, lock and dam operator, operations, Alma, Wisconsin

Kay White, administrative support assistant, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Congratulations

Carnot Joseph, engineering and construction, married Nadia, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Aug. 5.

Daniel Meden, regional planning and environment division north, graduated from the Planning Associates program.

Reid Olson, regional planning and environment division north, recently completed his master's degree from University of Wisconsin - Madison



Trace Strahle, regulatory, and his wife Hailey welcomed their daughter Eastyn Lakel Strahle, Oct. 18.

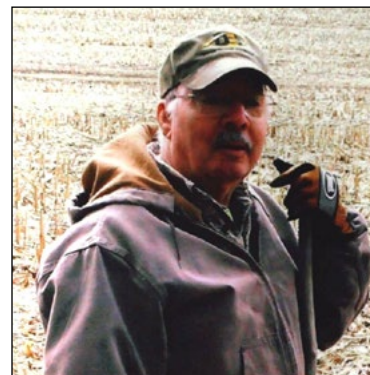
Taps



Lowell Hanson passed away Nov. 6. He worked 36 years with the Corps from 1975 – 2011. His last title before retiring was Construction Quality Assurance. He was the 2001 Civil Servant of the Year, 2005 National Hard Hat of the Year and 2013 St. Paul District Hall of Fame recipient.



Christine Kroll passed Sept. 10. She spent 35 years with the Corps before retiring in 2009. She served with construction and later with operations.



Roger Scottie Stewart passed away Oct. 5 at the age of 85. Stewart retired in the 1990s from Lock and Dam 3, near Welch, Minnesota.

Length of Service Awards

10 years

Meghan Brown
Trevor Cyphers
Cody Fairey
Justin Garrett
Marissa Merriman
Daniel Mock
Dale Rud
Elizabeth Stowell
Jennie Tyrell
Tom Yang

15 years

Daniel Adams
Brian Alberto
Renee Ferguson
Cynthia Hitchcock
Joseph Jandrich
Curt Larsen
Benjamin Nelson
Timothy Orlowski
Matthew Platteter
Dawn Polensky
Jesse Ray
Benjamin Rhoda
Colin Riddick
Keith Schindler
Joe Schroetter
Nicholas Stanton

20 years

James Adank
Joseph Heffner
Molly Hunt
David Johnson
Brent Lenke
William Nissalke
Eric Norton
Justin Rose
Steven Sulflow
Nathan Van Loon

25 years

Ricky Hager
Karl Jansen
Robert Kohner
Roy Lawson
Adrian Lowenhagen
Joshua Rye

30 years

Aaron Buesing
William Chelmowski
Terrance Fluekiger
William Sande
Ryan Winn

35 years

Scott Baker
Kristen Fairbanks
Jay Grimsled
Joseph Gurin
Virginia Regorrah

(below) St. Paul District park rangers participate in a water safety display for the 4th of July parade at Lake Winnibigoshish near Deer River, Minnesota, July 4. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



District water safety team recognized by division

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District water safety team was recognized by the Mississippi Valley Division for their outstanding commitment to the water safety mission, which resulted in zero fatalities for the district in 2023. The team promoted water safety utilizing a variety of methods. Their efforts ensured every member of the public that visited a St. Paul District recreation area had a safe, enjoyable visit, and went home to their loved ones.