

Crosscurrents

Serving the St. Paul District since 1977
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**The Dredge Goetz makes
waves on the Mississippi River**



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
St. Paul District

Contents



(cover) Brady Dehnke, leverman, operates the Dredge Goetz cutterhead near Wabasha, Minnesota, May 21. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

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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.

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Comments from the top: A message from Lt. Col. Joshua Rud

MVP Teammates,

I trust everyone is enjoying these warm summer days! Not only has the weather transitioned, but so has our commander. As most are aware, Col. Matt Chase has taken on a temporary mission in support of the broader USACE Enterprise. While we miss his leadership, I have every confidence in this team. The St. Paul District continues to deliver because of empowered leaders, dedicated professionals and an exceptional workforce.

That commitment is on full display as we move through another busy construction season. I recently had the opportunity to visit the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project and was impressed by the tremendous focus of the team and the progress being made on the Southern Embankment. With so much work still ahead before the project is operational for the next spring flood season, it was inspiring to see the teamwork, urgency and determination on display. I've also heard great things about the Lock and Dam 9 miter gate replacement project, where crews are modernizing critical navigation infrastructure that will serve the region for decades to come. Across the district, these projects – and many others – are making a lasting difference for the communities we serve.

As our work ramps up, so must our focus on safety. Every project, every site and every task begins with taking care of our people. That commitment is reflected in our anticipated achievement of Corps of Engineers Safety and Occupational Health Management System (CE-SOHMS) Stage III certification, a significant milestone that demonstrates our culture of safety, continuous improvement and operational excellence.

Thank you to everyone who joined us at Como Park for this year's Summer Awards Ceremony. It was a great opportunity to celebrate our teammates and the outstanding contributions they make every day. Congratulations again to all of this year's award recipients, and thank you to everyone who helped make the event such a success.

Thank you for everything you do each day. Your professionalism, dedication and commitment to public service are what make the St. Paul District such a remarkable organization. I look forward to seeing all that we accomplish together in the months ahead.

– Lt. Col. Josh Rud, acting commander



Stronger gates, stronger river: Lock and Dam 9 upgrade secures Upper Mississippi Navigation

Story by Melanie Peterson

The Upper Mississippi River lock and dam system was constructed in the 1930s, when steamboat traffic ruled the waters. Now, to keep up with the demands of the navigation industry, the district locks and dams are receiving critical infrastructure upgrades.

This summer, the four miter gates at Lock and Dam 9, near Lynxville, Wisconsin, were replaced. The St. Paul District is on a mission to replace all the miter gates at locks 2-10. The completion of this installation represents another step forward in ensuring navigation remains open on the river.

“The original gates were sufficient for the smaller, slower barge traffic of the 1930s, but now we used our knowledge about how the river is affected by ice in the wintertime and currents to design these gates,” said Jim Cook, project manager.

The new gates are the same length, width and height as the old gates but 50% heavier. The gates, which were designed by USACE engineers, reflect a better understanding of the needs of the river and the demands of the industry.

“The gates’ expected design life was 50 years, but through careful maintenance and periodic inspection under the watchful eyes of engineers and operators, we were able to extend the useful life of the miter gates almost 50 years,” said Cook. “The new gates have a similar design life of 50 years but with the same diligence, it wouldn’t be surprising to get more than 50 years out of them.”

Soup to nuts, a USACE project

This four-day install was the culmination of 4-5 years of work, said Cook. “I’m particularly fond of this project because, soup to nuts, it was a USACE project that will benefit the region and the country.” The project was designed by USACE engineers and construction and contracting was supervised by USACE professionals. The gates took two years to fabricate in Alabama and were then moved via barge to their final destination in Wisconsin.

The installation was done by the St. Paul District maintenance and repair crew in conjunction with our sister district, Rock Island,



The old and new miter gates at Lock and Dam 9 in Lynxville, Wisconsin, July 21. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

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who brought maintenance and repair staff as well as the 500-ton crane, the Quad Cities. “From inception to completion to operation to providing real benefits to the country, this project is wholly contained by USACE, and it’s pretty impressive when you see it,” said Cook.

Navigation is vital to the nation’s economy

“Navigation is an underappreciated economic multiplier for the region and the nation,” said Cook. “It’s the most cost-efficient and environmentally friendly way to move a large amount of materials such as grain and corn.”

More than 8.6 million tons of commodities passed through Lock and Dam 9 in 2025. Industries making these shipments save approximately \$430 million annually by using the inland waterways instead of overland shipping methods. One 15-barge tow is equivalent to 216 rail cars or 1,050 semis. Shipping bulk commodities on the river reduces wear and tear on America’s roads and bridges and does so as the most fuel efficient and environmentally friendly transportation mode compared to rail or tractor trailer.

The St. Paul District navigation program provides a safe and reliable waterborne transportation system on the Upper Mississippi River for the movement of commercial goods and for national security needs. To do this, the district maintains a 9-foot navigation channel and 13 locks and dams from Minneapolis to Guttenberg, Iowa.



Mike Holzer, left, civil engineer, and Jim Cook, project manager, discuss the miter gate replacement at Lock and Dam 9 near Lynxville, Wisconsin, July 21. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



The miter gate replacement at Lock and Dam 9 near Lynxville, Wisconsin, July 21. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

“Navigation is an underappreciated economic multiplier for the region and the nation.”

-Jim Cook, project manager

St. Paul District project partnership agreement with Fargo-Moorhead unlocks \$100 million

Story by Melanie Peterson

The St. Paul District showcases the Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork initiative through the Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project.

“This project exemplifies the [Building Infrastructure, Not Paperwork] initiative through cutting red tape, identifying and implementing efficiencies with strong partnerships and delivering critical infrastructure to the region,” said Adam Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works.

In May, the district hit a major milestone and signed a project partnership amendment which allowed \$100 million in funds that were not spent on federal projects to be transferred to the nonfederal sponsors, the city of Fargo, the city of Moorhead and the Metro Flood Diversion Authority. The project is a public-private partnership with split delivery, the first of its kind for a USACE civil works project.

“This is an important and growing region in our country that has challenges with perpetual flooding,” Telle said. “The local community leaders are working with the St. Paul District to be laser-focused on delivery. These people believe in the mission — protecting Americans from flood risk by building infrastructure for the communities impacted. They refuse to quit.”

Through effective leadership, the St. Paul District is delivering infrastructure to the region 10 years sooner than the traditional delivery methods. The project is on track to be ready in spring 2027, Telle said.

The project provides 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 and will save the nation millions of dollars annually in flood fighting and potential flood damages.



Adam Telle, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, right, and Col. Matthew Chase, district commander, discuss the signing of an amended project partnership agreement project, near Fargo, North Dakota, May 7. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes



Terry Williams, program manager, left, briefs USACE Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations Maj. Gen. Jason E. Kelly, during a tour May 7. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes

St. Paul District supports major flood protection on critical part of the Lower American River

Story by Liz Stoeckmann

From the heart of the Midwest to the banks of the American River, the St. Paul District is making an impact out West. The district's expertise and commitment drove the completion of the Lower American River Contract 3A in 2025 — a milestone and an important piece of the American River Common Features program.

Since 2019, the St. Paul District has provided technical know-how and engineering support to the Sacramento District, addressing both flood risk reduction and erosion protection requirements. “This project is a great example of structurally-based engineering that incorporates nature-based design,” said Dan Mielke, St. Paul District technical lead. “Our approach not only enhances flood protection but also supports environmental stewardship along the river.”

The Sacramento region is among the most at-risk areas for catastrophic flooding in the United States. C3A includes approximately 2,300 feet of levee improvements along the south bank of the Lower American River near the Business Interstate 80 bridge in Sacramento — an area that nearly failed during the 1986 flood event.

“Contract 3A was one of the most technically and logistically complex reaches within the American River Common Features program, requiring close coordination across multiple agencies and stakeholders while working in a highly constrained urban environment,” said Kevin Lee, Sacramento District project manager.

The project required the placement of more than 50,000 tons of rock, along with erosion control measures, tree protection, revegetation, and the installation of instream woody material to support fish habitat. The team's efforts included the establishment of native riparian vegetation such as trees, shrubs, grasses, herbaceous perennials and wildflowers like the California poppy.

“It's exciting to see our work to protect this stretch of levee complete and to see wildflowers growing on the soil-filled rock placed last year,” said Ben Nelson, St. Paul District project manager. On May 5, members of the St. Paul and Sacramento districts, along with non-federal sponsor representatives, inspected the project following its first winter flood season. The site visit focused on revegetation progress and overall project performance, as well as lessons learned from the design and construction phases. “This was a big effort and a lot of ‘deconflicting’ work in the project area because of good relationships between the agencies,” Nelson said.

The success of Contract 3A was made possible through a joint effort by the Sacramento District, St. Paul District, Caltrans, the city of Sacramento, and Union Pacific Railroad. The project stands as a model of interagency collaboration, technical excellence and commitment to both public safety and environmental health in the Sacramento region.

“Seeing the site perform through its first winter season and watching the native vegetation begin to establish reinforces the long-term value of this investment for both flood risk reduction and environmental stewardship in the Sacramento region,” Lee said.



Team members from Sacramento and St. Paul districts discuss the project in front of installed instream woody material, near Sacramento, California, May 5. USACE St. Paul District photo by Ben Nelson

Surveillance under the hard hat

Story by Liz Stoeckmann

Both now and in the future, employees exposed to biological, chemical or physical hazards on the job receive ongoing monitoring and care to help keep them safe.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Medical Surveillance Program provides occupational health oversight, enrolling employees based on their job duties and potential exposures, such as high noise levels, lead, welding fumes, silica dust and pesticides.

Medical screenings and exams are required to assess the effects of workplace hazards.

"We provide occupational health oversight for our employees who, while performing assigned duties, may be exposed to certain hazards at or above established action levels," said Tina Shivel, occupational health nurse.

For example, the district's Hearing Conservation Program is designed for employees exposed to high-noise environments, such as those working in the engine room of the Dredge Goetz, Shivel said. "We use noise dosimetry to monitor employees in high-noise areas. If their exposure exceeds a time-weighted average of 85 decibels, they are enrolled in the hearing conservation program. This ensures we're protecting their hearing and acting before long-term damage occurs."

Other examples include maintenance and repair crews working with concrete who are monitored for silica dust exposure. Air sampling helps determine if additional respiratory protection or controls are needed. Welders at Fountain Service Base are enrolled in respiratory protection programs, with regular monitoring to assess exposure to hazardous fumes.

"Medical surveillance isn't a hindrance — it's an investment in our employees' long-term health," Shivel said. "Some hazards, like silica, may not cause immediate illness, but can lead to serious health issues years down the road. By monitoring and controlling exposures now, we're protecting our team for the future."

Industrial hygienists play a key role in collecting data on workplace exposures, such as using air pumps to measure silica dust or monitoring welding fumes.

"You can't always eliminate the hazard, but you can control it," said 2nd Lt. Shaunna George, industrial hygienist. "If controls are effective, employees can be disenrolled from certain programs, but only after reassessment confirms the hazard is managed."

Tailored and implemented at the local level, the program is not just about compliance — it's about long-term health, she added.

"Many employees don't go to the doctor regularly, so these screenings serve as their checkup," Shivel said. "Physicals



Jacob Jandl, marine machinery mechanic, cuts a piece of metal during the Lock and Dam 2 dewatering in Hastings, Minnesota, Feb. 14, 2024. USACE St. Paul District photo by Liz Stoeckmann

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can include electrocardiogram, x-rays, and lab work and sometimes uncover other health issues that employees might not have known about.”

Initially, some employees were hesitant about the new program.

“There was resistance with the new program, but once we explained the reasons and benefits, employees became more receptive,” Shivel said. “Now, many are proactive, asking when their next physical is due.”

Physicals are provided at no cost to employees and are conducted during work hours. The program currently enrolls approximately 284 to 300 employees across operations, maintenance, dredging and other field activities.

The St. Paul District provides pre-employment, annual, and exit physicals, as well as continuous data collection and review. A contractor provides doctor oversight, ensuring that medical records are reviewed and employees are notified of any concerns.

The program’s success is also attributed to strong communication with supervisors and leadership, ensuring everyone understands the importance of participation and the process for enrollment.

“Our ability to build and maintain critical infrastructure depends on the health and well-being of our workforce,” said Aaron Pieplow, acting safety chief. “By investing in medical surveillance and workplace safety, we’re not only protecting our employees — we’re ensuring the continued success of our projects and the communities we serve today and for years to come.”

Each USACE district, division, or center is responsible for ensuring that its employees receive appropriate medical surveillance, in accordance with Army and Department of Defense regulations such as Army Regulation 40-5, Occupational and Environmental Health, and the Engineer Manual 385-1-1, Safety and Health Requirements Manual.



2nd Lt. Shaunna George, left, industrial hygienist, tests the noise environment with a noise sound level meter with Master Tender Jeff Rindal near Wabasha, Minnesota, May 21. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Protecting the Upper Mississippi from Invasive Carp

Story by Liz Stoeckmann

The St. Paul District teamed up with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to help protect the Upper Mississippi River from Invasive Carp at Lock and Dam 5 in Minnesota City, Minnesota. The St. Paul District is the site owner and engineering contractor for the design of an invasive carp deterrent for the lock. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is leading the project with funding provided from the Outdoor Heritage Fund.

This collaborative effort brings together state and federal partners to manage invasive carp and slow their spread. From April 2025 to 2026, more than 300 native fish and 31 invasive carp were tagged with acoustic transmitters during events at the lock and dam. Monitoring the movement of tagged fish through the lock and dam will help Minnesota DNR develop and evaluate the invasive carp deterrent project in coordination with the St. Paul District, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.



Judy Denzer, Lock and Dam 5 lockmaster, and Sam Mathiowetz, chief of locks and dams, address the group of participants at Lock and Dam 5, near Minnesota City, Minnesota, May 5. USACE St. Paul District photo by Liz Stoeckmann

Agreement begins environmental infrastructure project

Story by Liz Stoeckmann

Col. Matthew Chase, district commander, along with Northfield Mayor Erica Zweifel, recently signed a project partnership agreement with the city of Northfield, Minnesota, for the design and construction of a new city water tower.

The new 750,000-gallon water tower will provide redundancies to the water system near Northfield's Hospital and Clinic and improve fire protection and storage capacity for the northwest portion of the city. The water tower will measure roughly 150 feet tall and 28 feet in diameter on the ground.

The \$5 million environmental infrastructure project is expected to start in spring 2027.

The Corps of Engineers will fund \$4 million under the Corps of Engineers' Environmental Infrastructure Section 219 projects. The city of Northfield will fund the remaining amount.

"We're looking forward to partnering with the city of Northfield on the new water tower," Chase said. "Reliable water resources are central to our environmental infrastructure program's mission, and projects like this deliver lasting benefits—not just to Northfield, but to the resilience of communities across the nation."



Col. Matthew Chase, right, district commander, shakes hands with Northfield Mayor, Erica Zweifel, at the project partnership agreement signing ceremony in Northfield, Minnesota, May 15. USACE St. Paul District photo by Liz Stoeckmann

Drew Becker brings fresh leadership to regulatory role

Story by Ren Martin

Drew Becker officially took over as the new chief of regulatory in the St. Paul District in early April.

Becker first heard of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers when he became a fish and wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Based in Rock Island, Illinois, Becker learned about USACE through colleagues that had collaborated with the organization before. Though they mainly worked with the local division, his colleagues occasionally worked with the St. Paul District.

“Part of what attracted me to this job was the really good things they said about the St. Paul District and the team here,” explained Becker. He gained an appreciation for USACE’s permitting process — the intricacies involved and the fair and balanced approach to permitting decisions — when he personally began working with the district during his next stop with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Looking to further understand these intricacies, Becker made it a point in his first few weeks as chief of regulatory to visit the district’s eight regulatory offices, scattered throughout Minnesota and Wisconsin. “One mistake that’s easy to make is getting stuck in the district office,” Becker said, “I want to make sure I meet all of our regulatory employees, whether they happen to be located in the district office or another site.” These site visits left Becker impressed — both with how well the program worked and how motivated the staff was.

Becker recognizes the importance of relationships in his role, noting that his favorite part of the job is connecting with people. “I’ve had the opportunity to do some really cool things — from catching eagles, to flying in helicopters and diving for mussels,” Becker said, “But these memories will fade eventually, and what you’re left remembering is the relationships you’ve made with people and the impact they’ve had on your life. It’s important, as a regulatory division, that we remember that we are impacting people’s lives with the decisions we’re making.”

Becker grew up in Watseka, Illinois, and attended the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he received bachelor’s and master’s degrees in natural resources and environmental sciences with a concentration in fish and wildlife conservation. Becker loves being outside and enjoys upland bird hunting with his dog.



Drew Becker, chief of regulatory. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer

New chief takes over operations division

Story by Ren Martin

No stranger to district operations, Chris Atkins officially took over in February as chief of operations for the St. Paul District.

“Becoming operations chief has been a big goal of mine ever since I became a supervisor,” Atkins said. “I am very proud and honored to be in this position. There were a lot of good chiefs before me, and I hope to continue that tradition.”

Having served a 120-day detail as the operations chief, the job is a familiar one to Atkins. He credits this past developmental assignment with giving him a better understanding of the position and showing him his weaknesses to work on

As you work your way up, the focus shifts to managing people instead of actual engineering,” he said. “My job now is more about supporting the efforts of operations field units rather than running them directly.”

Atkins’ favorite part of his new position is interacting with people as he supports them, helping to ensure their work is safe and more satisfying. “Whether it’s seeing a project completed or figuring out the future of the organization, I enjoy seeing folks in their element,” he said.

Atkins, an Arkansas native, has been with USACE since 2003, holding various positions within the division. After starting out in his home district of Memphis, Atkins worked at the Fountain City Service base before moving to the Nashville District as the chief of the technical support branch.

Although he left St. Paul for Nashville, his St. Paul colleagues made a strong impact on him. “When I first arrived in the district, I immediately felt at home and part of the team,” Atkins said. “I really enjoyed interacting with the employees from this area, they were very welcoming and left a solid impression on me.” So much so that when an opportunity to come back to the district presented itself in 2021, Atkins jumped at it. “It was an easy transition back because most of the people I’d worked with before were still here.”

Atkins attended Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, where he earned a bachelor’s degree in structural/civil engineering and a master’s in both structural engineering and project management. His hobbies include reading about history, watching the St. Louis Cardinals and managing his 340-acre cattle farm in northwest Arkansas with his family.



*Chris Atkins, chief of operations. USACE St. Paul District
photo by Ren Martin*

Regulating the Mississippi River: Where art and science meet

Story by Melanie Peterson

When Dan Fasching started painting again after a decade, he said it was because it was something near and dear to his heart. His muse? The Mississippi River that he works on every day.

Fasching, who started with USACE as a student in 2011, now serves as the primary Mississippi River regulator for the 13 locks and dams within the St. Paul District from Minneapolis to Guttenberg, Iowa.

As a regulator, Fasching helps to direct and coordinate the lock and dam gate movements in support of the navigation mission to ensure a minimum 9-foot depth is constantly maintained.

“Navigation on the Mississippi River is vital to the nation’s economy; as long as navigation continues, we are succeeding,” Fasching said.

As President Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, “Plans are nothing, planning is everything.”

“In water management, we adhere to the bounds of the water control manuals by creating plans to coordinate all St. Paul District 13 locks and dams at once, and it’s a serious challenge!” Fasching said. “You have to adapt your plans constantly to the ambiguity of changing weather patterns, incomplete data or corrections from past decisions. We’re playing jazz so to speak by regulating the more than 250 river miles of the St. Paul District in real time.”

“Engineering school was structured with complete concepts and examples, but the reality and application is a lot more challenging and messier than people might expect,” he said. “It’s like learning how to drive by reading a book.”

Fasching has always had an affinity for art. As an advanced placement art student in high school, Fasching wanted to pursue art as a career, before his dad gently guided him in the direction of civil engineering. He attended the University of Minnesota – Duluth and graduated with his civil engineering degree in 2015.

“My art fell by the wayside during college; there wasn’t much opportunity to practice,” he said. Fasching did not come back to art until a few years ago. “I was so engrossed with my work and the seriousness of growing up.” Eventually, he met his wife, an art therapist and former art teacher, and they connected over their love of art.

When Fasching began to paint again, he was inspired by his work on the river. “My paintings of the river are the way I see it through water management. It’s not perfect so I don’t use perfect realism, there are violent movement brushstrokes, deep landscapes and active water as it roils down the river,” he said. “I try to show the power and mystery of the river.”

As he started his career, Fasching said he believed in the fallacy that because we know how physics works, we can perfectly predict things. “That is juxtaposed with the reality of water management, when the math isn’t working out because the data isn’t available and yet you still need to make a decision now.” Fasching said this is why he prefers impressionist painting. “You don’t have to be perfect; you can paint the wild side of the river and the unpredictability of it that we see in water management.”



Dan Fasching, primary Mississippi River regulator. USACE St. Paul District photo by Patrick Moes

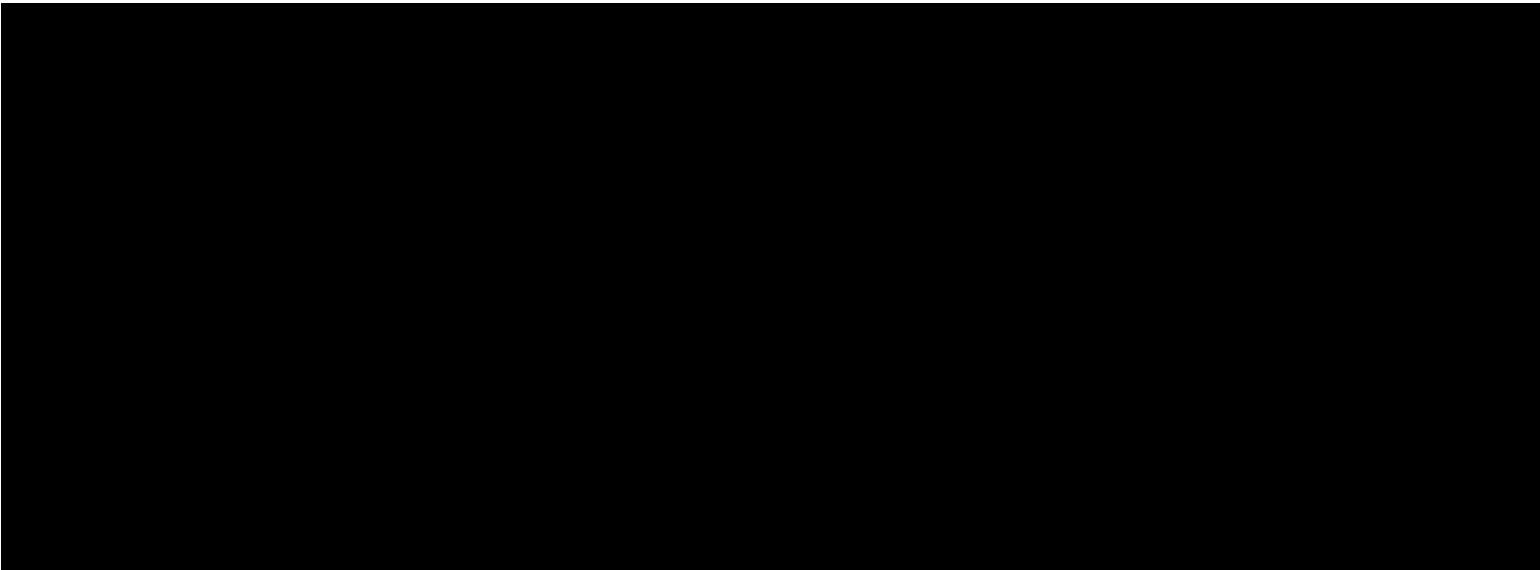
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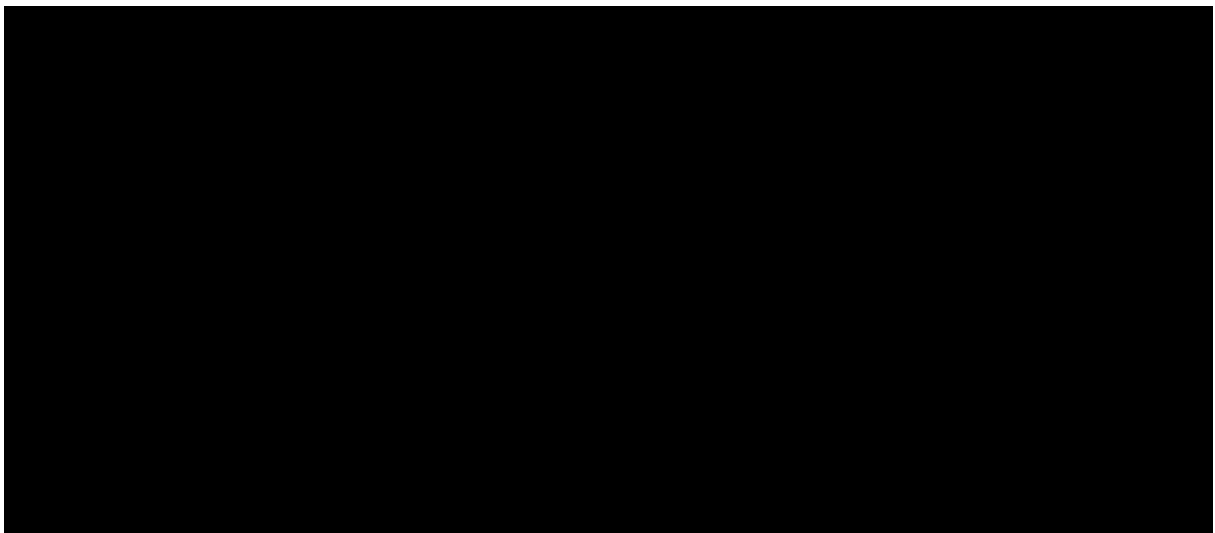
Fasching said he does not recommend water management for people who need exactness and control. “A lot of the job is living in that uncertainty, waiting for results, and the way you deal with it in your personal life is up to you. You have to be comfortable living in that unknown and have faith in your ability and understanding,” he said. “It’s the same thing when you paint, you need to have the confidence that it’s going to work out, because once the paint is dry, it’s done.”

Fasching takes his own photos as a reference then uses acrylic paint for his impressionist paintings, which differs from historical impressionist painters who used oil because of the slow dry times that allow more time to mix and blend on the canvas. He said he never formally learned oil painting but tries to emulate the look of oil painting, which is doable with modern paints. “You can add gels and other things to make paint thicker or thinner and more or less transparent. I can decide if I want the orange underpainting coming through or not, change the mood or the look and make the colors pop. Plus, you don’t have to deal with the fumes.”

Fasching concluded, “A lot of the challenge of my job is in those in-between moments, the less studied ones that rely on experience and intuition. I enjoy painting the river in an impressionist way, where it’s clearly the river, but it brings out the ambiguity that I see when I regulate into the painting itself. I want the viewer to know that there is still room for humans, and the wildlife in-between the infrastructure, mathematics and hard science that control and monitor but make modern life possible today. In the river and in my paintings, you see the human experience and great visual beauty, and also the power and economic use too, to support the navigation mission.”



Paintings by Dan Fasching. Reprinted with permission. Copyright Dan Fasching, 2026



The ties that bind them: Regulatory ecologists pursue fly-fishing passion

Story by Melanie Peterson

Two different paths, one passion. April Marcangeli and Marissa Merriman are both St. Paul District regulatory ecologists, and they have something else in common — a love for fly fishing.

April Marcangeli

Growing up in Oklahoma, Marcangeli was not around fly fishing, but she was around water. With a pond and a creek on their 10 acres, Marcangeli spent a lot of time playing outside in the water, turning over rocks and collecting crayfish, mussels and fish for hours at a time. This passion for aquatic resources and nature was translated into college where she majored in biology. However, once out of college, she didn't know what she wanted to do and pursued a job at the state crime lab in Oklahoma; often finding herself wishing she was outside.

She quit the lab and followed her partner to Lawrence, Kansas, where she started a job with the University of Kansas as a research assistant studying population genetics in minnows. She would electrofish (temporarily stun fish with an electric current) streams in Kansas all day long. "It was hard work, but it was the greatest thing ever. It opened up doors for me to say, 'maybe this is what I want to do,'" she said. She worked for the state of Kansas collecting water quality samples for streams and then with the Nature Conservancy doing stream assessments in California, before she went to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

At the Wisconsin DNR, Marcangeli was introduced to wetland permitting, which provided long-term stability over the seasonal work she had been doing. Eventually, a position with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Paul District, opened up and Marcangeli began as a project manager in 2016. Marcangeli, who also served as the utility liaison, began as a regulatory ecologist in March 2022. She works primarily in the technical services section and serves as the point of contact and subject matter expert for

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April Marcangeli, regulatory ecologist. Courtesy photo

Stream Program

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulates the discharge of dredged and fill material into Waters of the U.S. under the Clean Water Act.

USACE may require a property owner to replace the loss of existing aquatic resource functions from a project through compensatory mitigation.

The stream procedures, put forth in St. Paul District in 2023, discuss the Stream Quantification Tool and how it is used to quantify credits and debits for permitting.

The tool quantifies a change in various functions for a stream restoration/mitigation proposal. "This allows for stream mitigation to more accurately replace those functions that were lost through a permitted project with adverse stream impacts," said April Marcangeli, regulatory ecologist.

"Streams are dynamic and are constantly changing due to fluctuating flows and the movement of sediment. Benefits of streams include protection against flooding, filtering of pollutants and providing food and habitat for macroinvertebrates and fish," she added.

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stream mitigation and the Stream Quantification Tool.

“My background is in biology, so I’ve always been fascinated by the biological life within streams,” she said. “You never really know what you’re going to find below the surface.”

Marcangeli found fly fishing as a COVID-19 hobby. She had never done fly fishing and “wasn’t really around it.” More opportunities for fly fishing opened up for her when she moved to Madison, Wisconsin, with more access to trout streams in the driftless area.

“I thought to myself, ‘that looks pretty cool,’” she said. “I learned how to tie and to get materials to tie.”

Marcangeli explained you can use materials like deer hair and different colors and types of feathers. “You use things that look like a fly or bug in the water, so you need to know what the different life stages look like — from the larval stage under rocks to ones that emerge, fly around and land on the surface of the water.”

“You create these ‘flies’ as a lure when you’re fishing, you don’t use real bugs,” she clarified. “You hook it like a regular fish and then because of the angle of the rod, sometimes you are right next to the water and it’s easier to pull fish up with the net.”

“In tying you need an understanding of the bugs out there. This is where biology connected to my hobby. When you tie your own fly and you catch something with that, it’s awesome,” Marcangeli concluded.

Marissa Merriman

Merriman grew up fly fishing with her dad in southeastern Minnesota. Near Rochester is the heart of the Driftless Region, named for its geology and filled with spring-fed creeks. Merriman said that fishing with her dad sparked her interest in natural resources that led to her career path as a wetland stream ecologist.

Merriman began with the St. Paul District in 2010 as a student in the Student Career Experience Program in the recreation and natural resources branch in La Crescent, Minnesota. She worked for USACE while a student at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and graduated with her degree in forestry and wetland science in 2012.

Out of college, Merriman was hired into the regulatory division as an environmental protection technician and spent 1.5 years in that position before becoming a field biologist doing wetland and stream delineation and habitat surveys for an energy client. That position led to a permanent job as a natural resources consultant.

Eventually, Merriman came back to USACE as a project manager and lead project manager from 2016-2021 and then became a regulatory ecologist in 2021, which she describes as her “dream job.”

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Marissa Merriman, left, and April Marcangeli, regulatory ecologists, fly fish in Duluth, Minnesota, 2019. USACE St. Paul District photo by April Marcangeli

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As a regulatory ecologist, Merriman reviews wetland and stream mitigation bank proposals and monitors them to ensure the projects are ecologically successful according to the criteria. Merriman also teaches wetland delineation for the University of Wisconsin – LaCrosse and the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources. She is also a regional instructor for wetland delineation.

“Now that we’re standing up our stream program, it’s cool to see how much it’s evolving and we’re learning,” Merriman said. “How they design and develop the components of these restoration projects to achieve those goals supports macroinvertebrates and fish for fly fishing.”

Merriman has served on the board of the Fly Fishing of Minnesota Women since 2019 and served as the president of the board in 2025. The Twin Cities-based group strives to make fly fishing more welcoming and less intimidating for women, she said.

“It’s a lifelong sport and you are always learning something new,” she said. “I love a good challenge and it’s great mentally when you can’t turn your brain off. You are analyzing water flow patterns and what bugs might be flying around. It gets you out of your head and into problem-solving mode. It keeps you active and in nature.”

The stream program evaluates mitigation projects focused on stream restoration, reflecting on the commitment to species conservation found within the fly-fishing culture. “It’s my job to make a difference on a regional scale with our mission of no net loss of aquatic resources and aquatic functions,” Merriman said. “I am ensuring future generations, like my daughter, can continue to have these beautiful resources and continue the sport of fly fishing,” she added.

Merriman lives in River Falls, Wisconsin, with her family. “We have a stream behind the house and spend lots of time looking at cool bugs in the stream. I couldn’t think of a better childhood for my daughter to experience.”



*A nymph fly fishing bait. USACE
St. Paul District by April Marcangeli*

ANTITERRORISM AWARENESS MONTH

How to participate:

- Complete required Antiterrorism Level 1 training
- Practice situational awareness and pay attention to your surroundings
- Report any suspicious activity or behavior to the appropriate authorities
- Participate in drills and other awareness campaigns
- Stay updated on threat levels and advisories through official channels


**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**
St. Paul District

St. Paul District builds a win-win island project in Upper Pool 4

Story by Melanie Peterson

A \$30 million investment in the local community will build four islands, create an aquatic overwintering habitat, provide access to dredging, stabilize shorelines, support overall fish and wildlife habitat and promote recreation among river users. The Upper Pool 4 Pierce County Islands project is located near Bay City, Wisconsin, on the Upper Mississippi River.

“The granular base is complete, and we started some habitat dredging in the backwaters, we should be wrapping up fines and rock placement in the next year,” said John Henderson, project manager.

The St. Paul District will move dredged material via a barge from Pool 4 Read’s Landing to the Bay City area and the river sand will be used as the foundation of the islands. “We will also dredge 15 acres of backwater fisheries habitat,” Henderson said. “This will provide overwintering shelter for fish from cold water flows while maximizing depth for oxygen.”

The fine material removed from the backwaters will serve as topsoil for the vegetative species on the top of the islands. Those species will include herbaceous floodplain forest species like silver maples, cottonwood, hickory and swamp white oak.

“This project will benefit various bird species; this is one of the key areas of the Mississippi River flyway which birds use for migrating north to south as conditions start to freeze,” Henderson said. Through this project, the St. Paul District will also create emergent wetlands for dabbling duck and other amphibious species.

Three of the islands are funded under a pilot program for the beneficial use of dredged material. This island-building project was one of 10 pilot projects selected and one of a few to go to construction. The fourth island is funded under the Navigation and Ecosystem Sustainability Program. NESP is a long-term, dual-purpose program that integrates navigation improvements and ecosystem restoration together to provide positive impacts to the Upper Mississippi River system.

A project that is built on years of trust and partnership.

“Our partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, who is the non-federal sponsor, is vital to this important infrastructure project,” Henderson said. “We have great agency relationships up and down the river.”

“This project is really a win-win situation,” Henderson said. “We are ensuring navigation continues on the Mississippi River, while using the river sand that’s dredged to accomplish habitat creation for different species and increase recreation opportunities for locals.”

In total, the project will beneficially use a half million cubic yards of river sand that is dredged from the navigation channel. In 2025, the St. Paul District dredged over one million cubic yards of river sand to maintain the 9-foot navigation channel — a vital economic freeway. More than 10 million tons of commodities pass through Lock and Dam 10, in Guttenberg, Iowa, every year, and 25% of all waterborne commerce in the U.S. depends on the Mississippi River.



Construction continues on the Upper Pool 4 islands near Bay City, Wisconsin, Dec. 1, 2025. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

One step at a time: Henderson's journey with the St. Paul District

Story by Melanie Peterson

John Henderson, the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program manager, grew up in a small town in east central Illinois, 2-3 hours south of Chicago. He grew up fishing in Lake Shelbyville, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers reservoir.

Henderson began his journey with the St. Paul District in 2017 when he moved to Fargo, North Dakota, to work on the Fargo-Moorhead flood risk management project; one of the largest infrastructure projects in the nation. "I also got to do a lot of great fishing in the Detroit Lakes [Minnesota] area," Henderson said.

When the project was paused in 2017, Henderson started in the district office in St. Paul, Minnesota. While working in the district office, he got out on the Mississippi River and fell in love with the driftless area. "Something I was not used to was the bluffs — since I came from corn country," Henderson added.

He approached the resident engineer in Winona about a job opportunity. That office had a lot of people retiring so he was able to get a position there. "I joined a group of very experienced engineers and learned a lot," Henderson said. "Most importantly, I learned about the Upper Mississippi River Restoration program, or UMRR, and got engrained in that program. It was the first time I learned about all the unique projects that were completed down the river in the last 40 years."

UMRR has been around since 1986, and through the program over 60 projects have been completed. "We've been able to restore a lot of acres through this program and being a part of that is a unique and rewarding experience," Henderson said. "A lot of people don't know this job exists, so I find myself very fortunate." Growing up hunting and fishing, Henderson said he had conservation in mind but didn't realize he could make a career out of it. "Honestly, it's one of the coolest things ever," he said.

Henderson started as a quality assurance representative in 2018 on the Conway Lake habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project and assisted with the Harpers Slough island repairs, which are both in Pool 9 on the Mississippi River. He progressed into a project engineer position which focused on the design and field analysis side of things and then became a contracting officer representative, which he said "is like the field sergeant. You help guide how and where we build features."

In 2022, Henderson had the opportunity to join the project management team in the district. "In project management, I got a feel for working collaboratively and more in the weeds with agency partners to develop these projects — where we go and what we need to do," he said. "We're choosing the best thing for what the river needs right now."

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John Henderson, left, program manager, and Raylene Hylland, civil engineer, at the Lower Pool 10 restoration project, near Guttenberg, Iowa, Sept. 19, 2025. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

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In the last year, Henderson stepped into the UMRR program manager position. As the program manager, he communicates the district's needs internally and externally through the larger UMRR program, which covers St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts.

"We're working with our external agency partners to develop great projects, but that depends on funding," Henderson said. He works to develop budgets, determining what engineers, biologists, foresters and other positions need — funding and resource-wise — when they need it, and communicates that to the larger program. "Ultimately what the funding boils down to, is what the river needs. It can be complicated because the river is a large system with a lot of needs," he said.

"Where I really got into the weeds and got my boots dirty was with the McGregor Lake restoration project, which we started in 2020," Henderson said. "We're wrapping up the McGregor project this year [2026], and I have served as the quality assurance representative, contracting officer representative, project manager and now the program manager. I've really seen this project from cradle to grave."

There are UMRR projects in the St. Paul District going on in the Minnesota River and in pools 4, 9 and 10. "We have a lot of great people and agencies on a lot of different restoration projects targeting different species and restoration priorities up and down the river," Henderson said.

Right now, Henderson said he is heavily involved in the Lower Pool 10 habitat rehabilitation and enhancement project. This \$40 million investment is one of the largest UMRR projects. Stage 1 began in 2024 and will be wrapping up in the next couple years. There are two other stages covering three full river miles.

"We're really able to make a pool-wide impact and restore those islands to somewhat what they used to be," he said. The project will include bank stabilization, recreating islands and habitat dredging for overwintering fish habitat. "This is another testament to how great a program UMRR is and how much of a systemic change we can make through the program with the funding we're receiving."

There are over 100 technical professionals — engineers, biologists, lawyers — experts in their fields, that are contributing to the Lower Pool 10 project. "What I like the most about my job is the people that I get to work with. No matter their background, they are passionate about working on the river and the work we do," Henderson said. "When we get together to solve a problem, we may not have the same end results of priorities in mind, but we all want to make sure the river is what's benefitting the most; that we're doing the best we can."

"At the end of the day, I know we're doing great work, and I enjoy the people I'm doing it with so it makes coming to work fun," Henderson concluded.



John Henderson, program manager, plants a tree at McGregor restoration project near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, April 22, 2024. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson



John Henderson, program manager, at Conway Lake restoration project, near Lansing, Iowa, Sept. 13, 2023. USACE St. Paul District photo by Melanie Peterson

Around THE DISTRICT



The St. Paul District has an incredible conservation work happening at Lock and Dam 1, in Minneapolis. With the help of Lock and Dam 1 staff and regional partners, the St. Paul District recently banded four 16-day-old falcon chicks — two males and two females — at the Ford Parkway Bridge nesting box. This important monitoring effort helps track and protect the local urban falcon population. This success was made possible through a multi-agency collaboration, coordinated by the Midwest Peregrine Society. Pictured: Curt Larsen, Lock and Dam 1 head operator. Note: birds were handled for scientific research under a federally authorized Bird Banding Permit issued by the U.S. Geological Survey and in accordance with all state permitting requirements.



The 18th annual Gull Lake Recreation Area Spring Cleanup at Gull Lake Recreation Area, near Brainerd, Minnesota, April 25. In exchange for a free campsite for the weekend, volunteers helped clear the campsites of leaves and sticks before helping us install additional privacy netting between the recreation site and the newly constructed Gull Point Road. USACE St. Paul District by Ren Martin.



Delores Drendel, natural resources specialist at Blackhawk Park, practices CPR at Eau Galle Park, in Spring Valley, Wisconsin, June 5. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo

Recognizing our Employees of the Month: The MVPs of MVP



February
Hannah Caudill
Regional Planning and Environment
Division North



March
Dan Cottrell
Operations



April
David Klocker
Engineering and Construction



May
Brian Schmit
Engineering and Construction



New hires

Drew Becker, chief of regulatory, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota
Hunter Bolduan, deckhand, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Ryan Erp, maintenance worker, operations, Watson, Minnesota
Joshua Hawkins, lock and dam operator, operations, Welch, Minnesota
Cailey Kelvie, natural resources specialist (park ranger), operations, Valley City, North Dakota
Colton Sobiech, natural resources specialist (park ranger), operations, Crosslake, Minnesota

Promotions

Lauren Allin, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Christopher Atkins, chief of operations, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota
Matthew Boberg, engineering equipment operator, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Cameron Brock, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota
Michelle Butler, administrative officer, operations, St. Paul, Minnesota

Clayton Corken, biologist, regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois
Daniel Cottrell, supervisory biologist, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Jordon Dittrich, engineering equipment operator, Fountain City, operations, Wisconsin
Valeshka Mussenden Ferdinand, civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Jason Foss, supervisory civil engineer, engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Joseph Frawley, natural resources specialist (park ranger), operations, Brainerd, Minnesota
Keith Gades, lock and dam operator, operations, Hastings, Minnesota
Mallory Gross, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota
Joshua Hawkins, lock and dam operator, operations, Welch, Minnesota
Amy Heffernan, biologist, regulatory, Brookfield, Wisconsin

Joseph Hemmer, civil engineer (structural), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Bethany Hoster, environmental planning branch chief,
regional planning and environment division north, Rock Island, Illinois
Zachary Kimmel, chief of the programs and project support branch,
programs and project management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Samuel Kingsley, lock and dam operator, operations, Red Wing, Minnesota
Andrew Lorenz, master, tender, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin

Melissa Murray, financial management specialist, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Maggie O'Neill, emergency management specialist, emergency management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Katherine Opsahl, plan formulation branch chief, regional planning and environment division north,
St. Paul, Minnesota
Joshua Rye, dredge operations manager, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Thomas Sowinski, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota

Connor Spaeth, civil engineer (structural), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota
Langston Spencer, leverman, operations, Fountain City, Wisconsin
Peter Tellin, facilities specialist, logistics management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Samantha Thury, budget analyst, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota
Joseph Toth, biologist, regulatory, St. Paul, Minnesota



Promotions, cont.

Kelsey Voytovich-Berndt, staff accountant, resource management, St. Paul, Minnesota

Michael Walker, cartographer, public affairs, St. Paul, Minnesota

Helen Walz, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Jeremy Webb, realty specialist, real estate, St. Paul, Minnesota

Nathaniel Woolf, construction control representative, engineering and construction, Winona, Minnesota

Leigh Youngblood, civil engineer (hydraulics), engineering and construction, St. Paul, Minnesota

Retirements



Lt. Col. Joshua Rud, acting district commander, presents Kevin Berg, recreation and natural resources, with the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal on his retirement after 46 years of federal service. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo.



Tim Paulus received an engraved cutting board from Kari Hauck, chief of engineering, after 49 years of federal service. Paulus retired from headquarters as the mechanical engineering community of practice leader. He served in this role for seven years, but spent the majority of his career at the St. Paul District. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer



Craig Evans, regional planning division north plan formulation chief, retired after 40 years with the Corps of Engineers. Upon his retirement, Evans was recognized with the de Fleury Medal by Lt. Col. Joshua Rud, acting district commander. USACE St. Paul District photo by Shannon Bauer



Lt. Col. Joshua Rud, acting district commander, presents Corrine Hodapp, recreation and natural resources, with the Meritorious Civilian Service Medal on her retirement after 37 years of federal service. USACE St. Paul District courtesy photo



Congratulations



The graduates of the 2026 Leadership Development Program. Back row left to right: Brent Meyer, Thomas Sowinski, April Marcangeli, Kurt Schroeder, Jacob Moser, Eric Dykman, Jeremy Webb. Front row left to right: Joel Porterfield, Travis Burrier, Cindy Ward, Kory Warrington, Adam Loven.

USACE St. Paul District photo by Jill Bathke



Mark Buringa, civil engineer, and Ellie welcomed Beaumont Buringa Dec. 23, 2025, at 6 pounds, 5 ounces.



Hunter Simonson, natural resource specialist, and his wife Haley, welcomed Tucker Simonson April 8.

Aung Than Win, electrical engineer; **Kassandra Reynolds**, hydraulic engineer; and **Beth Post**, engineer passed the Professional Engineer exam

Sanjay Bimali passed the Contracting Certification Exam

Jerry Cudney graduated from the Sergeants Major Academy and was promoted to Sgt. Maj. in the U.S. Army Reserve

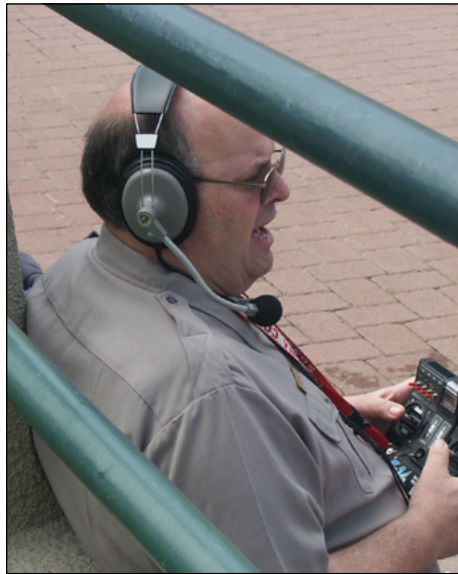
Sgt. Daniel Machado graduated from the U.S. Army Basic Leadership Course



Taps



Jim Greene passed away July 4. What began as a temporary opportunity at Lock and Dam 9 in Lynxville, Wisconsin, grew into a lifelong career. Greene retired in 2003 as lockmaster at Lock and Dam 8 after many years of service.



Frank Star passed away May 14. He retired from the district in 2008 after 35 years of federal service. His last position with the district was as a natural resource planner.



Scott Uhl passed away June 12. Uhl worked for the Corps of Engineers for around 28 years, most of which were in the St. Paul District physical support branch. He retired from the Rock Island District in 2025.

USACE receives the Army Superior Unit Award

USACE and its subordinate commands were awarded the Army Superior Unit Award for the period of April 2018 to May 2020.

This honor is a direct result of the exceptionally meritorious service of USACE and its subordinate commands during multiple, unprecedented national crises. The professionalism, ingenuity, and dedication of these units were on full display during the demanding 2018 and 2019 hurricane seasons, the response to the California Wildfires, and the critical mission to build Alternate Care Facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These collective efforts, along with other major events like the historic flood fights and the restoration of the Puerto Rico power grid, exemplified the highest standards of superior service.

The Army Superior Unit Award is a prestigious decoration that recognizes units for outstanding meritorious performance of a difficult and challenging mission in peacetime. This award signifies that USACE's performance was measurably superior to that of other units with similar missions.



The Army Superior Unit Award