Yankee Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Volume 45, No. 6 March 2011

Building Strong®

Engineers monitor New England water and snow levels

Story on page 3

Yankee Voices

Greg Buteau, retiree Joe Colucci and Jim Morocco

Congratulations

...to Jim Kelly and his wife, Denise, on the birth of their daughter Meghan Caroline, Feb. 3. Meghan joins big sister Shannon in the family circle.

...to Hop Brook Lake Park Ranger Marci Montrose and her partner, Melissa Anderson, on the birth of their first child, Konner Jaymes Anderson Montrose, Feb. 6.

Sympathy

… to Santos Lara, Sr., Human Resource Office, his wife, Lesley, and their entire family on the passing of Santos' father, Fermin Lara, Feb. 15.

… to John Astley, Office of Counsel, on the passing of his father, John Astley, March 7. The elder Mr. Astley was a U.S. Navy Korean War Veteran serving on the USS Midway.

Words worth repeating

Freedom is the right to choose the habits that bind you.

- Renate Rubinstein

Letters from Overseas
Thoughts from Adam Burnett in Afghanistan

NAE!

Thanks for keeping track of me. I know I need to write more, and I thank all those who have reached out to me.

First, I was completely surprised when I got the box full of gifts and treats and the old-standby Dunkin Donuts coffee.

I am very thankful for your care and good wishes. I really appreciate all your gifts, and so did the ANP gang - they made sure the candy and macadamia nut chocolates didn't hang around. And the coffee is a huge hit. We set up a coffee pot (careful not to blow it out by plugging into a 220 V socket) to start making actually really good coffee. This fresh-brewed coffee has made us a little more popular (we need everything we can get), and it makes the Dfac coffee actually taste like the poison that it is. I've even made the hazelnut coffee, and out came all the tough remarks (that's not real coffee), though some people admit quietly that they really like it and actually enjoy the aroma.

So, I have been busy, actually really busy being a PM for $100 million worth of Afghanistan National Police facilities projects. I'm covering Jalalabad Area Office. There are the PRB's, line item reviews, land issues, budget issues, engineering issues, and then the reward of ground breakings and the ribbon cuttings - coming about once a week now. For all the furious pace, the work is rewarding.

I hope you are doing fine and staying busy with projects. Thanks for keeping in touch!

Sincerely,
Adam Burnett
PM - ANP, USACE-AEN

YANKEE ENGINEER is an authorized unofficial Army newspaper under provisions of AR 360-1 published monthly. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Contributions from readers are solicited, but publication depends on judgment of the editor. No payment will be made for contributions. Published by the Public Affairs Office, New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 696 Virginia Road, Concord MA 01742-2751, 978-318-8777. Printed by the offset method on recyclable paper by the Defense Printing Office in Boston, Mass. Circulation 1600. The YANKEE ENGINEER can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/news/yankee.htm. On the Cover: Satellite image of February Blizard that hit New England (NOAA).

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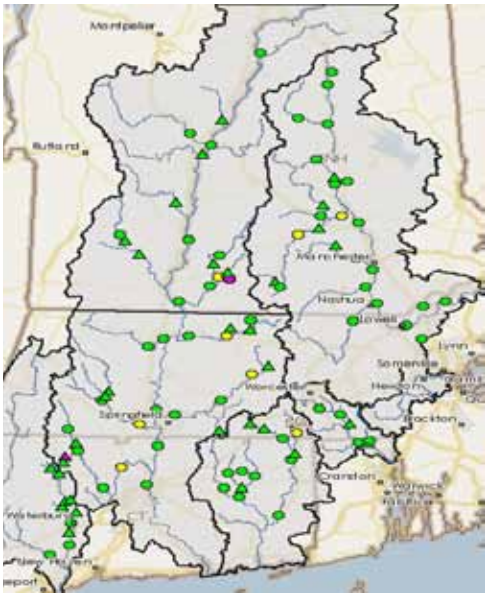
Engineers monitor water, snow levels to regulate Corps managed dams to minimize downstream impacts

By Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

Hydraulic engineers from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are monitoring the water levels in the region's major rivers and the depth of snow cover throughout the region to regulate Corps of Engineers-managed dams and to minimize downstream impacts from the New England District headquarters in Concord, Mass.

"The engineers in our Reservoir Control Center are especially busy now receiving reports from our field personnel on the water content and depths of snow on the ground across New England," said Paul Marinelli, chief of the Corps of Engineers, New England District Reservoir Regulation Section. "We also are receiving frequent data from our 'eye in the sky' on the levels and flow of water in major rivers – the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite."



Reservoir Control map of the New England District's dams in February.

New England District has been using the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite (GOES), known as GOES East or GOES-13, which became operational in April 2010 with advanced weather imagery, as its data collection satellite. The District data collection platforms monitor pool, tailwater, river levels, ocean levels, precipitation, and air and water temperature, recording data every 15 minutes. The data collection platforms also monitor piezometer data and record these every four to six hours, depending on the site.

By collecting information about river stages and flows and their increases and decreases from 100 data collection platforms over time, the hydrologists can effectively regulate the Corps of Engineers-managed dams to minimize impacts downstream. "This system assists us in deciding when to close or throttle back water flow through our network of 35 dams to provide the maximum flood damage prevention benefits to downstream areas," Marinelli said. Through the use of real-time hydrologic data, field collected snowpack data, and exchange of information with the National Weather Service's Northeast River Forecast Center, significant water movement can be identified, examined and predicted.

Each winter, the Army engineers compile bi-weekly summaries of snow depths and their water equivalents from 100 key locations within the Connecticut, Merrimack, Thames, Housatonic and Blackstone river basins. With the information, engineers make calculations to determine snow density and comparisons are then made to averages based on over more than three decades of such readings.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has designed a system of flood risk management projects which includes 35 flood risk management dams, 112 local protection projects, and five hurricane barriers in New England. A total of 31 of the 35 reservoir projects, and three of five hurricane barriers are operated and maintained by the Corps, while the remaining projects are operated and maintained by local interests.

Damages prevented from flooding events in winter/spring 2010 by flood risk management dams, local protection projects, and hurricane protection barriers were $317.9 million in fiscal year 2010. Cumulative flood reduction damages prevented by all projects, including local protection projects, since their construction through Sept. 30, 2010 are more than $5.2 billion. These projects cost a total of $538 million to build.

New England District operates and maintains 10 of 31 reservoirs for flood risk management only. Another 17 are operated primarily for flood risk management, and seasonally for recreational activities. The remaining four reservoirs are operated as multipurpose projects, including flood risk management, water supply, recreation, non-federal hydropower, and fishery storage.

Streamflow and other project/reservoir data are available online at the Corps' New England District website at http://www.nae.usace.army.mil. Select New England District River Watch Section under "hot topics" or go directly to the link at: http://www.reservoircontrol.com.

(Photos by Forrest Hammond and Kristy King)

Bald eagle at North Springfield Lake Project. Inset - John Buck and Gary Pelton installing flashing.

Bald Eagle Nest Protection in the Upper Connecticut River Basin

By Kristy King
SCA Intern

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in the Upper Connecticut River Basin is working in cooperation with Vermont Fish and Wildlife (VFW) to help recover Vermont bald eagle populations. On Feb. 10, VFW biologists John Buck and Forrest Hammond and USACE biologist Gary Pelton along with his interns Kristy King and Natali Walker predator-proofed two bald eagle nests located at North Springfield Lake. The process involved installing flashing around the base of the nest tree and surrounding trees. The flashing prevents predators from climbing the tree and endangering the bald eagle's eggs or nestlings. Every nestling that survives to adulthood helps contribute to building a stable bald eagle population in Vermont.

Removing any species from the Federal List of Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants is an incredible accomplishment, especially when that species is the emblem of the United States of America. This event took decades to accomplish and was mainly due to the ban on dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT), extensive reintroduction programs, and the protection of critical breeding and wintering habitat.

Bald eagles continue to be under the protection of the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (1940), the Lacey Act (1900), and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (1918). Even though bald eagles were federally delisted in 2007, their populations are still vulnerable to both natural and man-made threats. Since bald eagles are still susceptible to becoming threatened or endangered once again, they remain listed on the Vermont Threatened and Endangered Species List.

One of the threats to bald eagle populations is habitat loss. Suitable breeding habitat must include adequate tree canopy structure for perching, roosting, foraging and nesting; water for sources of food; and ample foraging opportunities. Three District projects are listed in the *Vermont Bald Eagle Recovery Plan* as potentially suitable habitats for breeding bald eagles. These projects include North Hartland Lake, North Springfield Lake and Townshend Lake.

If at least 28 nests remain active and produce an average of 28 nestlings yearly for five years, bald eagles will be removed from the Vermont Threatened and Endangered Species List.

The nests at North Springfield Lake will be monitored by the USACE to help meet the state's delisting objectives.

Corps of Engineers proposes maintenance dredging of Maine federal navigation project near Bath

By Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

The New England District is proposing to perform maintenance dredging of the Kennebec River Federal navigation project this summer in Bath, Maine.

The proposed work involves maintenance dredging of two portions (and advance maintenance dredging in one of those two portions) of the authorized 27-foot deep, 500-foot wide Federal Navigation Project in the Kennebec River in the summer of 2011.

(Photo by Ivan Massar)

Kennebec River in Maine.

Dredging is needed to remove hazardous shoals from the channel in advance of the transit of the U.S. Navy Destroyer, the "SPRUANCE," currently scheduled to depart the Bath Iron Works on or about Sept. 1, on its way to being commissioned. The SPRUANCE has been deemed critical to national defense and its transit from the Bath Iron Works cannot be delayed.

"We are proposing to perform maintenance dredging in the vicinity of Doubling Point, just below Bath, and at the mouth of the river near Popham Beach," said Project Manager Bill Kavanaugh, of the Corps' New England District, Programs/Project Management Division. "We estimate that a total of about 70,000 cubic yards of clean sandy material needs to removed from the channel." About 50,000 cubic yards would be from Doubling Point and 20,000 cubic yards from Popham Beach.

The shoals, especially in the Doubling Point area, consist of massive sand-waves oscillating within vertical and horizontal ranges. The elevation at the tips of these sand-waves vary from –19.7 feet to –26.8 feet below Mean Lower Low Water.

As part of this proposal, advance maintenance dredging may be performed to remove the sand-waves in the vicinity of Doubling Point to a maximum elevation of –32 feet in an effort to improve the chance that adequate depths will endure.

The proposed work will be performed with a hopper dredge over a three-to-five week period beginning on or about Aug. 1. The material dredged from the Doubling Point area will be disposed of at the previously used in-river disposal site located north of Bluff Head in about 95 to 100 feet of water.

Material dredged from the Popham Beach area will be disposed of at a previously used 500-yard circular near-shore disposal site located about 0.4 nautical miles south of Jackknife Ledge in depths of about 40 to 50 feet.

Maintenance dredging of the Doubling Point and Popham Beach areas was last performed in 2003 when approximately 22,000 cubic yards of material were removed and disposed of at these disposal sites. The proposed work is contingent upon the availability of the necessary approvals and funding. An Environmental Assessment of the proposed maintenance dredging of the Kennebec River is being prepared.

The Corps has assessed the effects that dredging and disposal of dredged material are likely to have on Essential Fish Habitat and has determined that effects will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources.

The Corps is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to assure that all impacts will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. The Corps is also in consultation with NMFS on issues under the Endangered Species Act. The District took comments on the proposed dredging through March 30.

African Americans' contributions during the Civil War highlight Black History Month program

The Equal Employment Opportunity Office and the Black Employment Program teamed up to sponsor a Black History Program, Feb. 15 in the Concord Park Theatre. This year's theme was "African Americans and the Civil War."

The keynote speakers for this year's event were Emmett Bell-Sykes and Joe Zellner of the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, Company "A."

Lt. Col. Steven Howell, Deputy District Commander, welcomed the audience. Before the guest speakers made their presentation on the history behind the 54th that included replica clothing and materials used during that time by the regiment, Lt. Col. Howell discussed the important role of African Americans during the unrest just before the Civil War. "In 1861, as the United State stood at the brink of Civil War, people of African descent, both enslaved and free persons, waited with a watchful eye," he said. "They understood that a war between the North and the South might bring about jubilee – the destruction of slavery and universal freedom."

(Photo by Brian Murphy)

Emmett Bell-Sykes explains the equipment used by African American Soldiers during the Civil War. Joe Zellner models the uniform worn during that era.

Lt. Col. Howell said that although President Abraham Lincoln's priority was to preserve the Union, it was Frederick Douglass, the most prominent black leader, who believed that regardless of intentions, the war would bring an end to slavery.

During the Civil War, four million people of African descent, free and enslaved, rallied around the Union flag, with nearly 200,000 joining the Grand Army of the Republic to destroy the Confederacy. "They served us as recruiters, Soldiers, nurses, and spies," said Lt. Col. Howell. "They endured unequal treatment, massacres, and riots as they pursued their quest for freedom and equality. Their record of service speaks for itself, and Americans have never fully realized how their efforts served the Union."

Bell-Sykes and Zellner spoke about their regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Regiment, which is part of the Massachusetts Army National Guard. It is a descendant of the famous 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry.

The 54th saw extensive service in the Union Army during the American Civil War. The regiment was one of the first black units in the United State Army during the Civil War. The Emancipation Proclamation passed in January 1863. Massachusetts Governor John A. Andrew authorized the regiment in March 1863 and it sprang to life under the command of Col. Robert Gould Shaw.

The 54th trained at Camp Meigs in Readville, Mass., near Boston and left to fight for the Union in May 1863. At first, they only performed manual labor, but that soon changed. The regiment saw combat against Confederate Troops for the first time on July 16 of that same year on James Island, South Carolina.

The original regiment was disbanded after the Civil War, but continued to retain its strong legacy. The unit, which is now known as the 54th Massachusetts Volunteers Regiment, was reactivated on Nov. 21, 2008. It serves as the Massachusetts National Guard ceremonial unit and renders military honors at events such as funerals and state functions.

After their remarks, Lt. Col. Howell presented Bell-Sykes and Zellner with a Bunker Hill plaque and Commander's Coins in appreciation for their interesting and educational talk.

Other speakers included Jackie DiDomenico, EEO Officer, who made opening and closing remarks, and Ruthann Brien, who introduced the speakers.

Corps proposes maintenance dredging of portions of Federal navigation channels in Patchogue River and Clinton Harbor

By Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

The New England District is proposing to perform maintenance dredging of portions of the Federal navigation channels in the Patchogue River in Westbrook and Clinton Harbor in Clinton, Conn. The Federal channels provide access to and from Long Island Sound to the public and private boating facilities of Westbrook along the Patchogue River and Clinton in Clinton Harbor.

The proposed work in the Federal navigation project at the Patchogue River involves maintenance dredging of a portion of the existing entrance channel, which has an authorized depth of – 8 feet at mean lower low water (MLLW). The authorized channel has a width of 125 feet from deep water in Long Island Sound, extending northerly about 1,850 feet through the inlet to the confluence of the Patchogue and Menunketesuck Rivers. The channel then narrows to 75 feet wide and continues upstream about 3,480 feet to the U.S. Route 1 highway bridge at Westbrook. The channel is widened to 80 feet through the bend abreast the Westbrook town wharf.

The proposed work in the Federal navigation project at Clinton Harbor involves maintenance dredging of a portion of the existing entrance channel, which has an authorized depth of – 8 feet MLLW. The authorized project consists of an 8-foot channel at MLLW, 100 feet wide, from Long Island Sound to the upper ends of the wharves at Clinton; an 8-foot anchorage area extending 600 feet above the end of the channel with widths of 150 to 250 feet and extending 50 feet south of the channel; and a stone dike between Cedar Island and the mainland. "The proposed work consists of the maintenance dredging of the most shoaled portions of the entrance channels of the Patchogue River at Westbrook Harbor and at Clinton Harbor," said Project Manager Jack Karalius, of the Corps' New England District, Programs/Project Management Division. "Approximately 20,000 cubic yards of sediment will be removed from the shallowest areas of the entrance channel of the Patchogue River, and approximately 30,000 cubic yards will be removed from Clinton Harbor."


The CURRITUCK at Patchogue River.

Dredging will be accomplished by the Government-owned special-purpose dredge CURRITUCK, which was also used last year. Dredged material will be placed in the littoral zone nearshore off of Hammonasset State Beach, inside the 20-foot contour. The material will then be spread throughout the beach and the littoral zones by natural wave action. The work will be accomplished over a 10-15 day period for each of the two harbors in May or June, pending coordination with the state and Federal resource agencies, funding, and the availability of the CURRITUCK.

For the Patchogue River, the entire federal navigation project was last maintained in 1997-98 when 29,000 cubic yards of material were mechanically dredged and disposed of at the Cornfield Shoals Disposal Site in Long Island Sound. In 2010, the CURRITUCK dredged approximately 10,000 cubic yards of sediment from the most shoaled portion of the entrance channel and placed the material nearshore off Hammonasset State Beach.

For Clinton Harbor, maintenance dredging of the Federal navigation project has been performed eight times since 1957. The most recent maintenance dredging of the channel occurred in 2010 when approximately 20,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed by the CURRITUCK and placed in a nearshore disposal site off Hammonasset State Beach.

An Environmental Assessment of the proposed maintenance dredging is being prepared. The Corps has assessed the effects that dredging is likely to have on Essential Fish Habitat and has determined that effects will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources. The Corps is consulting with the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to assure that all impacts will be minimized to the maximum extent practicable. Additionally, it is the Corps' preliminary determination that no threatened or endangered species are residents of the project area. Comments on the proposed dredging project were accepted through April 7.

(Photos by Brian Murphy)

Retiree Bill Holtham, Paul Battista and Tim Beauchemin talk over old times during Battista's retirement reception.

Retirement reception held for Paul Battista

Paul Battista, Project Engineer in Construction at the Providence Veterans Administration Hospital, made the decision to retire after over 30 years of service.

Friends and coworkers held a retirement coffee reception in the Massachusetts/Connecticut Conference Room on Feb. 3, to celebrate his distinguished career.

About 60 people drifted in and out of the reception to shake hands with Battista, tell stories, and wish him good luck.

Sean Dolan, Chief of Construction, served as Master of Ceremonies for the official portion of the retirement reception. Dolan also presented Battista with a coffee mug.

Other speakers included Lt. Col. Steven Howell, New England District Deputy Commander, Battista's current

Paul Battista (left) receives a mug from Master of Ceremonies and Chief of Construction, Sean Dolan.

supervisor, Jim Morocco and former supervisor, Paul Cooper.

Col. Philip Feir, New England District Commander, presented Battista with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service for 30 years of exceptional service and for his constant volunteering to go where the District needed him.

Battista was needed in many places over the years. He went to the new Devens Military Office in the mid-1980s; to Real Estate Division and the Silresim Superfund Site in Lowell, Mass., in the early 1990s and then out to Providence, R.I., to work on the Veterans Administration Hospital project.

Col. Feir formally retired Battista by presenting him with his retirement certificate and pin.

Battista began his federal career with the Corps in New England in 1981 as a Regulatory Intern under Bob DeSista. From there, he went on to work for Carl Boutilier in Navigation Division before making his final move to Construction.

Battista is currently enjoying his retirement and taking care of his two young children. Christine Johnson-Battista, who also works for Construction Division, accompanied her husband to the retirement coffee.

Retirees Bob Batt, Joe Collucci and Bill Holtham, also attended the event and welcomed Battista into the retirement community.

Gladys Leone (left) and Christine Johnson-Battista at Paul Battista's retirement reception.

Paul Battista receives a Commander's Award for Civilian Service from Col. Philip Feir, New England District Commander.

Jim Morocco talks about Paul Battista's career during the event.

Maureen Murray signs Paul Battista's retirement card.

Lt. Col. Steven Howell makes a presentation during the reception.

(Photos by Kevin Burke)

Bill Norman holds up a gift he received from John Pribilla and the other Canal Park Rangers during his retirement presentation.

Cape Cod Canal's 'First and Foremost Park Ranger' retires with 37 years of federal service

When Cape Cod Canal Park Manager Bill Norman decided to retire, he requested no parties. To honor his request, his friends and co-workers took him out for a quiet pizza lunch. To honor his 37 years of distinguished service, they held a brief retirement presentation during the Cape Cod Canal's annual Chinese New Year Celebration, Feb. 1.

Approximately 50 people attended the event. Larry Davis, Canal Manager, served as Master of Ceremonies during the official part of the retirement presentation. Davis officially retired Norman by presenting him with his retirement certificate and pin.

Park Ranger John Pribilla made presentations on behalf of the Canal Park Rangers. Gifts Norman received included a homemade inscribed lamp; a circa 1935 phone like those used on the Rail Road Bridge; a framed nameplate with the inscription, "Canal's First and Foremost Park Ranger," a clock, some pictures, and a tide clock with a Cape Cod Canal nautical chart in the background.

Bill Norman (left) receives his retirement certificate from Canal Manager Larry Davis.

Bill Norman started his career at the Cape Cod Canal in 1976. He worked for a brief time at Hodges Village Dam before returning to the Canal where he retired. Norman plans on spending some of his retirement helping family members take care of their properties.

Norman's wife, Carol, accompanied him to the Chinese New Year celebration. Distinguished Civilian Gallery member Fran Donovan also attended the celebration to wish Norman well.

Employee accomplishments, achievements celebrated during District awards ceremony

The Executive and Human Resources Offices held an awards ceremony, Feb. 9, in the Concord Park Cafeteria.

The awards ceremony welcomed home three District employees who were deployed overseas as well as recognized other employees for jobs well done. Col. Philip Feir, New England District Commander, hosted the event. He presented Commander's Coins to members of the New England District for their efforts. He presented Bob Meader, Engineering/Planning, with a coin for taking the lead for the District by serving as the 2010 NAE Combined Federal Campaign Coordinator.

Members of the ACE-IT Contracting Team received Commander's Coins from Col. Feir for their quick response to the computer room water damage that had occurred a few weeks prior to the ceremony. Team members who received the honors were Greg Goudas, Stefan Carpenter, Jay Provenzano, Edwin Johnston Moses and John Broderick.

Patrick Blumeris, Engineering/Planning, received the final Commander's Coin of the event for being named the Work Environment Committee's Employee of the Month for his outstanding work on the Nacala Dam project.

Karen Adams, Regulatory Division, received a Commanders' Award for Civilian Service for her outstanding efforts on the Cape Wind Permit application.

During the deployment welcome home portion of the ceremony, Col. Feir presented Commander's Awards for Civilian Service to three employees who have returned from overseas. They received the awards for performing their duties in "an outstanding manner in support of our nation's Overseas Contingency Operations."

Farrell McMillan, Chief, Engineering/Planning, served in Iraq from July 2010 to this past January. Richard Kristoff, Regulatory Division, served in Afghanistan from March to September 2010. Jennifer McCarthy, Chief, Regulatory Division, served in Iraq from April 2010 to January. In addition to the Commander's Awards for Civilian Service, the District's deployed employees also received Special Act awards.

Dona McMillan, wife of Farrell McMillan, received a Bunker Hill plaque for her courageous support of her husband's deployment. "We understand the sacrifice associated with the separation of a loved one and the burden it places on the shoulders of family members," read Col. Feir from the citation. Farrell McMillan accepted the award on her behalf.

Farrell McMillan, Chief, Engineering/Planning receives his deployment award from Col. Philip Feir.

Richard Kristoff, Regulatory Division.

(Photos by Brian Murphy)

Jennifer McCarthy, Chief, Regulatory Division.

Dredging up the past

(Photo by C.J. Allen)

Members of the Buffumville Dam team stand in front of the project sign after they were awarded Project of the Year in September 2000.

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