

Yankee Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Volume 49, No. 8 May 2016

Building Strong



Learners Cooperative unveils mural, new interpretive program at Cape Cod Canal

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Yankee Voices

Samantha Gray, Park Ranger, Cape Cod Canal



Summer Water Safety Tips

The warm weather is here and with it comes swimming and other water related activities. Swimmers should keep a few safety precautions in mind:

- Don't go in the water unless you know how to swim;
- Never swim alone
- Make sure the body of water matches your skill level; swimming in a pool is much different than swimming in a lake or river, where more strength is needed to handle currents

- If you do get caught in a current, don't try to fight it; stay calm and float with it, or swim parallel to the shore until you can swim free

- Swim in areas supervised by a lifeguard
- Don't push or jump on others
- Don't dive in unfamiliar areas
- Never drink alcohol when swimming

Taking water safety precautions saves lives; maybe even your own.

(National Safety Council)



Photo Courtesy of MASSPORT

Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy (second from left), Mike Keegan and Col. Christopher Barron join MASSPORT officials on a tour of Conley Terminal in Boston.

ASA (CW) Darcy visits New England District projects

The Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), Jo-Ellen Darcy, was in Boston, Massachusetts, April 29 for a briefing on several New England District projects. Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, and Mike Keegan, Project Management, accompanied Ms. Darcy on several site visits.

Ms. Darcy's first stop was to the Charlestown Navy Yard in Charlestown, Massachusetts for a tour. Keegan provided a briefing of the Long Island Sound Dredge Material Management Plan during a working lunch at the Navy Yard.

Soon after, the group traveled to the Massachusetts Port Authority to tour the Conley Terminal and to meet with Port Director Lisa Wieland, Chief Executive Officer Thomas Glynn and Commissioner Bill Adler, Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. While there, Col. Barron and Keegan gave Ms. Darcy a briefing on the Boston Harbor dredging project. The last stop on Ms. Darcy's visit was a trip to the Muddy River Flood Risk Management and Environmental Restoration Project in Boston.

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: Lauren Freed, Cape Cod Learners Cooperative, examines the mural that her students painted and donated to the New England District.



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Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite takes command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Lieutenant General Todd T. Semonite assumed his position as Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) on May 19, 2016. As the Chief of Engineers, an Army Staff Principal, he advises the Army on engineering matters and serves as the Army's topographer and the proponent for real estate and other related engineering programs. As the USACE Commanding General, he is responsible for more than 32,000 Civilian employees and 700 Military personnel who provide project management, construction support and engineering expertise in more than 110 countries around the world.



Lt. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, Chief of Engineers

Previous to this assignment, Lt. Gen. Semonite established the Army Talent Management Task Force and served as its first Director. In this role, Lt. Gen. Semonite was responsible for reforming the way the Army acquires, develops, employs, and retains a talented workforce. Prior to these duties, Lieutenant General Semonite was the Commanding General for Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan, responsible for the building of the Afghan Army and Police through management of a \$13 billion budget to support a 352,000 individual force. During his tenure, the mission focused on sustainment of that force and training, advising and assisting the Security Ministries towards establishing an enduring culture of fiscal discipline, transparency and accountability, while continuing to fight and win against a significant enemy threat. Previous to that command, Lt. Gen. Semonite served as the Deputy Chief of Engineers and the Deputy Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Lt. Gen. Semonite has also served as Commanding General, South Atlantic Division, responsible for the oversight of planning, design and construction projects to support the U.S. Military, protect America's water resources, and provide USACE support to U.S. Southern Command. The South Atlantic Division provides engineering and construction services from Alabama to North Carolina, the Caribbean and Central and South America.

Prior to assuming Command of the South Atlantic Division, Lt. Gen. Semonite was the Commander of the USACE's North Atlantic Division in New York City serving the states from Virginia to Maine as well as the U.S. European

Command and U.S. Africa Command Areas of Responsibility. He also served as Commanding General, Maneuver Support Center and Fort Leonard Wood and as Assistant Commandant, U.S. Army Engineer School at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. Additionally, he served in a wide variety of command and staff positions including: Director, Office of the Chief of Engineers, Headquarters, Department of the Army at the Pentagon; Deputy Commander, Task Force Restore Iraqi Electricity and Executive Officer to the Commanding General, U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR) and 7th Army.

Lt. Gen. Semonite served as Commander of the 130th Engineer Brigade and the V Corps Engineer, Hanau, Germany; Chief of Military Operations and Topography and Chief of International Operations, both with USAEUR; Battalion Commander, 23rd Engineer Battalion, 1st Armored Division, Friedberg, Germany (with a one-year deployment to Bosnia); Construction and Design Supervisor, 416th Engineer Command, Chicago, Illinois; Staff Officer for Logistics (S4), 937th Engineer Group and Staff Officer for Operations (S3) and Executive Officer, 1st Engineer Battalion, both at Fort Riley, Kansas; and Operations Officer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Office, Fort Drum, New York.

Lt. Gen. Semonite, a native of Bellows Falls, Vermont is a registered professional engineer in Virginia and Vermont. He graduated from the U.S. Military Academy, West Point in New York and was commissioned into the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1979. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the U.S. Military Academy, a Master of Science in Civil Engineering degree from the University of Vermont, and a Masters of Military Arts and Sciences from Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He is a graduate of the Engineer Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Combined Arms Services Staff School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

Lt. Gen. Semonite's awards include the Distinguished Service Medal (2 Awards), Defense Superior Service Award, Legion of Merit (5 Awards), Bronze Star, Meritorious Service Medal (7 Awards), Army Commendation Medal (3 Awards), Army Achievement Medal, Joint Meritorious Unit Award, Meritorious Unit Citation, Army Superior Unit Award (2 Awards), NATO award, Ranger tab and Parachutist Badge.

District Commander addresses Division and District strategic focus areas during town meeting

Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander, addressed the New England District team to talk about the priorities of the Division, the District and the team.

The Colonel discussed Brig. Gen. William Graham's North Atlantic Division Commander's five focus areas. The first was to ensure planning effectiveness. "General Graham is concerned about our challenges with vertical alignment and he's very concerned about two things," said Col. Barron. "The first is, are we taking risks in places by accelerating the time line? The answer to that is yes. And the other is, do we have folks at all levels, maybe even at headquarters who are a little bit too concerned with the risk? It's going to be very interesting to see how that pans out."

The second area of focus for the General is the USACE Dredge Fleet Recapitalization Plan. Col. Barron said that Philadelphia District has the lead on this focus, "It's about trying to figure out how do we build the packages and how do we get the PRIP dollars to buy the new dredges that the Corps can use."

Assess Gaps in our Flood Risk Management, Navigation and Ecosystem Restoration Systems is the Division Commander's next focus. "This is something that he has asked New England District and Norfolk to participate in," said Col. Barron. "That's a really big one and I'll be frank with you: It's a huge thing. It's going to consume a little bit of mental energy for some folks around here and it's going to continue to do so in the future."

Col. Barron continued with Brig. Gen. Graham's focus to meet evaluations, counseling and IDP Standards. "I'm very concerned that we are doing evaluations properly," he said.

The fifth and final focus area for

the Division Commander is to improve human capital management. "A lot of that is pure source training dollars," Col. Barron explained.

With Brig. Gen. Graham's current focus areas presented, Col. Barron wanted to talk about the other areas that he is currently focusing on as

'It's not that we are the wrong size, it's that the work load and the mission constantly evolves and changes.'

**- Col. Christopher Barron,
District Commander**

the District Commander. He said that people sometimes ask what's important to him. "It changes day to day, week to week," he said. "Some things come on, some things go."

Col. Barron went through his current focus areas. The first was Rightsizing the District – structure and personnel. "I think quite a bit about rightsizing the organization," he said. "It's not necessarily that we are the wrong size, it's that the work load and the mission constantly evolves and changes and so we have to make minor adjustments here and there to get as close to the fit to where we want to be."

One of the changes in the works is making Planning separate from Engineering. "We're going to go back to a stand alone Planning Division," he said. "I briefed it to the Regional Command Council last week in New York," said Col. Barron.

In addition, there will be a new Environmental Branch in Programs/Project Management, "so there will be a Military Program Branch and Environmental Program Branch," said Col. Barron.

The separation will create new

supervisory positions, which will be approved by the Division Commander. Col. Barron said that he is a firm believer in developmental assignments and rotations and will be looking to do more of that in the District. The colonel said that he is also looking to create a Knowledge Management position and

that there are some changes coming to Regulatory as well in terms of position descriptions and changes with the deputy position. In addition, Col. Barron is looking at potentially setting up a Connecticut Field Office.

The next focus area is ongoing individual projects and studies. "There are hundreds of them out there. There's probably 20-30 projects that have my attention."

The District Commander gave a small sampling of projects that are currently being worked on by the District. They include the Cape Cod Canal Bridge Study, Portsmouth Harbor, Hanscom Air Force Base Middle School; Natick Family Housing and general permits.

Col. Barron briefed the audience on some of the projects that are having varying degree of challenges. They include Block Island Jetty; Cohasset Harbor, Menemsha Harbor, Veterans Administration - Bedford repairs and the District's move to a new location.

To wrap up the meeting, Col. Barron asked the audience what was important to them and then answered questions. Some of the topics that came up were rotating Division chiefs, the budget, Base Closure rumors, speeding cars in the parking lot, the vending machines at the District, the new beginning employee evaluation system and the three year extension on the District headquarters lease.

District 'Prepares for Tomorrow' at 'Schools to Careers' bio-engineering forum

As part of its commitment to the Corps' Campaign goals, "Prepare for Tomorrow," members of the New England District team traveled to Blue Hill Technical High School in Canton, Massachusetts, to host a USACE 101 presentation, April 19. The presentation was one of two parts of an all-day look into what it is to work for the Corps of Engineers. The event was part of the Schools to Careers Bioengineering Symposium held over April vacation.

Nineteen juniors and seniors as well as several of their teachers gave up a day from their April vacation to attend the presentation given by Mark Anderson, Chief, Environmental Engineering and New England District's STEM coordinator. A trip to the Muddy River Project site followed. "Mike Keegan, Jack Parry and Steve Umbrell spoke to students about the history and evolution of the project from original planning and coordination through design and into construction," said Anderson. "Our project engineer Michelle O'Donoghue did a tremendous job leading a site tour and explaining the past and current site activities to the students."

According to Anderson, the group received additional support from Bill Phelan and staff member from the District's contractor, Charter Environmental, Inc., of Boston. According to Anderson, the students found the experience both enjoyable and educational. "Our event was extremely well received," said Anderson. "Feedback from the Schools to Careers Partnership has been extremely positive and the students indicated they liked every portion of the day, particularly the site walk and the understanding of what different engineers do and how an entire project comes together."

Other parts of the symposium that took place on different days for the students were trips to the BROAD Institute, Deer Island MWRA and Biogen-Idec.

The Bioengineering Symposium is open to all juniors



Students spent the day with members of the New England District Team as part of the School to Careers Bioengineering Symposium.



Photo by Mark Anderson

Students get a tour of the Muddy River project during the Symposium.

and seniors with an interest in entering STEM education and career fields from member schools in the Schools to Careers Partnership, including Avon, Randolph, Norwood, Milton, Holbrook, Dedham, Canton, and Blue Hills Regional Technical schools. "These are students who are already interested in STEM academic fields but haven't yet figured out what they want to study and/or do," said Anderson. "This was to help give them a sense of what different career fields do and help them figure out what they want to study in school."

The District has been involved with the symposium for several years and has an educational partnership with the School to Careers Partnership. This is the first year that the District included a site visit with their presentation, according to Anderson. The School to Careers Partnership has been in operation for over 20 years and serves 15 middle school and senior high schools in the Metro Boston area. According to School to Careers, their objective is to successfully transition each student into further training and education so they can attain highly skilled and satisfying careers. Investing in students now could potentially mean New England District engineers and scientists in the future.



Park Ranger Samantha Gray (right) with the students who painted and donated the new mural at the Herring Run Area Information Building.

Photos by Brian Murphy

Canal, Learners Cooperative unveil mural and new interpretive program

The Herring Run Recreation Area Information Building in Bourne, Mass., got a lot more colorful when the New England District and the Cape Cod Learners Cooperative unveiled a mural entitled, "Where in the World Are We?", May 1.

About 40 people attended the event that also introduced an interactive display to accompany the mural and launched the new "Did You Know?" Interpretive Program.

Park Ranger Samantha Gray and Lauren Freed, head of the Learners Cooperative spoke to the audience during the event. Gray presented Freed with a Certificate of Appreciation signed by Col. Christopher Barron, New England District Commander.

According to the citation, the mural that was created, then donated to the New England District, "enhances the Corps ability to interpret the various missions and rich natural and engineered history of the Cape Cod Canal with hundreds of thousands of visitors."

The 24 students with ages ranging from about 6-16 years old who attended the event all received an achievement patch courtesy of Eastern National, a non-profit partner of the District and were presented by Gray.

It took the students about five weeks to paint the mural. According to Gray, the home school students began the mural to celebrate the Cape Cod Canal's Centennial in 2014. "It is entitled 'Where in the World Are We?' as this artwork was

part of their geography lessons," she said. "Their goal was to engage the community through public art and visualize the world with respect to our location here in Massachusetts."

The mural highlights various local landmarks to include the Cape Cod Canal.

In addition to the mural, the students also created an interactive display entitled, "What Does the Cape Cod Canal Mean To You?" that discusses the mural and then asks others to share what the Canal means to them by writing stories and



Park Ranger Samantha Gray presents Lauren Freed, Cape Cod Learners Cooperative, with a Certificate of Appreciation from Col. Christopher Barron, District Commander.

Park Rangers earn Corps badges and receive citation authority

Park Rangers Keith Goulet, Knightville Dam, Brooke Dube, Littleville Lake, Bill Mehr, Tully Lake, Amy Charlton and Daniel DeFiore both from the Thomaston Dam Unit (Thomaston Dam, Northfield Brook Lake, Black Rock Lake) all recently received their citation authorities and Ranger Badges. The group now joins the rest of the Park Ranger team in having authority to issue citations for Title 36 (Parks, Forests and Public Property) violations. The authority is required for all permanent Park Rangers.

In order to receive the authority, the Park Rangers had to complete the PROSPECT training, "Visitor Assistance for NRM," which is the initial course for entry-level Park Rangers, according to Steve Lehmann, Operations Manager at the Lower Connecticut River Basin. "The course is a minimum

requirement within three years of hiring in order to receive and maintain citation authority," he said.

The week-long course trains the Park Rangers to professionally address issues and conflicts with visitors to Corps projects, legal issues related to Title 36 and personal defense.

Mehr joined the District team in 2014. Dube, a U.S. Navy Veteran, has been a full-time New England District team member since 2015. Goulet, a U.S. Air Force Veteran, has been with the District since 2015. Charlton is also a U.S. Navy Veteran and began working for the District in 2009. DeFiore arrived in 2011.



First Row: Bill Mehr, Brooke Dube and Keith Goulet. Second Row: Matt Coleman, Steven Lehmann and Jeff Mangum.

"These three rangers represent the bright future of the New England District Field Operations team," said Lehmann.

experiences into a journal located adjacent to the display.

The Cape Cod Home Learners Cooperative received funding from the town of Bourne and the town of Sandwich's cultural councils that allowed them to donate and hang the mural and install the display at the Herring Run Recreation Area Information Building.

The Cape Cod Canal team members also launched a new interpretive program called, "Did You Know?" during the unveiling. People who participate in the program will find interesting fact sheets on all things Cape Cod Canal. "Students from the Learners Collaborative assisted with this project as well," said Gray. According to her, they researched the history, operations and missions, especially the environmental stewardship. They picked the American Chestnut Tree because the native population has been decimated by a fungus and work is being conducted to backcross American and Japanese Chestnut Trees in an effort to restore the trees. To launch the program, the canal team held a tree planting ceremony with two of the Learners Cooperative students participating.



Maddy Ames, a student with the Cape Cod Learners Cooperative, helps plant a Chestnut tree during the unveiling event.

Dredging up the past



Park Ranger Merlon Bassett gives a safety presentation in this circa 2002 photo.

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