Beverly Lawrence mentors regional champs
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US Army Corps of Engineers
New England District

Yankee Engineer

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EPA, Corps of Engineers move to improve wetlands restoration and conservation

Swamps, bogs, fens, and marshes – in short; wetlands – are as vital to our environment as coral reefs and rain forests.

With that in focus, the U.S Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) are proposing a new rule to ensure more effective wetlands restoration and preservation nationwide. The agencies' rule, being published for public comment, proposes improved science and results-oriented standards to increase the quality and effectiveness of wetlands conservation practices under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

"We are accelerating the pace of wetlands restoration and conservation," said Benjamin H. Grumbles, U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator for Water. "The action, which emphasizes the best available science, promotes innovation and focuses on results which will help our nation meet the President's ambitious wetlands goal, while promoting flexibility and accountability."

"We are focusing on a watershed approach for improving wetlands conservation in this proposed rule," John Paul Woodley Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works), said. "This approach helps us fulfill the promise President Bush has made to protect, improve and create new wetlands and other aquatic resources."

Because wetlands play such a critical role in the environment, a project proposed to be built in wetlands is first subject to review by the Corps and EPA under the CWA.

Consistent with the goal of "no net loss of wetlands," this review often requires a developer to restore or create a wetland to replace the one that was impacted by the project.

The proposed rule:

- Responds to recommendations of the National Research Council to improve the success of wetland restoration and replacement projects

Continued on page 3

File photo

The Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps of Engineers are proposing a new rule that will help protect wetlands like this on in Sudbury, Mass.

Yankee Voices

Nathan, Sally and Benjamin Rigione
Public Affairs

Yankee Engineer mailing list

When employees retire, placement on the Yankee Engineer mailing list is not automatic.

New England District employees who are retiring and would like to be placed on the mailing list should contact Ann Marie Harvie in Public Affairs by phone 978-318-8777 or by e-mail.

Words worth repeating

Treat the Earth well. It was not given to you by your parents; it was loaned to you by your children. We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors--we borrow it from our children.
- *Native American proverb*

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.
- *Joseph Addison*

Congratulations

… to **Raushanah Muhammad**, New Bedford Resident Office (Construction/ Operations), on the birth of her daughter, **Tahira Amaya Muhammad**, March 15.

…to **Norman Krause** of Contracting, who has been chosen as the WE Committee's Employee of the Month for April 2006. The Upper Connecticut River Basin (UCRB) of Construction/Operations Division nominated Norman for his outstanding effort and his prompt, professional and courteous support of all the field offices in the UCRB.

…to the Concord Park team responsible for providing office space to our newest tenant, the U.S. Army's Community Based Healthcare Organization (CBHCO) for being designated as the WE Committee's Team of the Month for April 2006. The members being recognized are **Steve Brackett, Chris Caisse, Gary Cooper, Paulo DaSilva, Julie D'Esposito, Bob Govero, Chiway Hsiung, Cheryl Kassoy, Les Jacobs, Randy Lecuyer, John Mannarino, Conrad Menard, Patty Price, Jay Provenzano and Mike Russo.** This team worked under strict time constraints to negotiate, vacate, construct and provide operational assistance to our new tenants. Because of this work, the District has saved in excess of $300,000 a year in space and operational costs.

Sympathy

… to the family of Construction/Operations retiree **Charles "Chuck" L. Sabine**, who passed away April 27. Sabine retired from the District as Barre Falls Project Manager in 1997 after 28 years of federal service.

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Commander's Corner:

Recreational opportunities at District projects

by Col. Curtis L. Thalken
District Commander

I know New England weather is unpredictable, but as May unfolds before us, I think I can safely say winter is behind us. Springtime in New England is a joy to behold. With trees and flowers in bloom, sunny skies, and warmer, longer days to enjoy, there's no greater place to enjoy the outdoors than in one of New England District's own recreation areas.

The primary purpose of each of our 31 dams is to provide flood damage reduction, but all are open to the public for recreation and many of them provide safe, clean, and welcoming parks.

The Cape Cod Canal also provides premiere recreational areas operated by the Corps. Almost all of the parks have picnic pavilions and hiking trails and where there's a dam, there's water for fishing.

Even at our many run of the river facilities there are still great fishing opportunities in the rivers themselves. At many of our dams that impound water, there are beaches for swimming and beach volleyball courts. Many have boat docks and some of the dams boast competitive disc golf courses, a growing craze around the nation. A few of the facilities even have campgrounds.

In addition to the recreation areas themselves, our Park Rangers conduct interpretive and education programs throughout the spring and summer. They're a great way to learn about the New England countryside and the plants and animals we share it with. Our Visitor Centers at the Cape Cod Canal and Quechee Gorge in Vermont are among the best in the Corps and boast great programs of their own as well.

As a demonstration of their capabilities, we will celebrate Founder's Day this June at our Buffumville Lake facility in Charlton, Mass. This will be a great opportunity to learn more about our flood damage reduction and natural resource mission while enjoying the wonderful facilities at Buffumville. Look for more on this in upcoming issues of the Yankee Engineer. Information on each facility's interpretive programs can be found on either our websites or by contacting the individual projects.

Once again, spring and summer are great seasons in New England and while you are out enjoying the weather, visit one of our own recreation areas. You won't be disappointed. Be safe as you make summer plans and enjoy the season.

Essayons!

EPA, Corps propose new wetlands conservation rule

Continued from page 1

- Sets clear science-based and results-oriented standards nationwide while allowing for regional variations
- Increases and expands public participation
- Encourages watershed-based decisions
- Affirms the "wetlands mitigation sequence" requiring that proposed projects fully avoid and minimize potential wetland impacts before proceeding to mitigation

The proposed rule combines accountability and flexibility. By focusing on results and accountability, the proposed standards will improve the quality and effectiveness of wetland replacement projects. Most importantly, the proposal establishes a "level playing field" ensuring that all forms of wetlands conservation satisfy the same high environmental standards.

Increased reliance on innovative, market-based approaches is expected to promote the expansion of wetland banking, which is one of the most reliable and environmentally effective methods of wetland replacement. A wetland bank is a wetland, stream, or other aquatic resource area that has been restored and protected to offset permitted impacts to wetlands or other aquatic resources.

Wetlands provide important environmental functions including protecting and improving water quality and providing habitat to fish and wildlife. Wetlands are also critically important areas for storing floodwaters and can reduce damage from storm surges caused by hurricanes. For more information regarding compensatory mitigation and how to provide comments on the proposed standards see: http://www.epa.gov/wetlandsmitigation. Information about the importance of wetlands is available at: http://www.epa.gov/owow/wetlands/. Additional information about the Corps' regulatory program can be found at: http://www.usace.army.mil/inet/functions/cw/cecwo/reg/

(Corps of Engineers Press Release)

First African American Project Manager in New England District fondly recalls his life, work at Knightville Dam

Joseph W. Johnson, Jr., has lived through some of the world's most historic moments, such as the Great Depression, World War II and the Civil Rights Movement. Not surprisingly, on March 9, 2006, Johnson's own contributions to the nation made history as the first African American Project Manager at the Corps in New England.

Born the youngest of four children on May 24, 1926 in Springfield, Mass., Johnson shared the year with another event -- Harvard Scholar Dr. Carter Woodson organized the first annual Negro Week, a celebration of African American history, which would later evolve into Black History Month.

His father supported the family by working as a bank messenger for the Ellis Title Company while his mother stayed home to raise the children. In October of 1929 the stock market crashed, bringing on the Great Depression.

Dire circumstances at that time brought the Johnson family together. "Things were rough, but everyone tried to help out," he said. "I don't know how my father managed it, but he not only supported his family, he continued to own his home and automobile. He thought it was very important that he always owned a home."

Johnson recalled pitching in to help the family by gathering coal around the train tracks of Springfield so that the family could heat their home.

The neighborhood that Johnson lived in was diverse and tight-knit during the Depression. "It was a League of Nations and it was beautiful," he recalled. "You could go to anyone's house and you were like family."

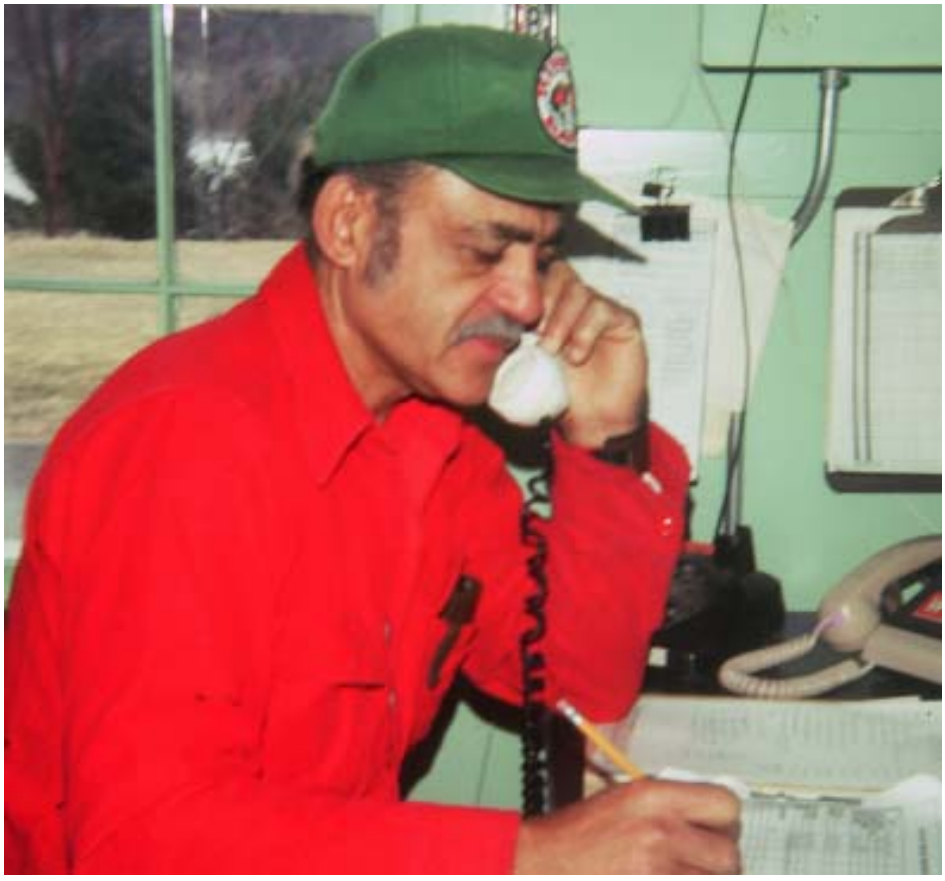


Photo by Joe Ledgere

Joseph Johnson hard at work at Littleville Lake in this 1981 photo.

Johnson started working at age 12 selling newspapers as well as working on a tobacco farm during the summer months in Connecticut. He loved playing sports and being outdoors. In high school, Johnson played football. "I would have perfect attendance during football season," he chuckled. "Off season there were no guarantees."

He was so good at football, he was offered a partial scholarship to a college in Arizona, which he did not accept. Instead, Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Navy and served from 1943 to 1946. He received training in Chicago, Ill., and the Hampton, Institute, Va ., before he was assigned to a gate vessel in San Diego, Ca.

Not long after the Motor Machinist, III arrived at his post, his ship was fitted with guns and readied for war. Johnson and his ship were towed to Okinawa, Japan where he experienced typhoons and the brutality of war. Johnson said that he had many vivid memories of World War II. "We just got tired of killing," he said. "War is an awful thing."

Johnson became a truck driver after the war. He eventually moved to Huntington, Mass., not far from Knightville Dam and Littleville Lake. "I watched them build Littleville," he said.

After 21 years of driving a truck, the company that he worked for went out of business, costing him his seniority and his source of income. "I was kind of tired of driving anyway," he said.

One fateful day in 1973, as Johnson was sitting on his porch, a young man named Mike Caputo drove by on his way to Littleville Lake. "He stopped and asked how I was doing," said Johnson. "I asked him if there was any work at the dam."

Caputo responded that they were looking for summer help and referred him to Joe Ledgere, who hired him. Johnson started maintaining the grounds and equipment. "I was a happy man," he said. "I liked the work and I liked the people I worked with."

Johnson recalled being put in charge of a group of young people from Huntington, Mass., that the Corps hired to help out at Littleville. "I thought it was great that the Corps gave them a chance," he said. "It was fun. When I see them now, they still talk about the time when they worked for the dam. They learned a lot, I learned a lot and we got a lot of work done."

An opportunity for advancement came in 1974 when Ledgere became a basin manager and John Parker took over as Littleville's project manager. "There was an opening for a permanent position, so I took it. I was never sorry for it."

Johnson eventually had the opportunity to go to Knightville as the assistant project manager. He recalled there were just four full-time people taking care of the two dams. "We did all the work, from taking care of the gates to the plowing and mowing," he said.

According to Johnson, the small group worked as a team and got a lot of work done through cooperation. "As soon as you got to work in the morning, everyone was talking about what had to be done and how to do it," he said. "We used a lot of Yankee Ingenuity."

Johnson became Knightville's project manager in 1983 until his retirement in 1988. During his time as project manager, the dam was tested with two floods. He recalled the flood in 1984 when water came to about a foot of going over the spillway, and in 1987 when the water went over the spillway. "That caused a lot of excitement around town," he said of the 1987 flood.

The retired project manager recalled false media reports that the dam was in imminent danger of failing. "I'll never forget the television crews that came up with their big buses," he said. "They wanted to be there when the dam broke." Andy Andreliunas, then Chief of Operations, came to the dam to get a report on the situation. "I asked him what he wanted me to do and he said to me, 'this is your dam; what do you want to do?' It made me feel pretty good inside."

Andreliunas' confidence in Johnson was well placed. The project manager and his team came up with a plan to evacuate the residents living directly below the dam in case the dam failed. "Everyone got together and went down to warn the people," he said. "We explained to them what was happening and what could happen. The evacuation was a complete success."

Photo by Brian Murphy

Joe and Barbara Johnson at their home in 2006.

During the flooding, Johnson and his team continually checked the interior of the dam using special instruments. "It was an exciting time," he said. "There was never a problem. The dam held."

Historic floods at Knightville are not the only memories that Johnson has of the project. He remembered the challenges of getting his younger employees to cooperate, but he also remembered one young man, Wayne Piers, who was one of the hardest workers Johnson had seen at the dam. "That young man renewed my faith," he said. "He's a prominent doctor in Maine now. We still keep in contact."

Johnson doesn't see many of his former co-workers anymore. "A lot of them have retired and are off doing their own things," he said. "When I see people like Joe Faloretti. Rick Magee, Tom Wisnauckas and Claire Sullivan, it's a pleasure."

Once retired, Johnson said he did things that he always wanted to do. He and his wife, Barbara, a retired Springfield schoolteacher, had bought property in Alaska and went in the summer to indulge their passion of hiking and fishing. The couple has also visited practically every state in the country as well as made a return visit to Okinawa.

Mr. Johnson is the father of two children and has four grandchildren and five great grandchildren. Advancing years and declining health have slowed him down a little, but he has no regrets about the way he has lived. "I've had quite a life," he said. "I'm glad to say I can sit in my rocking chair and don't have to say, 'I wish I've done this and I wish I've done that' because I've done it."

As an African American, he said that the Corps treated him fairly and gave him every opportunity to advance himself. He believes that everyone has an opportunity with the Corps. He did have some advice for young people just starting out with the agency: "Always do a little more than you're expected to do. Think about your work ethic. There's no such thing as I can't. Life can be wonderful, but you've got to work at it."

Johnson said that he would always cherish the memories of working at Knightville Dam and the Corps of Engineers. "Working for the Corps of Engineers was the best job I ever had. It was a great experience for me."

Johnson, who was the Project Manager at Knightville Dam from 1983 to 1988, received a Bunker Hill certificate for his valued contribution to New England District in Huntington, Mass. The acknowledgment is just another milestone in a life that has been well lived.

Building our future

Engineer mentors student science team to New England championship

Photos courtesy of Lisa Freed, Brown and Brown, PC

Students from the Parker Middle School explain their "Future City' at the New England Regional Future City Competition at Northeastern University. The students and their team won the regional competition.

When Beverly Lawrence volunteered to help a group of students "reach for the stars" by creating a model city of the future, she had no idea they would rocket themselves all the way to the top of the New England competition.

Lawrence, an Engineering Technical Lead/Project Manager for the New England District, mentored a group of 11 students from the Parker Middle School in Reading, Mass., which competed in and won the 2005-2006 Future City Competition.

The annual competition is held as part of National Engineer's Week. It is designed to foster an interest in seventh and eighth grade students on the subjects of engineering, math, and science through hands-on and real world applications. The Massachusetts Pre-Engineering Program, Inc., the Boston Society of Civil Engineers, and Northeastern University sponsored this year's competition. The competition took place Jan. 21 at the University Campus in Boston.

The eighth grade science students competed against schools from all over New England to create the most impressive "Future City."

The assignment was not easy -- students had to develop a project plan to guide team activities; use SimCity ™ software to design a logical model of their city; build a physical model of their city using recycled material; work as a team under the guidance of an engineer and a teacher; and demonstrate their writing skills through an essay about an assigned engineering design problem and by writing a narrative explaining features of their city design.

Working with children was nothing new to the Worcester Polytechnic Institute graduate. Her five years of experience as a Girl Scout Troop leader and her volunteer work at her daughters' middle and elementary schools gave her the confidence to take on the mentoring assignment. Although Lawrence was there to help, the students had to do all of the work. "I gave them a background on engineering and what types of people would work on different parts of the project," she said. "I assisted most with the plot of land they were to develop, which was once an abandoned gas station. It was hard not to help them do things, but it had to be 100 percent the kids' work."

The students had to meet several deadlines before the Jan. 21 final judging. The computer model was due in mid-December 2005 and the abstract and essay were due in mid-January. Lawrence was impressed with her students and the

way they handled the pressure. "It was extremely rewarding to see these kids at work, especially as deadlines approached," she said. "They really pulled together. They had great ideas and never gave up. Giving up was never an option for them – they just kept working and got it done. A lot of teams started the competition, but not that many made it to the finals."

Lawrence, another engineer mentor Alex Lachmayr and the students' teacher, Connie Quackenbush, met the students after school to work on the project. "Some kids made every meeting a couple times a week from the very beginning, and the other kids came whenever they could, which was at least once a week," she said.

Their persistence paid off – the team took first place in the New England competition and represented the region in the national competition held in Washington, D.C., Feb. 20. The Parker School won a trophy, their choice of a tee-shirt or fleece shirt and a paid trip for three of the students, a mentor and teacher to attend the competition. "Our team had many more members, so they all raised money to send the whole team," said Lawrence. Lachmayr accompanied the children to D.C., as the team's mentor as Lawrence was unable to attend the finals due to a sudden illness.

In the end, the Parker students did not take the top prize for their city. But according to Lawrence, taking the regional title is something to be very proud of. "The kids are so bright," she said. "It was interesting to see how these kids got things done. They are very proud of their hard work."

Lawrence got involved when she answered a request for mentors in the New England District's Weekly Bulletin and decided to help. After contacting Lisa Freed of Brown and Brown, PC, the regional coordinator for the event, Lawrence chose to mentor a school in her hometown.

The Parker team poses with their newly won trophy. Beverly Lawrence (far right) helped the team with its award-winning project.

According to Lawrence, mentoring was an experience that she would gladly repeat and encourages others to do so. "I would recommend mentoring. It was an extremely rewarding experience helping those kids achieve their goal. There's really nothing like it."

The 2006-2007 National Engineer's Week Future City Competition is currently registering schools for the contest and is looking for engineers to mentor the students who participate. For more information, please go to www.futurecity.org.

District retiree receives high honors from U.S. Air Force

Photo by James Conway

Steve Eaton (right) received the U.S. Air Force's Civilian Project Manager of the Year award from Wade Brower.

The U.S. Air Force recently bestowed a high honor on a New England District retiree for work he performed while employed with the Corps.

Steve Eaton, a retiree from the Eastern Area Resident Office, received the U.S. Air Force Civilian Project Manager of the Year, Design Through Construction Award in the New England District's Gridley Conference Room, March 28.

Wade Brower, a civilian project manager responsible for the military construction at Hanscom Air Force Base nominated Eaton for his work on the Building 1614 project at Hanscom. Eaton served as Resident Engineer, with delegated COR contract authority, for the $30 million Acquisition Management Facility.

The annual award recognizes Army, Navy, or host nation civilian project managers for exemplary professional management of design or construction of Air Force Military Construction or host nation funded projects.

The criteria for the award is stringent. Nominees are judged on leadership ability, innovative techniques, fiscal resourcefulness, as well as technical and management ability.

Eaton retired from the District on Sept. 30, 2005.

Katrina volunteer helps public, educates children during deployment

Ruth Ladd, Chief, Policy Analysis and Technical Support Branch, Regulatory Division, had always been curious about emergency operations. For years, she would hear of New England District employees deploying on disaster missions and how they were able to help others. When the call went out to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the timing was right and Ladd volunteered. Through helping the victims, she also found herself educating their children.

Ladd, a wetland scientist, deployed to Mississippi for 29 days in January as a quality assurance debris inspector -- counting trucks and the contents in the trucks and giving the drivers vouchers so that they would get paid – a job as far away from her career field as she could get. However, with some training and encouragement from her fellow volunteers, Ladd set about her new job with relative ease.

Ladd was also given the task of arranging for the distribution of wood mulch to farmers. One day while getting signatures for rights of entry for a truck to deposit the material on his land, Ladd met blueberry farmer and Clara Elementary School principal, Robert Dean.

The conversation began with Ladd's New England accent and the principal's note that his eighth grade students were going to be learning about the beginning of our country the following week.

Dean was also concerned that the students didn't have much exposure to people from other regions of the country. "He said that his eighth grade class would be talking about the Battle of Bunker Hill and wouldn't it be fun to have a Yankee come and talk to them about it, the Corps of Engineers, and its mission related to Hurricane Katrina," said Ladd.

After getting all the needed approvals, Ladd went to the school to make her presentation. The entire 8th grade -- 50 children at the most -- was fascinated with Ladd's accent. Ladd spoke with the children for about 40 minutes and then left 20 minutes for questions and answers about anything of interest. "Knowing I worked with wetlands, they had questions about wetlands and how they were affected by Hurricane Katrina," said Ruth. "They had questions about the hurricane and about the Corps, but they also had questions about what it is like living in the Northeast. In some ways it was almost as if we came from different countries. As a result, I learned about what is important in their lives and what they are interested in. Being able to touch the hearts and minds of the children was an honor and privilege."

As Ladd experienced, full recovery for the people of Mississippi may never be fully realized, especially in the Gulf towns – many homes are gone and things once taken for granted are now necessary for survival.

In appreciation for her presentation, Dean presented her with a school coin. Having received Commanders' coins in the past, Ladd knew immediately that the principal had a military background. "It turns out that not only was he a blueberry farmer and the principal of the elementary school, but he is also a retired U.S. Army Reserves Brigadier General who just recently returned from Iraq."

Dean expressed his appreciation for Ladd's efforts, not only to visit the children, but also to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina rebuild their lives.

"I will always treasure the time you spent with our students," he wrote. "Your inspiring enthusiasm and spirit allowed our students to get a feel of the subject matter. May you continue to touch lives in the positive manner that you did for all of us here in South Mississippi."

"Personally, I found it very interesting just to meet people from Mississippi," she said. "It felt good doing something to help the Katrina victims. Sometimes people would come up to me to thank the Corps for helping them. An elderly man parked in a four-wheeler just watched us work. He said to me, 'You don't know how much this means to us. Just to see this place finally beginning to look normal again, it makes all the difference.' Just hearing that was very rewarding."

Photo provided by Ruth Ladd.

Ruth Ladd stands near a pile of woody mulch material that she helped distribute to Mississippi farmers.

Mary Dunn retires with 23 years of federal service

Mary Dunn, an appraiser in New England District's Real Estate Division, along with her friends and co-workers celebrated her decision to retire with a quiet pot luck lunch held in her honor, March 30 in the Real Estate office. Dunn retired with 23 years of federal service.

During the official portion of the retirement luncheon, Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson, Deputy Commander of the New England District, read a letter of appreciation from Dwain McMullen, Chief Appraiser at Corps Headquarters. McMullen praised Dunn for her work on high profile projects such as the Market Impact Studies for Loring Air Force Base and Fort Devens; appraisals for Backwater River Section 205 project, Cutter Army Hospital, the Fort Devens golf course, Army Materials Technology Laboratory.

McMullen also cited her work on restrictive easements on cranberry bogs, a 50-acre antennae farm and appraisals and reviews for the Federal Aviation Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. "Mary, you have been considered a valued employee by the New England District, NAD, HQ and by the rest of the USACE Real Estate Appraisal community," he wrote. "I want to truly thank you for your proficient and professional assistance throughout the years."

In addition to her other accomplishments, Dunn also served as a PROSPECT instructor for the Real Estate Appraisal and Inleasing Course.

Most recently Dunn received praise as part of the Allin's Cove Project Team and its selection as the WE Committee's Team of the Month for January. The team was recognized for its outstanding performance, partnering with the state of Rhode Island and the town of Barrington, in order to restore degraded coastal wetlands at the mouth of the cove and to realign the tidal inlet to prevent future erosion.

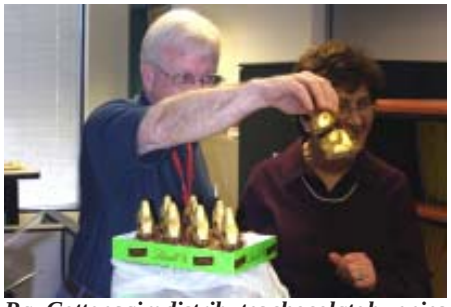
Lt. Col. Nelson officially retired Dunn by presenting her with her retirement certificate and pin during the luncheon.

Dunn, who spent her entire federal career in Real Estate, began in 1983 as secretary to the Chief of Real Estate. She was selected as an appraiser trainee in 1986 and through a succession of promotions retired as a Review Appraiser.

Now that she is retired Dunn plans to spend more time with her grandchildren and travel.

Lt. Col. Andrew Nelson presents Mary Dunn with her retirement certificate.

Mary Dunn, Rosalie Tekeyan, Sylvia Woodbury, and Molly McCabe at Dunn's luncheon.



Ray Cottengaim distributes chocolate bunnies at Mary Dunn's retirement luncheon.

Mary Dunn, Rosalie Tekeyan, Pam Bradstreet and Peg Lorenzo look at digital photos during Dunn's luncheon.

Photos by Robert Batt

Mary Dunn receives a balloon and a bouquet of flowers from Molly McCabe and Ray Cottengaim.

Founder's Day Committee announces 2006 celebration at Buffumville Lake

by Sally Rigione
Public Affairs

Mark your calendars, the 2006 Founder's Day Celebration will be held on Friday, June 23, at Buffumville Park. This year the committee, spearheaded by Regulatory Division, will host the celebration at one of the Corps' own properties – for a unique experience. Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, has pledged his support and said, "We have some great facilities that I bet many of our employees have not seen. Founders Day is a great opportunity for our operations folks to showcase for the rest of us what they do for the public everyday."

File photo

Buffumville Lake in Charlton, Mass., will be the site of the New England District's 2006 Founder's Day celebration.

How many of us have visited a Corps owned and operated facility? The Founder's Day Committee chose Buffumville Park, in Charlton, Mass., because it is the most centrally located Corps facility. The approximate distance from Concord, Mass., is 50 miles (one hour); from Devens is 40 miles (50 minutes); from Chicopee is 50 miles (54 minutes) and from Nashua, N.H. is 67 miles (1–1/4 hours).

This daylong event is shaping up to be action packed! For the last seven years the Founder's Day Committee has held this annual event at Hanscom Air Force Base. By moving the ceremony and celebration to Buffumville, the committee can plan activities that are unique and different than previous years. They can offer numerous events that they have never offered before, including some "back to nature" events.

Events will include swimming; volleyball and horseshoe (both are located on the sand next to the beach); boating at the "public boat access" (there are no power or size limits so feel free to tow your boat over for the day); fishing (don't forget to bring your fishing license); basketball; canoeing and kayaking (if you have one of these you can bring it along and there will be several of each type available that day for use from the basin offices); hiking and mountain bike trails; educational events such as nature trail walk, dam tours, comparative anatomy exhibit and a water safety program on the beach.

Buffumville is also the home of the regions' largest 27-hole Disc golf facility (remember to bring your own disc and try it).

The annual awards ceremony will begin at 10:30 a.m., with some of the above events occurring before it. A catered lunch is being planned. There is also the opportunity to picnic in the shade or on the beach.

Retirees and Corps family members are encouraged to drive to Charlton to join us for this fun filled day. No privately-owned vehicle authorizations will be approved that day as government provided transportation will be offered to all current Corps employees (departing from and returning to Concord Park). A survey will be sent via e-mail soon with further transportation details.

As this is a Corps-owned property, Buffumville will still be open to the public with all their daily use rules in place including "no lifeguards on duty," "no alcohol allowed on site" and "carry in/carry out any trash you bring."

The committee will provide more in-depth information (to include the day's agenda and driving directions) in next month's Yankee Engineer as well as in future weekly e-bulletins.

If you know of a retiree that does not receive the Yankee Engineer, please let them know that the retiree point of contact for this year's celebration is Susan Mehigan who can be reached by phone at 978-318-8057 or by e-mail at susan.j.mehigan@usace.army.mil.

Speaker discusses community building experiences at District's Women's History celebration

The New England District's Federal Woman's Program and Equal Employment Opportunity Office hosted the annual Women's History Month celebration April 13 in the District theatre.

The keynote speaker, Col. Dorothy Johnson, Deputy Commander of the U.S. Soldiers System Center, seemed tailor-made of this year's theme, "Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams." During her 28-year military career, Col. Johnson has spent most of those years creating or strengthening communities all over the world.

Col. Johnson said that she was not going to focus on her extraordinary achievements during her career, but instead she would share the many lessons that she had learned as she moved from one assignment to another.

The keynote speaker recalled organizing morale boosting events such as German-American carnivals, Cape Canaveral Day, and a performance by Gloria Estafan for 16,000 Cuban migrants at Guantanamo Bay. Organizing such events was very complex and daunting. Col. Johnson recalled her first experience in organizing a German-American carnival when she was stationed at Schwaebisch, Germany. "When people came to me on my first day and asked me when I was going to order the 150,000 pints of ice cream, I thought to myself, "I was just trained to be a killer. Here I am worrying about ice cream,'" she said.

The carnival, like the other events that Col. Johnson organized to help build communities, was a great success. She credited having great teams that supported her work to build and strengthen communities over the years. "When the team comes together, the team is successful and good things happen," she said.

Celebrations and special events are only a small part of building a community. Sometimes communities need to lend each other a helping hand. When she was the Commander at Joint Logistics Support Group, Operation Sea Signal at Guantanamo Bay, she set up a team of affluent Cuban Americans from Miami to teach Cuban migrants basic skills needed to live in the United States. "They needed to be taught things like the importance of balancing a checkbook, paying bills, learning some English, and using our transportation systems," she said.

Through her efforts and the efforts of her team, thousands of Cubans were able to fulfill their dreams of legally migrating to the U.S. Col. Johnson felt it was a rewarding experience for her as well. "Folks thought they threw me a lemon," she said. "No one wanted this assignment. But this turned out to be one of the highlights of my career."

Col. Johnson concluded her presentation by saying the most important lesson that she learned was that anyone could build a community and make dreams come true. "It doesn't take a superhero, and it doesn't take extraordinary efforts," she said. "It takes the average person to be willing to be a part of a team so that the team can build that community and make those dreams come true."

A distinguished military graduate of the Army ROTC program at Western Maryland College, Col. Johnson was commissioned in 1978 as a Second Lieutenant in the Transportation Corps. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in American Studies/English Education from Western Maryland College and Masters Degrees in Public Administration from the University of Dayton and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College. Her military education includes the Transportation Officer Basic Course, Transportation Officer Advance Course, Combined Armed Services Staff School, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Armed Forces Staff College and the U.S. Army War College.

Col. Johnson's awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Service Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Commendation medal with Oak Leaf, Army Commendation medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Joint Service Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf and the Army Achievement Medal with Oak Leaf.

Col. Curtis Thalken, New England District Commander, and Heather Sullivan, Federal Women's Program Manager, presented Col. Johnson with a Bunker Hill plaque in appreciation for her participation in the event. "Women's history is our nation's history," said Col. Thalken. "It's a story of how women built communities, inspired and nurtured dreams and how they will continue to do so."

Photo by Brian Murphy

Col. Dorothy Johnson talks about her experiences building communities during Women's History Month.

Maintenance dredging of Harbor of Refuge federal navigation project at Point Judith proposed

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs

At the request of the towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett, R.I., the New England District is proposing to perform maintenance dredging of the Harbor of Refuge Federal Navigation Project at Point Judith, R.I.

The proposed work involves maintenance dredging of the 15-foot-deep Mean Lower Low Water (MLLW) entrance channel leading into the harbor, as well as the east and west branch 15-foot-deep MLLW channels, the 10-foot-deep MLLW 6.6-acre anchorage within the harbor, and several shoal areas within the 6-foot-deep channel in Point Judith Pond.

The Harbor of Refuge Federal Navigation Project was originally authorized by the River and Harbor Act of 1890 and further modified 10 times through 1976.

"Natural shoaling processes in the 15-foot-deep entrance channel, the east and west branch channels, the 10-foot-deep anchorage, and the 6-foot deep channel in Point Judith Pond have reduced available depths, making navigation hazardous at lower stages of the tide," said Project Manager Michael Walsh, of the Corps' New England District, Programs/Project Management Division.

Maintenance dredging of approximately 115,000 cubic yards of sand from approximately 25 acres of authorized project area will restore the entrance channel, east and west branch channels, the 10-foot-deep anchorage, and shoal areas in Point Judith Pond to authorized dimensions.

This proposal was originally published on Oct. 11, 2005, but since the disposal location was revised this notice is being released for another public comment period. "Dredging will be performed by either a hopper dredge or a mechanical dredge, and the dredged material will be disposed of as a beneficial use in the nearshore off the Matunuck beaches in South Kingstown, approximately 3 miles west of the harbor," Walsh said. "The work will take place over a three-to-four-month period in the years in which funds become available."

The dredged material consists of clean sand based on sampling and testing performed in 2003 and 2004. "It is the Corps policy to use dredged material in a beneficial manner if practicable," Walsh said. "Our preliminary determination is that the material is suitable for unconfined open water disposal, and thus suitable for disposal in the nearshore waters off of the Matunuck beaches."

The towns of South Kingstown and Narragansett are the local sponsors for the proposed work. Maintenance dredging of the Point Judith Harbor of Refuge was last performed in 1977 when approximately 72,000 cubic yards of material were removed and side-casted.

Alternate disposal options that have been considered include nearshore disposal, open-ocean disposal, beach disposal, and upland disposal. Upland disposal and open-ocean disposal were not pursued as this would remove the sand from the littoral system. Beach nourishment was originally proposed for either East Matunuck State Beach or Roger Wheeler State Beach. However, these alternatives were rejected by the state due to piping plover concerns.

The Corps favors the nearshore disposal site off of the Matunuck beaches as a beneficial use of the clean sand. Hydraulically pumping the material onto the Matunuck beaches would not be practicable because of the costs and construction difficulties associated with hydraulic pumping. The proximity of the proposed disposal site to the dredging area makes the proposed alternative cost-effective.

An Environmental Assessment for this work is being prepared and, when ready, will be available for review upon request. The Corps has determined that the proposed project may have a temporary adverse effect on Essential Fish Habitat (EFH). The Corps has determined that they will be short-term and localized and that there will be no significant impacts on the designated fisheries resources. The Corps will prepare an EFH Assessment to obtain EFH Conservation Recommendations from the National Marine Fisheries Service.

The Corps sought public comments on the project through April 24.

Photo provided by Michael Walsh

Harbor of Refuge, Point Judith, R.I.

Samantha Mirabella (left) tries using verbal commands and self defense stances to deter her "attacker" Mike Boles.

Course instructor Bradley Clark assists Samantha Mirabella as she washes her eyes out with fresh water after being sprayed with OC.

Canal Park Rangers train in self defense, pepper spray

Park Rangers at the Cape Cod Canal got some valuable self defense training, particularly on the use of Oleoresin Capsicum Aerosol (OC, also known as pepper spray) on March 14. Certified trainers and park rangers Mike Hayward, Brad Clark and Dave Kratz, held the all day class at the Canal for eight park rangers.

"In 1995 a visitor ranger safety survey was conducted by a task force to find out what park rangers in the Corps of Engineers thought about ranger and visitor safety," explained Matthew McClintock, park ranger, Cape Cod Canal. McClintock arranged for the training at the Canal. "From this study 54 recommendations were made by rangers regarding what could be done to better protect them and the visitors while carrying out their duties in a safe manner. A recommendation was made to allow rangers to carry pepper spray. A task force was formed in 1996 to study the perspective use of pepper spray by Corps employees."

According to McClintock, after a one-year test study in 2001, Circular No. 1130-2-214 was issued providing implementation guidance for the use of OC by Corps employees on April 22, 2002. Each Division was given the choice to allow or disallow the employees to carry OC. New England District received the green light in 2005.

Part one of the mandatory class consisted of indoor training that covered learning the regulations, what pepper spray is and when and when not to use it. Part two of the training session was more interacting and held outside. "We learned defensive techniques such as proper stance and positioning, verbal commands and warnings that we had pepper spray," said park ranger Samantha Mirabella. "You're only supposed to use pepper spray as a very last resort."

The reason for this became apparent to the park rangers that opted to get sprayed with the chemical. Although it was recommended that the trainees get sprayed, it was not mandatory. The park rangers that did volunteer were sprayed with the chemical and then confronted by the trainers with pads. "During this part of the training, we were supposed to find out what we could do to defend ourselves if we were sprayed," explained Mirabella.

Fending off an attacker while coping with a face full of pepper spray was not an easy feat. "It burned a lot," recalled Mirabella of her experience. "I started to panic at first, but then I got my composure and I was able to push off my attackers."

The exercise took a lot of balance and situational awareness, according to Mirabella. "You had to use the proper stance as well as a step and slide technique," she said. "While you're doing all this, you have to get your pepper spray out in time before you're attacked."

The trainees' reward for their pain was a tub full of fresh, cold water to wash out their eyes. The cold water brought some relief, according to Mirabella, but the initial burning lasted about 30 minutes. "After the training, some of us just held our eyelids open in the wind so that our eyeballs would get the nice cool air."

At the end of the training, each park ranger received a two-year certification authorizing them to carry pepper spray. Mirabella indicated that after her experience she would be very cautious using pepper spray. "I don't take the responsibility lightly," she said. "I wouldn't spray anyone unless I absolutely had to. I wouldn't want to put anyone through that kind of pain."

(Photos by Kevin Burke)

From the field

Where does all the water come from?

by Michael D. Currie
Park Manager, N. Springfield Lake

For those of us who work at one of the Army Corps of Engineers 33 flood control dams spread around New England, that is one of the most frequently asked questions. We have many a visitor in a year's time visiting and recreating at our projects, but it's "Flood Time" that brings out the curious. High-water has an allure that can only be felt -- I think it's hard to describe. Perhaps it's the danger associated with swollen rivers and streams, the destructive power, or the awe of Mother Nature acting in a very powerful way. It's more than likely a combination of all these things, but one thing is for sure, when the water begins rising behind our dams the questions and stories of the "old" flood times begin.

Flood Rivers swallow up businesses on River Street in Springfield, Vt., in this 1924 article. Photo courtesy of the Springfield Vermont Library.

It is with these thoughts in mind, of reaching out to folks like our high-water watchers, as well as teachers and schools, civic organizations and our working protective services folks, that I began brainstorming. I've answered many similar questions all too often it seemed, to not be able to think of a way or to find some vehicle to deliver this information, rather than always having to be in the first person.

I was someone who grew up watching a dam being built, living through floods as a youngster, and feeling all those same attractions to high water that others do. I eventually become the dam operator of that dam. That was super cool, but still I needed to find some way to share and preserve the institutional knowledge and experience that we had at our project. The reality is, as I told Tom Snow the project manager, our current operational team will someday retire, and more than likely someone new will be here, and a lot of information and knowledge will go with us.

Finally, a light did come on for me, and that happened two summers ago with the arrival of a very green, brand new summer park ranger, her name was Lindsey Parent. She was a very fine and dedicated young lady, but didn't have a clue about the Corps of Engineers, flood control dams, recreation areas or even how to get around the roads surrounding the project she was working at. I had a dilemma immediately, and I thought of our future dilemma I just mentioned at the same time. This employee may be temporary, but she needed information fast.

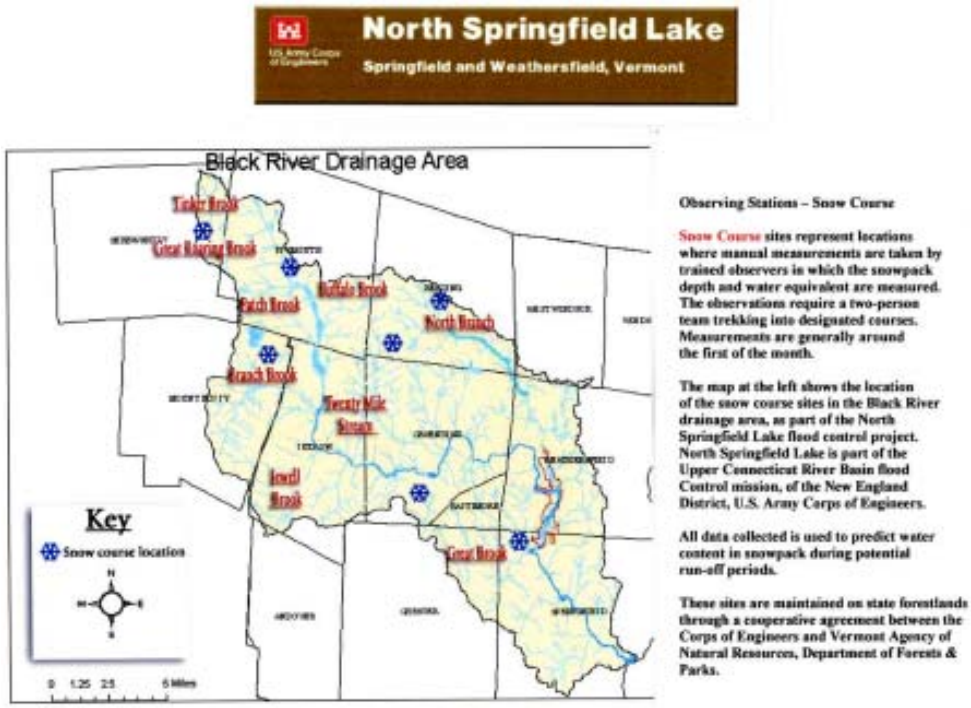
In the beginning it was pure survival for both of us, because she needed help just to help her navigate the project to do her job, with the next immediate question being, "what if somebody asks me a question?" She would need answers, especially being that public figure in uniform. We now had to work fast, brainstorming "101" was over, it was now game time for the public and Lindsey, and being a ranger is a contact sport, contact with our visitors.

Lindsey came with a very nice skills set to use for my "outside the box" brainstorming ideas. Lindsey was website savvy, very savvy. She had taken college level classes in website design, and it was just what the project needed at this particular point in time, and this was the vehicle I was waiting for. We now had a vehicle to teach with, and one for Lindsey to use and learn from, and one to make a contribution to the project during her tenure, and that was our webpage.

I immediately gave Lindsey tasks related to getting her oriented with the project; we used topographic maps, local histories and historical maps, and our water control manuals. We worked together on an outline for her to learn about the project and better enable her to be able to speak about these

topics during the course of her duties.

The first finished product during summer #1 was our "cultural history tour" of the North Springfield Lake Project; we completed that the year before last. It is complete with live interactive maps, local histories, historic markers, and archived photographs. This project turned out to be a very worthwhile and rewarding experience for everyone involved. Our ranger staff had a way to train and learn about the project, and it had a way to feel fulfilled by making a contribution they knew was valued.



In our second season with Lindsey, last year, my desire was to continue exposing her and our staff to main mission objectives, with a more in depth study of water control, how the dam itself works and how our relationship with our Reservoir Control Team (RRT) works. I wanted to continue to advance public knowledge and hers at the same time, by challenging ourselves the permanent staff, to project our mission through and to her, using hers and RRT skill sets, to again have a final product as an outreach tool for us as a project. You will have to visit our website again, to see our summer #2's final product on the "Flood Control" page. We again built a live interactive map for visitors, future staff, and fellow Corps employees to use, to better understand our main flood control mission, and to answer the "Where does the water come from?" question.

We explored the major contributing tributaries of the main stem of the Black River on many field trips. The Black River is the river North Springfield Dam controls, and its associated 204 square miles drainage area, is where the water comes from. We began with the map, and we then picked locations on each major tributary with landmarks and a good access point to be able to take photographs of both static conditions (low water), and swollen (high water) conditions at places the public could recognize.

These were then transposed onto our drainage area map as "live" thumbnail images. We then went back to work writing short descriptions of the streams, their "headwaters" descriptions, stream length to the main stem of the Black River. We computed travel times of run-off with the help of RRT, and gave our viewers the vertical drop of the stream to better interpret drainage area contours and topography. We also included snow survey sites on our map, that coincide with interpretive signs at our snow survey sites in the field, to interpret better our main mission of flood control and the many facets and types of data used in it.

The project and the product was a huge success, and we just recently got it posted on our website for all to look at. Hopefully, folks will come away from the exposure with a better understanding of our mission, the complexities and variables involved and a little more knowledge of where the water actually does come from, and what we do with it. We are excited this product got completed before our traditional "high water" time of year, which is coming up.

Our hopes for this project were threefold; first, we wanted to be able to better project ourselves to our customers and bring their knowledge level up; secondly, we wanted to provide a template and a vehicle with which to train with. We expect new folks every summer and eventually permanently, so we wanted to save our institutional knowledge; thirdly, we wanted to develop a platform that can built on. Hopefully, future visitors will challenge us to go beyond "where the water comes from." It will also give the staff a chance to explore our mission further, and to be better prepared for any contingency.

My final goal through this project, as futuristic as it may sound today, and I've shared this with RRT, would be able to create flood models that the public, school teachers and public first responders at all levels would have access to. To be able to "create a flood" scenario, and be able to learn from it, and project ourselves and our main mission with it.

So stay tuned -- that's where I'm headed. In the mean time check out North Springfield Lakes "Flood Control" link on our webpage, and if there are ideas out there about a future use of this information, please "let's invent the new wheel together."

Dredging up the past . . .

PAO file photo

Bob Heald (left) receives gifts from Rick Magee and Jamie Kordack during his retirement party in this 1999 photo.

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