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**US Army Corps
of Engineers
New England District**

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Yankee Engineer

May 2008

Passing the Torch Col. Feir to take command of District in June

**By Sally M. Rigione
Public Affairs Office**

Officers' Basic and Advance Courses;
Air Assault School; Airborne School;
Jungle Warfare School; Sapper Leader

Course; Ranger School; U.S. Army
Combined Arms and Services Staff
School; and the Navy's Command and
General Staff College.

Col. Curtis L. Thalken will relinquish command of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District to Col. Philip T. Feir during a Change of Command ceremony scheduled for Friday, June 27 at 10 a.m., at historic Faneuil Hall in Boston, Mass.

Col. Feir is a native of New York. He is a graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Information Systems. He received a Master of Science degree in Nuclear Engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology and a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies from the U.S. Naval War College.

His military education includes the Engineer Of-



Col. Philip T. Feir will take command of New England District on June 27.

In 1985 Colonel Feir was commissioned a second lieutenant in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, where he spent much of the next five years with the 101st Airborne Division, serving as Platoon Leader, Company Executive Officer, and Battalion Adjutant in the 326th Engineer Battalion, and as Aide-de-Camp to the Assistant Division Commander (Support). He was reassigned in 1990 to U.S. Army Europe (USAREUR), where he served in both the 7th and 130th Engineer Brigades. With the 7th, Col. Feir served in Heilbronn, Germany, as the 237th Engineer Battalion Adjutant and B Company Commander; and with the 130th, he served in Karlsruhe, Germany, as

Continued on page 3

Yankee Voices



Linda Lindell
Nurse, Health Unit

Congratulations

... to Lt. Col. (P) Al Pantano on his selection to command the Jacksonville District. Lt. Col. (P) Pantano served at the New England District when he was a Captain.

Sympathy

... to the family of retiree **Renzo P. "Mike" Michielutti**, who passed away April 8. He began working for the Corps in New England in 1957 and worked for the Hydrology Branch. Michielutti served in the Army Air Corps for two years. He retired from federal service in 1987. Michielutti was a long-time member of the NED Bowling League and the NED Golf League.

... to **Ed O'Donnell**, Navigation, on the passing of his mother, April 23.

Correction

In the March Yankee Engineer, page 4, the photo of Sgt. Kurt Mintell is incorrect. The correct picture is online at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/news/march2006.pdf>

Top official praises FUDS team

I would like to express my personal thanks for a job well done to all those within the North Atlantic Division responsible for the successful execution of the DERP-FUDS MMRP SI program to date.

Your entire FUDS team is commended for their good work, dedication, and rapid response to Headquarters' requests, plus outstanding achievement of program goals. The superior efforts of Alan Koppel (NAD), Jack Butler, Julie Kaiser, Christopher Augsburger, Scott Change, Anisha Downs, Nicki Fatherly, Liza Finley, George Follet, Bryan Frey, Paul Greene, Gloria Hawkins, Clyde Lichtenwalner, Gloria Markovci, John Owens, Dennis Powers, Hamid Fafiee, David Ruderman, Ron Santos, Alan Warminski, and Sher Zaman (NAB) Larry Cain, Carol Ann Charette, Robert Davis, Timothy Dugan, Sheila Holt, David Larsen, Peg Lorenzo, Gary Morin, Marcos Paiva and Heather Sullivan (NAE), Noreen Dresser, Gregory Goepfert, Scott Harris, Bob Hass, Barbara Hebel, Helen Kim, Constancio Labeste, and James Morre (NAN), and Dillard Horton, Adraine James, Terry McCann, David Parson, John Regan, and Gerald Rogers (NAO) deserve special recognition.

My team looks forward to your continued support in the execution of the DERP-FUDS MMRP SI Program.

Edwin A. Theriot, Ph.D.

Chief, Department of Defense Support Team
Directorate of Military Programs

Memorial Day – The origins of the 21-gun salute

Most sitting American presidents visit Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day to lay a wreath on the grave of the Tomb of the Unknowns. By tradition, any presidential visit at this site – or any other U.S. military installation – merits a 21-gun salute. The origins of this tribute date back to the 14th century when battling war ships signaled their defeat by discharging seven cannons, rendering them ineffective. Because gunpowder could be kept in grater quantities on land, forts could fire three rounds for every one from sea so the number of shots rose to 21. In time, the 21-gun salute became the highest honor a nation paid, although throughout the 1800s the number of rounds varied – sometimes according to the number of states in the Union. In 1842, the United States declared the 21-gun salute as its presidential salute. In 1890, the national salute was formally re-established as the 21-gun salute. (*Ideas Unlimited*)

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District CommanderCol. Curtis L. Thalken
Chief, Public AffairsLarry B. Rosenberg



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Memorial Day 2008

Honoring our fallen heroes

Our national flag flies at half-staff on Memorial Day to express our profound gratitude for the acts of brave patriots who gave the full measure so that we might live free. We place flowers on their graves and speak in words of eulogy. But, we must wonder, is that enough? In our hearts we know that we cannot fully discharge our solemn obligation to these men and women with mere words or gestures. They did not die for words or wreaths alone; they died so that in freedom our nation might endure.

It is therefore fitting that on this Memorial Day we turn our thoughts to the renewal of our own dedication to the cause of freedom. While we gather in groups and pay tribute as a nation, that dedication is entirely a personal matter. It is a personal matter for us to renew our commitment—to renew our involvement—in the preservation of a heritage that our honored dead have purchased at such dear price. Involvement is precisely how Memorial Day began. Just after the Civil War had ended, a group of Southern women visited the cemetery in Columbus, Mississippi, to decorate the graves of the sons and fathers who had died serving in the Confederacy.

When they were done, they saw that nearby Union graves were unattended, drab and forgotten. These ladies could not bring themselves to ignore the graves of the fallen Northern men. Carefully, they decorated the Union graves until there was nothing to distinguish them from those of the Confederates.

Originally called Decoration Day, Memorial Day was formally established in 1882, a day of remembrance for those who have died in our Nation's service. It is perhaps an indication of the success achieved by those who sacrificed

everything that many Americans today do not fully understand the meaning of Memorial Day. The theme of sacrifice is overcome by the super-abundance of life's blessings here, even in this time of war. If some in our communities think Memorial Day is the day the swimming pools open, we all may thank the triumph of the brave few for easing the prospect of menace and securing the bounties of liberty. Yet, we all would do well to heed the words of Abraham Lincoln, who said, "Any Nation that does not honor its heroes will not long endure." Well, we do remember.

We remember that Soldiers serve, and some die to preserve our bedrock freedoms, among them the freedom of association, of speech, of participation in governance, the freedom of choice in worship, and the freedom to pursue happiness.

It has been said that for a Nation to be successful, the Nation must be willing to serve. For more than 230 years, our Soldiers have been serving; they have followed a timeless warrior ethos—a system of values which is central to all we do in our Army: I will always place the mission first. I will never accept defeat. I will never quit. I will never leave a fallen comrade.

So, let us pay tribute today to these heroes who gave their full and final measure. In this way, we will continually renew the spirit of involvement exemplified by those who made the highest sacrifice and by the spirit reflected in the kind and good acts of those Southern ladies decorating Union graves in 1867. We will ourselves move with the grand flow of America's heritage, from its wellsprings in the idea that mankind should live free, to a destiny that liberty itself, exercised by free men and women, will help define.

Col. Feir to take Command of District in June

Continued from page 1

the 565th Engineer Battalion Assistant Operations Officer and 502nd Assault Float Bridge Company Commander. Following his stint at Georgia Tech, Col. Feir was assigned to West Point where he taught physics and nuclear engineering.

In 1999, he was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division in Hawaii and over the next five years served as the Division's Assistant Division Engineer, Secretary to the General Staff, and Deputy Chief for Transformation, as well as the 65th Engineer Battalion's Operations Officer.

During that period, Col. Feir also deployed to Bosnia where he served as the Deputy Chief of Joint Military Affairs, and he concluded his tour in Hawaii as the Assistant Chief of Staff for Engineering for U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC). In 2004, he assumed command of

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' San Francisco District, and following command once again returned to West Point to teach calculus and probability and statistics.

Col. Feir's awards and decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal (4th OLC), Army Commendation Medal (2nd OLC), Army Achievement Medal (1 OLC), National Defense Service Medal (2), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, NATO Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. He has also been awarded the Overseas Service Ribbon, Air Assault Badge, Parachutists Badge, Ranger Tab and Sapper Tab.

Col. Feir is a lifetime member of the Army Engineer Association (AEA); Association of the United States Army (AUSA); Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); and the Pi Mu Epsilon (National Honorary Mathematics Society).

Hop Brook Lake Ranger is District's Interpreter of the Year

by Diana Errico-Topolski
Park Ranger Hop Brook Lake

Marci Montrose, Natural Resource Specialist at Hop Brook Lake, has been named the New England District's 2008 Interpreter of the Year. The award recognizes an individual for his/her outstanding contributions in the field of interpretation and environmental education.

Montrose received the award from Col. Curtis L. Thalken, New England District Commander, during a small ceremony, April 15 at the Hop Brook Lake project in Connecticut.



Marci Montrose

"Marci's talent, extensive knowledge of the interpretive process, selfless service and strive for excellence has marked her as a respected and admired individual, and team player throughout the New England District," said nominator Diana Errico-Topolski, Natural Resource Specialist, Park Ranger.

Montrose was singled out for the award due to her achievements in the continued development and strengthening of Interpretative Programs and

Outreach Services for the Hop Brook Lake Unit.

According to her nomination package, in 2007 Montrose demonstrated her creativity and motivation by producing excellent interpretive programs for the public which effectively promoted the Corps mission. Montrose took part in coordinating and presenting over 19 programs, dedicating over 103 hours and reaching 1,275 people.

According to her nomination, as a result of her exceptional resourcefulness, judgment and dedication to these programs, the Hop Brook Lake Unit continues to have one of the most comprehensive and successful Interpretive Services Programs in the New England District.

In addition, Montrose's name has been forwarded to North Atlantic Division to be considered for the Corps of Engineers Hiram M. Chittenden Award for Interpretive Excellence.



Photos by Christopher Cogley

Park Rangers Marci Montrose (far right) and Reese Pipe work on a project with participants of the Junior Rangers Program.

Local Guardsman does double duty at Gillette Stadium

Sgt. 1st Class Ed Groh is an activated National Guardsman serving on active duty as a platoon sergeant with the U.S. Army's Community Based Health Care Organization (CBHCO) Unit in Concord, Mass. He is also a die-hard New England Patriots football fan.

When Groh isn't doing the nation's business by assisting our wounded Soldiers coming home from overseas, he is probably the envy of every Patriots fan in the country. He is one of seven men and one alternate of the First Down Crew Chain (chain crew to those who know football) at Gillette Stadium in Foxboro, Mass. That means that from August to January, Groh attends every home game and is right on the sidelines where the action is – not just watching, actively participating.

"We do the measurements for the first down," said Groh. "We also keep track of the penalties and we have three of the team members keep track of the down and distance. We do that just in case there is a penalty or a situation that sometimes means we have to go back after we've already moved the equipment. It's very important not to go back to the wrong place."

When asked if he hob knobs with the likes of Tom Brady or discusses strategy with Head Coach Bill Belichick, Groh is adamant that it's all business on the field. "As a rule we don't talk to the players or the coaches," he said. "I mean it's really busy – they've got a lot on their minds and everyone's got a job to do. Pretty much we try to stay out of each other's way."

Most people would be a little on edge working in front of tens of thousands of people, but the high school referee says the crew isn't affected at all. "Even though the crowds aren't as big as they are at Gillette Stadium, we're used to refereeing the football

games and being in front of a lot of people," said Groh. "That being said, we do try not to do something embarrassing like getting knocked down by a football player."

Groh got the position after returning from serving in Iraq with the 726th Ordnance Battalion from Natick, Mass. So how did Groh get every Patriots fan's dream job? "One of the prerequisites for the job is that you have to be a football official," he explained. "We're all football referees for either high

enjoyable."

From time to time, friends and family have caught a glimpse of Groh on their televisions when the Patriots home games are televised. Two years ago, he was lucky enough to share a little screen time with Belichick. Although friends and family thought it was a big deal, Groh took his moment of fame in stride. "It's funny, you just don't know who you'll be standing next to or what TV shot you find yourself in," he said casually. "My brother said that it seemed like I was on screen with Belichick for a half an hour, but it was really only about 10 seconds. I got a lot of phone calls from people in Ohio and Washington, D.C., telling me they saw me, so it happens occasionally."

In addition to serving on the chain crew, Groh is very active refereeing high school football, which he has been doing for 15 years. In 2007, Massachusetts held their high school equivalent of the Super

Bowl at Gillette Stadium and Groh refereed the Division 2 game. "It was great," he said. "I got to actually be on the field instead of just being on the sidelines."

When not activated by the National Guard, Groh is an Army Civilian working as a Communications Electronics Equipment Inspector at Devens, Mass. Although there will be a time that Groh, a 27-year Veteran with eight years of active duty service, will retire from the military, he plans on refereeing football and keeping his position with the Patriots for many more years to come. "I'm a huge football fan," he said. "I've had season tickets for years. I've lived in Foxboro my whole life and the Patriots have been there since I was eight years old. I can't imagine there will be a time when football won't be a part of my life."



Sgt. First Class Ed Groh (third from right) with the First Down Crew Chain at Gillette Stadium.

school or college. You also have to live close to the stadium – which I do – and you have to have one of the crew members recommend you to the Patriots."

According to Groh, who will be starting his fourth season on the staff in August, the position is his for as long as he wants it and not many people leave the crew chain, making it a rare honor to be selected. "I'm the newest guy and there's been no turn over since I've been there," he said.

Although there are many obvious perks to the job, Groh says the best one is the time that he spends with his fellow crew members before and after the games. "We like to get together and talk about the high school and college games that we referee," he said. "They're a great group of guys. The time I spend with them is really

Corps, Massport propose improvements to deep-draft navigation channels in Boston Harbor

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, in partnership with the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), has released a Draft Feasibility Report and joint Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and State Draft Environmental Impact Report (DSEIS/DEIR) that recommends deepening of the navigation channels in Boston Harbor in Boston, Chelsea and Revere, Mass.

This Draft Report documents the jointly funded investigation to evaluate the feasibility of channel deepening and related berth improvements at the Port of Boston to provide deeper channel access to their Conley Container Terminal located on the Reserved Channel in South Boston as well as other minor port improvements in the Mystic and Chelsea Rivers and in the Main Ship Channel above the Reserved Channel.

A public meeting to present the results of the 6-year investigation and to solicit comments was held on May 20 at the Black Falcon Cruise Terminal in Boston.

Currently, only about one third of New England's containerized cargo is shipped through the Port of Boston.

Most is shipped through the Port of New York and New Jersey and comes overland by truck to Boston and the rest of New England.

Deepening the main channels at Boston would allow more of this cargo to be directly handled in New England reducing truck traffic on the region's highways. As the size of these vessels in the world's fleet continues to increase, ports that are not deepened will see less waterborne traffic at shallower ports, as tidal delays make serving such harbors less economical. In some cases, vessels that would experience a tidal delay in Boston, would bypass Boston all together so as not to jeopardize their arrival schedule at other ports.

"We value our partnership with the Corps on this critical project for the Port of Boston," said Michael A. Leone, Massport's Port Director. "As we plan for the future, deepening the harbor is necessary in order to accommodate the next generation of vessels calling Boston."

Col. Curtis Thalken, the Corps of Engineers, New England District Commander, indicated that, "Separate improvements were developed and evaluated for the Boston Harbor Deep Draft Project. Alternatives evaluated to deep-

ening the outer and lower harbor's existing 40-foot deep channel system to provide deeper access to Massport's Conley Terminal in South Boston for containership traffic resulted in the recommendation to deepen the channels to a depth of 48 feet with an additional two feet of depth in the Entrance Channel to 50 feet."

Additional incremental improvements being recommended include deepening the existing 40-foot lane of the Main Ship Channel from the Reserved Channel Turning Area upstream to just below the Third Harbor Tunnel to a depth of 45 feet, to improve access to the Massport Marine Terminal in South Boston; deepening a portion of the 35-foot lane of the Mystic River Channel to 40 feet to improve access to Massport's Medford Street Terminal; and deepening the 38-foot Chelsea River Channel to 40 feet.

These improvements would require the removal of about 12 million cubic yards of dredge material and one million cubic yards of rock which would be placed at the Massachusetts Bay Disposal Site.

The proposed work has been coordinated with the federal, state and local agencies and harbor interests throughout the study.

Corps of Engineers public interest review results in permit denial for Winthrop Beach

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, North Atlantic Division Commander, Brig. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, announced his decision to deny a permit to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation due to public interest factors and the availability of less environmentally damaging alternatives.

The application called for creating a shoreline protection project using one-half million cubic yards of sand and gravel from an offshore site

in Massachusetts Bay and placing it on 37 acres of Winthrop Beach, near Boston's Logan Airport.

The source of the proposed beach fill would have come from an offshore habitat area essential to the survival of cod and other species.

The National Marine Fisheries Service office in Gloucester, Mass., objected to the project because of concerns about the impacts on this habitat.

The Corps' Engineer Research & Development Center conducted an in-

dependent review and found the concerns to be valid.

Brig. Gen. Semonite said, "Before making this decision, the Corps of Engineers reviewed all the data, considered the overall public interest, and applied the relevant laws, regulations, and policy. We know there is a real need for this shoreline protection project. But we also know that there are other less environmentally damaging options." (*North Atlantic Division Press Release*)

Geocaching at East Brimfield Lake

**Story and Photo by
Matthew Coleman, Park Ranger
East Brimfield Lake**

East Brimfield Lake in Fiskdale, Mass., offers many recreational opportunities for the public to enjoy year-round. One such opportunity is Geocaching. Geocaching is a worldwide scavenger hunt that uses Global Positioning System (GPS) to locate hidden containers placed by other players. These containers, called “caches”, can be different sizes and contain different items, with most containing a small logbook to record who has visited it and small trinkets that are left and taken by those who find the cache. These caches can be as small as a magnet and as large as a plastic storage bin, though most are the size of an ammo canister or small plastic container.

These caches are tracked using the website www.geocaching.com, where each cache is listed along with its exact GPS coordinates, maps, and any other important information about the cache. This website is also where a person can see who has visited the caches they have hidden, as well as keep track of the ones they have found and what items, if any, they have taken or left in the caches. The site also provides updates on new types of caches and geocache-related events.

Tens of thousands of caches are hidden worldwide in a variety of areas, from urban buildings to rural parks and forests, including many on Corps’ properties in New England.

The Corps requires that geocaches placed on government land be documented and permitted by project staff.

This documentation enables the Corps to know how many caches are located on project, where they are located, and who owns each cache. This opens up a line of communication between the cache owners and project management, allowing the Corps to notify the



A typical geocache, the prize at the end of a scavenger hunt, near its hiding place in a stone wall.

cache owner if the cache needs to be relocated due to any project operations (logging, construction, etc...), and also allowing the Corps to prevent caches from being placed in restricted or unsafe areas.

At East Brimfield Lake, the first step in implementing this process was to contact the state coordinator for [geocaching.com](http://www.geocaching.com).

This person, who has administrative powers on the geocaching website, was able to set the website so that any users trying to list a new cache on project lands would receive a message indicating that they needed Corps’ approval before the website would publish the cache listing.

The cache owner will then contact the project office and we will schedule a meeting to view the cache and see the proposed location. If the site is acceptable, photos will be taken to document it. For security reasons, and to prevent

them from being mistaken for litter, we require each cache to be clearly labeled and identifiable as a geocache.

Following the site visit, a permit is issued, which documents the cache’s location, name of cache on the website, name of the owner, and the owner’s contact information. The permit also makes the owner aware that damaging or removing any government property to place a cache is prohibited, that the Corps is not responsible for damage to the cache due to flooding or other project operations, and that the owner must notify the Corps if they desire to relocate, remove, or change the cache. Finally, after issuing the permit, I notify the website coordinator that we have given our permission and the cache’s listing is published.

For the many caches that were on project lands before we began this process, I used the website to contact owners of existing caches and arranged meetings to inspect the caches and their locations. The locations were documented and permits issued for these caches.

Throughout this process, I found the geocache community to be very cooperative and easy to work with. Many were eager to do their part in keeping the projects clean, by asking visitors to their cache to bring a litter bag and help clean up litter from the trails and cache area. By working with the geocache community to track the caches on our lands, we can ensure a safe and unique new way for people to explore their public lands.

For more information on geocaching at East Brimfield Lake or for other recreational opportunities at the project, please visit the project website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreation/ebl/eblhome.htm>.

Breaking the Ice

Park Ranger reaches thousands with expanded safety program

by **Glenna L. Vitello**
Park Ranger, East Brimfield Lake

As Park Rangers, we have all presented summer Water Safety Programs. The kids at the beaches and parks have always been enthusiastic on their visits to the Corps sites. It became apparent this past year that the participants were mainly visitors from out of town for the day, perhaps on vacation with their families.

It occurred to me that we need to educate as many local children as possible about water safety. Water safety needs to be practiced year-round. In an effort to extend our water safety program this past winter, I expanded year round to include the local elementary schools with a new Ice Safety Program.

This expansion has been very well received by our local school principals. Last winter I visited Holland, Burgess and West St. Schools promoting Ice Safety to at least 1,400 students from Grade 3 to 6. This winter I was able to expand our programs to Brimfield and Wales Elementary schools and reached over 1,700 students from Grade 1-6. The program has been flexible and evolved into an interactive experience where kids and teachers have been willing to learn by doing.

Smaller elementary schools offered some interesting moments during this winter's programs. The participants, regardless of age, referred to the area water bodies and rivers as "their water."

As professionals we can easily forget that we are merely managing the water bodies on our projects. These students reminded me that they live here and they take ownership of the environment around them. This made a difference in their increased level of interest in ice safety. Students are a more captive audience, of course, but they have been more vested as they understood that the safety message was meant

specifically for them.

Programs began with the school principal or teachers present testing the "ice bath," in which they held their hand in a large basin of ice water while imagining their whole body being submerged. My simple request of them to show their leadership skills by going first, routinely caused the entire student group to erupt in an energetic roar of laughter and giggles. My attempt to capture the students' attention was immediately successful. Students were amazed at how fast the adults felt the cold; class by class, the students came up to try the "ice bath." It was challenging to manage the "ice bath" while carrying on a 45 minute program. The kids were surprised at how fast they would feel the cold and would attempt to out last one another.

During the program, the kids were led through interactive scenarios where they had the opportunity to participate in simulated ice and cold emergencies. Each program would turn out a little different, depending on the questions or answers from the group.



Park Ranger Glenna Vitello with children from the Burgess Elementary School testing the ice bath.

Various scenarios had been developed from actual news stories over the past few years. What may have seemed a comical story of dogs or ice fishermen falling through ice turned out to be a valuable lesson for all participants to seek help and keep themselves safe during ice emergencies. Individual scenarios highlighted the topics and safety issues of hypothermia, frostbite and safe winter activities.

With the assistance of Ranger Matt Coleman and Basin Safety Officer Neil Beliveau, the Ice Safety Program has been successful and will be expanded with the addition of material added by Dr. Gordon Griesbecht, a hypothermia researcher at the University of Manitoba. Future programs will be developed as a multi-media experience for a wider audience and promote the winter safety of those at the East Brimfield Lake project and beyond.



Photo by Zachary Koziol

Volunteers plant crab apple trees at Birch Hill Dam during the project's Arbor Day event.

Arbor Day event at Birch Hill Dam supports area wildlife with crab apple tree plantings

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

An Arbor Day event was held on April 26, at the Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area at Birch Hill Dam in South Royalston, Mass., to support area wildlife with the planting of crab apple trees, according to officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District.

The activity included information sessions for area residents on how to prune apple trees to help them produce more fruit. The event was held in coordination with H&R 1871 of Gardner Mass., and Mt. Grace Land Conservation Trust of Athol, Mass., and with assistance from Red Apple Farm in Philipston, Mass.

Birch Hill Dam is situated on the Millers River in South Royalston. Completed in 1942 at a cost of \$4.6 million, the 1,400-foot-long, 56-foot-high dam can store 16.2 billion gallons of water.

To date, damages amounting to more than \$70.8 million have been prevented by the flood damage reduction project.

Birch Hill offers many recreational opportunities. The Lake Denison Recreational Area, managed by the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, provides camping, swimming, picnicking, boating and fishing.

The Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife manages much of the remaining reservoir as part of the Birch Hill Wildlife Management Area. Popular activities include hiking, hunting, fishing, mountain biking and snowmobiling in season. The Birch Hill Dam and reservoir area attract more than 293,000 visitors annually.

For more information about activities at Birch Hill Dam, visit the Corps of Engineers website at <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreate/bhd/bhdhome.htm> or call (978) 249-4467.

Recreation season begins at District

by Timothy Dugan
Public Affairs Office

Recreation areas at the 31 federal flood control reservoirs in New England operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will open to the public in mid-May 2008.

"Most areas offer a wide range of recreational opportunities, including picnicking, swimming, boating, fishing and hunting, while a few also provide facilities for overnight camping," said Richard C. Carlson, Chief of Construction/Operations for the Army Engineers in New England.

Fishing is permitted at all federal flood control reservoirs in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. The only requirement to fish the lakes is a state license and adherence to state regulations. Trout, bass, pickerel, hornpout and perch inhabit most reservoirs, while a few areas have their own specialties. Many of the areas are stocked by state fish and game agencies to provide some of the finest fishing in the region.

Developed facilities, including beaches, picnic areas, athletic fields and campgrounds are available at a number of locations. Many are open to individuals or small groups free of charge on a first come, first serve basis.

For a brochure about recreational opportunities, including directions to each site, write to the New England District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, ATTN: Public Affairs Office, 696 Virginia Road, Concord, MA 01742-2751. For more information about Corps recreation and activities check the website at: <http://www.nae.usace.army.mil/recreati/recreati.htm>



Volunteers collect trash along the Cape Cod Canal during the Cape Cod Canal Clean Up on April 26.

Photo provided by Abigail Clark

Earth Day events held throughout New England District

The theme for the U.S. Army's celebration of Earth day 2008 was "Sustaining the Environment for a Secure Future."

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was one of approximately 200 major commands that commemorated the day with special events. At the New England District, four flood control projects hosted cleanup events to celebrate. Over 250 volunteers visited the sites and performed clean up and improvement work that saved the federal government more than \$18,000 in labor.

Thomaston Dam partnered with the Nutmeg R/C Flyers, an AMA-chartered remote control club that operates at the bottom of the dam, to host its April 5 event. Work included flood debris and trash removal from the field. New England District employees that participated included Bob Padovani, Marissa Wright, Chuck Whitehead, Mick Howe, Vin Gualtieri and John Haluchak.

Thomaston Dam also had a clean up event on April 26, in conjunction with the Pathfinders Motorcycle Club and New England Trail Riders Association. Work included removing four trees from the trails, replacing and reinstalling 10 signs damaged by ice; rerouting a restored wetland trail; installing a heavy duty water bar; restoring a trail and installing two water bars; cleaning three culverts; and picking up three truckloads of trash. Employees that participated included Tim Titus, Padovani, Wright, Whitehead, Howe and Gualtieri.

East Brimfield Lake and Westville Lake partnered with several local organization to host its 5th Community Appre-

ciation Day April 19. Completed work at Westville Lake included repairing 500 feet of eroded trail; installing 500 feet of new stone dust surface to the Westville lake community trail; installing 12 cross drain station markers along the community trail; and removing three tires and enough debris and trash to fill 12 trash bags. Work at East Brimfield Lake included installing a vehicle control gate and two vehicle control signs at the Brimfield Section Trail Head Parking Lot; installing a new project sign at Brimfield Trail Head; grading



Barre Falls volunteers plant juniper bushes.

Photo provided by Barre Falls Dam.

and slope stabilizing a new eight car trail head parking lot; removing 12 yards of stump and grinding debris from trail surfaces; and spreading 15 yards of gravel to level trail surface.

Employees who rolled up their sleeves and pitched in were Keith Beecher, Tom Chamberland, Pat Tetreault, Glenna Vitello and Matt Coleman. Local partners were the Trails Committees of Brimfield, Sturbridge and South bridge; the Conservation Commission of Sturbridge and the Grand Trunk Trailblazers.

Park Rangers at Barre Falls Dam held their Earth Day celebration joined by the Devreaux School in Rutland, Mass., and the Hubbardston Cub Scouts on April 22. Work at the project included cleaning up the picnic area, planting junipers, spreading woodchips in the juniper beds, and cleaning up litter along the disc golf course. Employees who pitched in to help were Ralph Gendron, Rick Kristoff and Delia Vogel.

The Cape Cod Canal hosted the Canal Cleanup event on April 26, which was organized and sponsored by Americorps Cape Cod. Andrew Brown, who is a member of Americorps and an intern at the Canal organized the event between the two agencies.

Volunteers collected 64 bags of trash from an approximately 3.25-mile area along the North Service Road portion of the canal. Jay Zavala, retired Contract Officer from the New Orleans District, turned out to help with the cleanup. District employees who also lent a hand were Abigail Clark, Willis Loper and Ann Cook.

Earth Day was created by Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson. The first celebration was held in 1970, seven years after he convinced President John Kennedy to bring national visibility to the environment. More than 20 million people participated in that first event that would become an annual observance held throughout the nation.



Photo by Tom Chamberland

New stone drain being installed along Community trail at Westville Lake.



Photo provided by Thomaston Dam.

Volunteers remove debris at Thomaston Dam.



Photo provided by Barre Falls Dam.

Park Ranger Rick Kristoff helps some young volunteers spread woodchips on juniper beds at Barre Falls.

Dredging up the past . . .



Carl Boutilier (second from left) is all smiles as he is welcomed into the retirement community by friends and Distinguished Civilian Gallery members Paul Pronovost, Jim Wong and Richard Reardon at his retirement party in this Nov. 20, 2001 photo.

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