Yankee Engineer

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Building Strong®

Dredge Currituck visits New England

Story on Page 4

Yankee Voices

Retiree guests from Raimo Liias' retirement luncheon.

Congratulations

...to Robert Webb, Logistics, for being selected as the Work Environment Association's Employee of the Month for April 2013.

...to the New England District Team members who participated in the Red Cross blood drive in May. Total collected--36 pints of blood.

Sympathy

… to Construction retiree Joseph C. Hathaway who passed away on Dec. 15, 2012.

… to the family of Operations Retiree David Stidham, who passed away, March 24. Mr. Stidham served as the District's Park Manager of Buffumville Lake and was instrumental in bringing Disc Golf to the recreation area.

…to the family of Operations retiree Don Shepardson, who passed away April 1. Mr. Shepardson worked for many years at projects such as Birch Hill and Barre Falls Dams. In addition to his service to the Corps of Engineers, Mr. Shepardson faithfully served his nation during the Vietnam War as a Soldier in the U.S. Army.

… to Bill Mahan, retired Chief of Logsitics, on the passing of his wife, Peggy Mahan, May 26.

Commanding General's Founder's Day Message

Corps Teammates,

It was 238 years ago that our Army was founded, beginning a rich history of defending freedom and democracy around the world.

Looking back, it is hard to imagine what life was like for the first American Citizen-Soldiers. They were a fledgling force of Colonial troops with no unified chain of command...equipped and supported with whatever the state militias could afford...preparing to face the seasoned British troops in Boston. Realizing that the fight for independence could be quickly lost, Congress voted to establish the Continental Army on June 14, 1775, and the following day made General George Washington the Commander in Chief.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers can trace its roots to June 16, 1775, when the first Chief Engineer, Colonel Richard Gridley, was appointed. Since then, Engineer Soldiers and Civilians have played a role in every major U.S. military conflict; built countless projects that ensured our country's security, economy and quality of life; and answered the call of duty after devastating natural disasters, helping communities recover and rebuild.

The selfless service, loyalty and bravery of Washington's troops began the legacy that has sustained our nation's Army since its earliest days. Now, we are the best equipped, best trained and best led fighting force in the world. In war and in peace, serving in every corner of the globe, our Soldiers, Veterans, Civilians and Families are, and always have been, ARMY STRONG.

Today, on our 238th Birthday, we remember and give thanks for the nearly 100,000 Soldiers currently deployed and the 880,000 Army men and women who have rendered the ultimate sacrifice.

Thank you for your service and your dedication to the Corps, the Army and the nation. Hooah and Happy Birthday!

Thomas P. Bostick
Lieutenant General, U.S. Army
Commanding

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District Commander: Col. Charles P. Samaris
Chief, Public Affairs: Larry B. Rosenberg
Editor: Ann Marie R. Harvie
Media Relations Officer: Timothy J. Dugan
Public Affairs Specialist: Sally M. Rigione
Web Content Manager: Andrew Stamer
Student Intern: Jess Levenson

New England District Commander's Founder's Day Message

Team:

As you may know, "Founder's Day" is really a celebration of the lineage, honors and achievements of the organization. But sometimes - in the midst of BBQs, service awards, and other activities - we forget the true reason for which we gather together. So, permit me to delve momentarily into the history of "our reason" – the New England District.

The New England District has a uniquely rich and proud lineage, dating back to the birth of the Army Corps of Engineers…and, in fact, the birth of our Army. During the opening days of the Revolutionary War, General George Washington named Boston native Colonel Richard Gridley chief engineer of the newly formed Continental Army. Shortly thereafter, in June 1775, General Washington charged Colonel Gridley with building fortifications on Breed's Hill in preparation for what would become known as the Battle of Bunker Hill. This action marked the beginning of our long tradition of "Engineering" service to New England and the nation.

Interestingly, the New England District (Division), dates back to 1942 when the New England Division consolidated geographically dispersed projects and operations located throughout the six-state region. Over time, the New England Division included districts in Eastport, Portland, Boston, New Bedford, Newport, Portsmouth, Providence, New London, New Haven, New York – the first four of which date back to 1866. As post-WWII workload decreased, and districts cased their colors, the New England Division evolved into an "Operating Division." Subsequently, to operationally and organizationally align it with the rest of USACE, the New England Division cased its colors in April 1997…and uncased new colors as the New England District.

You and your fellow New England District teammates all bring unique professional skills and personal strengths to the collaborative table – and flat-out execute! Your proven results establish and maintain our credibility, build and strengthen our partner relationships, and foster and protect our great reputation across New England. YOU are the reason our portfolio remains so well balanced.

Delivering superior results to the people of New England and the nation – with character, passion, and a strong sense of service – is a team sport. And you play that sport very well, just as our founders did during the formative years of our great nation. You should be proud of yourselves! The nation appreciates you!

Happy Founder's Day!

Col. Charles Samaris
Colonel, Corps of Engineers
District Engineer

Flag Day facts: What do you know about the U.S. flag?

June 14th is Flag Day, when Americans proudly display their patriotism by flying the U.S. flag far and wide. While you're gazing at Old Glory, consider these facts about our star-spangled banner:

- The design of the U.S. flag was originally established by the Second Continental Congress on July 14, 1777. The Flag Resolution stated: "Resolved, that the flag of the United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new constellation."

- The U.S. flag has been modified 26 times since its inception to reflect the addition of states. The current design, with its 50 stars, was designed by a 17-year-old high school student named Robert G. Heft in 1958 and was adopted by proclamation of President Eisenhower in 1959.

- Six flags were planted on the moon during U.S. space missions there. The first, left by Apollo 11, was blown over by exhaust gasses when the ascent vehicle lifted off from the Sea of Tranquility.

- The first American flag to fly over a fort in a foreign country was hoisted in Tripoli (now Libya) in 1805, followed by the Battle of Derne in the First Barbary War – the first recorded land battle fought by United States forces on foreign soil. *(First Draft Magazine)*

Hopper Dredge CURRITUCK
'Indispensable' vessel safely removes hazards to navigation

From Florida to Maine, one unique vessel in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' maritime fleet earns its "indispensable" reputation 363 days a year by dredging dangerous shoaling in shallow draft federal channel inlets: hopper dredge Currituck.

The Currituck is economical, safe to operate, and easy to maintain. Its shallow draft and ability to withstand sea conditions other types of dredges cannot make it a valuable resource in dredging shallow draft inlets, like those found in New England, in a timely and cost effective manner.

The Currituck spent six weeks in New England between May and June and dredged four harbors where it removed the most shoaled portions of the entrance channels thereby increasing navigational safety; Cuttyhunk Harbor in Gosnold, Mass., Green Harbor in Marshfield, Mass., Hyannis Harbor in Hyannis, Mass., Block Island Harbor of Refuge and Great Salt Pond, R.I. Also in November 2012, the Currituck dredged the Housatonic River in the vicinity of Stratford, Conn.

The Currituck is assigned to the Corps' Wilmington District in North Carolina. It's the only special-purpose type of hopper dredge in the United States that works the same projects as larger sidecasting dredges, only on a smaller scale. It features a self-propelled split hull and is equipped with a self-leveling deck-house located at the stern, where all controls and machinery are housed.

The Currituck is hinged above the main deck so that the hull can open from bow to stern by means of hydraulic cylinders located in compartments forward and aft of the hopper section.

The Currituck pumps dredged material into its hull. USACE photo

There are over 170 federal navigation projects maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District. Most of these are coastal harbors; there are also several river channels. Navigation projects in New England include 11 deep draft commercial waterways with authorized depths of 35 feet or more, and a diverse array of channels and harbors which support the navigation needs of national defense, petroleum and other commercial goods shippers, commercial fishing vessels, and recreational boating.

Federal waterways in New England carry about 80 million tons of commercial goods annually and facilitate substantial ancillary economic activity associated with both commercial shipping and recreational pursuits.

Cuttyhunk Harbor

Local officials have reported that shoaling has occurred in the authorized 10-foot deep entrance channel in Cuttyhunk Harbor as a result of Hurricane Sandy. Cuttyhunk Harbor is located at the northeastern end of Cuttyhunk Island, which lies at the southwestern end of the Elizabeth Islands. The harbor is used by a small fishing fleet, local and transient recreational boaters, and mail and freight carriers from the mainland. It frequently serves as a harbor of refuge. A hydrographic survey was performed in early spring 2013 to determine the extent of shoaling. Funding for maintenance dredging has been appropriated in the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013. Maintenance dredging with the Government owned, special-purpose dredge Currituck began on June 16.

Green Harbor

Considerable shoaling has occurred in the authorized 6-foot and 8-foot deep entrance channel at the "Narrows" in Green Harbor, and damage to the east and west jetties at the mouth of the harbor has occurred as a result of Hurricane Sandy and subsequent nor'easters.

Green Harbor is situated in the northwestern end of Cape Cod Bay, about 30 miles southeast of Boston and nine miles north of Plymouth Harbor. It is located at the mouth of Green Harbor River, a small stream

that drains nearby marshlands. Green Harbor is a popular recreational boating and sport fishing center.

Funding for maintenance dredging and jetty repair has been appropriated in the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013.

Maintenance dredging to alleviate shoaling in the entrance channel was performed with the Currituck from May 22-31. A plan for repairing the jetties is being developed.

Hyannis Harbor

Shoaling in the authorized 13-foot deep entrance channel, the 13-foot deep inner harbor channel and the 13-foot deep inner harbor turning basin in Hyannis Harbor has occurred as a result of Hurricane Sandy and subsequent nor'easter storms.

Hyannis Harbor lies midway along the south shore of Cape Cod in Hyannis, about 21 miles east of the harbor at Woods Hole and 16 miles west of Chatham. It consists of an outer harbor, a middle harbor (known as Lewis Bay), and an inner harbor. The outer and middle harbors are separated by Dunbar Point.

Hyannis Harbor is used extensively by recreational boaters and serves as a base for a small fishing fleet, sport fishing charter boats, and ferry boats that service the offshore islands. Shoaling is causing hazardous conditions for the ferries that are the primary lifeline to the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket.

The Woods Hole, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket Steamship Authority has recently reported that the M/V NANTUCKET and M/V EAGLE have both incurred damages to their hulls believed to be resultant from interactions with these shoals.

Funding for maintenance dredging has been appropriated in the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013. Maintenance dredging with the Currituck began on June 21.

The hull of the Currituck splits and releases dredged material at a designated disposal site.

Block Island

Dredging of the entrance channels of the Block Island Harbor of Refuge and Great Salt Pond is needed. The Corps has obtained approvals and plans on using the Currituck during June to complete the dredging. Block Island, coextensive with the town of New Shoreham, is an 11-square mile island lying 12 miles off the southern coast of Rhode Island and 15 miles northeast of Montauk Point, the eastern tip of Long Island, N.Y.

The Block Island Harbor of Refuge, located on the island's east side, is used by a small fishing fleet and is the subsistence harbor for the island. Great Salt Pond is located on the island's west side and is used by large numbers of recreational boaters (over 1,000 per day) during the summer season.

Housatonic River

The local community contacted the Corps to request dredging of the federal project, the 18-foot channel, in the Housatonic River. A recent survey of the project indicated about 600,000 cubic yards of sand needed to be removed to return the project to authorized dimensions. In an effort to dredge the most shoaled portions of the river, the state of Connecticut funded the entire cost of $750,000 to have the Currituck dredge approximately 50,000 cubic yards of sand to approximately - 14 feet mllw from the most shoaled portions of the 18-foot authorized channel below the Route 1 Bridge. Nearshore disposal was about six miles away off Point No Point. The Currituck dredged from Nov. 2 - 30, 2012. Connecticut Department of Transportation is coordinating with the Corps for possible additional dredging in 2013.

The Corps is coordinating with Wilmington District to possibly use the Currituck and is coordinating with the Connecticut Department of Transportation and the city of Stratford to develop a plan on how to complete the dredging. The next dredge window is Oct. 1 to March 31.

Editor's Note: Jack Karalius, Bill Kavanaugh, Mike Walsh, Tim Dugan and Larry Rosenberg of the New England District and Hank Heusinkveld of the Wilmington District, all contributed to this article.

District employees take their daughters and sons to work

The Federal Women's Program, in conjunction with the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, hosted the annual Take Your Daughters and Sons to Work Day, April 19, in various areas of the Concord Park headquarters.

Approximately 35 children, ages 8-12, participated in the event that is aimed at exposing school-aged children to science, technology, engineering, math (STEM), the environment and other professions of the Corps of Engineers. More children were signed up, but according to FWP Manager Denise Kammerer-Cody, they were unable to come due to the events that resulted from the Boston Marathon bombings.

Col. Charles Samaris, New England District Commander, greeted the children in the morning. He talked to the participants about what they would be doing throughout the day to get them excited. He had those who were willing join him in doing pushups to get their blood pumping for the day's activities. "It's great to have all of you here," he said. "You don't realize this yet, but you are the most important people in the building right now because our country relies on you. Years from now you will contribute to the success of your nation, whether your know it or not right now. That's why we are so excited to have you here – anything we can do to expose you to something fun and make us all smarter is good for everybody."

Jackie DiDomenico, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, set down important ground rules for the children before Tina Chaisson gave them small bags of erasers filled with specific shapes and colors. She had the children go around to the others to see if they could match up their erasers. At that point they would introduce themselves, completing the ice breaking exercise.

The children were broken up into three different groups -- Nick Junior, Disney and Looney Tunes -- and rotated through three 45-minute educational sessions in the morning. During the Geology session, children discovered how rocks, minerals and fossils are formed. They were given the opportunity to hold samples of different types of minerals such as gold, silver and diamonds as well as fossils such as clams, whalebone, wood and a dinosaur footprint. Each child was allowed to select a rock to take home.

Children dissect owl pellets to see what's inside.

Photos by Brian Murphy

New England District geologists Paul Young and Mike Boiardi presented the activity.

"It seems kids are learning earth science in the earlier grades than years ago," said Young. "I think seeing and passing around interesting minerals and fossils really gets the kids excited. It's fun to see the expressions on their faces while they hold a sample of gold or copper or an interesting fossil like the fossilized turtle dung or dinosaur footprint."

During the Journalism activity, the children got a brief overview of the District newsletter, YANKEE ENGINEER, before working on a Mad Lib exercise. The children asked a partner to provide silly and fun parts of speech to transform a story into their own unique version that they read to the rest of the participants. After, the children designed their own page of the YANKEE ENGINEER using pictures, text and other materials. Ann Marie Harvie and Rachel Fisher ran this event.

The "Wasting Energy At Home" session described the importance of energy conservation and the ways energy can be wasted and conserved. Amy Bourne and Ruthann Brien described the efforts of the New England District to conserve energy and promote a sustainable environment.

"Our session included a brief overview of energy/renewable energy with a couple of mini quiz assessments to show how energy conservation-minded the kids were," said Bourne. "Next, we showed some everyday renewable energy / energy efficiency items such as a solar-powered watch, crank flashlight and lantern, LED light bulbs and power strip. "

The session ended with a board game that included questions and tips about renewable energy and energy

efficiency the children read aloud and answered in order to make their way through the board. As they left, Bourne and Brien gave each child a sheet that had instructions for them to perform a "vampire hunt" at home, which will tell them if any of the items that are plugged in are "sucking" energy even when they are turned off.

At the conclusion of the morning sessions, the children met up with their adult sponsors and enjoyed a pizza lunch in the Concord Park Cafeteria. Loud chattering about what the children had learned in the morning filled the room, as well as anticipation for the afternoon sessions.

The participants regrouped after lunch to rotate through four, 30 minute activities.

Karen Hoey presented, "Water Safety – Do you know the rules to being safe around water?"

"Being that I had water safety as a topic I wanted to make sure that the kids got some basic water safety rules down," said Hoey.

In this session, children received information about water safety through water games and relays. They also learned how to throw a life ring correctly. "I had each kid throw a real life ring so they could get a feel for the weight and size," said Hoey. "We then worked on throwing the life ring with accuracy by using a ring toss, which was made by Ranger Jennifer Samela."

The children then discovered firsthand how cold New England lakes are in the spring. Using the activity titled "Cool Hand Luke," Hoey had the children reach into ice-filled water to try to pick up pennies, one at time, to see how many they could get out before time ran out. According to Hoey, this was the children's favorite activity.

Learning how to properly put on a life jacket was last on Hoey's Water Safety agenda. "We went outside and I had the kids look for a life jacket and put it on. The twist was they were being timed and the life jacket was all tangled up," said Hoey. "This activity was trying to illustrate the importance of having a life jacket on *before* an emergency occurs."

Paul Young has the children touch fossils and rocks during his geology presentation. Michael Boiardi (background) assisted.

During the Owl presentation, the children learned what an owl really eats when they dissected an owl pellet and examined its contents. Presenter Jennifer Rockett also talked about the many varieties of owls that live in New England as well as their habitat. She let them touch a couple of stuffed owl mounts before they dissected the pellets. "The kids enjoyed dissecting the pellets the most because they could actually determine what the owl ate," said Rockett.

Everyone knows that most kids love ice cream, and during the Ice Cream presentation, the children learned how to make it themselves. Leanna Martin and Dara Gay ran this event.

As a lesson in measurements and chemical reaction, the children measured ingredients to make vanilla ice cream. The children vigorously shook bags full of ingredients, to include ice, salt, cream and flavoring, and turned liquid into solid, with various degrees of success. Some got ice cream, some got vanilla shakes. All got a yummy snack. "I loved doing the ice cream activity," said Molly Sneeringer. "It was a lot of fun."

Wendy Gendron and Drew Cattano led the children in the hovercraft activity. After a short video of real hovercrafts, the children decorated their own hovercrafts which were made using a compact disc and a balloon. A hovercraft is a vehicle that glides over a smooth surface by hovering upon an air cushion. By participating in this activity the children explored the concepts of friction and volume as well as discovered how the amount of air in the balloon affects how long the hovercraft hovers and how far it can move. "The best part about today for me was the personal hovercraft," said Saniha Kumar. "It was really cool when I blew up the balloon and attached it to the CD and watched it glide across the table. "

Some kids couldn't decide which session was their favorite. "I loved everything," said Andrew Sneeringer. "I learned a lot today and had a lot of fun."

"Everyone did such a good job putting together the activities for us," said Saniha. "I would love to come again. I really had a lot of fun."

New England's Best Kept Summer Secret
The Corps: New England's First Choice for Recreation

by Jess Levenson
Public Affairs Office

In New England, summer is an annual gift that always retains its sheen and never disappoints, a tradition that the Corps contributes to by providing New Englanders access to pristine family-based recreational facilities co-located with its dams and flood-control projects throughout the region.

The New England District provides outdoor recreational opportunities at each of the 31 Corps-operated flood risk management reservoirs within Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, "water is the number one recreation attraction in America…swimming in lakes, streams and oceans is ranked among the top ten recreation activities; lakes and oceans remain the top vacation destination in America. Whether one uses aquatic resources to swim, boat, ski, fish or simply take advantage of surrounding resources such as bicycle paths, walkways and hiking trails, water is a recreation resource that offers rest, relaxation, fun and fitness."

Kayaking is one of many recreational activities offered at New England District facilities. Photo by C.J. Allen

Here is a snapshot of what to look forward to at the sites. The recreational facilities in Connecticut are located at Black Rock Lake, Colebrook River Lake, Hancock Brook Lake, Hop Brook Lake, Mansfield Hollow Lake, Northfield Brook Lake, Thomaston Dam, and West Thompson Lake. Each facility offers fishing and supports warm-water fish species like trout and bass. Hancock Brook Lake and Thomaston Dam also offer remote control model aircraft fields. Various sporting activities at the sites include volleyball, disc golf, and horseshoes.

Barre Falls Dam, Birch Hill Dam, Buffumville Lake, the Cape Cod Canal, Charles River Natural Valley Storage Area, Conant Brook Dam, East Brimfield Lake, Hodges Village Dam, Knightville Dam, Littleville Lake, Tully Lake, West Hill Dam, and Westville Lake are located in Massachusetts. The Cape Cod Canal has 13.5 miles of paved roads, useful for bicycling, in-line skating, jogging, and more. The canal itself provides an attractive view of traveling tugs, container ships, and luxury yachts. Additionally, the Cape Cod Canal Visitor Center has educational films, interactive exhibits, live radar, and a retired 41-foot patrol boat. Fishing is available at all of the Massachusetts sites with the proper license. Sporting activities include mountain and dirt biking, canoeing, disc golf, and volleyball. West Hill Dam has a wheelchair accessible playground and handicap accessible parking. Conant Brook Dam even features horseback riding, as do other sites.

The sites in New Hampshire are Blackwater Dam, Edward MacDowell Lake, Franklin Falls Dam, Hopkinton-Everett Lakes, Otter Brook Lake and Surry Mountain Lake. Sporting activities include hiking, horseback riding, canoeing, kayaking and volleyball. Franklin Falls Dam includes Profile Falls, which presents a beautiful waterfall. Hopkinton-Everett Lake has both a swimming beach and a model airplane flying field.

When the public visits Vermont, they can travel to Ball Mountain Lake, North Hartland Lake, North Springfield Lake, Townshend Lake and Union Village Dam. Ball Mountain Lake has Atlantic Salmon fishing. There are trails, volleyball courts, basketball courts, and playgrounds all in Vermont, and visitors can look forward to scenic views and a wealth of enjoyment.

Interpretive programs are scheduled at many recreation areas. Programs may include visits to local dams, sessions on natural science, wildlife, local history and recreation safety, Junior Park Ranger programs, and more. Visitors are also attracted to special events, like fishing tournaments, sailing regattas, arts and crafts festivals and scouting activities.

For more information, visit the online brochure at http://corpslakes.usace.army.mil/employees/vtn/pdfs/recreation.pdf.

New England District, partners host a Grand Opening of the Brimfield Section of the Grand Trunk and Mill Brook Water trails

By Thomas Chamberland, Park Ranger
East Brimfield Lake

After several years of hard work and recovery from the tornado of June 2011, and the devastating snow storm of October 2011, the 2.5 mile section of the Grand Trunk Trail and two-mile adjoining side trail in Brimfield, Mass., is now open along with an access to Mill Brook, a flat water river that flows through Brimfield.

With the opening of the 2.5 mile Lake Siog Pass trail into Holland, there are now over seven miles of relatively flat, "rail trail" available to the public. This section of the Grand Trunk Trail is a portion of the Titanic Rail Trail initiative of the Grand Trunk Trail Blazers. When complete, the Titanic Rail Trail will run 66 miles from Franklin to Palmer, Mass.

The official grand opening, complete with an official ribbon cutting ceremony. The event took place on the exact day of the second anniversary of the June 1st tornado, in the Rte. 20 Trail Head Terminus of the Grand Trunk trail in Brimfield.

Local dignitaries along with New England District team members, the Grand Trunk Trail Blazers, the Brimfield Trail Committee and Board of Selectmen were on hand to officially open the trails.

"The hard work of the Brimfield Trail Committee led by Dick Costa and Rob Mahlert along with Park Ranger Tom Chamberland of my staff coordinating all of the volunteer and contractual efforts have led to this great trail effort," said Keith Beecher, Park Manager for East Brimfield Lake during the ceremony. "I am very proud of this partnership which will now benefit many residents and visitors to our area."

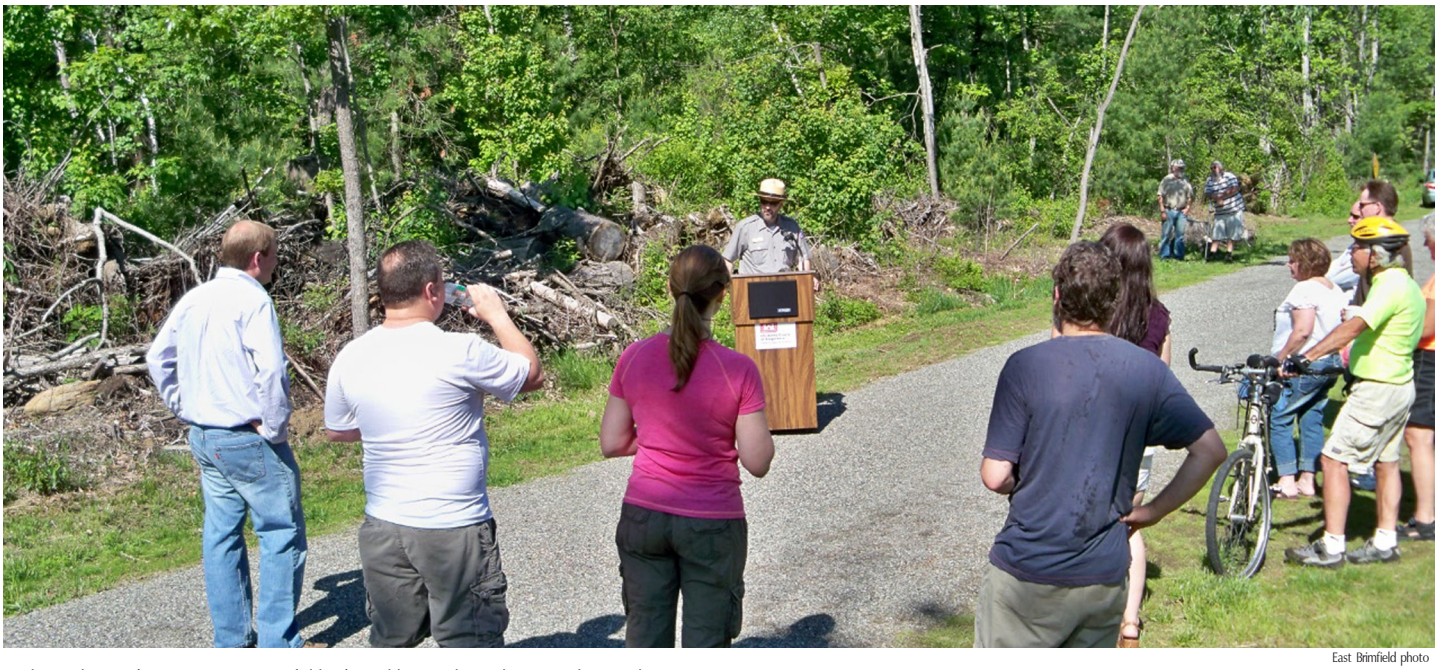
Initial work in opening these sections of the abandoned Trolley and Grand Trunk Rail beds started in 2005, and were slowly progressing with a hoped for grand opening in September of 2011. The tornado of June 2011 delayed that opening, causing over a half mile of the trail to be totally destroyed, and an additional three fourths of a mile significantly impacted.

Thanks to the partnership between the town of Brimfield and the New England District, volunteers went to work re-dedicating themselves to getting this trail reopened and in better condition than originally envisioned.

Total costs over the past six years of contracted and volunteer effort as well as materials and supplies to open this 2.5 mile section of trail have amounted to $255,000, with some $120,000 of that directly related to tornado and winter storm clean up/damages and repairs.

"Residents of Brimfield have been great in their support of this effort, and although the tornado slowed us down, it strengthened our resolve to get this section of the trail completed, and now just two years later, this is a great example of our community of Brimfield working together towards recovery," said Rob Mahlert, Chair of the Brimfield Trail Committee.

One of the side benefits of the trail is new and easy access to Mill Brook, allowing for canoes and kayaks to enjoy this section of the river. The day's activities included a brief walking tour of the trail and then later a bike tour of the trail. River access was made available shortly before the official ribbon cutting ceremony.



East Brimfield photo

Keith Beecher, Park Manager, East Brimfield Lake, addresses the audience at the grand opening.

Park Rangers Jonathan Dumais and Elisa Carey pass out water safety information at the Canal's annual Safety Day.

Photo provided by the Cape Cod Canal.

Cape Cod Canal holds annual Water Safety Day

The New England District's commitment to public safety is a priority throughout the year. Each of the four seasons hold particular types of safety hazards, and summer brings warm temperatures that beckon people to the water for relief and enjoyment, posing potential hazards if not careful.

Keeping this in mind, the New England District increases its stress on water safety as soon as temperatures are about to rise. At the Cape Cod Canal, District team members partnered with other federal, state and local agencies to host their 8th annual Water Safety Day.

This year the majority of the event was held at Cape Cod Canal's Visitor's Center in Sandwich, Mass., on May 25. The event went from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and was free to all.

Despite the unusually cold, wind and rain, about 100 people attended the popular event. "We held our event in conjunction with National Safe Boating Week and the kick off of summer for most of the boaters in the Sandwich area," said Park Ranger and event organizer Elisa Carey.

New England District Park Rangers opened the water safety trailer and had handouts and other water safety materials. Special guest Bobber the Water Safety Dog greeted visitors and made himself available for pictures with smaller visitors. Partners also had tables and displays filled with water safety information.

District Park Rangers also had educational water safety games available for those who wanted to play.

"To effectively get the water safety message out there to everyone, scavenger hunts were given out to the participants," said Carey. "The questions required them to visit each table, activity and location, such as the Coast Guard Station and the Canal's Visitor's Center. This way they actually read or interacted with rangers or volunteers to get the answers and a prize, such as flying discs, stickers or coloring books."

According to Carey, finished scavenger hunt worksheets were entered to win water safety and water recreation gear to include life vests, Bobber cartoons, a fishing pole or a knot tying book.

The U.S. Coast Guard gave vessel and Coast Guard station tours. The U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary gave out complimentary vessel checks to any boat owner who wanted to participate. The Sandwich Marina encouraged participation by donating launch passes to boat owners who got the vessel checks. The marina also provided the New England District team with a boat slip for one of the Canal patrol boats to allow them to conduct dockside boat tours.

Other partners who worked with the District Team to make this event a success included the Cape Cod Chapter of the American Red Cross, the town of Sandwich Fire and Rescue Department as well as the Sea Scouts.

Raimo Liias (second from right) greets friends and coworkers at his luncheon.

Raimo Liias unwraps a Minuteman Statue.

Photos by Brian Murphy

District Branch Chief joins retirement community

Raimo Liias, Chief, Geoenvironmental Engineering Branch, Engineering/Planning Division, traded in his shirt and tie for golfing attire when he decided to retire after 26 years of federal service.

His retirement celebration was a two-part event, with the first part being a nine hole round of golf – a nod to his love of the sport – before the official retirement lunch. Both were held at the Sandy Burr Country Club in Wayland, Mass., April 25. More than 95 family members, friends, co-workers and retirees came out to wish Liias well.

Scott Acone, Chief, Engineering/Planning, served as Master of Ceremonies. Liias' brother, Father Jurgen Liias, said the blessing and a few kind words about his brother. Other speakers included Liias' brother-in-law Brent Goldstein, Dave Margolis, Rose Schmidt, Fran Donovan and Joe Bocchino. In addition Ravi Ajodah, NAD Environmental Program Manager, presented Liias with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service signed by Brig. Gen. Kent Savre, NAD Commander, along with a coin from each of the districts that make up the North Atlantic Division as well as a NAD Commander's Coin in appreciation for his contribution to the Corps' environmental mission.

Other gifts that Liias received were the New England District Bunker Hill Plaque, a Concord Minuteman statue as well as various golf-related gifts.

Lt. Col. Steven Howell, Deputy Commander, presented Liias with his retirement certificate and pin.

Family members who accompanied Liias to the retirement event were his wife, Kathe, son Egan and his girlfriend Lisa; son Dunstan and girlfriend, Hollie; daughter Johanna; brothers Father Jurgin and Leo Liias and his wife; sister Karin and her husband. Distinguished Civilian Gallery members Dick Carlson, Fran Donovan and Buz McDonald welcomed Liias into the retirement community. Other retirees who also attended to wish him well were Farrell McMillan, Joe Colucci, Don Wood, Mark Geib, Chris Lindsay, Mark Otis, Joe Bocchino, Bruce Zawacki, Tom Rosato, Lynne Bleakney, Rich Ring, Yuri Yatsevitch, Bill Mullen and Bobby Byrne.

Liias said he plans on spending lots of time with his brand new granddaughter, Astrid. In between her naps, it would not be a surprise to find him on the golf course.

Lt. Col. Steven Howell, New England District Deputy Commander, presents Raimo Liias with his retirement certificate.

Dredging up the past

Buffumville Lake Park Ranger Jamie Kordack (left) and Park Manager Dave Stidham discuss awards prior to the presentation ceremony during the National Public Lands Day event in this September 2000 photo. Mr. Stidham passed away in March. See page 2 for details.

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New England District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
696 Virginia Road
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