



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Volume 53, No. 3 December 2019



District holds public hearings on Central
Maine Power permit
see story on page 4

Yankee Voices



Philip Niminskern

Control the holiday glow

Candles are a popular holiday decoration, but they're also one of the most dangerous. Follow these precautions to prevent a fire in your home or fireplace:

- Never leave a lighted candle unattended.
- Always put candles in a metal or ceramic holder. Never place them in combustible containers or ones that can melt.
- Put out candles once they get within two inches of their holders or decorations. This is especially important with natural or plastic decorations that often grace holiday candle holders.
- Keep wicks trimmed to a quarter-inch.
- Never burn candles near things that can catch fire, like trees or curtains.

(First Draft Magazine)

Words Worth Repeating

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things."

- Peter Drucker



Photo by Albinko Hasic

New England District collected hundreds of toys for underprivileged children to enjoy during the holiday season.

District team donates toys for underprivileged children

The spirit of giving was alive and well this holiday season at the New England District as was evident by the successful 2019 Toys for Tots Toy Drive held at the Concord Park headquarters in Concord, Massachusetts. The drive benefited the U.S. Marine Toys for Tots program.

This year the District Team doubled last year's toy donations with 270 new, unwrapped toys. Jessica Rudd, who served in the U.S. Marines as a Lance Corporal (E-3) from 2006 to 2008, has been running the program for the District in recent years. "It feels good to give back," she said about heading up the District's program.

According to toysfortots.org, the basic mission of the Marine Toys for Tots program is to collect new, unwrapped toys and distribute those toys to less fortunate children. The Marine Toys for Tots Foundation is an IRS recognized 501 (c) (3) not for profit public charity created at the behest of the U.S. Marine Corps in 1991.

Lt. Gen. Todd Semonite, Chief of Engineers, learned of the successful toy drive on social media and praised Rudd and the District for their generosity. "Way to pay back New England," he wrote. "Well done!"





Park Ranger Viola Bramel hands pinecones to a group of Cub Scouts to decorate a tree during the Decorate a Tree For Wildlife event.



A father and son prepare to hang a pinecone.



A pinecone hangs waiting to become a meal for local wildlife.

West Hill Dam team, volunteers ‘Decorate a Tree for Wildlife’

With the winter season just beginning, birds and other small wildlife find it more difficult to find food. At West Hill Dam in Uxbridge, Massachusetts, the team made that search a little easier for local animals.

The team, along with 59 volunteers aged 7 years to adult, participated in West Hill Dam’s annual Decorate a Tree for Wildlife event, December 7. West Hill has been running this program for more than a dozen years.

“We met in the garage bays because it was so cold out,” said Park Ranger and event coordinator Viola Bramel. “We had folding tables set up with supplies donated by local Cub Scout troops and our volunteer Linda Lestha. The goal was to have everyone roll and stuff two pinecones each with peanut butter and bird seed.”

After the pinecones were prepared, the group headed out to the designated tree, led by Bramel, Lestha and some of the parents.

“We chose the most beautiful Atlantic White Cedar,” said Bramel. “It’s

about 50 years old now and a natural perch from predators. It’s a delight to have this holiday-shaped tree to provide wildlife benefits for so many years.”

Volunteers decorated the tree from top (for birds) to bottom (for fox and other small animals). The taller adults tackled the taller branches, leaving the lower ones for smaller participants to decorate. The younger volunteers had to take quick breaks to play in the snow. According to Bramel, participants were also delighted to see animal tracks during the event.

“We saw paw prints from the red



A young participant prepares his pinecone to be a wildlife snack.

fox, who walks on its rear paws stepping where its front paw step first,’ said Bramel. “It’s a defense from predators. It looks like it walks on its front paws.”

What seemed like a minutes-long event was actually much longer. The fun continued well after the tree was decorated and the sun went down.

“We were out almost three hours and stayed until dark,” said Bramel. “We had a camp fire and roasted marshmallows.”

According to Bramel, some participants returned to the tree the next day to report exciting results. “Some families who came back reported that their pinecones were empty,” she said. “Some said they saw hawk wing prints in the snow as well.”

This popular West Hill event is not going away anytime soon. In fact, Bramel already has the date planned for 2020. “Save the date!” she said. “Our next Decorate a Tree for Wildlife will be held December 13, 2020.”

District holds public hearing on Central Maine Power permit

About 350 people crowded the Ramada Inn and Conference Center in Lewiston, Maine Dec. 5, for a public hearing on the Central Maine Power Company permit application. Col. William Conde, New England District Commander, and Regulatory's Maine Project Office hosted the event. The public hearing afforded concerned residents a chance to have their voices heard and provide comments either for or against the permit.

Prior to the 4:30 p.m. hearing start time, the applicant held a public information session to answer questions from attendees and present information on the proposed project. Members of the New England District team were available to discuss the New England District's regulatory permitting process.

Project opponents also held information sessions and press briefings. During his opening remarks, Col. Conde told the audience that the public hearing was an opportunity for them to present their views and opinions as well as provide information on the permit application.

"Today's hearing is being conducted for the purpose of acquiring information that will be considered in evaluating Central Maine Power's application for a Department of the Army federal permit," he said. "At this hearing, you will have the opportunity to submit oral or written statements, to call witnesses who may present oral or written statements, and to present recommendations as to an appropriate decision."

Central Maine Power Company has applied for a permit to place temporary and permanent fill material in numerous waterways and wetlands between Beattie Township at the Maine/Quebec border and Lewiston. The fill is necessary to construct a new high voltage direct current electrical transmission line and related facilities



Col. William Conde addresses the audience during the public hearing.

Photo by Albinko Hasic

capable of delivering up to 1,200 megawatts of electrical power from hydroelectric sources in Quebec to the New England control area. This is specifically in response to a request for proposals for long-term contracts for clean energy projects from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The New England District issued a public notice on the permit application on March 26.

Following Col. Conde's remarks, Tammy Turley, Chief of Regulatory, provided an overview of the Corps' Regulatory Program for the audience.

"During the evaluation of this proposal, several requests for a public hearing were received and the District Engineer determined to hold this public hearing," she said.

Turley pointed out that the Corps is neither an opponent of, nor advocate for, the proposed activity and did not hold the public hearing to defend the proposal.

Jay Clement, Senior Project Manager, summarized the application for attendees and emphasized the importance of public participation.

"All comments received by the Corps of Engineers will be fully considered to determine whether to issue, condition or deny a permit for this proposal," he said. "To make this decision, comments are used to assess

the impacts of the public upon the public interest review factors."

Moderator Elizabeth Gosselin, Chief, Public Affairs, went over the hearing procedures before opening the hearing up for public comment.

State Senator Everett Carson, like many who attended the hearing and spoke, was against the project.

"Maine people have strong concerns about this project," he said. "First because of its impact on Maine's landscape, its water, particularly the forested areas of Franklin and Somerset counties, which would be cut to make way for a 53-mile corridor," he said.

Mr. Carson also expressed concern over the brook trout and how the project could affect them. While many who attended the meeting oppose the project, there were also those who supported it.

"One of the beneficiaries of this project will be the city of Lewiston due to a \$250 million converter station planned for our community," said Lewiston City Administrator Ed Barrett. "In addition, this project will also help by bringing additional energy into New England."

The record of the hearing remained open after the public hearing was closed. Written comments were accepted until Jan. 6, 2020. All comments will receive equal consideration.



Photo by Albirko Hasic

Project Manager Erika Mark (right) talks to the audience while Public Affairs Chief Elizabeth Gosselin (left) and the court stenographer listen.

District hosts public meeting for Stratford Army Engine Plant cleanup

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District team held a public meeting to get comments on their proposed plan for the environmental restoration for the tidal flats and Outfall-008 (OF-008) drainage ditch sediments at the Stratford Army Engine Plant (SAEP) in Stratford, Connecticut. The meeting, attended by over 100 people, took place Dec. 10 at the Baldwin Center in Stratford.

The SAEP was selected for closure under the Department of Defense Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Act of 1995. The U.S. Army BRAC Office asked the Corps of Engineers to implement a focused feasibility study to come up with alternatives to remediate the 300,000 cubic yards of contaminated Tidal Flats and OF-008 that are adjacent to the site. Eleven alternatives were created for the Tidal Flats and three alternatives for the OF-008.

“All alternatives were evaluated against the effectiveness, implement ability and cost criteria for screening purposed,” said New England District Project Manager Erika Mark. “For the Tidal Flats, the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1), two alternatives including a sheet pile cofferdam to isolate the dredge area (Alternatives 7 and 8), Amphibious Dredging (Alternative 9), a Shoreline CDF alternative for disposal of sediments (Alternative 10) and two CAD cell options within the Tidal Flats and within the Housatonic River (Alternative 11) were eliminated from further consideration.”

According to Mark, Alternatives 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were retained for detailed evaluation. The New England District completed a focused feasibility study (FFS) in October 2018. The proposed plan for Environmental Restoration was completed in November 2019.

Opening up the public meeting, Mark thanked the

attendees for participating in the process.

“Today’s meeting is being conducted for the purpose of acquiring information that will be considered in evaluating the proposed plan for environmental restoration at the Stratford Army Engine Plant site,” she said. “Please feel free to bring up any topics that you feel need to be provided on the record specific to work we’re proposing in the tidal flats or OF-008. I assure you that all of your comments will be considered during this process.”

Tom Lineer, BRAC Program Manager, Headquarters Department of the Army, Office of Assistance Chief of Staff for Installation Management, presented an overview of the BRAC program to the audience. Tony Delano, P.E., the New England District’s Environmental Engineer for the project, discussed the history of the project, summarized the remedial action and feasibility study, the remedial action objectives and the preferred remedy and time frame.

Meeting Moderator Elizabeth Gosselin, Chief, Public Affairs, went over the meeting procedures before turning the meeting over to the public for comments. More than two dozen attendees made comments and asked questions about the project. Comments were accepted on SAEP until Dec. 13. A draft final Record of Decision with responsiveness summary to the administrative record, will be sent to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in February 2020.

The SAEP team plans to submit a final Record of Decision to CT DEEP and EPA in April 2020. If the preferred remedial alternative is chosen, work will be completed 24 months after the yet to be determined start date.



New England District team members look over the offerings for the annual basket raffle.

Photos by Brian Murphy

New England District enjoys the holiday season with get together

'Tis the season for the New England District team to step away from their desks and enjoy each other's company during the annual holiday party at the Concord Park Headquarters, Dec. 12.

The activity-packed festivities began at noon with an Italian buffet served by the New England District Senior Staff. Col. William Conde, New England District Commander, took the opportunity to talk with the District team, praising them for their work throughout the past year.

"The New England District team has a lot to be proud of this year and I am excited for us as we enter 2020," he said.

Col. Conde said that he did not want to talk about individual and office accomplishments until Founder's Day in June, but did want to highlight some District achievements.

"We set records in both 2018 and 2019 for our District's total program and we are well on track for another consecutive year of growth with a projected total program of over \$600 million in 2020. That's impressive. Well done."

Other topics Col. Conde touched on were the District's workforce status and the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey results. He concluded by wishing everyone happy holidays.

"Keep your foot on the gas these first two quarters of Fiscal Year 2020 to buy us some space to deliver the fourth quarter," he said. "Let's take a little time this afternoon to relax and celebrate as an NAE family. I wish you and your families a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and a Blessed New Year. Essayons."

The famous New England District basket auction promised amazing last-minute holiday gifts for those brave enough to enter a bid and lucky enough to win. New England District offices donated baskets to be auctioned off. Over the years, friendly rivalries between offices over who can make the better baskets have evolved into some elaborate offerings. This year did not disappoint – those putting in bids for the baskets had a hard time choosing and often took a chance on more than one. Proceeds from the auction go directly to the Work Environment Committee to offset costs of District events such as Founders Day.

The annual Holiday Sweater Contest has become a staple and a much anticipated event during the holiday party. This year's variety of entries really stepped up in the entertainment department and all the sweaters were prize-worthy. Unfortunately, the rules stated that only one winner could be named. Using applause as a measure of



Steve Elgart (center) is congratulated on his win by all of the other holiday sweater contest participants.

approval, Steve Elgart, Operations, took home the top prize. Kim Russell, also from Operations, took a close second.

An old-fashioned New England Yankee Swap followed the sweater contest. Participants enjoyed the swapping and everyone ended up walking away with fun gifts.

Dessert contests have become a big part of New England District events where food is involved. The holiday dessert contest is a favorite with the New England District team. District bakers floured their rolling pins, greased up their baking sheets and brought their best desserts to

the contest table. The judges had a tough job tasting all the treats and making a decision, but in the end Tammy Turley, Chief of Regulatory, earned the top prize with her caramel pie.

In addition to the daytime holiday party, the Work Environment Committee hosted a Holiday Bowling and Pizza party at Hanscom Lanes, Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Massachusetts. The bowling bash included four hours of bowling, shoes, pizza, salad and lots of good cheer.



New England District team members gather in the cafeteria for the holiday festivities.



Baskets such as this one made perfect last minute holiday gifts for those lucky enough to win an auction.

Dredging up the past



Photo by Brian Murphy

Michael Biordi, (from left) Drew Cattano and Jesse Morrill-Winter enjoy themselves at the New England District Holiday Party in this December 2012 photo.

First Class
U.S. Postage
Paid
Concord, MA
Permit No. 494

Public Affairs Office
New England District
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
696 Virginia Road
Concord, MA 01742-2751
Meter Code 40