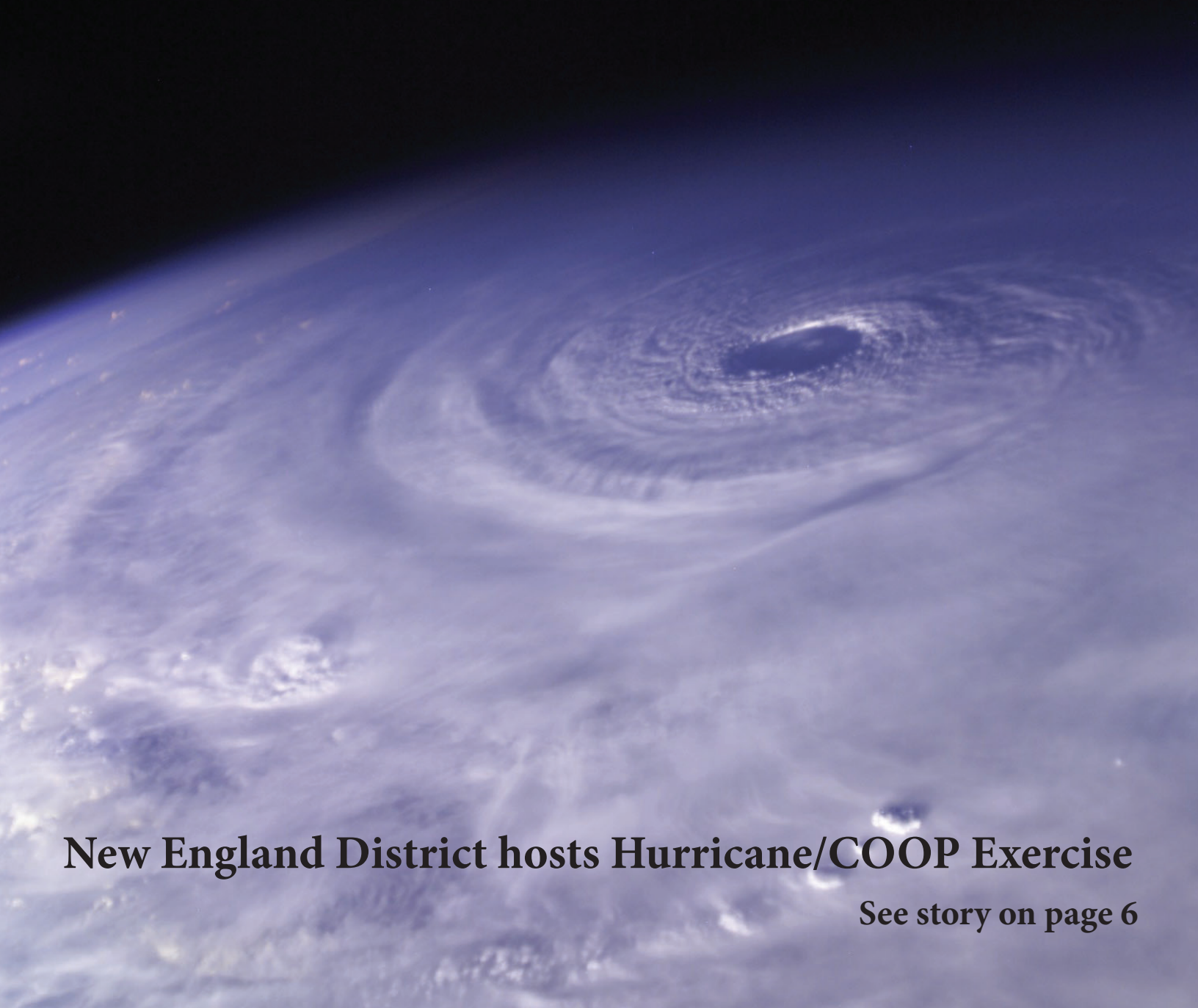




U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New England District, Volume 54, No. 7 May 2021



New England District hosts Hurricane/COOP Exercise

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Yankee Voices



Buffumville Lake team



West Hill Dam team

West Hill Dam team wear their life jackets to work

The West Hill Dam team donned their life jackets, May 21 to celebrate "Wear Your Life Jacket to Work Day."

During the event, sponsored by USACE, team members were encouraged to wear their life jackets to work to emphasize the importance of wearing them around water.

Pictures were published to social media, with about 800 people viewing the post.

Words Worth Repeating

"Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counsellors, and the most patient of teachers."

- Charles W. Eliot



Photo courtesy of Sheila Warren

Members of the Silver Jackets team and members of South Portland High School attended the high water mark unveiling.

Silver Jackets, South Portland officials, residents unveil high water mark signs

The New England District Maine Silver Jackets team joined South Portland officials and South Portland High School students at Willard Beach in South Portland, Maine on May 29 for a high water mark sign unveiling ceremony.

The sign, located on the beach, indicates how high water levels were at the beach when it experienced historical-level flooding during the Blizzard of 1978, on February 7 of that year. The level is marked on the sign with a blue band. The new sign also shows where the high-water mark would be for the same storm in 2050. The level, which could be several feet higher than the 1978 storm because of rising sea levels due to climate change, is shown in red.

"This is part of the fiscal year 2019 Flood Plain Management Services Interagency Nonstructural project awarded to Maine Silver Jackets team," said Sheila Warren, Planning Division - USACE New England District Silver Jackets Coordinator. "It was a great community event, highlighting South Portland's 'One Climate Future' initiative, and the state's 'Maine Won't Wait' and Maine's Climate Council resiliency efforts."

Misha Pride, Mayor of South Portland, spoke at the event and students from South Portland High School presented essays they wrote about sea level rise and flood risk awareness. The students also recorded explanations and the importance of signs for those who scan the QR code at the sign.

In addition, members of the New England District's Maine Silver Jackets team, Pete Slovinsky and Nathan Robbins, made remarks during the event.





Kayakers enjoy water sports at Ball Mountain Lake in Vermont.

Photo courtesy of Ball Mountain Lake

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers promotes water safety this summer season

Warmer weather is almost here and that means millions of Americans will be planning visits to our nation's lakes and rivers. As the steward of many of these public waters, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) reminds visitors of the importance of practicing safe, sensible, and thoughtful activities in and around the water.

Tragically, several people lose their lives while visiting USACE lands and waters every year. The majority of the tragedies are water-related. The public's help is needed to reduce the number of fatalities at the more than 2,800 USACE-managed recreation areas nationwide. USACE personnel stress the importance of water safety year-round when talking with visitors, but especially during the summer season because that is when most public recreation fatalities occur.

People of all ages are strongly encouraged to practice water safety this summer. Before entering or being around the water, keep these five things in mind because they could save your life or the life of someone you care about.

- Expect the unexpected – Accidents can happen within seconds, so always be prepared for the unexpected. If you are ejected from a boat, fall, or jump into water that is colder than 70 degrees, you can inhale water from involuntary gasping, hyperventilation, panic, and sometimes vertigo that can cause you to drown. You can also be knocked unconscious if you are ejected from your boat or fall into the water along the shoreline while fishing.

- Wear a life jacket – By providing time to be rescued, it will help ensure you survive an unexpected fall into the water. It can also save your life if you become exhausted due to fatigue, waves, or current while swimming. An adult can drown in 60 seconds and it takes a strong swimmer 10 minutes to put on a life jacket after entering the water. Life Jackets Worn...Nobody Mourns.

- Know your swimming abilities – Be aware that swimming in natural waters such as a lake, river, or pond is

different from swimming in a pool, and your swimming ability decreases with age. It is never too late to take swimming lessons and learn to swim well. Several people every year drown while swimming to retrieve boats and toys. Let those go because they are not worth losing your life over.

- Alcohol and water are a deadly combination – Alcohol induces an inner ear condition (caloric labyrinthitis) that can cause you to become disoriented when underwater and not realize which way is up. If you jump or fall in the water, you can become disoriented and swim down instead of up to safety, causing you to drown. This can more likely happen if you have been consuming alcohol.

- Understand “boater’s hypnosis” – It is a condition brought on by the effects of sun, wind, noise, vibration, and motion experienced during a day of boating. Boater’s hypnosis can slow your reaction time almost as much as if you were legally intoxicated. Adding alcohol to this condition intensifies the effects.

Learn more water safety tips by visiting <https://www.PleaseWearIt.com> and following Please Wear It on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

In addition to water safety, USACE reminds all visitors, volunteers, and employees that a face mask is required in all USACE buildings and facilities to slow the spread of COVID-19. Masks should also be worn outdoors on USACE-managed lands when attending crowded events, and non-vaccinated individuals should wear masks outdoors when social distancing cannot be met, such as hiking on trails.

USACE is one of the nation's leading federal providers of outdoor and water-based recreation, hosting millions of visits annually to its more than 400 lake and river projects. It's estimated that 90 percent of the USACE-operated recreation areas are within 50 miles of metropolitan areas, offering diverse outdoor activities for all ages close to home. For more information on USACE recreation sites and activities, visit www.CorpsLakes.us. (USACE News Release)



Members of the Cape Cod Canal team wear jeans to support survivors of sexual assault during "Denim Day."

New England District team participate in 'Denim Day'

Team members from all over New England District took part in supporting survivors of sexual violence on National Denim Day, April 28, by wearing jeans. Col. John Atilano, New England District Commander, urged his team to participate in the event which began in 1992 as a protest against the Italian Supreme Court's decision to overturn a rape conviction.

According to the nonprofit group, Peace Over Violence, National Denim Day started in Italy back in 1992 when an 18-year-old woman was raped by her 45-year-old driving instructor. According to the organization, the woman reported the rape and the man was arrested and convicted.

Years later, the man appealed the conviction saying that it was not rape at all, but consensual sex.

Unbelievably, the Italian Supreme Court overturned the conviction and the perpetrator was released. The Court argued that because the victim was wearing very tight jeans, she had to help

him remove them, and by removing the jeans it was not rape but consensual sex. This became known throughout Italy as the "jeans alibi."

The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. Denim Day is a campaign sponsored by Peace Over Violence to bring awareness to victim blaming and destructive myths that surround sexual violence.

Col. Atilano urged the New England District team not to let the day go by without making a statement.

"Nobody should fear being sexually assaulted or harassed because of what they are wearing," he said. "I stand with, and support, survivors of sexual assault and I will be wearing jeans on April 28. I ask that you join me in making a social statement with a fashion statement and wear jeans as a means of protest against the misconceptions that surround sexual violence."

The District Commander told Park Rangers who wanted to participate

could do so by wearing jeans with their uniform top. He suggested that those who took part in Denim Day to take pictures and send them to the EEO Manager and Public Affairs so they could be posted on social media. The Denim Day Facebook posts reached 2,900 followers. Team members both working remotely and working in the field took part in the effort. Those who wanted to show support but did not want the photo published, sent pictures privately.

In addition to Denim Day, April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month. There are many resources available to survivors of sexual assault:

In Massachusetts:

- The Center for Hope and Healing: 1-800-542-5212 (Lowell)
- Voices Against Violence: 1-800-593-1125 (Framingham)
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center: 1-800-841-8371. (Boston)
- A resource list of rape crisis centers across MA: <https://www.mass.gov>



The Ball Mountain and Townsend Lake teams take part in "Denim Day."



The Montoya family supports survivors of sexual assault.

[gov/service-details/rape-crisis-centers](https://www.mass.gov/service-details/rape-crisis-centers)

• <https://mass211.org/resources/sexual-assault-resources/>

Trained advocates are there to help you, offer support and connect you with resources, and respect your decisions.

In New Hampshire:

• New Hampshire Coalition against domestic and Sexual Violence - <https://www.nhcadv.org/member-programs.html>

• 24 hour hotline – 1-866-644-3574

• New Hampshire Domestic and Sexual Violence Crisis Center Catchment Areas

- https://www.nhcadv.org/uploads/1/0/7/5/107511883/catchment_map_december_2016.pdf

• Bridges Domestic and Sexual Violence Support - <https://www.bridgesnh.org/>

In Rhode Island:

• 24-hour hotline - 1-800-494-8100

• Day One - <https://www.dayoneri.org/>

• HelpRi.com - <https://www.helpri.com/sexual-assault>

In Connecticut:

• Connecticut Hotlines and Services - <https://portal.ct.gov/OPM/CJ-Adult/Program-Victim/CT-Hotlines-and-Services>

• Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence - <https://endsexualviolencect.org/>

• 24 hour hotline – 1-888-999-5545

In Vermont:

• Vermont Commission on Women - <https://women.vermont.gov/Violence>

• Sexual Violence Hotline - 1-800- 489-7273

• Vermont 2-1-1- Resource Directory

- <https://www.navigateresources.net/211Vermont/MatchList.aspx?c05778;Whiting;31057;;N;0;0;Mental%20Health%20Care%20and%20Counseling;Outpatient%20Mental%20Health%20Care;302;Sexual%20Assault%20Hotlines~>



West Hill Dam team members wear jeans as part of Denim Day.

In Maine:

• Maine Sexual Assault Support Centers - <https://www.mecasa.org/maine-sexual-assault-support-centers.html>

• 24 hour hotline – 1-800-871-7741

• Counseling and Mental Health Services - <https://www.mccs.me.edu/wp-content/uploads/Sexual-Assault-Support-Services-and-Resources.pdf>

In addition to all of these local resources, is the national hotline that can be found here: <https://www.rainn.org/resources> as well as our own U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Employee Assistance Program - <https://magellanascentd.com/?ccid=hpZiwlTni/VKNrZqvUQNB5D4V7teqd8YQojjPgga8Zk%3D>



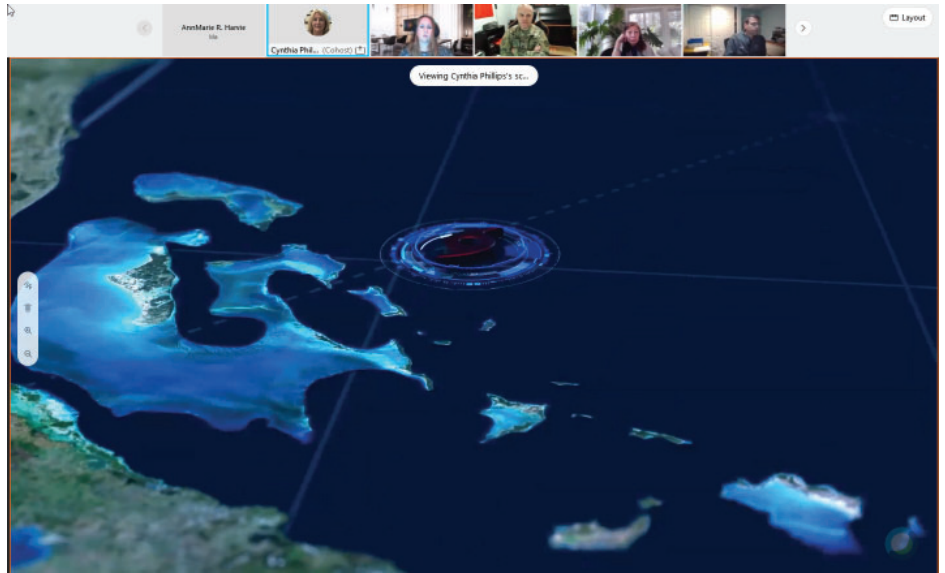
New England District hosts Hurricane/COOP Exercise

**By Amy Hamilton and
Peter Navesky
Emergency Operations**

The District conducted a virtual Hurricane/COOP exercise on May 5. Luckily, it has been a while since the District has had to deal with a hurricane or its aftermath within our Area of Responsibility (AOR). However, when it comes to disasters, the question is not “if” but “when”; we may not know the time line, but we must remain prepared to execute a coordinated event response at a moment’s notice. As we bring new personnel on board at the District and as some seasoned personnel retire, we want to ensure continuity in the knowledge of emergency operations and continue to improve the Commander’s Emergency Management Program. To accomplish that goal, this exercise was a “No Fault Exercise”, and was intended to bolster communications across District functional areas and identify single points of failure in our District-wide response capabilities. About 174 New England District and NAD team members participated in the event.

Three of the primary teams that participated in this exercise were the District Crisis Action Team (CAT), the Crisis Management Team (CMT), and Temporary Housing Planning and Response Team (PRT).

The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Crisis Action Team (CAT) is a non-deployable team that supports our new Emergency Manager (EM), Amy Hamilton, by providing internal support during an event. The Crisis Management Team (CMT) consists of the District Corporate Board and Division Chiefs who advise the Commander of activities related to event response and direct District personnel to perform response activities. The Temporary Housing PRT is a deployable team



Screen shot of video played during the hurricane exercise.

that can be tasked to provide support Enterprise-wide in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the impacted state. These three groups provide invaluable support to emergency response missions, and we hope to continue to provide opportunities such as this for everyone to learn together as we continue to build our teams.

We normally see the potential for hurricanes in our area in the latter part of Hurricane Season, typically from mid-September into late October. In keeping with this, the exercise scenario had a hurricane based on a historic track, “Hurricane Celena,” impact the District during the artificial time frame of September 14-22. The storm came ashore as a Category 3 along the west-central coast of Connecticut and eventually exited eastern Maine as a Tropical Depression.

Prior to Hurricane Celena’s landfall the region underwent a number of rain-maker weather events that had saturated grounds across much of the AOR and caused many streams and rivers to run near, or at, bank full. Many District organizations were stressed to provide support for a variety of needs, both at our projects and in support of

the impacted states’ needs.

The exercise format was primarily that of a virtual “Table-Top” Exercise (TTX), which was conducted via WebEx. The TTX provided a base simulated scenario setting the scene, and then issued exercise “injects” (injects are taskings or items needing response) to various District organizations throughout the day to drive exercise play. More than 90 injects were sent out for response during the exercise. The representatives of each organization participating in the WebEx discussed how they would respond to each inject, which included reaching out to engage team members. An e-mail outlining the response and any associated “actions” was then sent back to the EOC.

The Temporary Housing PRT exercised a simulated deployment into Rhode Island in support of a FEMA Temporary Housing mission. Their exercise time line was placed several weeks after landfall to reflect real-world delays between landfall and the start of the housing mission.

We also conducted a full-scale exercise element, with our Operations Division Civil Engineering Technicians (CETs) instructing project personnel in constructing sandbag barriers around

simulated sand boils at a number of our projects.

At the end of the exercise Division Chiefs provided a brief to Col. John Atilano II, District Commander, on their respective elements of the exercise, and conducted a “Hot-Wash” for all who participated in the exercise. Exercises are conducted to practice response and identify areas for sustainment and improvement, so we captured feedback on the way we operate to manage an emergency, how to improve for a “real” response, and recommended improvements to exercise play. An After-Action Review (AAR) followed the exercise and key players were asked to provide input in a survey.

Some of the challenges identified in the hotwash overview included: too many injects to respond to in depth during a one day exercise; confusion due to sending the injects through global e-mail as many of the players in the exercise were on multiple dll lists and received more than one copy of the injects; lack of familiarity with acronyms used during the exercise; and confusion from the use of WebEx and breakout sessions for some players who were not sure which session they were supposed to attend. In addition to challenges, successes for sustainment were also identified.

Many CMT Division Chiefs applauded the knowledge of their team members and those willing to participate in the exercise even though it was not part of their normal duties, as well as participants’ knowledge of who to contact for certain issues. The command interest and interaction in the exercise was appreciated by participants and the level of participation throughout the District was excellent.

Coordinators of the exercise will examine the after action report and the challenges identified to plan improvements to future exercises and improve overall response activities.

Franklin Falls, Blackwater Dam teams participate in hurricane exercise

**Story and photos by
Park Ranger Karen Tryon
Franklin Falls & Blackwater Dam**

On May 5 many of the New England District team participated in the 2021 functional exercise.

During this no-fault exercise, events were projected through a realistic scenario of a Category 2/3 Hurricane that would impact New England. The goal of this exercise was to generate discussions on various issues regarding collaboration and communication across the district. The exercise began with an exercise facilities call. The exercise began soon after with the Phase 1 Pre-landfall and activities.

Phase 2 involved the hurricane's landfall and the initial response related injects issued.

Phase 3a followed with the continued response and recovery related injects issue.

At the end of the exercise participants held a Commander's battle update and a hotwash conducted

One of the injects that each basin received during this exercise was titled “sandbagging operations.”

Upon receiving this exercise, the team at the Merrimack River Basin conducted a quick meeting to discuss what creates a boil and the proper way to treat a boil; construct a ring of sandbags around the boil building up a head of water within the ring sufficient enough to check the velocity of flow,

thereby preventing further movement of sand and silt.

Actual conditions at each sand boil will determine the exact dimensions of a boil and the flow of water from it and therefore the sandbag ring construction. In general, the following considerations should be followed: The base width of the sandbag section on each side of the ring should be no less than 1-1/2 times the completed height, weak soils

near the boil should be included within the ring, thereby, preventing a breakthrough later, and the ring should be sufficient size to permit sacking operations to keep ahead of the water.

Now came the action portion of this inject. The Park Rangers loaded sand, sandbags, and tools. The boil was marked

out and the team worked together to create a sandbag ring.

For many of the rangers, we have all seen Plate 10 “RECOMMENDED METHODS FOR RINGING SAND BOILS” but none of us had practiced how to do it.

Due to the hands on portion of this exercise we were able to discuss and have experience on what tools would be needed, how much sand would be needed, how many people would be needed to quickly and safely construct a ring for a sand boil, and steps that could be taken before an event to ensure a smooth deployment of the sand bags.

All in all this was a fantastic hands on event, one that the basin plans to do again.



Members of the Franklin Falls and Blackwater Dam teams create a sandbag ring during the hurricane exercise.

Dredging up the past



Photo by Brian Murphy

William Scully, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, praises William Holtham's outstanding and dedicated service to the nation before presenting him with a Commander's Award for Civilian Service during Holtham's retirement party, May 5, 2007.

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