

St. Louis District *Esprit*

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Veterans Curation Project preserves past, prepares veterans for the future

Story and photos by
ALAN DOOLEY
MVS Public Affairs Officer

Active duty service members make history fighting today's wars. Upon their return from the battlefield, the Veterans Curation Project gives them a chance to preserve history as they build new skills.

The VCP, which was conceived by Dr. Michael "Sonny" Trimble, director of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Center of Expertise for Curation and Management of Archaeological Collections in St. Louis, has two primary purposes.



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Louis District

Veterans are trained by professional archaeological laboratory management specialists in technical skills such as digital

photography and scanning, cataloging, data base and records management, preserving historical documents and making the information about these items available to researchers and historians via the internet.

At the same time, they are helping USACE reduce the backlog of artifacts, images and records from engineering projects carried out over the past decades. "We estimate there are materials, stored artifacts and other items, that would fill 30 semitrailers – and this is in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers alone," Trimble said.

Using \$3.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, USACE established three pilot VCP projects in areas that are home to large numbers of wounded warriors and veterans. Center locations include St. Louis, Augusta, Ga., and Washington, D.C.

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Safety takes priority during holiday celebrations, recreation activities

As we prepare to celebrate our Nation's independence this weekend, I ask you all to take a moment to remember those who came before us and fought for our freedoms, and those who continue to fight today.

On July 1, we had 19 members of our MVS family deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan, with many others en route.

These men and women, as well as their families who support them from home, are making sacrifices to secure the future of two troubled nations. They, like the Soldiers fighting on the front-line, are heroes in my eyes.

Take a moment this July 4th to remember them and the sacrifices they are making.

I also ask you to "Think Safety" before celebrating or participating in recreational activities this weekend.

While safety is paramount to all summer activities - from barbecuing to mowing the grass - safety on the water is crucial, and not taking measures that

can save one's life is inexcusable.

According to the National Recreational Boating Statistics, there were 510 drownings in 2008. Ninety percent of those who drowned were not wearing a life jacket.

It is heartbreaking to know that lives could have been saved if life jackets had been worn.

Life jackets are not just something to consider. Wearing them should not be a choice. You would not step onto a construction site without a hard hat and steel-toed boots. Don't go on the water without wearing a life jacket.

That doesn't mean just having them along.

Accidents on the water happen much too fast to reach for and put on a stowed life jacket.

Remember - friends don't let friends on the water without their life jacket!

Another factor in drowning and boating accidents is alcohol. Alcohol use is the leading contributor in nearly 20 percent of all boating deaths. Just

one beer can impair balance, vision, judgment and reaction time. Further, research shows that four hours of boating produces fatigue that simulates drunkenness.

Boating fatigue combined with alcohol consumption intensifies the effects of both and increases accident risks.

We all must be smart as we celebrate this week. We know the dangers of drinking and driving - drinking and boating are no different.

In closing, I would like to bid a fond farewell to Lt. Col. Robert Bayham who retired on June 4 after 20 years of service. Bob served as our Deputy Commander for the last three years.

He is a true leader and a valued colleague. I wish Bob and his family well in their future as they return home to Ohio and he embarks on the next phase of his service to our great nation. Hooah,



O'Hara

*Col. Thomas E. O'Hara, Jr.
MVS District Commander*

While safety is paramount to all summer activities ... safety on the water is crucial, and not taking measures that can save one's life is inexcusable.

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ON THE COVER: A Veterans Curation Program staff member examines a slide at the St. Louis VCP location. (Photo by Alan Dooley)



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MVD commander receives 2nd star

MVD Press Release

Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, Commander and Division Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mississippi Valley Division, was promoted to major general June 2 at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Lt. Gen. Robert L. Van Antwerp, the Corps' Commanding General and Chief of Engineers, hosted the ceremony.

The Armed Services have a long-standing tradition of celebrating the promotion of its members to the next higher rank in a formal ceremony. This ceremony is a public indication of the increased responsibilities the service member is about to assume. The ceremony demonstrates the confidence placed in him by senior officers, by Congress and by the President of the United States in his abilities to carry out these responsibilities. Finally, this ceremony allows the family, friends and colleagues of the newly promoted service member the opportunity to celebrate and share in this achievement.

Walsh arrived in Vicksburg in February 2008 to lead MVD with its management of the Corps' water resources program in the Mississippi River Valley

The boundary of the Mississippi Valley Division extends from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, includes portions of 12 states, and encompasses 370,000 square miles. The programs and activities overseen by the MVD are conducted by district offices located in St. Paul, Minn., Rock Island, Ill., St. Louis, Mo., Memphis, Tenn., Vicksburg, Miss., and New Orleans, La.

In addition, Walsh oversees the Mississippi River and Tributaries Project and the comprehensive flood control plan for the alluvial valley. He serves as president-designee of the



Photo by F.T. Eyre

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Mississippi Valley Division Commander Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh receives his 2nd star from Corps Commanding General Lt. Gen. Robert L. VanAntwerp (left) and his wife, Susan, at a ceremony June 2 in Washington, D.C.

Mississippi River Commission.

Walsh came to Vicksburg from Baghdad, Iraq, where he was Division Engineer of the Corps' Gulf Region Division.

Walsh and his wife, Susan, have two adult sons.

National recreation organization honors Rend Lake operations project manager with 2010 Legends Award

By **MARY MARKOS**

MVS Public Affairs

In conjunction with Great Outdoors Week, the American Recreation Coalition presented Rend Lake Operations Project Manager James E. Lynch the 2010 Legends Award June 10 in Washington, D.C.

Lynch, who has been with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for more than 25 years, received the award for his efforts and achievements in advancing outdoor recreation programs and resources for the lake, the St. Louis District and the Mississippi Valley Division.

"Jim's leadership, selfless service and dedication to mission accomplishments have enhanced recreation opportunities of public lands in the Mississippi Valley Division and the Corps Natural Resources Management program," Maj. Gen. Michael Walsh, MVD commander, said. "Throughout his



“I've known several recipients of this award. I have always considered them to be giants in the field. To be included in their ranks is a great honor and very humbling.”

Jim Lynch, Rend Lake Operations Project Manager

career, he has devoted constant attention to the preservation and improvement of recreation resources in order to improve environmental, social, health and economic benefits from people of all ages and backgrounds. Jim is a true professional, leader and team member.”

Since becoming operations manager in 2005, Lynch has led the lake staff in attracting 15 million visitors - generating more than \$139 million for the local economy.

Lynch also assembled a volunteer

program of more than 4,900 volunteers and actively encouraged his staff to educate lake guests on the importance of the lake and what they can do to preserve it and the environment. This encouragement led to staff interaction with more than 11,000 visitors through cultural, historical, environmental and water safety programs.

Lynch has also worked to foster partnerships with local governmental and non-profit agencies. One such

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ARRA funds improve Rend Lake, local economy

By **MARY MARKOS**
MVS Public Affairs

“Project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.” ARRA Signs scattered across the American landscape show the progress of the 2009 law that hoped to create jobs, spur economic activity and foster accountability following the economic crisis in 2008.

But, many ask what the Act has done in the local economy and how it will affect the future. At Rend Lake in southern Illinois, the Act continues to bring improvements to facilities and needed maintenance to existing structures, as well as the construction of Americans with Disabilities Act compliant buildings for the more than 125,000 visitors each year.

The first task order for the numerous ARRA projects at the lake was signed Aug. 28, 2009. While that order, which included the construction of a new visitor’s center and administrative building, will not see completion until August of this year, more than 216 individuals have been employed through ARRA projects.

Projects completed or near completion with the 26 million awarded include:

- ◆ Construction of 16 concrete ADA compliant buildings
- ◆ Addition of 70 full hookup campsites
- ◆ Re-pavement of 147 campsites
- ◆ Installation of a new sewer system for the South Marcum and Gun Creek Campgrounds
- ◆ Upgrades from 30 amp service to 50 amp service at 98 campsites in the South Marcum Campground
- ◆ Construction of new fee booths at North and South Sandusky Campgrounds, South Marcum Campground and Gun Creek Campground
- ◆ ADA compliant upgrades for all restrooms on the west side of Rend Lake
- ◆ Construction of 5.5 miles of bike trail
- ◆ Reinforcing the rip rap at the spillway and several recreation areas
- ◆ Repairs and upgrades made to the spillway bridge and drainage gutters



USACE photo

A construction team works to complete one of the 16 Americans with Disabilities Act-compliant buildings funded under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act at Rend Lake.



USACE photo

Construction workers begin the removal of a railroad bridge at Rend Lake. The demolition of the bridge is one of the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act projects which have employed more than 216.

Vital aspects of the ARRA projects, however, are not as visible as the newly constructed buildings or improved campsites.

“The dam work that maintains the integrity of the dam that creates Rend Lake and provides a source of water for 60 communities and more than 300,000 people, as well as the consolidation and repair of facilities that increases efficiencies of operations are the most important aspects of ARRA projects,” said Jerry Schutte, natural resource specialist.

Other aspects of the Act mean added comforts for visitors. “One very important reason that the upgrades were necessary was to keep up with the changing equipment that our visitors are now using when they recreate,” said Dawn Kovarik, natural resource specialist and park ranger.

“Camping 40 years ago meant bringing a tent or at best a popup camper. Today 40-foot-long motor coaches that support two air conditioners, satellite dishes, computer equipment and washer/dryers are very commonplace in our campgrounds. This equipment requires longer camping pads and more electrical capability. We had to upgrade if we intended to stay in the recreation business.”

Upgrades to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sites such as Rend Lake bring upgrades to the economies of neighboring communities. “There is a domino effect that performing this work has on the local economy,” Kovarik said.

“Local restaurants and grocery stores feed the laborers; gas is purchased from local businesses to fuel both work vehicles and the vehicles of laborers driving back and forth, and on and on. The benefits of these projects are far reaching.”

The affects of ARRA-funded projects may be far reaching as well. “Increased visitation will drive the local economy for years to come,” Schutte said. “Rend has seen an increase in visitation of 3 to 5 percent annually since the 1980’s and fees collected topped \$600,000 last year.

“It has been estimated the Rend Lake helped generate \$73,000,000 in tourism dollars last year alone.”

Right: The Bayou St. John floodwall reconstruction is one aspect of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Project. Below: Eighty-foot steel H-piles are used for the foundation of a new segment of T-wall.



Left: A new T-wall is constructed according to the 100-year storm risk reduction criteria.

Photos by Robert Heer

St. Louis District on track to provide 100-year level of risk reduction to Orleans Metro

By **MARY MARKOS**
MVS Public Affairs

Five years after Hurricane Katrina brought 175 mph winds and nearly \$81 billion in damages along the coast of Louisiana, the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers nears completion of their responsibilities that will help protect New Orleans citizens in the future.

“Plans and specifications are all complete for Orleans Metro, Eastern Tie-In and Western Closure small sector gate, and construction is nearing completion at Terrebonne Parrish and Grand Isle,” said Dennis Gilmore, MVS New Orleans program manager.

Orleans Metro is one aspect of the Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity Project, which will provide improved hurricane and storm damage risk reduction to the areas devastated by Katrina. The project consists of LPV101-104.

Upon completion of all LPV projects, the area will be protected at a 100-year level. A “100-year level of protection” refers to a level that reduces the risk of damage from storm surge and wave-driven flooding caused by a hurricane that has a 1 percent chance of occurring in any given year.

The St. Louis District has design

responsibility of LPV101 and oversees all hurricane risk reduction design efforts within the Orleans Metro project area. Other facets of the Orleans Metro polder were divided among the Districts of the Mississippi Valley Division. The mission of each aligns with that of MVS.

The Orleans Metro project area consists of approximately 9,536 feet of existing floodwall, 23,020 feet of levee, 6 roadway ramps and 12 gates. The projects are located in New Orleans and roughly parallel the shoreline of Lake Pontchartrain between the IHNC and the 17th Street Canal.

“Our mission and purpose is to develop plans and specifications for the restoration of the hurricane protection of New Orleans and southeast Louisiana. What that entails is the design of flood walls and levees, as well as flood gates,” Gilmore said. “We also have projects to protect Terrebonne and Grand Isle. Terrebonne is unique in that MVD transferred complete project responsibility to MVS.”

Gilmore said he expects the completion of all responsibilities within a year.

“Our remaining effort is primarily engineering during construction for the Orleans Metro projects, LPV101-104.

For Terrebonne, we are completing the mitigation project and that will be closed out later this year. At Grand Isle, we’ve completed the construction effort and we are just finishing up the operations and maintenance manual which will be completed next month,” Gilmore said.

The projects have not been without challenges.

“The biggest challenges that we’ve faced came during the design process. First and foremost is the unique soil conditions encountered in southern Louisiana,” Gilmore said.

“Additionally, we were designing features as criteria were being developed, which resulted in many changes and revisions. We’ve also had to incorporate changes in how we do business. We’ve added an independent external peer review where we go to academia and other agencies and have established teams review our work.”

Despite such challenges, he said he is satisfied with the work that has been done.

“The projects are going well. All plans and specifications were completed and were ready to award on time. We are on track to provide 100-year level protection by the mandated completion date of June 1, 2011,” Gilmore said.

'SAFETY ROCKS'

Water programs receive honors at safety summit

By **GEORGE STRINGHAM**

MVS Public Affairs

Safety is paramount in everything the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers does, whether that is repelling down a miter gate leaf at Locks 27 to inspect for stress fractures or metal fatigue, or it's minimizing risk through flood protection projects.

Another opportunity and mandate the Corps has is to stress the importance of safety to the public through the District's water programs.

Through the lakes projects and their partners, the Corps reaches out to the general public and educates them on the importance of water safety and how individuals can safely enjoy water-related recreation activities at USACE facilities.

The St. Louis District was recognized for their ability to do just this, both regionally and locally.

At the International Boating and Water Safety Summit held at Daytona Beach, Fla., March 28-31, the District was awarded the Regional Water Safety Award by the National Water Safety Congress.

Every year the NWSC presents awards to individuals and organizations who made outstanding contributions to water safety during the previous year.

Recognition of those who contribute substantially to water safety is encouraged to further promote water and boating safety, helping to reduce the number of drowning and boating accidents occurring each year.

"The Regional Award is a tough one to get, they don't have to award one every year," explains Lynda Nutt, manager, USACE National Operations Center for Water Safety.



Photo by Nickie Mitchell

Dairy Queen Owner Carla Caplinger (left), Carlyle Lake Park Ranger Tyler Goble and Dairy Queen Manager Linda Paine pose with water safety incentives at the Carlyle Dairy Queen.

"I've been working with the St. Louis District for several years and they've always been very proactive and worked to engage the public at every opportunity," she said.

At the southern end of the District on the Missouri side of the Mississippi River, Wappapello Lake was also awarded first and second places for their public service announcements titled "Winners Wear Life Jackets," and "It Only Takes 10 Seconds to Buckle Up."

Wappapello also took home second place for a tray liner entitled "Safety Rocks" through a partnership with a McDonalds restaurant in Poplar Bluff.

At the water safety summit, Lake Shelbyville's Water Safety Task Force received the Award of Merit for their water safety efforts and partnerships.

Initiatives that led to this award ranged from water safety hopscotch messages on sidewalks at beaches, to "Wear It" vehicle magnets and a billboard campaign with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources and Outdoor Illinois Advertisers.

The District's Water Safety Team also beat-out an Air National Guard unit and other government entities for the Greater St. Louis Federal Executive Board's Public Safety award for Team Excellence.

"This was truly a team effort, not just the efforts of one or two of our

projects," said Dennis Fenske, assistant chief of the District's Operations Division. "From one end of the District to the other, our water safety team continues to take the lead with unique and effective initiatives."

Mark Twain Lake formed a partnership with G.C. Potterfield Trucking of Monroe City, Mo., to transmit their message. Potterfield covers territory from the Rocky Mountains to the East Coast. On the sides of 40 of their white, 53-foot trailers were large, blue decals delivering a simple message: "Life Jacket... Good. Drowning... Bad. Mark Twain Lake."

Elsewhere, Carlyle Lake used their "I Got Caught" campaign to educate and reward lake patrons for wearing their life vests.

During the campaign that runs from Memorial Day through Labor Day, park rangers promote wearing life jackets by handing out t-shirts that say "I Got Caught Wearing My Life Jacket" and coupons from Dairy Queen.

In addition to normal water safety initiatives, the outreach team at Rend Lake in southern Illinois partnered with a local hospital to provide water safety training to employees and their families.

The District's Rivers Project Office at the Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo., continues to partner with federal and state agencies, as well as non-profit organizations along the Mississippi River Water Trail to promote safety on the river.



Making a connection: USACE leaders discuss the importance of the Mississippi River with teens

By **MARY MARKOS**
MVS Public Affairs

Stories of playing stick-ball as a child broke the ice May 19 as then Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, Mississippi Valley Division commander, spoke to teens at the RiverVision Leadership Discussion in St. Louis, Mo. “I wish someone would have helped me understand the importance of the Hudson River when I was growing up,” Walsh said. “It’s all about making a connection.”

Through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer’s partnership with the Audubon Center at Riverlands, the teens formed a connection with the Mississippi River through education and recreation, and learned the value and importance of preserving the third largest watershed in the world.

St. Louis District Commander Col. Thomas O’Hara joined Walsh in the Audubon Center Auditorium at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

“To make the Mississippi River system sustainable over time, we have to show why it is important from many different perspectives,” O’Hara said. “That draws people in and shows them the value of the river. It creates a connection between them and the water.”

The discussion highlighted the connection and collaboration local organizations have with USACE in their mission to protect the community and environment. “Collaboration is really pretty simple,” O’Hara said. “It is when people or organizations with a single vision work together to reach that vision. With that common vision, comes a shared responsibility.” O’Hara added that having a shared responsibility does not excuse individuals from doing their part in protecting the river.



Photo by Alan Dooley

Mississippi Valley Division Commander then Brig. Gen. Walsh (left) and Col. Thomas O’Hara, St. Louis District commander, explain the mission of the Corps and the importance of U.S. waterways to youth May 19 in St. Louis.

These individual responsibilities and the teens’ roles as leaders concluded the discussion. “You are tomorrow’s leaders,” Walsh said. “You have the skills and knowledge to make a difference.”

O’Hara added that the teens are the answer to today’s environmental problems. “Find something to be passionate about and then be responsible for one’s own actions. You are all part of the solution,” he said.



Photos by Alan Dooley

Moving On

Left: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Robert Bayham (right) displays a Corps flag with District Commander Col. Thomas O’Hara June 4 at Bayham’s retirement ceremony in St. Louis. Below: O’Hara thanks Bayham and his wife, Tammy, for their service.



MVS library services make research easy

By **ROMANDA WALKER**
MVS Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' St. Louis District Library not only houses many historical documents, it has a rich history itself.

Phyllis Thomas, librarian technician, has been around long enough to witness some of its history.

Thomas has been working as a library technician for 21 years. She said when she started back in March of 1989 District offices were located at 210 Tucker.

"When I started working for the District, there were five of us in the library," she said.

"There were two student workers, two library technicians, and one librarian - Art Taylor."

After Taylor's retirement in 2003, Thomas took over library operations. She has been running the library solo since.

Originally, the information management office operated the library.

After IM's transition to ACE-IT in 2008, the district's library found a new home in public affairs.

Running the library single-handedly Thomas said, is a challenge.

"I oversee all the daily operations of the district library. Some of the processes include maintaining the library's holdings; managing and ordering technical books and manuals for specific offices throughout the district; ordering books and periodicals for general use; managing technical equipment in the library such as computers and microfiche machines, and performing purchase functions for the library and the public affairs office," Thomas explained.

Thomas' duties do not stop there. Cathy Van Arsdale, a St. Louis District physical anthropologist, said she uses the district library mostly for interlibrary loan services, another service Thomas manages.

Through an interlibrary loan request, Thomas acts as an intermediary for the district library.

She searches to find an item that has

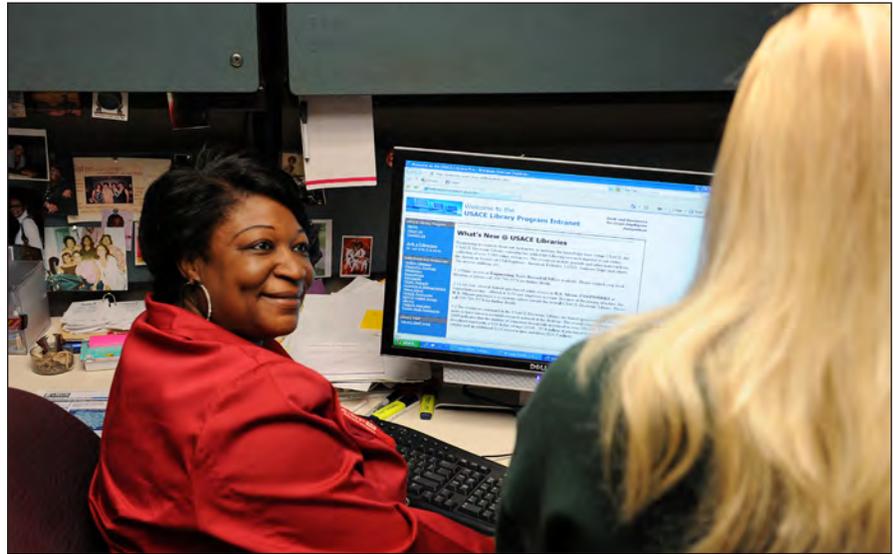


Photo by Alan Dooley

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District Library Technician Phyllis Thomas helps a District employee with an interlibrary loan request.

been requested, identifies a library that has the item, and secures the request.

After receiving the item, she ensures delivery to the requestor, and arranges for its return back to its home library.

"Phyllis and the interlibrary loan request service have allowed me to do necessary research to provide good products to our customers.

"Without the ILL services, getting obscure cultural resources information would be next to impossible and cost a lot of money and time to track the items down myself," Van Arsdale said.

"You just send Phyllis the reference you need, and boom. In a few weeks it's here for your use."

"Phyllis can get just about anything through interlibrary loans. What references she has found for my research have astounded me at times," she added.

"Also, my contacts at other districts (that do not have a library) have asked me to get ILLs through Phyllis for them for their research. Without a library in their district, they can't do their research as efficiently, so they asked me to get the items for them through our library."

Amy McPherson, an archival intern also relies on Thomas and the library for research.

"I use the library mostly for request through the interlibrary loan to do archival reports," she said.

She added that she, and many others in her division need a lot of articles that are hard to find.

"Phyllis is very good at finding those articles that we need and obtaining them through the ILL services," McPherson said.

The St. Louis District spends approximately \$14,000 a year for the library and research services.

Those who benefit from it the most say that it is definitely worth it.

"There are some services that I would not be able to provide our customers without the library, and if I could do those things myself, it would cost a lot more than \$14,000 for me to do that," Van Arsdale said.

"One of the biggest misconceptions about the library is that it only has books," Thomas said. "District employees should stop by to see for themselves what all it has to offer."



To search the Corps of Engineers library or ask a library technician a question, visit www.corpslibrary.com/search/um/Express.html.



Photo by Mindy Cory

A crowd gathers May 22 to watch a demonstration of rescue techniques at the Great River Rendezvous at Ellis Bay in the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in West Alton, Mo.

Water trail connects adventurers with nature, offers vehicle of river exploration

By MINDY CORY

National Great Rivers Museum

Have you heard the phrase, “Nature is only a paddle away?” That’s a true statement when talking about the Mississippi River Water Trail. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers’ Rivers Project established the Mississippi River Water Trail in partnership with the Mississippi River Water Trail Association, American Canoe Association, St. Louis Canoe and Kayak Club and others.

The Water Trail is a vehicle for exploration, with maps outlining access points, day use areas and primitive campsites along Pools 24 and 25; Pools 26 and 27 are set to open later this year.

The development and implementation of the trail has encouraged community and citizen involvement to make the trail something that truly belongs to the people who use it.

As environmental sustainability seeps into the mainstream, low-impact recreation is becoming more important. Paddling is not only a great form of exercise, but also a way to get closer to nature. Paddlers can make a quiet approach to view birds and other wildlife. Without the roar of an engine, the sounds of the great outdoors can be heard loud and clear.

Canoes and kayaks are becoming a more common sight on the Mississippi River; however with this increase comes the need to ensure that proper safety protocols are being followed.

“Safety is the most important part of getting out on the river,” says Kevin Dempsey, a lead partner with the Water

Trail. “In the maps, paddlers will find tips for safe paddling - everything from life jackets to float plans is covered.”

“We hold several events each year, designed to teach people the basics of safe paddling,” Kimberly Rea, Recreation & Interpretive Services manager at the Corps’ Rivers Project Office said. “Our signature paddling event is the Great River Rendezvous which offers paddling skills clinics, among other activities.”

The 2010 Great River Rendezvous was held on May 22 at the Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary. The 18-mile race from Grafton, Ill., to Riverlands in West Alton, Mo., was cancelled due to high water, but that didn’t stop crowds from gathering for a day of summer fun.

At rendezvous, visitors were able to experience kayaks and canoes first hand at free skills clinics. “It helps build a person’s confidence when they are able to practice basic maneuvering skills in a controlled environment,” Rea said. “ACA certified instructors were on hand to make sure these folks learned the proper way to handle themselves on the water.”

The hope is that through these hands-on clinics, visitors will develop the skills needed to begin exploring the Mississippi River Water Trail. “One of the great things about the Water Trail,” Dempsey said, “is that you can experience as much or as little of the river as you want.”

The maps of the Water Trail suggest activities for all skill levels, from an afternoon in a backwater slough to an overnight trip covering several miles. For more information, visit www.greatriverwatertrail.org.

Left: Trey Stone, a Veteran Curation Project staff member, scans a preserver of black and white negatives that document archeological investigations conducted over decades of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers excavations. The negatives were of a multitude of public works projects such as locks and dams, recreation and water resource projects.



VCP opens door to St. Louis veterans

continued from Cover

The project is being conducted with cooperation from the Department of Veterans Affairs and organizations such as the Central Savannah River Area Wounded Warrior Care Project.

Project participants are employed, earning a fulltime or part-time salary as they learn new skills.

“This isn’t make-work,” Trimble said. “Properly documenting these items is required by the National Historical Preservation Act to preserve them and their information for study and educational purposes. It is unfinished business. It’s federal law

and it is our responsibility.

“We aren’t trying to turn these Soldiers into archaeologists or anthropologists,” he added. “But the skills they are gaining, the processes they are learning, relate directly to the growing field of record keeping in medical, insurance, financial and other professions,” Trimble said.

Soldier-curators in the St. Louis VCP office said working with the artifacts help them understand and appreciate the past.

“I have held a metate in my hands. That’s a stone Native Americans used to grind grain,” said eight-year Army

veteran, Walter Sinnott IV.

“When they ground the grain, tiny, abrasive flecks of stone would mix with the food. I have also held the flattened teeth of the people who produced and ate these foods, which ground their teeth down over years. It all became very real – not just intellectual, like a picture or a text about prehistoric America. I felt the connection between their tools and their lives. I felt I was able to touch these people.”

That’s how Sinnott, who served four tours in Iraq and Afghanistan as a fire support specialist, described his greatest thrill as a participant in the VCP.

Sinnott spoke as he carefully smoothed wrinkles in an aging table-sized chart and map that had been tightly folded for 40-plus years. “We humidified this chart with hot water vapor for an hour. Then we dried it between blotter paper and I manually smoothed the folds. I’ll repair any damage and then I have to figure out how best to preserve it for the future,” he said.

Sinnott said that after being discharged three years ago he first studied to become a computer engineer.

“But I didn’t want to spend my life in a cubicle. I have always been fascinated by outdoor characters like Indiana Jones. This experience is showing me I can do anything I want to do, and if I have to choose today, I’ll say I want to be a geologist,” he concluded.

In a far corner of the VCP office,



Staff members from the St. Louis Veterans Curation Project discuss how to properly photograph artifacts.

East St. Louis, Ill., native, Sean Box, described how he wants to work with people, perhaps in an office setting.

He spoke as he stared at a computer screen, trying to conjure up the precise word he needed to “nail” a carefully crafted technical report of a study he was finishing.

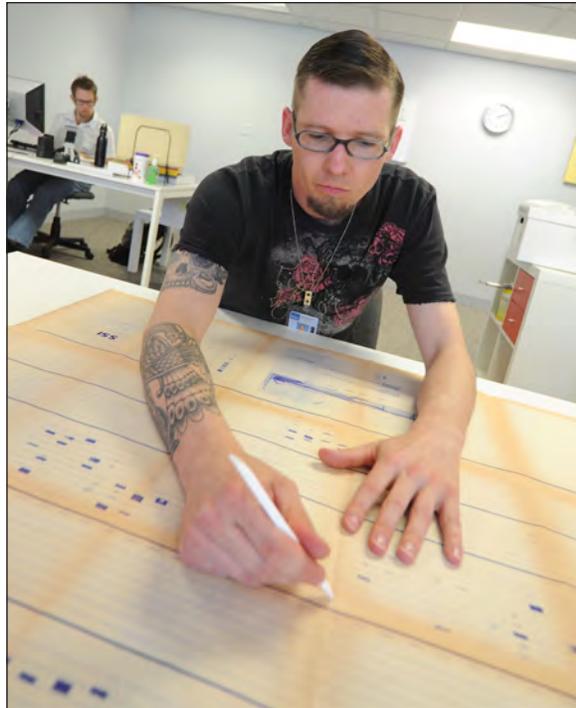
Box, who served six years in the Army, explained what he was gaining from the VCP.

“First of all, in addition to technical skills, I’m learning not to speak ‘Army.’” Awaiting a knee replacement for a service injury, Box said, “This isn’t just learning computer skills. This is very real.

“I have also gained a new appreciation for those who have gone before me. They couldn’t read and write, and I thought that made them stupid,” he said.

“But listen, I’m learning people have always been smart, just knowing how to live and figure out how to do what they did,” he said. “And this experience has taught me that there’s a lot more to life than TV. I read a lot more now and want to know more and more. We had a daughter a year ago, and I want her to be proud of me. I want to be her role model as a daddy,” he added.

Trey Stone, a five-year Army veteran as a vehicle driver, reviewed a collection of documents to confirm their proper disposition. “I am learning technical skills like photography,” he said. “I am studying criminal justice at Kaplan University, and the photographic skills I have learned and used here may earn me college credits and help me complete my education sooner.”



Veteran Walter Sinnott smooths creases in a map the contains details about where and at what depths artifacts were recovered at a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction site.

Stone, who last served with the 128th Infantry Battalion at Fort Riley, Kan., went on to draw connections between forensic and documentation skills needed to curate historical materials and similar methodology in police work.

“This is giving me hands on skills I can use in what I want to do in the future. Holding artifacts and imagining how someone might have used them a thousand years ago is something that will help me visualize a crime scene and how seemingly insignificant things may be keys to solving a crime.”

In addition to the technical skills, Stone said he is being helped in other

ways. “I’m gaining people skills. I’m getting help building a resume to tell potential employers about what I can do for them,” said Stone. “They are helping me learn how to relate better to civilians,” he said. “You cannot order them to do things like you could with Soldiers,” he said.

“This is a win-win for America,” Trimble said after returning from opening the VCP in Washington, D.C.

“Information on large amounts of materials that were undocumented and unavailable for study are emerging to fill gaps in our historical knowledge.

“At the same time, veterans, to whom we owe a great deal for their service and sacrifices, are being prepared for post-service civilian employment and lives,” he added. “That will serve them today and in the future. This repays a debt to the past, the present and the future,” he said.

The VCP is a small start on a road to resolving two challenges our nation faces. The program may or may not grow in areas or numbers of former Soldiers served.

To this point, Soldiers find connections and gain life’s wisdom from reaching across centuries to touch America’s earliest peoples’ lives.

“I never even dreamed this kind of work existed,” one veteran said as he looked at a pottery shard, turning it over carefully in white-gloved hands. “Wow! This is exciting,” he said.

Sean Box, a U.S. Army veteran, weighs archaeological materials at the Veterans Curation Project office in St. Louis.



Lynch receives 2010 Legends Award

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partnership with Sesser-Valier Outdoorsman's Club allows more than 25 hunters with disabilities the opportunity to safely hunt with facilities and activities designed to meet their needs.

"His ceaseless efforts to maintain facility integrity and preserve and enhance recreation resources, while working

with partners, stakeholders and customers during times of fiscal restraint, have placed Jim in the forefront of his profession," said Derrick Crandall, American Recreation Coalition president.

"I've known several recipients of this award," Lynch said. "I have always considered them to be giants in the field. To be included in their ranks is a great honor and very humbling."

For Lynch, the highlight of receiving the award came with the remarks of Tom Vilsack, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture. "When he spoke of the \$700 billion per year value of outdoor recreation provided by the federal government in America, and the way it benefits urban citizens by enabling them to get outdoors, as well as the local economies where they visit - we all knew he really got it."

Lynch was one of six federal managers to receive the 2010 Legends Award. Other winners include: William Boggs, Bureau of Land Management; Robert Morris, Federal Highway Administration; Dan B. Kimball, National Park Service; Nancy Haugen, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and Floyd Allen Thompson III, U.S. Forest Service.



Photo by Valerie J. Mavis

Left to right: Family members Lizzie Lynch, Mike Lynch, Jim Lynch, Penny Lynch and Mary Cou-lombe, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Branch chief, take a moment to pose for a photo following the 2010 Legends Award June 10 in Washington, D.C.

Picnic, golf tournament brings record participation

**Story and photos by
MARY MARKOS**
MVS Public Affairs

Despite morning showers and weather-related delays, the St. Louis District Corps of Engineers family gathered June 17 in Mascoutah, Ill., for the District's annual picnic and Corps' birthday celebration.

The day began with a 9-hole golf tournament at a nearby course with 64 participants.

"This year was the highest number of golfers we've had since I've been involved in the picnic golf tournaments," Carolyn Ruebusch, golf tournament coordinator, said. "It was great to see this much participation and a lot of fun for everyone."

Cash prizes were awarded for five places in two separate flights (a total of 40 participants), including longest drive and closest to the pin for both men and women.

Participation was also high for team sporting events, which culminated with the Commanders Cup trophy. The cup was awarded to the engineering team, who beat out operations by one point



Andrew Jefferson, Wappapello Lake park ranger, takes on the face of a tiger June 17 at the MVS annual picnic.

after team competitions in horseshoes, trivia and volleyball.

The Civilian Activities Council ensured team engineers were not the only winners at the event. Three additional attendance prizes were

awarded th year as the picnic concluded.

"We were able to give away a digital camera, laptop and flat-screen TV. I really think the prizes added to the event and the winners were very

See ST. LOUIS Page 16

SAFETY

OSHA targets ARRA project sites

By **MARTY WERDEBAUGH**

MVS Safety Office

Although the Occupational Safety & Health Administration has previously been unlikely to inspect Corps projects, the tendency looks to be changing.

Beginning FY 2010, OSHA's goal has shifted to inspecting construction sites that received American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding, as recently reported in the St. Louis Business Journal.

With the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer's St. Louis District receiving \$279.4 million in ARRA funding, Corps projects represent a large target for OSHA to inspect.

In fact, OSHA recently inspected two ARRA funded projects at one of the District's lake facilities. No violations were found during the inspection, which is a testament to the project's safe work practices.

While the Corps itself may be exempt from being fined for violations, our contractors are not so lucky.

OSHA has the authority to shut contractor projects down indefinitely should their inspectors find circumstances that are immediately dangerous to life and health to employees.

OSHA inspections are typically conducted without advance notice. There are a few exceptions to this rule, but the maximum notice for an inspection would be 24 hours or less.

The vast majority are done without prior notice. As such, it is our responsibility to ensure that our employees and any contractors on USACE sites practice the safety guidelines set forth in EM 385-1-1.

If there are any questions on the application of EM 385-1-1, contact the District safety office.

Should a Corps project refuse to admit an OSHA compliance officer or interfere with an inspection, the compliance officer can initiate legal action, such as a warrant to inspect. If this is the case, the CO will likely have a warrant to inspect the entire worksite with a fine toothed comb.

As a fellow government entity, our projects should assist OSHA to the best of our ability.

What to do if a CO arrives at your project

Below are the procedures for handling a situation with an OSHA compliance officer should one arrive at your project.

1. The compliance officer must show their credentials upon walking onsite. An employer has the right to contact the

local OSHA office to verify these credentials prior to letting the officer on your jobsite. The St. Louis office for OSHA is (314) 425-4249.

2. Call the District safety office immediately at (314) 331-8307 or (314) 331-8664 and notify them that you have a compliance officer at your site.

3. An opening conference is then conducted between the employer and the CO. This will cover the following items:

a. The CO will explain the purpose of the visit, the scope of the inspection, and the standards that apply.

b. The CO will ask the employer (i.e. project manager or supervisor) to select an employer representative to accompany the compliance officer during the inspection.

c. In addition, the CO will give an authorized employee representative the opportunity to attend the opening conference and inspection. Typically, this is a union member or someone from a recognized bargaining agent.

NOTE: An employee representative is not required for each inspection. Should there be no authorized employee representative, the CO must consult with a reasonable number of employees concerning safety & health matters at that jobsite.

4. The inspection will take place thereafter. The CO determines the route and duration of the inspection. The CO may take photos, videotape, instrument readings, air samples, noise levels, survey existing engineering controls, and monitor employee exposure to toxic fumes, gases and dusts.

5. A closing conference will then take place with the same personnel from the opening conference. All unsafe conditions and violations observed by the CO will be addressed at this time.

Inspection Notes

1. An inspection may cover part or all of an establishment. The compliance officer can expand an inspection if there is a violation in open view.

2. Most compliance officers place emphasis on record keeping requirements. These would include the OSHA 300 forms and the employer's hazard communications program (including training records and list of hazardous chemicals.)

3. Some violations can be corrected immediately and the CO will note that these were successfully resolved. Still, the CO can use those violations against the employer because they were not addressed prior to the inspection.



USACE HEROES: SUPPORTING

CRAIG MARSHALL



Craig Marshall, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction Representative deployed to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan in February.

“I wanted to see what I could do to help out our troops,” Marshall said of his six-month deployment.

“I want to see how the Corps of Engineers is dealing with situations in Afghanistan.”

Marshall has been with the Corps for 13 years – all with the St. Louis District.

This is his first deployment.

He is married and has three children aged 18, 12 and 11.

KRISTINA WEIS



Kristina Weis deployed to Qalaa House in Kabul, Afghanistan in October 2009.

Her responsibilities include that of an “accountant/morale connoisseur/timekeeping in-briefing alternate presenter/alternate CSR and spin instructor,” she said.

“For my first tasker, I came to fight the war on terror and win hearts and minds,” Weis said. “I came back after the first six months for a different reason – I knew Mike Kessler would miss me and probably cry himself to sleep every night,” she said jokingly.

Weis has been with the Corps for 3.5 years – three of which with the St. Louis District.

Although this is her first deployment, she said she gained valuable experience while working in North County as a receptionist for a car dealership.

“That was far more dangerous than this. I once had to call the cops because a customer brought their car in for service, but failed to pay the loan on it for a few months. We wouldn’t give her the car back,” she said.

Weis is scheduled to return to MVS in October.

MATTHEW MILLER



Matthew Miller, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Construction Representative deployed in May to Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan.

“This is a great way to serve our country and support the Corps mission,” he said.

“I enjoy the fast paced work environment, the interesting MILCON construction projects and the opportunity to work with various military branches, as well as other USACE civilians from different districts, contractors from different countries, and the local Afghan people. It is great to see how USACE operates in the big picture.”

Miller began working at the Lake Shelbyville Project Office in 2000 as a STEP employee. He also held the position of a park ranger Co-OP and a civil engineer technician.

He deployed to Iraq for a year in 2008 with the Gulf Region South District and Camp Bucca Resident Office.

Miller is scheduled to return in May of next year. “I would like to thank everyone at the district and my home office for being supportive and covering my normal duties and responsibilities while I am deployed,” he said.



For more on the mission of our deployed civilians

visit <http://www.usace.army.mil>

OVERSEAS CONTINGENCIES

MICHAEL KESSLER



Michael Kessler, Kabul central resident engineer, deployed to Kabul, Afghanistan in October of last year.

"It was important to me to contribute to this high-priority mission of the Corps of Engineers," he said.

While in the Navy, Kessler deployed to Iraq twice and to Bosnia/Kosovo. This is his first deployment with the Corps. Kessler joined the Corps family in 2007. He has worked in the St. Louis District since that time.

Kessler has been married for 17 years to his wife Dana. They have two children – Kaylee, 14, and Krista, 12.

Kessler is scheduled to return to MVS in October.

DANNY LUNSFORD



Danny Lunsford deployed to Wardak Province, Afghanistan in February.

"I deployed to support our military," he said. "Anyone who thinks they can make a difference should volunteer and show their support."

Lunsford served in the U.S. Navy prior to joining the Corps and the St. Louis District 13 years ago. During his time in the service, he deployed three times as an interior communications electrician on a nuclear submarine. His previous deployments took him to the western Pacific.

Lunsford is married and has two boys, ages 8 and 5. He is scheduled to return to MVS in August.

JONATHAN BAILEY



Jonathan Bailey deployed four months ago to Qalaa House in Kabul, Afghanistan as a geotechnical engineer.

"I volunteered for the experience," he said. "I had thought about the differences in the path I chose of going to college, and the path that many good friends and father chose of being in the service.

"I just thought that it was something that I wanted to do, and figured right now was the time to do it."

Now is the time, Bailey said, as he is getting married to Meghan Holtschlag next May.

"We had originally planned to get married in November, but once I decided to deploy she wanted to push it back so that we could have more time to plan together."

Bailey is also planning on finishing the renovations to his home upon his return in August. "I bought a house last year in Saint Peters, Missouri. This summer the kitchen is being redone by friends and family. I'm hoping to make it back to work on it," he said.

Bailey has been with the Corps and the St. Louis District for two years.

CHARLENE BOECKLEN

Charlene Boecklen left St. Louis March 7 for a six-month deployment to Qalaa House in Kabul, Afghanistan as an engineering technician.

"Being in Afghanistan is better than I anticipated," she said. "I only have 5 more years to work and wanted a chance to learn new skills with the Corps."

Boecklen has been with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District for 25 years. Previously, she deployed to Kuwait and to numerous natural disasters, to include hurricanes, tornadoes and floods.

Boecklen is married and has two adult sons, a daughter-in-law she said she adores and two grandchildren aged 6 and 4.

Editor's Note: A photo of Boecklen was not available at time of publication.

ians and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan,

www.aed.usace.army.mil/



St. Louis Corps' families gather for games, sports



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excited," Phyllis Thomas, CAC president, said.

Other events of the day included a safety demonstration and games from the MVS Water Safety Team, face painting and the "Ohio challenge," which led participants through a obstacle course wearing goggles that simulated the effects of alcohol.

Left: A St. Louis District family member completes the Ohio Challenge June 17 at the District picnic. Below: Corps employees practice for the annual picnic golf tournament.



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