Southwestern Division

Pacesetter

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The road ahead:

The people and projects transforming SWD

SOUTHWESTERN

DIVISION

PACESETTER

Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Kula
Commander
Southwestern Division

Martie Cenkci
Chief, Public Affairs
Southwestern Division

Editor
LaDonna Davis
Deputy Public Affairs Chief
Southwestern Division

Associate Editors
Edward Rivera
Fort Worth District

Sara Goodeyon
Tulsa District

Jay Woods
Little Rock District

Isidro Reyna
Galveston District

on the cover

The Southwestern Division is focusing on transforming the way it does business by developing and using innovative, transformative processes and projects in order to stay relevant and solvent during a time of less projects, constrained funding and less time to complete projects.

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Transforming for the better

Brig. Gen. Thomas Kula
Southwestern Division Commander

Why do organizations transform? They transform when change is needed to overcome multiple challenges; when the times and the environment and all the factors that delineate an organization's existence are in a state of flux. The Corps of Engineers is dealing with many of these challenges now, such as aging infrastructure, budgetary shortfalls and fiscal constraints, and requirements that can quickly become global. We have reached a "tipping point" and face the question: will our organization and our projects be reliable and resilient now and for the future, or do we "band-aid" along, fixing projects and processes as we go?

As leaders of change, it is imperative that the Corps and SWD leadership be the developers and disseminators of the vision and strategies that drive transformation. But it is also important that we take the time to get our subordinate leaders to understand and embrace what's needed, and then empower them to execute.

I wrote about this paradigm in a recent e-mail to our workforce, and this edition of the Pacesetter Magazine addresses transformation, the projects, the people, and the stakeholders who are making it happen and helping us write our future. These projects and the people who oversee and execute them are as diverse as our regional mission, from our coast to the MKARNS, from civil to military customer. Their success is our success; their story is our story. In addition to the numerous examples throughout this edition of Pacesetter, I wanted to shine the light on a few others, people and projects who represent the very best of our regional efforts. Here are some SWD transformers.

Jay Townsend, Social Media Transformer

The Corps' first-ever hydrology mobile application now has more than 8,000 users. Until now, the Corps has been unable to communicate with our water and project users on the Smartphone platform. Developed and designed by Little Rock District Public Affairs Specialist Randall "JT" Townsend, the mobile App has been used over 100,000 times by anglers, navigators, paddlers, park visitors, and more. This USACE Innovation of the Year award-winning App delivers current water conditions for Corps reservoirs, rivers, and streams within the district including the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System. Jay designed the app from numerous contacts with anglers and river navigators. He also refined the art of cutting through multiple layers of government rules and organizations.

Little Rock's Risk Programs transform a lot of dam work

When seepage resulted in a huge sinkhole on the upstream face of Little Rock District's Clearwater Lake Dam on Jan. 15, 2003, little did anyone know the event would help change the way the we approach our work. The old system of dam repair was a "first-in/first-out" approach. This meant that a repair project was placed in a queue and waited until it rose to the top of the list. All that transformed during the last decade, when USACE adopted an informed risk program that identified the highest priorities, regardless of when a project "entered" the line for repair.

The Clearwater Lake Dam project also earned accolades by winning the USACE Team Dam Safety Award of Excellence for 2012. Team members received recognition for their work in completing the first Dam Safety Action Classification System I project, a category reserved for projects with the highest priority.

Charissa Kelly, leverage of tenets

Charissa Kelly, the initial Project Officer for the Fort Worth District's Westside Creeks Pilot

Study is now assigned as the Senior Environmental Planner for Southwestern Division. However, during her tenure as the Westside Creeks Pilot Study lead, Charissa was involved in every aspect of management for this project as well as regular interaction with all key stakeholders, partners and congressional members and staffers. From the onset, she leveraged the three tenets of the Corps' Civil Works Transformation initiative. She directed her Project Delivery Team to maintain constant and continual vertical coordination with SWD and USACE Headquarters, which resulted in quicker decisions on key issues. Her guidance and oversight was instrumental in helping the PDT reach its goal to produce a more concise Chief's Report that is completed faster with a lower cost. They are currently on track to complete the study in 2 ½ years and under $3 million.

Westside Creeks: Keeping San Antonio dry

Fort Worth District's Westside Creeks Project represents a highly successful example of Civil Works Transformation and involves the study of four tributaries of the San Antonio River that run through the city's westside communities. These tributaries are the Alazan, Apache, Martinez, and San Pedro Creeks. All four creeks were straightened and channelized during the 1960s as part of the San Antonio Channel Improvement Program. The study examined how to restore the native riverine function to the Westside Creeks study area while maintaining the current level of flood risk management. Recreation is also an authorized project purpose and was considered as a study component.

Dr. Brian Taylor, understanding the present and the future

As a Project Manager, Dr. Taylor helped put together a plan for John Redmond Reservoir dredging. He stayed in touch with the stakeholders and did all the things an extremely successful Project Manager does. Taylor was a park ranger, and worked in Operations and Regulatory before becoming a PM. His varied background gives him a good understanding of the issues with John Redmond. He is well rounded and understands the needs of the stakeholder and brings new ideas and a new way of doing things to the District. He also understand the importance of the need to sustain the life of projects like John Redmond Reservoir

John Redmond Dredging, a project with a purpose

In a first of its kind effort at a federal project, the Kansas Water Office plans to dredge the Tulsa District's John Redmond Reservoir in a multi-year effort that will help to regain some of the water storage capacity lost. From 1964 to 2010 the reservoir lost an estimated 42 percent of its conservation pool storage capacity and it continues to lose on average 739 acre feet storage to sedimentation each year. This dredging must be done in order to save the lake. By working together with the KWO, the Corps is able to extend the life of the lake and bring it back to its project purpose.

Gary Chow, geotech, failure minimizer

Gary Chow, a geotech engineer with the Galveston District, is routinely tasked with providing engineering design support, permit application technical reviews and engineering recommendations for the operations and constructions of structures in dams, levees and navigation systems located within the district – a tremendous responsibility, but one he finds extremely rewarding. With his main focus currently on the Addicks and Barker Dam Safety Modification Study and Design, Chow continues to collaborate on the development of a plan to minimize the risk of significant failure modes that drove the "extremely high risk" classification of the structures in 2009.

TxSed, a Galveston-GLO partnership

Galveston District partnered with the Texas General Land Office and scientists at Texas research universities to populate a centralized repository of information along the Texas coast called the Texas Coastal Sediment Geodatabase (TxSed), providing vital geotechnical cores and grab samples of sediments during routine navigational channel dredging for coastal construction projects that can be used to assist in identifying compatible sediment resources for proposed beach nourishment, habitat restoration projects or aid in the permitting/regulatory processes for such projects. The sediment data also creates a benchmark of sediment transport information to help researchers better understand the environment.

What a wide array of people and projects bring change to SWD, the Army Corps of Engineers, and our nation! As we all work to transform the Corps of Engineers into the organization it must be in the future, remember the saying from Ghandi: "Be the change you want to see in the world." It will take not only inspired leadership, but also dedicated innovation at every level to make this the organization we want it to be for now and the next generation of Americans.

Thanks for the warm welcome

Col. Courtney W. Paul
Commander, Little Rock District

In my first few months as District Commander I've been traveling both inside and outside of the district. I've heard stories from past flood fights, looked off the balcony of the Dewey Short Visitor Center, watched the Army Reserve build a bridge across the mighty Arkansas River and listened to story after story of how our District is setting the bar high during times of fiscal restraint.

I can truly say it is an honor and privilege to be your new leader. I've heard so much about you and it's exciting for me and my family to become part of your team. Over the past few months I've been getting to know you, what you do and what we need to do to take the district to the next level. I believe if we work together and embrace the following three principles from my command philosophy, we'll not only excel at our mission but we'll also weather the looming budget challenges or other threats that lay ahead.

- Take care of People. An environment of respect is the foundation of taking care of people. An atmosphere of respect and inclusion depends heavily on one guiding principle: That what unites human beings far outweighs what divides them. Listening and trying to understand an alternate viewpoint not only shows respect for your fellow human, but it will be far more effective in the long run than discounting their views as "crazy" "misinformed" or "driven by a hidden agenda". "Take care of People," also means looking out for one another, by setting the example in safety and behavior and warning each other when we appear to be taking unnecessary risks.
- Team with our Partners. Our strength is in building teams, communicating effectively, and profiting from the diversity that such a partnership yields. The principle of teamwork drives relations inside the Project Delivery Team, with our higher headquarters and other districts, and with our stakeholders in the public and private arena.
- Deliver on our Promises. Our reputation rests – quite simply - on consistently doing what we say we will do. Our stakeholders and taxpayers want value for their money, and they want good quality infrastructure. Even the best project managers will have to manage potential schedule and cost increases, and should not delay in letting shareholders know if we realize a problem. But once finished, the quality will be the legacy we leave, and what future operations will have to maintain. Be transparent and ensure everyone knows how serious we are about achieving quality, safely.

"I can truly say it is an honor and privilege to be your new leader."

I am very excited about the Little Rock District mission and the challenges that lie ahead. How we respond to any situation will reveal a lot about our attitudes and perceptions. I encourage you to turn those challenges into opportunities.

Tulsa heads into year-end full speed ahead

Col. Richard A. Pratt
Commander, Tulsa District

It is an honor to join the Tulsa Team, a District with a reputation throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a disciplined, values-based team. Thank you all for the wonderful welcome to Tulsa and thank you for a job well done. Over the next several months, I will visit offices throughout the District, but with so much territory to cover, it will take some time. I look forward to working with each of you as we continue to support our Nation's investment in the future.

Special thanks go to Col. Michael Teague and his family for the warm welcome to the City of Tulsa and the District. It was wonderful to see Mike receive the Legion of Merit and the de Fleury medals at the Change of Command ceremony. The Army's loss is clearly the State of Oklahoma's gain as he was appointed to serve in the Governor's Cabinet as the Secretary of Energy and Environment. My wife Mary and I wish Mike and Dawn all the best as they leave us after three successful years in the District.

This first month has been a busy one, with lots of traveling throughout the District and Division, meeting commanders and sharing lessons learned, and meeting with State officials, including Oklahoma's Governor, the Oklahoma Secretary of Tourism, and Oklahoma Secretary of Transportation to provide updates on topics of interest to them.

Excessive rains in August brought many of our lakes in Kansas and Oklahoma above normal levels into the flood control pool and we activated the Incident Management Team to monitor the event. Our Hydraulics and Hydrology team went to 24-hour staffing and worked with the National Weather Service for river forecasts and with the U.S. Geological Survey for accurate stream gauging for the flooding.

Assuming command in the middle of the recreation season quickly introduced me to the importance of preventing public fatalities on Corps lands and waters. There is a robust public safety outreach program in place in the District and you all deserve great credit for your work to reduce fatalities on the water and to educate visitors about the importance of wearing a life jacket while operating on the water, especially for weak and non-swimmers. We also must continue to focus on educating our visitors to swim only at designated swim beaches.

The District closed out the fiscal year with several important events. Most importantly, the Department of Defense reduced the number of furlough days from eleven to six, thus reducing a significant financial impact to the 148 Tulsa Team members affected. I thank each of you for your patience and professionalism in working through the challenges associated with the furlough.

In August, we completed the dewatering of Lock & Dam 18 on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System to repair a leak on a gate on the downstream end of the lock. This type of work is imperative in order to keep the MKARNS operational. We also attended the Civil Works Strategic Initiative meeting in Fort Smith, Arkansas which strengthened our resolve as with Little Rock District and our stakeholders to provide a long-term solution to the maintaining of our facilities on the navigation system.

In September, we hosted a stakeholder meeting to announce the complete replacement of the Highway 151 Bridge crossing the Keystone Dam, which will result in a 13-month closure of the bridge. The bridge replacement is a great example of the importance of great partnerships. This work would not be possible in the current constrained budget environment without $6 million in funding contributed by the Oklahoma Department of Transportation.

We must prepare for the future by continuing to promote the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) with our young people. I look forward to working with our Engineering & Construction Division to pursue possible partnerships with Memorial High School in Tulsa, and Langston University, in Langston, Okla., to expand their engineering programs.

Tulsa Team, we are nearing the close of FY13 in a great position. Let us finish strong and set our sights on another great year in FY14.

Essayons!

Utilizing Civil Works transformation and planning modernization

Col. Charles Klinge
Commander, Fort Worth District

Team Fort Worth – As we approach the end of another fiscal year and begin a new one, we can take pride in the many successes we experienced this last year and carry those into FY14 for even greater success.

These successes are numerous – District right-sizing, execution of a new business line for Facility Condition Assessments, master planning with emphasis on energy, approval of the Tentatively Selected Plan for the Dallas Floodway, and overall improved relationships with our stakeholders.

And we have made great progress in Civil Works Transformation. Although it has been a rough flight at times – similar to the 'fixing the plane while you fly' analogy – we have learned a great deal and have been very successful. This directly correlates to how well our team members in the district embraced and moved out early to implement the principals of civil works transformation.

Whether your position at SWF is in support of military construction, civil works or Interagency and International Support (IIS), the core principals of civil works transformation and planning modernization cross all functional areas. Risk Management, a significant part of our Project Management Business Process, is the key element within the SMART planning process to shorten the time it takes to address alternatives for Civil Works projects.

I feel that it is important that we understand the rationale behind the decision of the Corps' senior leaders to 'transform' our civil works mission. The Corps has struggled for over 15 years to address the concerns of Congress and stakeholders to address the backlog of projects and the length of time is takes to complete projects.

Additionally, our ever-aging infrastructure, sophisticated stakeholders, and limited funding have forced us into make extreme changes to the Corps' Civil Works Program. The result is that Fort Worth District and all of USACE is implementing and executing major transformation initiatives to better align our project development processes with national priorities. Our goal with these initiatives is to improve and better address long-term and numerous water resources challenges and other critical needs of the Nation.

One of the major pillars of civil works transformation that we proactively implemented and executed immediately is planning modernization, also known as SMART planning, which focuses on a better project delivery cycle. SMART planning stands for Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Risk-Informed and Timely.

Our over-arching goal with planning modernization is to expedite delivery of quality planning products and assessing the level of risk such that we can deliver solutions in a timely fashion.

How is our implementation of planning modernization helping us achieve that goal? All District project managers are successfully educating their project teams and have them using planning modernization throughout the schedule and life-cycle of their projects.

Our numerous project delivery teams are: improving planning program delivery; improving planner knowledge and experience; developing sustainable planning, operational and organizational models; and modernizing planning guidance and processes.

As a part of this transformation, all of our project teams are now required to adhere to the 3x3x3 rule for feasibility studies. This rule compels our teams to strive for all feasibility studies to be completed in no more than three years, at a cost of no greater than three million dollars, and with three levels of concurrent vertical coordination.

As we move into the new fiscal year, I will be highlighting many of our projects that are successfully using Civil Works Transformation, but when I think of immediate success one project truly stands out as an example of that transformation – our Westside Creeks' Pilot Study Project.

In 2012 as a part of Civil Works Transformation, a National Pilot Program for Feasibility Studies was initiated to develop sustainable and repeatable processes. Five initial pilot studies were selected, and the Fort Worth District's Westside Creeks' Pilot Study was one of them.

Westside Creeks' Ecosystem Restoration Pilot Study involves the study of four tributaries – the Alazan, Apache, Martinez and San Pedro Creeks – of the San Antonio River that run through the city's west-side communities.

The pilot study team is on the fast track to produce a very concise Chief's report and complete the study in two and a half years at a cost under three million dollars.

When the study is completed, not only will the team have successfully met the 3x3x3 rule, but they will also become a model for how a district successfully implements Civil Works Transformation – a win-win for the Corps, our partners, the local communities and the Nation (for more information in the Westside Creeks' Project see related article by Mr. Randy Cephus in this issue of the Pacesetter).

I applaud each of you for your great work and adaptability as we transform as a District to make our best even better.

Happy New Fiscal Year, thank you for a great FY13 and let's make FY14 even better!

Looking towards the new fiscal year

Col. Richard P. Pannell
Commander, Galveston District

We're nearing the end of fiscal year 2013 and have accomplished a lot this last quarter. It's been a great experience for me to see firsthand the fantastic contributions you are making every single day. I am awestruck by two observations: first, the dedication of our workforce and second, the incredible impact our efforts have on the nation. I am convinced that we have the best-trained, most well-educated workforce, fully committed to delivering the nation's engineering solutions. I'm also certain that our mission is of extreme importance to the future of this nation's economic and environmental prosperity.

As we move forward, I ask that you continue to execute and follow up with our commitments and deliver those important solutions to our stakeholders. We must continue to show why we are relevant to stakeholders, our partners and the public. It is through our continued strategic engagements that we will remain most effective and I'd like recap just a handful of our significant engagements this month:

In early August, I attended the Gulf Intracoastal Canal Association Conference in New Orleans and met with many of our non-federal sponsors. I presented my thoughts on the Texas coast and discussed our current initiatives along the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway. We received very positive feedback on our GIWW Set Back Policy initiative as well as our many efforts to support this vital waterway.

We continued our engagements with the ports and our non-federal sponsors to include Texas City, Freeport, Cedar Bayou and Addicks and Barker Dam, which provided me with important insight into our daily operations and where some of our challenges lie.

Later in the month, I headed to the central coast region and met with sponsors for Bay City, Victoria, Calhoun County, Palacios (and others) as well as our area office to discuss the concerns and challenges our stakeholders are facing. While in Corpus Christi, I had the privilege to sign a Cooperation Agreement with Texas A&M-Corpus Christi (a Hispanic-serving institution) to commit our two organizations to work together to enhance opportunities for minority students throughout the Corps. In the coming weeks, I will visit you, our sponsors and other stakeholders as I continue to learn about our district and strive to discover those key bits of knowledge that will shape our future.

On a similar note, we launched a STEM Inspiration Campaign this month asking professionals in the science, technology, engineering and math fields to share with us their stories regarding who inspired them to pursue a career in STEM. To date we've received participation from approximately 40 people to include Congressman Randy Weber, NASA Astronaut Tracy Caldwell Dyson, Fox News Latino Contributor Nelson Balido, Actress Dr. Mayim Bialik (The Big Bang Theory and Blossom), Boeing, Great Minds in STEM Senior Education Coordinator Roberto Ornelas, business owners, medical doctors, teachers and professors (from our partner institutions and more) and military members.

As we look to the future of the district, I want to re-emphasize the points made during the town hall meeting. I ask that you continue to incorporate my ideals and expectations:

- Work as a team
- Treat all with respect
- Leadership matters
- Seek knowledge and understanding
- Live the Army Civilian Corps Creed
- Accomplish the mission
- Take care of people
- Protect our resources
- Have fun!

I'm eager and excited about the future of this district and look forward to seeing each of you. You are an amazing group of people and I'm overwhelmed at the capability that exists in this building and in the field offices.

I want to thank you for your continued dedication and let you know how important your efforts are to coastal Texas and to the nation. Keep up the great work as we run through the finish line tape for FY13!

Overseas Deployment: The personal side

by Julie Bentley, SWD Deployment Coordinator

The Southwestern Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has volunteered and deployed in support of military contingencies and humanitarian missions for more than 20 years.

Some of the missions have included support to Iraq and Afghanistan, Operations Just Cause in Panama, Restore Hope in Somalia, Support Hope in Rwanda, Uphold Democracy in Haiti, and Joint Endeavor in Bosnia. Even though the missions vary, there is one common thread: the men and women who volunteer to complete the mission.

One of those individuals is Keith Loos, real estate specialist, Little Rock District, who deployed to Afghanistan. Loos's mission is to acquire, manage, and dispose of real estate in support of U.S. Forces.

"What I like most about the deployment experience are the people! They are dedicated, loyal and here to serve their country. Despite all the challenges, I like seeing things get done and knowing I was a major influence in the decisions that led to the best possible solution makes it all worthwhile," said Loos.

Michael Mattera, project engineer, Tulsa District, currently works on a number of projects in Afghanistan. Most are difficult and dangerous to get to. Mattera can easily access two projects from his office; one is a 50-bed hospital and the other with 38 buildings on 88 acres. Mattera has to access the rest of the projects by helicopter, which he visits twice a month.

"For me, being deployed has been fantastic. I teach local Afghans everything from engineering, design, management and cultural differences between the US and Afghanistan. I also teach the junior engineers in our office process and procedures regarding construction, design, modifications and methods of adjusting to deployment," said Mattera.

Christopher West, project engineer, Fort Worth District, is also deployed to Afghanistan. West serves as a contracting officer representative for two projects: the Afghanistan National Army and the Afghanistan National Police. The $45 million project site is located in Helmand Province, where West relies heavily on the Local National Quality Assurance team who oversee the project sites.

"Interaction with the LNQA is a very eye opening experience as we each learn about the other's culture and customs. I have enjoyed this experience because I have been able to gain from becoming a COR, and the responsibilities that go along with it," said West.

Bruce Barrett, regional safety officer, Southwestern Division, deployed to Afghanistan from December 2011 to March 2013. Barrett worked alongside 110 people at his post, where he led the safety team on several projects.

"The safety program was in poor condition upon arrival; with the help of a professional and dedicated team of safety personnel we turned it around and met all goals. I'm glad I was able to support this important mission," said Barrett.

During his deployment, Barrett encouraged the safety staff to get professional certification. Two of them did with Barrett's support, months of study and discussion. This was a first for anyone in safety, while deployed.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers support to Overseas Contingency Operations would not be successful without the unwavering dedication and support to our nation by the brave men and women who volunteer to deploy. We will continue the proud tradition of supporting contingency and humanitarian operations whenever called upon. The overall success of the mission always depends on our great volunteers," said Julie Bentley, deployment coordinator, Southwestern Division.

Keith Loos, Little Rock District and Russ Wallace, Galveston District (top right) relax with the rest of the Transatlantic Afghanistan District Real Estate staff after the 5K "Race for the Cure". (Photo by Transatlantic District South)

(left to right) Steve Herman, Little Rock District; Keith Loos, Little Rock District; Russ Wallace, Galveston District and Harrison Sutcliffe, Southwestern Division head out to the rifle range in Afghanistan. (Courtesy of SWD Deployment Coordinator)

Michael Mattera of Tulsa District is Project Engineer in Afghanistan. Mattera works on a number of projects, but says he is most proud of the work he does teaching local Afghans his engineering expertise. “I love to teach so this has been fantastic in this regard,” Mattera said. (Courtesy of SWD Deployment Coordinator)

Strategically planning for a transforming USACE

by Nova Robbins, SWD Strategic Planner for Future Initiatives

Fiscal Year 2014 presents the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers a unique opportunity to reconnect with its core constituency, the American people.

The Corps' Civil Works program faces many challenges which are prompting swift transformation in its business model. As an integral part of the Civil Works Transformation, the Corps has initiated a USACE Infrastructure Strategy (UIS) team to help lead this effort.

UIS is a key enabler for USACE to move toward a national ranking of future investment in the national portfolio based on value to the nation, condition, risk and linkages to national priorities and watershed criteria

The four major interdependent UIS focus areas include:

Life cycle Portfolio Management includes developing a comprehensive inventory of existing and planned projects and corresponding assets, and evaluating projects to ensure they provide intended value and purpose. Working with stakeholders to plan, construct, rehabilitate or repurpose assets as infrastructure needs are better defined and prioritized.

Newt Graham Lock and Dam is located near Tulsa, Okla. on the Verdigris River at river mile 426. The lock and dam are part of the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, which provides for barge navigation on the Arkansas River and some of its tributaries. Under the USACE Infrastructure Strategy, the Corps is looking at new ways to support the maintenance of the navigation system due to constrained funding. (USACE photo)

Alternative Financing Options that include partnerships and collaboration to develop ways to work with the private sector investment in water resources infrastructure. Some alternative financing options have shown that some repairs and improvements can be made more expeditiously by non-federal partners acting with Corps' assistance, rather than depend solely on the federal appropriations process.

Watershed/System Level Strategic Plans provides comprehensive planning that enables USACE to consider all aspects of the watershed approach and emphasizes the interdependence and interrelationships of the assets within the watershed that allows USACE to better consider the actions of our local and Federal partners as we make planning and funding decisions.

Strategic Communication that provides national synchronization, collaboration and coordination for effective messaging that will support the overall strategy. The emphasis will be on educating and informing congressional and administration leaders of UIS objectives and strategies to achieve important national outcomes, and establishing working relationships with traditional and non-traditional stakeholder groups.

All divisions within USACE are engaging in this effort. The Southwestern Division is doing this by initiating an infrastructure strategy to include collaboration with the stakeholders, business process improvements, and long-range investment plans that include participation by SWD partners.

Collaboration with stakeholders is occurring with hydropower; deep draft and shallow draft coastal transportation system, inland waterway systems such as the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas Navigation System (MKARNS), and in sustaining the USACE reservoir infrastructure.

The purpose is to strategically position SWD so it can help those that they support and partner with to achieve its vision for the future.

"To determine how USACE can provide the highest future value to our partners we need to truly understand and embrace our business from our partner's perspective," said Robert Slockbower, SWDs director, programs directorate "That requires us to fully understand our partner's vision as well as the associated challenges, opportunities and business strategies."

Process improvements are also critical to the success of civil works transformation. Utilizing the visioning sessions, SWD is also asking its stakeholders for input on current policies, regulations, and authorities to assist with providing ideas for alternatives to streamline federal processes to enable its stakeholders to achieve their future initiatives.

SWD is working to develop a process for establishing a five year development plan to help provide transparency to its stakeholders and partners on the condition assessments, risk assessments, and maintenance management of critical components required to buy down risk. This will also assist USACE to help in the prioritization of limited federal dollars to provide the greatest value to the Nation.

"SWD will work closely with our partners throughout the region as we develop and implement strategies for sustainable transformation in civil works to meet current and future challenges and address the water resources needs of our nation to improve performance and responsiveness; increase customer satisfaction, public trust and confidence; improve readiness; and maintain a competitive edge," said Slockbower.

Military Missions transformation

by Brian Kamisato, chief, Military Missions, SWD

The Southwestern Division Military Missions has implemented a sustainment management system to efficiently manage military facilities around the region. (USACE photo)

Our Southwestern Division team continues to set the pace in support of the ongoing transformation within Military Missions. Over the last year, we've seen continued change in our military missions. We have less Military Construction (MILCON) projects, our customers are faced with fiscal challenges, and our customers want quality projects delivered faster and cheaper.

Within the Military Missions, we see seven "lines of operation" in support of our military installation customers:

- Military Construction (MILCON)
- Sustainment, Restoration, & Modernization (SRM)
- Sustainability/Energy
- Environmental
- Asset Management
- Master Planning
- Real Estate

Our ability to deliver value in each of the lines of operation is the driver for our transformation. The following are just two examples of the transformation efforts that are being led by SWD and our Districts:

Asset Management— Our Fort Worth District is leading the implementation of a Sustainment Management System called BUILDER for the Defense Logistics Agency and the Air Force. BUILDER is an information system tool developed by the Engineer Research & Development Center that provides the ability to efficiently manage facilities/assets across an entire enterprise. BUILDER helps users make smart investment decisions for restoration and modernization funding. SWF is conducting facility condition assessments across all DoD installation where DLA has assets (over 600 sites worldwide). In addition, SWF has conducted training for personnel from all USACE regions and is serving as a mentor to other Districts. Through these efforts we are transforming our military missions.

Real Estate — The Corps of Engineers and the Air Force Civil Engineer Center are establishing a Real Estate Program Management Office that will assist in the planning and execution of the Air Force real estate program. The Tulsa District was assigned this mission by Headquarters USACE and will serve as the PMO starting in FY14. The PMO will deliver value by manage execution of real estate tasks/projects across all USACE Districts. The PMO will drive consistency in our delivery (cost, time, quality) and will provide AFCEC with "one door" for real estate actions. As a key member of this enterprise initiative, we are transforming military missions.

There are many other examples, but the bottom line is that our customers must see value in the projects and services we deliver. In this environment where the customer has the ability to choose their agent/partner, we must deliver in a consistent and disciplined way. I've heard it said that "every project is strategic" and I think this is a great way to think about how you connect to the transformation within both Civil Works and Military Missions. Thank you for all that you do – and let's keep innovating and finding ways to deliver value to our customers!

Regulatory supervisor plays a part in Civil Works transformation

Forms partnerships to deliver comprehensive and lasting solutions to make a positive difference for the American public and their communities

by Galveston District Public Affairs

Managing operations in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District's Regulatory Branch of the Corpus Christi Regulatory Field Office isn't always easy. With wetland issues to be resolved, jurisdictional determinations to be made and violation claims regarding the Clean Water Act and the Rivers and Harbors Act to be reviewed and investigated, even Supervisor Lloyd Mullins, a 12-year veteran, says though he has his share of difficult days there is no other place he'd rather be working.

Supervisor Lloyd Mullins, USACE Galveston District's Regulatory Branch of the Corpus Christi Regulatory Field Office.

"I chose to work in the environmental field when I was in high school," said Mullins. "Both my mother and my grandmother were nature lovers and at a very early age they instilled within me the love of the outdoors and the desire to learn about and experience nature. As I matured I learned of the need to balance the protection of our dwindling natural resources with economic development and feel that this inherent love of nature and the realization that progress will and must occur have tempered me to fulfill the duties of this job."

A lifelong coastal biologist, Mullins' passion for phytoplankton has taken him on a journey from the University of Texas Marine Science Institute in Port Aransas as a research assistant, collecting data within the Aransas and Corpus Christi bays systems, to working for the Texas General Land Office as its first field representative along the Texas Coast.

"Things have changed since I first began my career four decades ago," said Mul-

lins. “I worked for the GLO for over 25 years as a coastal biologist and range and wildlife specialist on their extensive upland holdings in South Texas. I went from being the only field person to ultimately supervising a coastal upland field staff of about 30 people, located in both the Corpus Christi and La Porte field offices.”

Following his retirement from GLO Dec. 31, 2000, he joined the district’s Regulatory Branch one day later, having enjoyed a short-lived 24 hours of retirement. Over the course of 12 years, Mullins has overseen regulatory actions in numerous coastal projects including the Corpus Christi LNG/Cheniere Energy Project (a large natural gas importing/exporting project planned to be situated along the La Quinta Channel in Corpus Christi); large pipeline projects associated with oil and gas development within the Eagle Ford Shale complex; jurisdictional determinations of extensive areas within the expansive sand and mud-flat complex along the bay side of undeveloped portions of South Padre Island and several permit actions involving large canal subdivision projects being proposed within Whooping Crane use areas.

With projects spanning several years, Mullins recalls a moment recently that made him think about his participation in a project more than 20 years ago while employed by GLO.

While working with USACE representatives and other state and federal agency staff on the design and permitting of a benefical use project in Mesquite Bay in Aransas County, Texas, Mullins was part of a team that granted a permit on a project involving oil and gas exploration in which the dredged material from the channel would be used to build a marsh for fishery enhancement and anticipated to be frequented by Whooping Cranes. Recently, when reviewing a proposal for a new project, Mullins had the opportunity to visit the marsh and observe a family of Whooping Cranes using the marsh.

“It took many years for the created marsh to develop to the point of serving as habitat for that iconic endangered species, but it was very rewarding to know that I had played at least a small part in its creation,” Mullins said. “It has helped me appreciate that sometimes the rewards of what one does is not realized for many years.”

The USACE Galveston District has a number of projects all along the Texas coast that use dredged material from its maintenance dredging program beneficially to create marsh, restore sea grass and provide bird rookeries, including projects in Galveston Bay, Matagorda Bay, Corpus Christi Bay, the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge and Laguna Madre.

The Corps will cost-share an oyster reef restoration in Matagorda Bay with The Nature Conservancy in the near future and has initiated a comprehensive study of the upper Texas coast from Sabine to Galveston in collaboration with GLO that will look for opportunities for large-scale ecosystem restoration projects to protect not only habitats but also the Texas coast from storm surge and erosion.

“I like the challenge of trying to problem solve the various projects,” Mullins said. “To work with both a project’s proponents and opponents in order to come up with a permutable project that is not only viable but also protects as many natural resources as possible while compensating for those which cannot be avoided.”

The USACE Galveston District’s Regulatory Branch works to ensure no net loss of wetlands while issuing about 2,500 permits a year and supports ecosystem sustainability as a mission focus for all project development and land management decisions. This focus reflects protection of the state’s natural resources under numerous federal laws, including the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), Clean Water Act, Coastal Zone Management Act, Endangered Species Act, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act and Migratory Bird Conservation Act.

A certified wildlife biologist and honorary Texas Land Commissioner, Mullins earned a Bachelor of Science from Stephen F. Austin State University and a Master of Science from Texas A&M. When he’s not knee-deep in regulatory oversight for the district, he can be found operating a wildlife management and hunting outfitting business on several large South Texas ranches or enjoying time with his wife, son, daughter and baby granddaughter.

Little Rock District takes step in project planning

By Jay Woods

Little Rock District Public Affairs

The City of Springfield, Missouri, experiences damages from flash floods along Jordan Creek. The area along Jordan Creek is heavily urbanized and includes extensive infrastructure associated with both commercial and industrial areas. A wide variety of management measures to address the flood risk were developed, evaluated and screened.

A team led by Laura Cameron of the Planning and Environmental Division took on the Jordan Creek Flood Risk Management Study. This project was chosen as part of a pilot program that could possibly speed up the project planning and approval process.

"This project was different than the other projects I have worked on because it was a much higher profile project," Cameron said.

Because this was a pilot project, communication and coordination was critical. "There was a lot of coordination between our team and the vertical team," she said. "Since this was a pilot project we had to learn how to best facilitate coordination between the teams."

Laura Cameron

Most project and study managers are usually working on more than one project. For Cameron working on the Jordan Creek Project was a big change. This was the only project she was working on.

"I have never been able to devote myself to one project for such a long period of time," Cameron said. "We were able to do that because we had federal and non-federal study funds in hand."

Since sufficient funds were available it allowed the team to aggressively attack the schedule throughout the project.

Fifteen plans were formulated for consideration, and in the final array two plans were closely compared for recommendation. The recommended plan includes flood risk management consisting of five detention basins and 2100 feet of channel widening. This plan reduces 65 percent of the damages and includes detention basins in the upper reaches of the watershed and channel modification at the confluence of Wilsons Creek and Jordan Creek.

The total project cost is estimated to be $21,900,000 with a sponsor contribution of $7,700,000 and a federal contribution of $14,200,000. The recommended plan has a benefit-to-cost ratio of 2.7 (at an interest rate of 3.75 percent). The Office of Management and Budget uses an interest rate of 7 percent to budget items. At 7 percent, the benefit-to-cost ratio of the project is 1.7.

Before the project can proceed to design and construction, congressional authorization and appropriations are required. If authorization and federal funds are appropriated the City of Springfield would sign a partnership agreement to proceed.

The writing of this feasibility report piloted new pre-authorization processes under civil works transformation. Overall the new process has been a huge success that shortened the study time and created processes for communication throughout the vertical team.

Thanks to Cameron and her team the bar has been set for future projects.

Fort Worth District's Carroll Harris recognized for 2012 Innovation of the Year

by Edward Rivera

Fort Worth District Public Affairs Office

In the movie "The Wizard of Oz," the all-powerful Oz turned out to be a man behind a curtain operating a machine that might have even been considered a computer back in 1939 when the movie was released. In 2013, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has their own Wizard and the man behind that curtain is Carrol Harris, who's Sustainment, Restoration and Modernization Wizard was selected as the Fort Worth District's 2012 Innovation of the Year.

"Its great recognition, this is really a team award," said Harris. "Many people across the Corps had the pieces, but our team was able to put them together into one tool."

Harris works for the District's Standardization and Sustainability Branch of the Engineering and Construction Division. As the team lead for the SRM Wizard he spent nine months developing a Request for Proposal development tool that accelerates the development of renovation projects. Using his many years of experience in the field of facility restoration and modernization Harris designed the SRM Wizard to give designers the ability to accurately and quickly develop building construction Scopes of Work for SRM projects.

According to Harris, the SRM Wizard provides three major components to streamline the process for SRM projects. A standardized RFP template allows contracting, and engineering and construction entities to find and use common components USACE and Army wide. The use of an industry standard language (ASTM Uniformant II) that enables a seamless link of all phases of a building life cycle – from planning facility maintenance though facility asset management. And the ability to allow non-design team members to write comprehensive statements of work turns the SRM Wizard into an engineering force multiplier.

"The standard templates provide a single solution for a consistent delivery of ideas," said Harris. "The standard language allows for virtual teaming and decreases the time used on writing SOWs and Request for Proposals roughly about 50 percent."

According to Alain Bernier, deputy director, Engineering and Construction Support Office, recently the Defense Logistics Agency inquired about how they could support defining their requirements in support of SRM work. Harris asked DLA to choose a site they wanted to know more about. They identified a site and Harris, through the Wizard, sought reports and within 90 minutes he provided a list of all deficiencies and a draft SOW.

Carroll Harris (courtesy photo)

"It is amazing the savings that this logic will bring to our customers," said Bernier.

Headquarters USACE, has recognized the capabilities of the wizard and has already provided funding to expand and enhance the capabilities of the current SRM Wizard. In Fiscal Year 2014, the Fort Worth District Center of Standardization plans to automate data linkages between the SRM Wizard and BUILDER Sustainment Management System to more closely to enhance productivity, exchange data, capture and analyze cost data relative to SRM projects, and to use Building information modeling data. Other USACE field offices have expressed interest in using the SRM Wizard tool for their own SRM requirements, because of the speed at which things can be accomplished.

Harris said the Corps has taught him to be a "Solutioneer" and the SRM Wizard is truly a transformational tool for the way USACE engages the SRM arena through its ability to support the process throughout the Lifecycle of a building or facility.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will replace the aging Highway 151 Bridge over Keystone Dam west of Tulsa. Speed of construction factored into the design of the new bridge. The existing span will close to traffic Oct. 28, 2013 and remain closed for up to 13 months. (USACE photo)

PDTs communication process helps Civil Works program transform

By Sara Goodeyon, Tulsa District Public Affairs

Work is set to begin in October to replace the Highway 151 Bridge over Keystone Dam, west of Tulsa. It is the highest priority major maintenance project for the Tulsa District, but the work could not go forward without a $6 million contribution from the State of Oklahoma.

With limited federal funding available, the Oklahoma Department of Transportation contributed the funds after bid proposals exceeded available federal funds. The $15.6 million contract went to the Kiewit Infrastructure South Company of Omaha, Neb., July 15, 2013.

Through the Corps' commitment to Civil Works Transformation, which fosters a better and smarter way of working for the nation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Tulsa District was able to accept the alternative financing from the state.

"We had a contract action open that was going to expire. We were up against a time crunch," said Richard Bilinski, Keystone Bridge Replacement Project Manager. "We explained to ODOT and they said they could contribute. They really stepped up to the plate. We had a good working relationship with them and this issue came up and they said no problem."

No problem from ODOT, but there was a problem with a new process for accepting such

Damage on Highway 151 Bridge over Keystone Dam is being repaired by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tulsa District this fall causing the bridge to stay closed through the end of 2014. (Courtesy photo)

contributions. Due to the nature of the cash contribution, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Civil Works (ASA-CW) and Congressional permission was required. This demanded a great deal of effort and close coordination within the vertical project delivery team (PDT) to accomplish in a timely fashion. What was initially anticipated to be a 12-18 month process was accomplished in less than 6 months.

"We had good division support, excellent headquarters support, and they worked to get it to the ASA and the congressional subcommittee," said Bilinski. "Then we had the efforts of Ray Russo Southwestern Division Chief of Civil Works Integration Division, John Roberts, Deputy for Programs, Projects Management here at Tulsa District, and also Adrienne Carter and Elaine Newbaker-London the Division Program Managers for Civil Works Integration greased the skids with the PDT group and the headquarters vertical team. Everybody was communicating. We sent this thing up in February and everybody was working together through the vertical team and with the PDT and we raised it as a high priority need for Tulsa."

Ultimately, the deal was negotiated in days with people at all levels brainstorming, remaining open-minded, and teaming up to find a way to get the project accomplished.

"Someone came up with a new streamlined agreement that was only 2-3 pages instead of 6," said Bilinski. "Everybody said, 'This will work.' Within a couple of days everybody said,' Yep it looks great.' We were able to get the subcommittee approval and the PDT's."

Thanks to the transformation within the Civil Works program for the process of accepting contributed funds the Highway 151 Bridge replacement project can go forward and the people of Oklahoma will benefit by having a new and better structure for their use.

Brazos Island Harbor Jetty Channel dredging project to save money and improve method of delivery

by Galveston District Public Affairs

It was the first time the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District staff incorporated Civil Works transformation processes on the Brazos Island Harbor Jetty Channel dredging project in Cameron County, Texas, hoping to save the district money while providing a quality service and moving one step closer to changing the way the district does business – a risky venture, but one that was worth taking.

Historically the job was performed using a cutter-head dredge to remove sand from the channel and place it on South Padre Island. Revising the scope of work to allow for a hopper dredge with pump-out capability to compete for the job was a gamble that had never been taken before. Staff considered whether anyone would bid this contract and if the bids would come in under budget.

To the district's surprise, Weeks Marine Inc., bid in the amount $3,405,500 to remove an estimated 350,000 cubic yards of shoal material from the channel using a large ocean-going hopper dredge, BE Lindholm, that would then sail to the vicinity of the shoreline to pump sand onto the beach.

Following the completion of the Brownsville Harbor Entrance Channel dredging project, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Galveston District, began work on a $14.5 million jetty repair project at the entrance to the Brownsville Ship Channel with scheduled completion in 2014. Jetties, also known as stone breakwaters, minimize wave action along the shoreline and prevent sediment from filling the entrances to ship channels along the Texas coast, reducing dredging maintenance cycles. (Courtesy photo)

"This is the first time we've used a hopper dredge with pump-out capability in the Rio Grande Valley," said former Project Operations Manager Alicia Rea, USACE Galveston District. "In an effort to reduce project operations costs, a more competitive solicitation was developed to allow contractors to bid either using a hopper or pipeline dredge. An additional benefit came with the method that the contractor used for placement on the beach. Instead of laying miles of pipeline across the beach, contractors were able to place the pipe in the exact location and discharge the sand in a more confined method, allowing beach-goers access to more of the beach while construction was underway."

The Texas General Land Office partnered with the district to contribute approximately $1.5 million in a non-federal cost-share initiative to beneficially use dredged material originating from the Brownsville Harbor navigation channel to renourish approximately half a mile of shoreline with beach-quality sand harvested from the dredging process.

"The USACE Galveston District contributes to the well-being, economic success and quality of life of local communities by employing environmentally and economically responsible ways to use dredged materials to improve eroded coastlines through beach renourishment," said Navigation Branch Chief Christopher Frabotta, USACE Galveston District. "While performing one of our primary missions of maintaining safe waterways for commercial traffic, we're able to work with our partners to ensure environmentally sound dredging and placement of the material in a more cost effective manner."

Due to the success of the Brazos Island Harbor Jetty Channel dredging project, the district will continue to seek bids using a hopper dredge this November for the next annual dredging.

Clearwater Lake Dam team wins award

by Little Rock District Public Affairs

When seepage resulted in a huge sinkhole on the upstream face of Clearwater Lake Dam on Jan. 15, 2003, little did anyone know the event would help change the way the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approaches its work.

Located in southeast Missouri on the Black River, the Clearwater Lake Dam rehabilitation became the first major project to be completed under the USACE Risk Informed Dam Safety Program. Under this approach, USACE developed a new process to rank its portfolio of dams.

The old system of dam repair was a "first-in/first-out" approach, said Glenn Proffitt, project manager for Clearwater Lake Dam. This meant that the Corps placed the repair project in a queue and waited until it rose to the top of the list.

Located in southeast Missouri on the Black River, the Clearwater Lake Dam rehabilitation became the first major project to be completed under the USACE Risk Informed Dam Safety Program. Under this approach, USACE developed a new process to rank its portfolio of dams. (Courtesy photo)

All that changed during the last decade, however, when USACE adopted an informed risk program that identified the highest priorities, regardless of when a project "entered" the line for repair

The Clearwater Lake Dam project also earned accolades by winning the USACE Team Dam Safety Award of Excellence for 2012. USACE recognized team members for completing the first Dam Safety Action Classification System I project, a category reserved for projects with the highest priority.

"This project helped lead to efficiencies to determine the best ways to rank our portfolio of dams," Proffitt said. As a result, potential projects are rated under a scale that separates high priority from lower-priority projects.

An earthen dam 4,225 feet long and 157 feet high when including the parapet wall, Clearwater Lake Dam was originally built in 1948 to control flooding in the Lower Mississippi River Basin.

To repair the sinkhole, USACE embarked on a multiyear effort that included construction of a cutoff wall completed in December 2012. "It was ahead of schedule and below cost," Proffitt said. "It also provided a lot of security to those living in downstream communities below the dam."

The Clearwater rehabilitation project actually involved the awarding of three contracts. The first two covered drilling and grouting along the alignment of the cutoff wall to avoid further seepage and slurry loss during construction of the new cutoff wall. The final major part of the project was to build the wall. Bencor, the wall contractor, was "very pro-active about getting the work done," Proffitt said.

Ironically, USACE was beginning minor work on the dam when the sinkhole opened up a decade ago. In the years to follow, the rehabilitation team "invented the new process to some degree," Proffitt said. The project became a touchstone for USACE's effort to identify problem dams and levees and prioritize their repair.

In winning the Team Dam Safety Award for Excellence, Proffitt and his team also were recognized for their participation in promoting dam safety within the Little Rock District, part of USACE's Southwestern Division, and in USACE's National Dam Safety Program. Team members also have contributed time and talent to several national organizations in promoting dam safety in the United States and around the world.

"Now we have a process that ranks and categorizes projects," Proffitt said. Plus, on a local level, "We have constructed a cutoff wall that is secure for future generations."

Fort Worth District biologist Danny Allen, left, discusses information involving the Westside Creek project footprint with a local resident during a public meeting hosted by the district in San Antonio, Texas. (Photo by Fort Worth District public affairs)

Westside Creeks, a model for the Corps' new planning paradigm

by Randy Cephus, Fort Worth District Public Affairs

There have been many challenges along the way for the Westside Creeks Pilot Study but the Project Delivery Team has fought through them all. The team completed Decision Point 2, and in late June briefed the recommended plan to San Antonio communities that lie along the path of the creeks.

The study examined how to restore the native riverine structure and function to the Westside Creeks study area while at least, maintaining the current level of flood risk management. Recreation was also an authorized project purpose and was considered as a study component.

Four tributaries of the San Antonio River that run through the city's west-side communities comprise the study area. These tributaries are the Alazán, Apache, Martinez, and San Pedro Creeks. All four creeks were straightened and channelized during the 1960s as part of the San Antonio Channel Improvement Program.

During the public meeting Corps biologist, Danny Allen discussed the top three courses of action, detailed the pros and cons of each, and then announced the recommended plan for the Westside Creeks National Pilot Study.

Upon their return to Fort Worth, the PDT made final touches on completing its National Environmental Policy Act document to make it available to the public by the end of July. The public then had a 30-day review period to comment on the document.

Westside Creeks is part of the Corps updated process under its Civil Works Transformation. The study is one of only five studies across the nation currently in the pilot study program and is the only one to enter the program from the project's inception. Corps leaders envision this transformation, featuring a risk based decision process, will help produce a more concise Chief's Report that is completed faster with a lower cost than in the past.

From the onset, the Westside Creeks PDT wanted to leverage three tenets of the Corps' Civil Works Transformation, dubbed the "Method of Threes." They include maintaining three levels of vertical coordination; completing studies in three years or less; and keeping cost at no more than $3 million.

Coordinating with the vertical team consisting of members of the Southwestern Division and Corps headquarters is proving to be a great benefit with the pilot study program. Key decision makers are brought in early in the planning phase which allows for more spot checks and guidance as the PDT progresses through the

study.

"We sought them out early and often and were able to identify potential issues early so we could address them," said biologist, Allen. "If we were going in the wrong direction, they steered us back on course."

One of the major challenges faced with embracing the tenets of the transformation was overcoming the old mindset of doing things the long, deliberate way. Getting away from the old paradigm of conducting extensive modeling and testing to confirm things the PDT already knew from similar past studies is an example, according to Allen.

"It took a while to get comfortable with making inferences based on sound existing data and applying it to our study," said Allen. "However, once we embraced it, we were able to tweak the data to apply it to our specific study area."

Implementing techniques such as this were factors that enabled the team to cut down on cost and the amount of time it takes to conduct the study. With this direction, the team is in good shape to complete the study in approximately 2 ½ years.

Identifying risks and implementing mitigation measures as part of the study was another new feature implemented with the pilot study. Risk based decision-making was a tool that helped the PDT not only buy down risk, but also cut cost and time from the study, according to Fort Worth District Regional Economist, Norman M. Lewis.

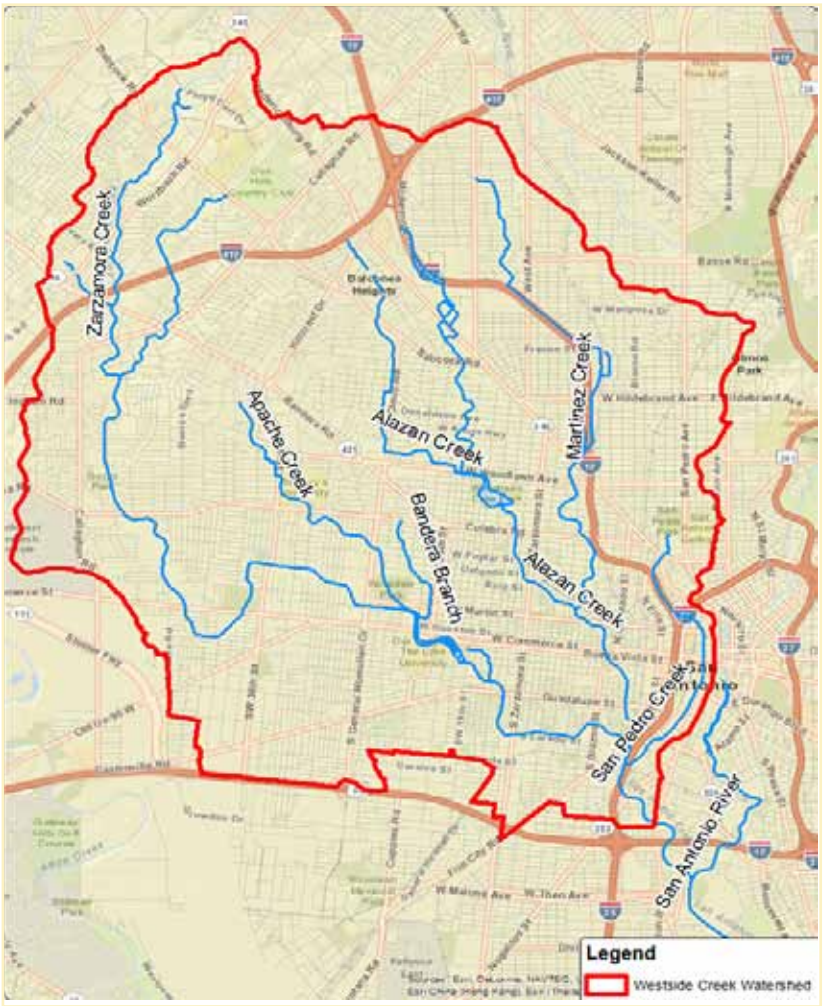
"We used the risk register to identify and track risks and develop means in which to mitigate those risks," said Lewis.

The San Antonio River Authority, the Corps partner for the study has played a tremendous role in the project's success. Information provided by SARA has also saved time and money for the study. SARA has also coordinated with city and county officials, and facilitated public outreach and feedback from the local communities.

"It has been really good to see the PDT, which includes our partners at SARA, working together to get to this point in the process. We are thinking outside the box and sharing information and ideas," said Lewis.

The next step for the PDT is to get to DP 3, the Senior Leaders Meeting. This will hopefully lead to the final Corps approval of the study and the issuance of the Finding of No Significant Impact, or FONSI.

With the continued team effort, the Westside Creeks PDT will reach its goal to produce a more concise Chief's Report that is completed faster with a lower cost than in the past.



The Westside Creeks Restoration Project is specifically focused on portions of the four Westside Creeks which are tributaries to the San Antonio River. The targeted portions include the San Pedro Creek from the confluence at the San Antonio River to W. Quincy; Apache Creek from the confluence with San Pedro Creek to General McMullen, Alazán Creek from the confluence with Apache Creek to Tobin Drive; and Martínez Creek from the confluence with Alazán Creek to Hildebrand Avenue. (Courtesy of Westsidecreeks.com)

Tulsa District completes Oologah Lake Watershed Assessment

By Nate Herring, Tulsa District Public Affairs

The Tulsa District, in partnership with the Metropolitan Utilities Authority completed the Oologah Lake watershed assessment study. (Courtesy photo)

Corps-managed lakes in the Tulsa District provide flood risk management, water supply, hydropower, and recreation. While all of these lakes are designed to eventually fill with sediments, the Tulsa District is working with our partners to find ways to extend the life of these reservoirs to allow them to provide these services to the surrounding communities, the public, and the nation for years to come.

Recently the Corps, in partnership with the Tulsa Metropolitan Utilities Authority, completed the Oologah Lake Watershed Assessment, which sought to develop a science-based tool, a watershed plan, for reservoir sustainability and infrastructure protection at Oologah Lake. Oologah Lake provides approximately 50 percent of the potable water for the Tulsa metropolitan area, and a majority of the water to rural water suppliers throughout northeastern Oklahoma.

"This powerful tool links watershed and in-lake processes for extending the life of the reservoir and addressing threats such as loss of storage through sedimentation and the excessive nutrients and algae growth," said Steve Nolen, Tulsa District chief of planning and environmental division.

The assessment evaluated water quality and sedimentation flowing into the lake from the Verdigris Watershed and how best management practices in the watershed would reduce sedimentation and improve water quality. Water quality samples were taken at various locations, both in the lake and in tributaries upstream, over the course of a few years. The data was then used to calibrate two models. The first model, the Soil and Water Assessment Tool, processes digital information to estimate annual average

sediment yield and nitrogen and phosphorus loading from the watershed above the lake. The second model is a lake response model that simulates the effects of best management practices on the lake that reduce sediment loading, nutrient loading or both. These simulations can help identify areas within the watershed where adjustments can be made that will help reduce sediment and nutrients coming into Oologah Lake and maximize benefits of investments.

John Roberts, deputy, program and projects management, presents Jim Cameron, Tulsa Metropolitan Utilities Authority, with a certificate recognizing the authority's partnership in the study. (Photo by Tulsa District public affairs)

"When linked together, an assessment of the entire system, both the watershed and lake, is possible and a very powerful tool," Nolen said. "This represents a proactive approach to sustain project purposes of a major federal reservoir against the threat of excessive sedimentation, excessive nutrient loading, and excessive algae growth."

These models have now been transferred to TMUA, who contributed 50 percent of the funding for the study and will use the results to coordinate with others to implement the suggested best management practices. Since most of the watershed is located in the state of Kansas, TMUA will work with federal, state and local agencies as well as private individuals to implement the suggested practices.

"The model identifies the best solution in terms of best management practices and site specific locations for these features," Nolen said. The study and tool provides a snapshot of best management practices that, when implemented, will give all stakeholders the "best bang for their buck."

The City of Tulsa plans to use the tool to facilitate dialogue with stakeholders in the watershed, said Roy Foster, City of Tulsa project manager.

"This study is important for the city because it will help protect source water quality of Tulsa's drinking water by proactively evaluating sources of pollutants and modeling of best management practices," he said.

As the Corps strives to work smarter and within the resources already available, a process called civil works transformation, the Oologah Lake Watershed Assessment is a great example.

"One of the four pillars of civil works transformation is an emphasis on resilient water resources infrastructure," Nolen said. "This is a perfect example of development of a watershed-based tool to support a proactive approach to infrastructure sustainability."

Nolen hopes that this study will serve as a model approach for any USACE reservoir where extension of project life, project purposes, and valuable federal assets is the goal.

Scientists test the Half Moon Reef Restoration site in Matagorda Bay for suitability of various construction materials for collecting spat (small oyster larvae). (Photo by Associate Director of Coastal Restoration Mark Dumesnil, The Nature Conservancy)

District engages DEEP Water Horizon/ RESTORE stakeholders

by Galveston District Public Affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Galveston District's Regulatory Branch staff met with Texas agencies in the summer to build a strategic partnership with respect to the Deep Water Horizon/RESTORE actions anticipated to involve multiple agency reviews and approvals. Texas General Land Office Deputy Commissioner of Coastal Resources, Helen Young, was the state's representative for developing the Gulf of Mexico Regional Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and remains a key advocate for facilitating Corps efforts to reach out to other agencies.

"After working with Corps of Engineers Galveston District in many capacities, including the Sabine Pass to Galveston Bay Study, beneficial use of dredged material projects, permit application reviews, and more, I'm confident that the collaboration involved in this strategic partnership will help ensure success in completing the important restoration projects needed in the Gulf of Mexico region following the impacts from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill," said Young.

London-based BP Plc (NYSE: BP) committed to fund up to $1 billion in early restoration projects under an agreement with the National Resource Damage Assessment trustees titled "the Framework for Early Restoration Addressing Injuries Resulting from the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill." This agreement represents an initial step toward fulfilling the company's obligation to fund the complete restoration of natural resources injured by the spill.

According to Young, Texas is set to receive $203 million of cleanup funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for coastal restoration as part of a plea agreement BP reached with federal authorities to resolve criminal charges stemming from the disaster.

"The district and division regularly participate in monthly calls with headquarters and the other Gulf districts and divisions to keep appraised of any activities on the horizon that may be associated with any of the BP funding streams," said Kim McLaughlin, acting chief of the USACE Galveston District's Regulatory Branch. "We will continue to engage federal and state resource agencies to ensure transparency and cooperation early as NRDA and RESTORE Act funds are released and projects are in the planning stages with the National Fish and Wildlife Federation and other stakeholders."

Former USACE Galveston District Commander Col. Christopher Sallese formed an Interagency Workgroup in June 2013 (including key representatives from state and federal resource agencies), that hosted a kickoff meeting in Austin to discuss roles and responsibilities and identify communication strategies. A follow-up meeting is scheduled for early October to further align agencies' responsibilities, assess any new developments and introduce incoming USACE Galveston District Commander Col. Richard Pannell to the Interagency Workgroup.

In addition to the partnership with GLO regarding the DEEP Water Horizon/RESTORE initiative, Regulatory Branch staff continues to participate in multiple in-house Project Delivery Teams to ensure timely decisions are made by the district while minimizing redundancy with respect to not only Section 404/10 permitting, but all authorities for which the Corps is responsible. This includes reviews and authorizations required though the district's Real Estate Branch and Section 408 to avoid impacts to federal projects. This collaborative effort resulted in shorter internal review times and provides applicants with transparency and predictability.

Using a variety of methods to disseminate information for public and agency review, staff began implementing the U.S. Army Aviation and Missile Research Development and Engineering Center's (a subordinate laboratory to the Research, Development and Engineering Command) data-sharing site to deliver large documents, saving time and resources.

With a focus on public outreach, staff continues to regularly attend science fairs, career days, participate as guest speakers and host public meetings to inform the public about our mission and tell the Corps' story, which has contributed to a significant increase in community relations engagements in 2013 over the same period last year.

Minimum flows improve trout habitat

by Laurie Drive & Jay Townsend; Public Affairs, Little Rock District
Photo credit Mike Wintroath, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission

After years of effort by many groups and agencies, the Corps recently began making minimum water to improve the trout habitat below Bull Shoals Dams. The Corps of Engineers and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission officially dedicated the project in an August ceremony.

After years of effort by many groups and agencies, the Corps recently began making minimum water to improve the trout habitat below Bull Shoals Dams. The Corps of Engineers and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission officially dedicated the project in an August ceremony.

The Corps activated minimum flows below Bull Shoals Dam in July and the Norfork project will go live this month.

Minimum flow is the release of water into the tailwater on the downstream side of the dams when water is not being released for hydropower generation or flood control. It will benefit trout and non-game species in the tailwater by increasing the wetted perimeter.

The value of trout fishing in Arkansas mostly below Corps dams exceeds $130 million, with about half the anglers coming from outside the state. Outfitters and business owners have pitched the benefits of minimum flows since the hydropower plants at these two dams first came on line in the 1940s and 50s and began releasing cold water from deep within the lakes.

Because power generation is intermittent the demand for electricity rises and wanes during the course of any given day. This leaves periods of time when no cold water is being released. The streams shrink to disconnected pools of water that begin to warm in the summer sun. This can threaten trout survival. Also, the shrunken 'wetted perimeter' decreases available habitat.

Minimum flows will ensure a slow but steady stream of cold water. A constant minimum flow also raises the river level and inundates shoreline areas that are dry in low-water periods. This will make more food available for trout. It also increases the amount of overall trout habitat, and makes more cover and structure available for trout.

To provide the water necessary for minimum flow, the Corps raised the level of Bull Shoals Lake 3 feet. It also modified some equipment in the hydropower plant. Minimum flow on the North Fork of the White River required raising the level of Lake Norfork 1.75 feet and installing a siphon through the dam. The siphon pulls water from various depths of the lake and releases it into the tailwater.

The tradeoff caused by the storage reallocations is a small reduction in the ability to capture storm water and reduce downstream flooding. Bull Shoals will lose slightly more than 1 percent of its flood storage capacity, and Norfork Lake will lose less than a percent of its capacity.

The effort required stakeholders to secure legislation from Congress that authorized and funded Little Rock District to perform the necessary detailed engineering and environmental studies and prepare the plans that led to where the project is today. The studies found that keeping a steady minimal release of cold water flowing during non-generation times will improve the downstream trout population and benefit the local recreation industry by $5 million annually.

The effort also produced a partnership between the Corps and the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, the non-federal sponsor funding portions of the work. On Jan. 19, 2012, Little Rock District and AGFC signed a Project Partnership Agreement that outlined responsibilities for each agency to implement at Bull Shoals. The two agencies signed a similar agreement in 2010 for Norfork.

Ultimately, this should decrease trout mortality in hot weather and improve the overall health of the trout fishery by reducing the physical stress that accompanies warm water and low levels of dissolved oxygen.

Corps plays pivotal role in rebranding Air Force

Story and Photos by Edward Rivera

Fort Worth District Public Affairs Office

The Air Force Recruiting Service hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony in a first-of-its-kind, nationwide recruiting hub office August 1 in Austin, Texas as part of a national rebranding initiative.

During the ceremony more than 60 applicants were sworn into the delayed entry program outside of the new office which expands the manning of traditional recruiting offices from commonly two recruiters to nine, regionalizing recruiting efforts.

Odessa Fielder, Fort Worth District Real Estate Recruiting and Housing Section anticipates that existing Air Force recruiting offices will be rebranded based on this and a prototype office recently accepted in Live Oak, Texas.

For the Corps the concept is not new said Fielder. "The Army started this concept with their 'pinnacle' offices in 2011. These offices are larger than the regular recruiting facilities ranging from nine to 15 recruiters for the region."

The Air Force's regional or "Hub" offices will absorb the one and two recruiter offices requiring the Corps to find larger spaces to accommodate recruiting teams from nine to 11 members.

The current recruiting model is based on one- or two-person offices where recruiters are separated from their teammates and flight chief; and are frequently away from their offices due to community engagement activities. This has led to a more expensive resource footprint and challenges with recruiter professional development and applicant access to a recruiter. The flight-centric concept will improve these areas.

Communication and teamwork had been essential throughout the design and construction of the new office. The Air Force provided the Corps with minimum requirements: types of rooms, square footage of those rooms, and the square footage needed per recruiter for the main office. Based on that, Sarah Watts, realty specialist, drew up several conceptual floor plans.

"The floor plan which was selected for construction was one which I drew based on input from the recruiting service," said Watts. "This floor plan allows for maximum circulation within the whole space, privacy for the conference room, secured access, and follows American

Disabilities Act requirements."

The recruiting service is constantly developing new and innovative ways of conducting business, especially in light of current budget constraints. With the need to operate with fewer resources, these consolidated offices are designed to strengthen the recruiting force while simultaneously requiring fewer resources to carry out the mission.

"This office completes the initial phase of the recruiting transformation that will ultimately provide better support to our future Airmen," said Air Force Col. Robert Borja, 369th Recruiting Group commander, based in San Antonio, Texas. "We will have more recruiter availability in the office and a flight chief on site to help with the professional development of our force."

Air Force Col. Robert Borja, commander, 369th Recruiting Group, based in San Antonio, Texas cuts the ribbon officially opening the new look Air Force Recruiting Service office in Austin, Texas.

Air Force applicants watch a recruiting video in the waiting area of the new, USACE-built Air Force Recruiting Service office in Austin, Texas.

Bob Portiss: Getting done what needs to be done

by Ross Adkins, Tulsa District Public Affairs

The transformation of Civil Works in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineer is not just about the Corps' efforts to meet the needs of this country. It is a team effort that includes the efforts of many stakeholders as well.

One of the target areas of civil works transformation is development of a long term strategy for our nation's infrastructure. In Tulsa District that includes the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System which is a part of our nation's inland waterways.

The waterway is a collection of 18 locks and dams spread over two Army Corps of Engineer Districts built more than 60 years ago and beginning to show their age.

With declining funding, new ways had to be found to keep the waterway a reliable and sustainable economic engine.

A name long associated with the local waterway, Robert W. "Bob" Portiss, director of the Port of Catoosa and key a stakeholder in the operation of the waterway saw a need for change.

Bob Portiss (Courtesy photo)

In discussions with the commanders and other stakeholders of the two districts, Portiss began drawing on his years of association with the inland waterway to begin addressing the changes needed.

The change, was a move away from doing business as individual locks and districts into doing business as a system.

Tulsa District's Program and Project Management's Civil Works Branch Chief, Mike Abate said, "Bob has been a great help in our Civil Works Transformation. Using his wealth of expertise and knowledge, he has helped us to prioritize the McClellan-Kerr waterway needs and change us into a system, rather than a string of locks on the river."

John Roberts, Chief of Tulsa Districts Project Management Division has known and worked with Portiss for many years. Roberts said, "Over the years, Bob has a developed a knack for bringing Federal, State and local entities together to find solutions to problems. He also has a real passion for getting things done. When Bob speaks, people listen."

Portiss, when asked about his role in bringing people together to make a change said, "Look, don't just single me out. There were a lot of people who worked hard to get where we are today. To me, it was a labor of love."

Roberts summed it up by saying, "In spite of his trying to deflect the well deserved praise, Bob does loves what he's doing. You have to remember, Bob goes about his business they way he goes about his life…. and he goes about both with unequaled passion. Bob's all about getting done what's needed to be done."

Tommy Schmidt: Remembering the life and legacy of a transformative engineer

by Martie Cenkci, SWD Public Affairs

The Corps of Engineers recently marked the passing of a major leader: Tommy Schmidt, former Southwestern Division Dam Safety Program Manager and senior Geotechnical Engineer. Schmidt passed away in Fort Worth on Aug. 16, about a year and a half after his retirement; he had provided outstanding service to the Corps of Engineers and the nation for almost four decades.

"Tommy Schmidt's impact on the Southwestern Division and the Corps was one of those long lasting impacts, the kind that continues for many years," said Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Kula, SWD commander. "His engineering and technical expertise, combined with his keen sense of how critical dam safety is to the Nation, made him an unparalleled expert whose advice was sought and followed.

Tommy Schmidt (Courtesy photo)

"He was extremely instrumental in the implementation of a new Dam Safety Production Center," Kula added. "This center streamlines the dam safety workload and will result in safer dams and a greater degree of public safety in the Southwestern Division footprint."

Schmidt retired in December 2011, after 38 years of service with the Corps. He held a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering and a Master of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Texas at Arlington. He served at SWD from 1994 until his retirement, and had served as a civil engineer with the Fort Worth District from 1973-1994.

"Tommy was one of the most influential people in the history of the Corps Dam Safety Program," said Mr. Eric Halpin, special assistant for Dam and Levee Safety at Headquarters U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. "He helped rebuild the Dam Safety Program and the Community of Practice through his work on the Dam Safety Steering Committee, the Dam Safety Senior Oversight Group, and the Dam Safety Policy and Procedures Team.

Schmidt was also the proponent and lead developer of the Dam Safety Program Management Tools, which answers many of the basic questions that were posed to the program over a decade ago. He recognized the need for a Dam Safety Scorecard to track the effectiveness of each district's Dam Safety Program. He developed and implemented the concept in the Southwestern Division and this process has now been adopted Corps-wide.

"Tommy was a kind and quiet man, providing thoughtful advice, backed by a great education, broad experience, and good "old school" smarts to all levels of the organization," Halpin continued. "When he spoke, we all stopped, listened, and learned something. His work helped change the very culture of the program and the agency, one where life safety is paramount and decisions are risk informed."

Halpin also announced that the Corps will officially honor Schmidt by renaming the annual USACE Dam Safety Award the "Tommy Schmidt Dam Safety Professional of the Year," creating an opportunity for people to be reminded of who Schmidt was and the incredible contributions he made and transformation he brought to the Corps of Engineers and the Nation.


Employee
Spotlight

Galveston District:
Kenneth Finley

By Galveston District Public Affairs

Q. What do you do in your current position:

A: As a Natural Resource Specialist (Ranger) DA Intern, I work with senior level rangers and staff to gain the knowledge and skills needed for this position. My duties include assisting in educating the visiting public on park purposes, conditions, policies, and regulations. I monitor park facilities and other areas for operational safety and ecosystem stability; assist in the patrols on project lands and waters to provide visitor protection and assistance; and interpret and enforce rules and regulations related to park management.

Kenneth Finley

Q: What do you enjoy most about working on your particular project(s)/ tasks?

A: I enjoy knowing that the projects and task that I am working on will lead to increased public relations and a better understanding of the Corps role here at the Wallisville Project.

Q: What's the most interesting thing you've encountered or who's the most interesting person you've worked with during your tenure at the Corps?

A: I have encountered many interesting things in my short time with the US Army Corps of Engineers. So to narrow it down is not a simple task, but if I had to choose one it would have to be just encountering a variety of different people on a daily basis. I meet all kinds of people with varying backgrounds, and from different parts of the world. Each day is different and you never know **who you will get** to meet.

Bio Stats

Current Title/Position: Natural Resource Specialist(Ranger) DA Intern
How long have you held this position?
4 months
How long have you been with the Galveston District?
1 month
Past Position(s)/Title(s): Summer Ranger out of the Russellvile Project Office for three summers, Little Rock District
Park Ranger out of Rough River Project Office for one summer, Louisville District

Q:What do you hope to gain from your Department of the Army intern experience?

A: I hope to gain full time employment that leads to a long career in doing what I love to do.

Q: Why did you choose this field?

A: Simply because I love being outside, and I love doing things that will give back to the public.

Tulsa District:
Joe Custer

By Kyle Dunlap, Public Affairs intern, Little Rock

Joe Custer

Q: What has been the most rewarding aspect of your job?

A: Being able to work on a large project, being able to make a difference to the public and our customers and doing the things that I think enhance the recreation aspect and enhance the Texoma project for all of our users. So, it's hard to pick out any one item that's been the most rewarding, but I would say just being able to work on a large project and make a difference in the facilities and make a difference in the things that people enjoy using on Lake Texoma.

Q: What was your experience in Washington D.C. like? What work did you do?

A: It was very interesting work. The experience was great. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity to be able to go and work in our headquarters division and work on the national policies and initiatives within multiple business lines, recreational, environmental and sustainability. So it was a great experience. I was able to take my family with me so they were able to enjoy Washington D.C. and all of the history that comes with it. It definitely brought about a lot of new perspectives on the Corps at the headquarters level and the MSC (Major Subordinate Command) level that I don't always get to see sitting in this particular chair where I'm at now.

Bio Stats

Position Title: Lake Manager of Lake Texoma
Years in Position: 5
Hobbies: Family time, skeet shooting, hunting and fishing

Q: How do you feel you can use your time in D.C. to serve the people of Lake Texoma?

A: One of the big things that you gain from these trips like this is that you build relationships and you build camaraderie with people at different levels, at headquarters and MSC levels, and all of those things you bring back home... So it's very interesting to be able to see and get that insight from that headquarters level and then bring that back home because you know where they are trying to get to with these different programs. So being able to bring back all that knowledge back home and apply that knowledge here is tremendous and I think it will serve Lake Texoma and will serve our customers tremendously in the long run.

Q: Is there anything else that you would like to add?

A: I would like to thank our leadership that I have in operations division and our commander for giving me the opportunity to be able to go to headquarters and do a career assignment like that. It's tremendous knowledge that I gained, and I think it will definitely benefit and serve the Corps well.

Little Rock District:
Russell Malahy

By Jay Woods, Little Rock District

Q: How were you chosen as the Water Safety Champion?

Three ladies, who will remain anonymous (they know who they are) approached me and coerced, hmmm, I mean, encouraged me to apply for the co-chair position because they could see potential in me. So I was voted in as co-chair and two years later rotated to the chair.

Q: What additional duties come with this responsibility?

Nearly 90 percent of the drownings at Corps-managed lakes could have been prevented if the victim was wearing a life jacket. So the main responsibility is to find ways to reduce the number of unnecessary deaths from drowning. Other than assisting the program manager with oversight, management, and directional guidance for the team, a major responsibility that I feel is important is to shine the light and brag on our excellent team members and other district employees in the water safety arena. These folks are the real champions. You cannot measure our success very accurately. It's hard to put a number on how many drowning didn't happen, so I feel it's important to constantly recognize their efforts.

Q: Do you take this role personally?

Absolutely! I take each water safety accident personally. I try to zero in on each case, target what went wrong and what could have been done to reach the victim before the tragedy to ultimately prevent it from occurring in the future.

Russell Malahy

Bio Stats

Official Position: Natural Resources Specialist/ SWL Water Safety Team Chair
Years with SWL: 3.5
Hometown: Fruitland, Mo.
Education: Bachelor's Degree Biology & Wildlife Management and Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement; Minor in General Agriculture

Q: What are your short and long term goals as water safety champion?

I want to bring new, innovative ideas and concepts to the district and nation. We've got to figure out how to reach our target demographic (18 to 35-year-old males) better. My goal is to figure out how to make water safety one of their priorities. One of the big challenges is figuring out where to reach them. Is it Facebook or Twitter or do they care about it there? Do we only have a few short minutes when they are filling out their Day-Use-Pass? One big goal is to find the "sweet spot," or the prime real-estate for a water safety message that will reach the bullet-proof male. We've also got to come up with messages that are gripping and unfortunately, tragic so we can reach folks. The challenge is getting these types of images approved.

Southwestern Division:
Kristi Thornton

By SWD Public Affairs

Q: Describe your position at SWD.

A: I am the Administrative Assistant for the Deputy Commander, Chief of Staff, and PAO. I also provide assistance to the National Staff when needed.

Kristi Thornton, left, with twin sister Misti Thornton (courtesy photo)

Q: Many times admin assistants get overlooked for the jobs they do, why are admin assistants so important to the day in and out operations of the office?

A: The admin assistants here take care of the little things. We often get to do the things that others don't want or like to do. Our jobs are to make others look good.

Q: You have an identical twin sister, what was it like growing up, did you two ever do a bait and switch?

A: Having an identical twin has always been interesting. We never have done a bait and switch, simply for the reason that if one of us got in trouble, the other did too. So, it didn't do either one of us any good to try to act like the other

Q: What's the best part about your job, the most challenging?

The best part of my job is my coworkers, the most challenging is trying to keep up with Jenny, (the commanders admin)

Bio Stats

Years at SWD – I've worked for the Army and the Corps for a year and a half now, however, I have a total of over 10 years with the federal government.
Hobbies- crocheting, spending time with my family, eating (not that you can tell), and riding horses.
Hometown – Crystal Springs, Miss.
Education/certifications – I have been taking general online classes for the past 2 years, working toward associates degree in business.

Fort Worth District:
Brandon Mobley

By Denisha Braxton, Fort Worth District

Q: What is your role at the Fort Worth District?

A: I am a Natural Resources Management Specialist in our Operations Division. My duties are specific to furthering our natural resource and recreation missions at our District lakes. I support our lake project staff primarily on environmental stewardship initiatives to include habitat and wildlife management, shoreline management activities and real estate requests, our hunting program, invasive species efforts, threatened and endangered species efforts and provide oversight on our programs and activities for compliance with our District policies, regulations as well as state and Federal law.

Q: What are some key initiatives that you are working? Why is it so important to the Corps' mission?

A: A multitude of initiatives comes to mind, especially in these changing times. Levels of service, budgets, dam safety, water safety, business lines, environmental and recreation efforts, partnerships, customer satisfaction …these all to me are key initiatives in one form or another. However, efforts towards invasive species for me, is also a significant key initiative. Invasive species in many ways negatively affect our ability to reach success in our missions. My job is to work with other Districts, Federal and state resource agencies, partners, and stakeholders to develop feasible solutions, educate and make sure we as an agency are not contributing to the proliferation of invasive species as a result of our activities.

Q: What are some of your day-to-day duties in the office?

A: I serve on a number of project related PDT's which at any given time have some component that I need to be engaged in to include meetings, conference calls, site visits, etc. I also coordinate with Real Estate, Planning, Environmental and Regulatory, Office of Counsel divisions while keeping leadership and my supervisors up to speed on critical efforts is a must. Being available to lake staff and fielding calls from the public also are part of my day-to-day duties.

Brandon Mobley

Q: Tell us about your most rewarding experience, your proudest moment, since joining the Fort Worth District.

A: It is rewarding to me to be team player and to be able to contribute in a positive way to not only our Natural Resources branch, but to the Fort Worth District as a whole. I am proud to serve on two national teams and be able to take that experience back to Fort Worth, facilitate solutions to our challenges and help us successfully further our mission.

Bio Stats

Position: Natural Resources Management Specialist
Years with the SWF: just under 10 yrs
Hometown: Crowley, Texas
Education: B.S. Animal Science, M.S. Agriculture,
Conservation Genetics, Tarleton State University
Hobbies: just hanging with my wife and daughter…we always seem to have something going on.

Pacesetter Points

Congratulations

Congratulations to the following Tulsa District employees: **Ashley Allinder**, selected for 18 month temporary, developmental assignment for SWT Chief, Military/Environmental Branch, PPMD, **Robert Steiner who was** selected as SWT Navigation System Operations Manager, Locks and Dams 14, 15, and 16., **Lisa Oxford** who was selected as the new SWT Program Analyst within E&C, Construction Branch, **Chris Strunk** selected as SWT Engineering Branch Structural Engineer, supporting three branch sections (Infrastructure, Military, and Civil) and **Paul Ellefson**, new SWT PCO team member.

Congratulations to **Rebecca Ward**, civil engineer, Fort Worth District on receiving the 2013 HENAAC Luminary Award.

Congratulations to Galveston District's **Pete Perez** on his promotion to the Senior Executive Service and selection to assume the role of regional business director at the Southwestern Division in Dallas.

Congratulations to Galveston's Deputy District Commander, **Lt. Col. Marty Maldonado** on being promoted to lieutenant colonel.

Robert "Ed" Morgan, P.E., from Galveston District was selected for the position of resident engineer in the Port Arthur Resident Office.

Ralph Steiner was selected to the permanent position of area engineer, Northern Area Office, Galveston District.

Rondal (Jason) Shreve from Galveston District completed the Army CP-12 Explosive Safety Certification (Level 1). He successfully completed all training requirements set forth in ASTM E2659-09 and AR 385-10.

Galveston District's, **Katie Parks** received an incentive award from the Alamo City Chapter of the American Society of Military Comptrollers (ASMC) for achieving the Department of Defense's Financial Manager Certification.

Colorado River Locks Operator **Rik Stanley** is the first lock operator in the USACE Galveston District to be a certified IMTS lock and dam operator after completing the IMTS Lock and Dam Training and Certification Program.

Franchelle Craft was selected to the permanent position of supervisory civil engineer in the Houston Resident Office.

Andria Davis a project manager in the Galveston District Regulatory Branch's Permit Evaluation Section received the Reserve Outstanding Junior Officer Award from the Reserve Officers Association for her outstanding work in the Coast Guard Reserve. She is a U.S. Coast Guard lieutenant.

Congratulations to **Walt Skierski,** SWDs Deputy Division Counsel. Walt has been selected by the Chief Counsel to receive the Bert Pettinato Award for Pride in Public Service. This Award recognizes a member of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Legal Services System who has demonstrated the ideals of "pride in public service" through leadership, concern for people, and a personal belief that Public Service is both a noble calling and a public trust.

Arrivals

Tulsa District would like to welcome the following employees: **Terry Rupe and Kent Bray**

Galveston District would like to welcome **Jon Plymal (redeployed), Carlos Tate (redeployed), Rikki Stanley, Prater Wesley and Brooks Anacker**

Welcome to Galveston District: **Brooks Anacker, Kyle Barnum, James Brewer, Robert Little, Luis Lopez (redeployed), Hans Miller, Leslie Olson, Wesley Prater, Samantha Wells (redeployed)**

Congratulations to **Brandee Wright** for being selected as a Park Contract Representative at the Millwood Tri Lakes Project Office, Little Rock District.

The Southwestern Division Office would like to welcome the following employees: **Beverly Martin, Josh Miller, Charissa Kelly, Harrison Sutcliffe, Raineye Patton, and Michael Zalesak**

Departures

Tulsa District would like to bid farewell to **Steve Chapman**, Operations Division Maintenance Manager, who retired, and **Nate Herring**, SWT public affairs office who has accepted a position with the Middle East District PAO.

Farewell to the following employees at Galveston District: **Jason Foltyn, Mark Garza, Carolyn Milton, Adrian Ramos, Desiree Wilson**

Fort Worth District would like to say goodbye and good luck to the following retiree's: **Billy Colbert, Chris Byrd, Charlie Burger and Joyce Johns.**

Good luck to the following SWDO employees who recently retired: **Terri Nolen, Larry Bogue and Bob McCollum.**

Goodbye and good luck to the following SWDO employees who recently departed: **Kim Sandifer and Bill Bowen**

Pete Perez appointed to Senior Executive Service

by Martie Cenkci, SWD Public Affairs

Pete G. Perez has been appointed to the Senior Executive Service by the Secretary of the Army and selected for the position of director of Regional Business for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern Division.

Perez, who is currently serving as the deputy district engineer for Programs and Project at the Southwestern Division's Galveston District, recently served in the Regional Business position as the acting Director. His appointment and selection was announced Sept. 4 by Lt. Gen. Thomas P. Bostick, Army Chief of Engineers and Commanding General of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

"Mr. Perez brings with him over 27 years of exceptional engineering management expertise," Bostick said. "Since August 2011, Mr. Perez has served as the Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management for the Galveston District, overseeing Civil Works and International and Interagency Support services, to include the navigation and Civil Works planning efforts in support of the Texas Gulf Coast."

In his new position, Perez will manage the operations of the Regional Business Center and oversee three divisions: the Business Technical Division, Business Management Division, and Business Resources Division. He will be the lead liaison on efforts between regional boards and functional boards synchronizing activities with a particular focus on regional issues.

Brig. Gen. Thomas W. Kula, SWD commander, said, "We are quite pleased and excited that Mr. Perez will be returning to SWD to lead the Regional Business Directorate. His executive and management skills, coupled with his passion for serving this Nation, will result in huge dividends for our Division as well as the customers and stakeholders we serve."

Perez previously served as the chief of the Galveston District's Engineering and Construction Division. While chief, Perez served an eight-month tour in Afghanistan Engineer District-South. Perez was also the former chief of Construction Operations at the Alaska District and was an engineer in the USACE Far East District in Korea. He began his career with the Corps as a project engineer in the Fort Worth District's San Antonio Area Office.

"I look forward to rejoining SWD and leading the great team that comprises the Regional Business

Directorate," Perez said. "Working together, we can accomplish much to address the challenges facing the Army Corps of Engineers and the Nation."

A registered professional engineer in the State of Texas, Perez earned a Bachelor of Science in civil engineering in 1985 from Texas A&M University, a Master of Science in 1997 from the University of Texas at San Antonio in Environmental Management, and is Defense Acquisition Workforce Improvement Act Level II certified. He is also Facilities Engineering Level III certified.

In 2002, Perez was recognized with the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Award, earned a 2002 Professional Achievement Award from Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Conference, received a Department of the Army Superior Civilian Award in 2008 and 2010, and earned the prestigious Bronze de Fleury Medal in 2008.

The Senior Executive Service is comprised of the men and women serving as the civilian executives of the Federal Government. They hold the key positions just below the top Presidential appointees, and are the major link between the Presidential Appointees and the rest of the Federal workforce. The Senior Executive Service was established in 1979 as a result of the Civil Service Reform Act of 1978.