Open Channels
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Agencies collaborate to solve problems on the Mississippi River

by Cpt. Tim Tracy
Aide-de-Camp to MVD Commander

Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca (commander of the Mississippi Valley Division and president of the Mississippi River Commission), Tom Graziano (chief of staff for the National Weather Service) and Rear Adm. Gerd Gland (director of NOAA's Office of Coast Survey, U.S. National Hydrographer and commissioner on the Mississippi River Commission) discuss the future of the National Water Center in Tuscaloosa, Ala.

The Mississippi Valley Division recently participated in an interagency integration tour with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), private industry and the Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC).

Leaders from across these, and many other, agencies have recognized the need to increase collaboration. Mississippi Valley Division Commander Brigadier General Duke DeLuca put it well, "When agencies don't collaborate, when they don't share data and conclusions, the government inevitably will pay for the same work two or three times, and often more. That's what we're trying to prevent."

Current pressing issues, such as relative sea level rise, the increasing economic significance of the Mississippi River and aging infrastructure make the need for interagency collaboration even more apparent. During this three-day collaborative venture, the leadership from all parties answered the call.

The effort began with a symposium at NOAA's new National Water Center (NWC), recently built on campus at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

There they discussed the future role the NWC could play in collaboration between agencies. While there is considerable flexibility in the development of the NWC's objectives as NOAA seeks to accommodate partners, for now its mission remains that

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Inside this issue...

Newest Corps vessel honors river innovator

by Romanda Walker
St. Louis District PAO

Mentor, river man, devoted family man… innovator. These are all words used to describe the late Thomas George, master of the St. Louis District U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Dredge *POTTER.*

During his time with Corps, George worked diligently to bring to life an innovation that will improve versatility and provide ecological benefits from routine maintenance dredging on the Mississippi River. The St. Louis District team recognized his efforts when the motor vessel *THOMAS N. GEORGE*, a specialized barge that completed his vision, was christened in a ceremony July 15 on the Mississippi River at the Corps' St. Louis Service Base.

Each year dredging is performed on the Mississippi River in order to maintain the congressionally mandated depth of nine feet for river traffic. Historically, dredged material placement locations and options have been limited by both equipment constraints and cost.

Starting as a drawing on a napkin, early designs for the specialized spill barge was conceived by George, who had a vision of using a flexible floating dredge pipeline with the Corps' dustpan dredges. His colleagues at the St. Louis District Service Base credit him with moving his concept to reality through a mix of tenacity, creativity and decades of experience on the river.

"This was his vision, he is totally linked to it in every way," Jared Schmidt project engineer with the St. Louis District said. "This is more than a great tool for the Corps. To us, this is Thomas George."

When feasible, dredged material is recycled for beneficial uses within the river. Reuse is the preferred approach by the Corps of Engineers, and the St. Louis District is always seeking out innovative and creative ways to accomplish this task.

"Our partners and stakeholders have challenged us to find more ways to reuse dredged material in an environmentally friendly way," said Brian Johnson, biologist and chief of the Environmental Compliance Branch with the St. Louis District.

Flexible pipe dredging is more efficient and faster than using a

The Corps' St. Louis District team recognized Thomas George's efforts when the M/V Thomas N. George, a specialized barge that completes his vision, was christened in a ceremony July 15 on the Mississippi River at the Corps' St. Louis Service Base.
(U.S. Army Corps of Engineers St. Louis District photo)

(See "Corps vessel" on next page)

Corps vessel (continued)

traditional rigid pipe which limits the opportunity to reuse the dredged material, due to the rigid metal disposal pipe that is used.

"Normally dredged material is side-cast along the main channel border in a linear fashion, resulting in a long, narrow disposal bar that is limited in size, elevation and location," Lance Engle dredge manager with the St. Louis District explained.

The pipe's flexibility allows the dredged material to be placed independently of the dredge as it moves to avoid fleeting areas and allow for more versatility around well-used areas of the river. This also allows material to build up to create sandbars and island habitats in various shapes, sizes and elevations in the Middle Mississippi River while maintaining the navigation channel.

"The flexible floating dredge pipe provides the St. Louis District opportunities to create a diversity of aquatic habitats such as sand islands and shallow water habitats in areas where it may not be possible without the use of dredged material," Johnson said.

Designed and constructed entirely by the St. Louis District's Service Base team, the completion of the Spill Barge *THOMAS GEORGE*, is a tribute to their departed friend and leader.

Randy Jowers, captain of the Dredge Potter, hands roses to Dana George, wife of Thomas George.

"It's sad to think that he is not here to see it deployed, but seeing his vision complete and knowing he had a hand in it, that's what's so special about this," Schmidt said. "It's a promised fulfilled to him from everyone at the Service Base."

George's service with the Corps of Engineers spanned more than two decades. He previously served in the Memphis District, working aboard the dredge *BURGESS*, dredge *HURLEY* and motor vessel *MISSISSIPPI*. Before coming to the Corps, he worked in the river towing industry beginning in 1974 for Brent Towing Company. He famously served as navigator on three Mississippi River Challenge Races from New Orleans to St. Louis. His teams – led by Mike Reagan (son of the late President Ronald Reagan), actor Don Johnson and inventor Howard Arneson – always won, each time setting a new speed record. Arneson credited his win directly to George's expert navigation of the river.

Thomas is survived by his wife Dana Lyles George and daughters Emma Katherine George and Kayla Louise George Legons.

"Thomas George was an innovative and respected part of the Mississippi River community," said Col. Anthony Mitchell, commander of the St. Louis District. "The new vessel named in his honor realizes his vision and reflects the influence and impact he had on the Corps and the nation."

The vessel bearing the name of *THOMAS N. GEORGE* will carry on the legacy of its namesake as it benefits the Mississippi River and those who depend on it.

Blessing of the fleet

by Shirley Smith
Vicksburg District PAO

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Vicksburg District's Mat Sinking Unit (MSU) left the harbor for its annual revetment season on July 9. The district hosted a Blessing of the Fleet ceremony at the Vicksburg City Water Front as the MSU departed.

The ceremony was the first blessing of this fleet which was held during a rainy morning aboard the Corps' inspection barge. Rev. Sam Godfrey, rector of a local church, and Col. Mark Mitera, an Army chaplain, read the blessings. "We bless the crews and their families as they wait for their return," Rev. Godfrey stated. The blessing involved two different kinds of showers – the steady stream of water from a deck gun atop a waterfront bulkhead and, of course, the rain.

A tradition that dates back to medieval times, the Blessing of the Fleet originally started in early European fishing communities. A blessing bestowed by a local priest was meant to ask for an abundant and safe season.

Attendees included District Commander Col. John W. Cross, and former District Commander Col. John W. Eckstein (now commander at the Engineer Research and Development Center) Vicksburg Mayor George Flaggs, city aldermen, other local officials, district team members and members of the public.

The MSU is scheduled to lay concrete mats along areas of the of the lower Mississippi River banks that were left uncovered late last year due to high water. The high water caused the revetment season to end about two months earlier than scheduled.

Photo by Oscar Reihsmann, ERDC

This year, this talented and unique crew is expected to place 200,000 concrete squares, or enough to pave about 80 miles of highway. Work began at Kemp Bend, near St. Joseph, La., and will move down river to New Orleans.

The MSU is the only one of its kind in the world and performs one of the most important jobs in the Corps' river stabilization program. This unique one-of-a-kind crew places articulated concrete mats along the river banks of the Mississippi River to control erosion.

Its fleet consists of towboats, quarter boats and a dredge, including the motor vessels *BENYAURD*, *WILLIAM JAMES*, and *HARRISON*. The MSU is known as a floating city that houses and feeds its employees and has the capability to provide all of the electricity and potable water needed.

Inland waterway navigation is a crucial mission for the Corps. The MSU's responsibilities are to maintain more than 800 miles of navigable channels and harbors to ensure safe, cost-effective, dependable and environmentally sustainable transportation of vessels within our country's inland waterways.

Engineering Ecosystem Restoration - A Partnership Approach

by DeAnna Prestwood (MVD) & Angeline Rodgers (LMRCC)

In the mid-1980s the Mississippi Valley Division began incorporating environmental features into various civil work projects; however, the highest priorities were navigation, flood damage reduction and watershed planning. Through the years the Corps recognized the importance of ecosystem restoration and in 2003 designated it as one of the Civil Works program's top four mission priorities. Partnerships are key to this recognition and in carrying out the restoration mission.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Southeast Region, Mississippi River Trust and Lower Mississippi River Conservation Committee (LMRCC) have been working together to improve habitat for species in the lower Mississippi River, without compromising the vitally important navigation and flood risk reduction systems.

Notch being constructed.

The LMRCC is a coalition of 12 state natural resource conservation and environmental quality agencies in Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri and Tennessee. There are several federal cooperating agencies and USFWS provides staff and support to the LMRCC. Formed in 1994, the LMRCC is dedicated to conserving the natural resources of the lower Mississippi River floodplain.

In 2000, the LMRCC, USACE and other partners outlined strategies for restoring aquatic resources within the 2.5 million-acre active floodplain from Cairo, Ill., to Head of Passes in the Gulf of Mexico. Restoring aquatic habitat and biological resources was one of the goals.

From 2001 to 2004 LMRCC hosted state-level planning meetings for watershed partners to identify projects that would improve aquatic habitat and enhance public access to river habitats. Through this process, a total of 239 projects were identified and rolled into "Restoring America's Greatest River" plan.

Projects were selected to enhance habitat complexity in the main channel but also to restore floodplain hydrology and connectivity between the river and its floodplain. Restoration of secondary channels was selected as a high priority and the USACE Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) developed a ranking system for the proposed work by establishing an index of habitat quality. Projects were ranked according to how they improve habitat quality and their cost-effectiveness; this information is useful for project selection.

Secondary channels, also called abandoned channels, side channels or chutes, are associated with areas of sand and gravel and are an important component of the lower Mississippi River habitats as they support a diverse assemblage of aquatic species.

Through authorization of the Mississippi River and Tributaries project in 1928, the Corps began constructing dikes along the river and in secondary channels. Dikes are important river training structures used by the Corps' Channel Improvement Program to direct water flows into the navigation channel during lower river stages.

(See "Ecosystem" on next page)

Ecosystem (continued)

These stone structures are constructed perpendicular from the river bank to the main channel and increase current velocity, thereby increasing sediment transport to maintain a nine-foot channel for safe navigation. A series of dikes, or dike field, are typically constructed and the slack water between the dikes results in sediment deposition, creating sandbars. An additional consequence of dike construction is the disconnection of side channels from the main channel and loss of aquatic habitat during low river stages. To counteract the loss of aquatic habitat, a dike notch can be constructed to provide more permanent flow to secondary channels. A notch, or low weir section, is constructed by removing a trapezoidal section of stone from the existing dike.

Existing dike.

Notch completed.

Site reconnaissance, aerial photography and hydrographic surveys are used to determine appropriate location of notches. The Corps provides engineering design and technical assistance during preconstruction and construction. Additionally, they provide construction oversight.

The LMRCC secures all necessary permits for regulatory compliance, coordinates all activities and procures the construction contract. Mississippi River Trust provides support for project implementation. Funding for the construction is provided by the USFWS through the Fish Passage program.

Annually, the Vicksburg District Channel Improvement Team and LMRCC meet to evaluate priority reaches in the Vicksburg District area of response. The team reviews all available information to determine potential projects. In 2013, the district identified two reaches, Catfish Point at River Mile 570L and Below Prentiss at River Mile 580L, on which to focus restoration efforts that year.

In October 2011, the Vicksburg District partnered with LMRCC to complete a restoration project at Island 70 (River Mile 610L) near Dennis Landing. Through this project, the notching restored flow to over three miles of secondary channel habitat.

In March of 2009, fish sampling was performed in this area, at the time catfish were captured, but there was no evidence of sturgeon. However, in March of 2012 sampling was performed in the same area using the same methods; sholvenose sturgeon and pallid sturgeon were captured, and the species richness had increased. These sampling efforts show that the dike notching program has positive benefits to the aquatic ecosystem.

The Vicksburg District has approximately 75 dike notches in their area of response, and is planning future work at Boundurant Towhead at River Mile 395R near St. Joseph, La., and Wilson Point at River Mile 500R near Lake Providence, La.

Since 2006, the LMRCC, the Corps and USFWS have restored more than 55 miles of secondary channel habitat in the lower Mississippi River.

Contributing to this article were Steve Coleman, David Mooney and Charles Stokes Jr.

Photos by Bruce Reid and Ray Emerson.

Big River Initiative

A bold initiative to connect New Orleans to Minneapolis via a walking and biking path atop some 3,000 miles of Mississippi River levees could become an international tourism draw for the Mississippi River and Vicksburg.

The Big River Initiative is now listed by the National Geographic Society as a world-class attraction that is scheduled to open sections of river levee and the Memphis Harahan Bridge in March 2016. Dozens of Levee District management organizations will be contacted to participate in the strategic tourism initiative, one that will eventually allow biking and hiking enthusiasts to trek the entire length of the Mississippi River.

The National Geographic Society is also partnering with Big River Initiative organizers to create map guides that highlight scenic and historic places along the river. Vicksburg is certain to be a key location due the city's dedication to preserving our region's history.

Although many approvals remain, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is supportive of all initiatives that highlight the tremendous value the levee system provides to our nation. During the Great 2011 Flood alone, the levees helped prevent more than $230 billion in flood damages to the river valley, including homes, farms, businesses and transportation infrastructure.

If all goes according to plan, tourists from around the world will have a first class bicycling parkway and they will be able to roll alongside the river, as well as roll with it.

Mississippi River mainline levee.

MVD Change of Command

The Mississippi Valley Division will bid farewell to current commander, Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca, in a formal change of command ceremony Friday, August 29.

Brig. Gen. (P) Michael C. Wehr will become the division's 38th commander at the 10:00 a.m. ceremony scheduled to take place in the Vicksburg Convention Center. The ceremony will be officiated by Chief of Engineers Lieutenant General Thomas Bostick.

DeLuca, MVD commander and president-designee of the Mississippi River Commission since September 2013, will be retiring after more than 32 years of service with the United States Army.

Wehr comes to Vicksburg from Afghanistan where he served as director of the Joint Engineering Directorate, United States Forces-Afghanistan, and commander of the Transatlantic Division (Forward), Afghanistan. He also served as Vicksburg District commander from June 2007 to December 2009.

Interagency (continued)

"*The National Water Center collaboratively researches, develops and delivers state-of-the science National hydrologic analyses, forecast information, data, decision-support services and guidance to support and inform essential emergency services and water management decisions. Through partnerships it integrates and supports consistent water prediction activities from global to local levels.*"

NOAA hopes to achieve full operating capability with 244 full-time employees by 2024.

From Tuscaloosa the team headed to Mississippi Valley Division headquarters in Vicksburg, with a goal of understanding better the respective missions of the division and ERDC, as well as the dynamic relationship between the two organizations.

Following presentations from Brig. Gen. DeLuca, the Modeling, Mapping and Consequences Center and Dr. Barb Kleiss (director of Science and Technology at MVD), the party moved to ERDC where they met with ERDC leadership, Dr. Jeff Holland and Col. Jeff Eckstein, and toured the Coastal and Hydraulics and Environmental laboratories. Presentations at ERDC included an overview of advances in storm surge modeling, recent developments in river modeling (specifically on the Mississippi River), a visit to the Coastal and Hydraulics lab ship simulator, a discussion of issues associated with harmful algal blooms and a tour of the fisheries laboratory emphasizing involvement with estuarine species and ecological relationships to river hydrology. Finally, having seen NOAA's burgeoning science center in Tuscaloosa and USACE's facilities in Vicksburg, the group made its way to the southernmost stretch of the Mississippi River as it flows by Venice, La., and into the Gulf of Mexico.

Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca, commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, briefs representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the U.S. Geological Survey and private industry on the Mississippi Valley Division and its missions. *Photo by Alfred Dulaney, Vicksburg District*

(See "Interagency" on next page)

A river pilot's view as seen from the ship simulator at the Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory located at the Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg, Miss. *Photo by Alfred Dulaney*

Interagency (continued)

Stephen Gambrell, director of the Mississippi River Commission, called this leg "a reality check for scientists and other leaders. When you are physically on the channel from a ship pilot's perspective and have to navigate alongside the massive commercial ships with valuable quantities of goods with the conditions in the Southwest Pass, you gain a new appreciation for how important our work is for the nation's future and world trade."

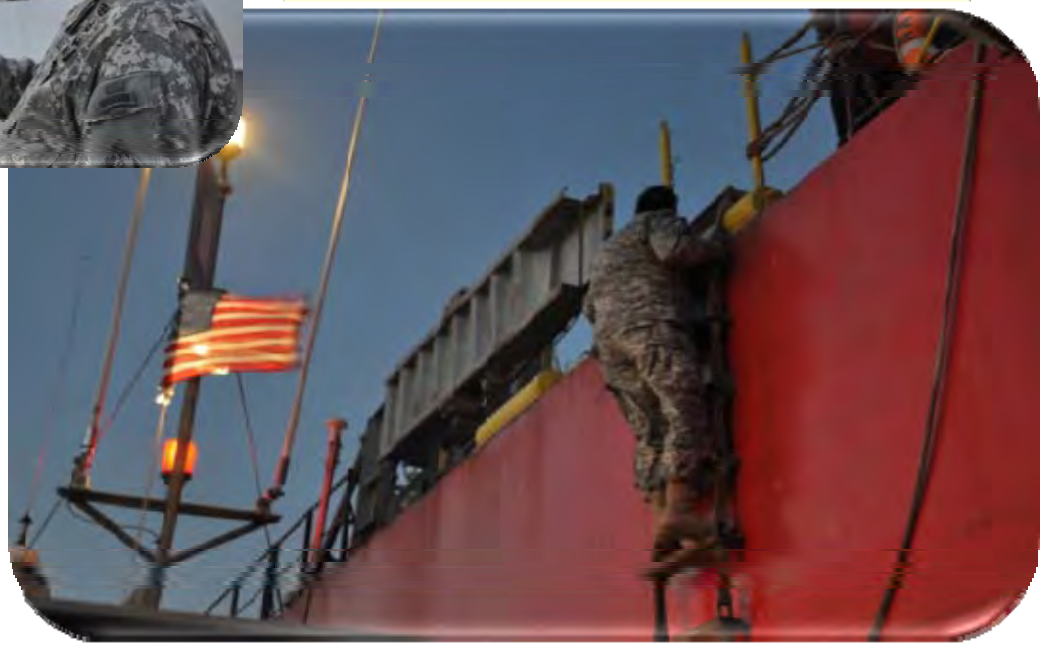
In groups of four, the ensemble boarded ocean-going, commercial vessels as they passed by Venice on their way to the Gulf. This involved pulling alongside the moving ships and climbing a rope ladder up and over the vessel's hull, then doing the same in open water to disembark.

Moving down the channel, pilots explained their work to the travelers, in addition to discussing changing circumstances on the river and how diversions have inadvertently affected the channel. On their way out to sea, the team passed lighthouses built in 1839 and 1871, recreational boaters and fisherman, several commercial port facilities and MVD's dredge WHEELER (the largest hopper dredge in the Corps of Engineers) hard at work at the Head of Passes.

The inspection at Southwest Pass proved invaluable to all. Dr. Barb Kleiss commented that "Viewing Southwest Pass from the vantage point of a tall ship reinforced the fact that the banks of the pass are eroding, subsiding and are narrow and fragile. You also get a new perspective on just how much water is leaving the lower river from the various passes and channels." It is observations like this that energized both parties, as they returned to their home stations to continue their work and service to

ABOVE: Brig. Gen. Duke DeLuca (right), commander of the Mississippi Valley Division, and Captain Lorino, president of the Associated Branch Pilots, discuss navigation challenges aboard the Navios Vector in the Southwest Pass.

BG Duke DeLuca climbs the hull of Navios Vector in the early morning hours of July 30th to inspect the Southwest Pass with leadership from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.



Historic rainfall leads to upper Mississippi flooding

Patrick Moes (St. Paul PAO), Sue Casseau, Mike Petersen (St. Louis PAO) and Samantha Heilig (Rock Island PAO) contributed to this article.

Heavy rainfall across much of the Upper Midwest in June and July (three times greater than normal in parts of Minnesota and Iowa, with an historic 10 inches of rain falling on June 18th) caused flooding in many of the Mississippi Valley Division's river basins and filled Corps reservoirs to near capacity. The flooding lasted through early July when it finally crested in Missouri.

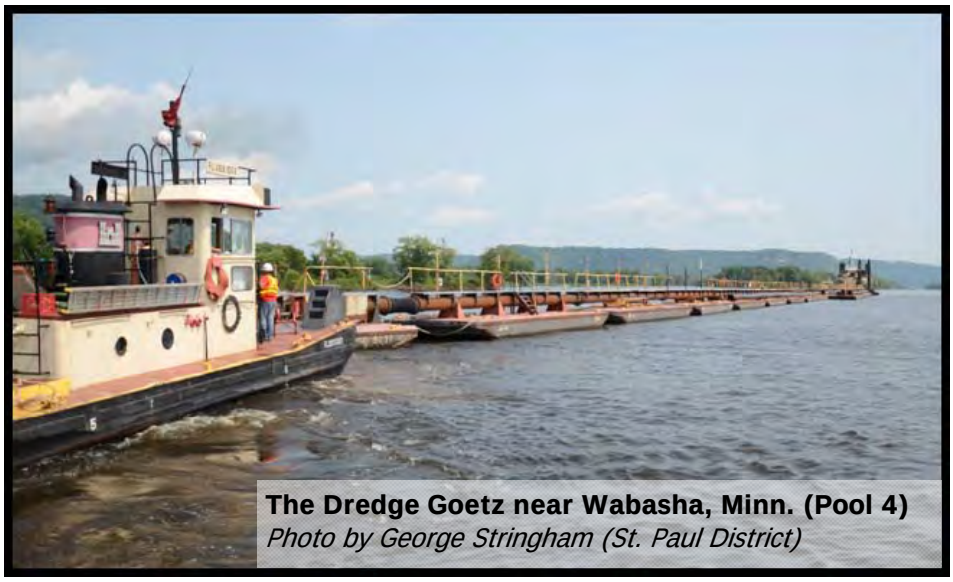
St. Paul, Rock Island and St. Louis districts all activated their readiness operations centers during the unusual summer flooding. Each district also offered technical advice with St. Louis District issuing 218,000 sandbags and 218 rolls of poly to assist communities. Most of the lands flooded were agricultural and none of the levees in the federal risk reduction system were overtopped.

Navigation suffered the most from the flooding, with hundreds of barges delayed for more than a week when the locks between Minneapolis, Minn., and St. Louis, Mo., could not be operated due to the high water. During the height of the flood, nine locks (numbers 16-25) were closed due high water (see graphic on next page).

Additionally, the St. Paul District completed a massive effort August 7th to dredge silt and sand deposits from Lock Pool 4. The district employed four dredges to clear the deposits and they are now busy clearing other clogged stretches of the upper river.

Another negative side effect of the flooding is the large amounts of debris that gets flushed along the banks of the Mississippi and its many tributaries. The lock and dam system wasn't designed to control flooding, so during high water the gates at each dam are opened wide to allow water and debris to move though the system as efficiently as possible. This concept works for allowing large

(See "Flooding" on next page)



The Dredge Goetz near Wabasha, Minn. (Pool 4)
Photo by George Stringham (St. Paul District)

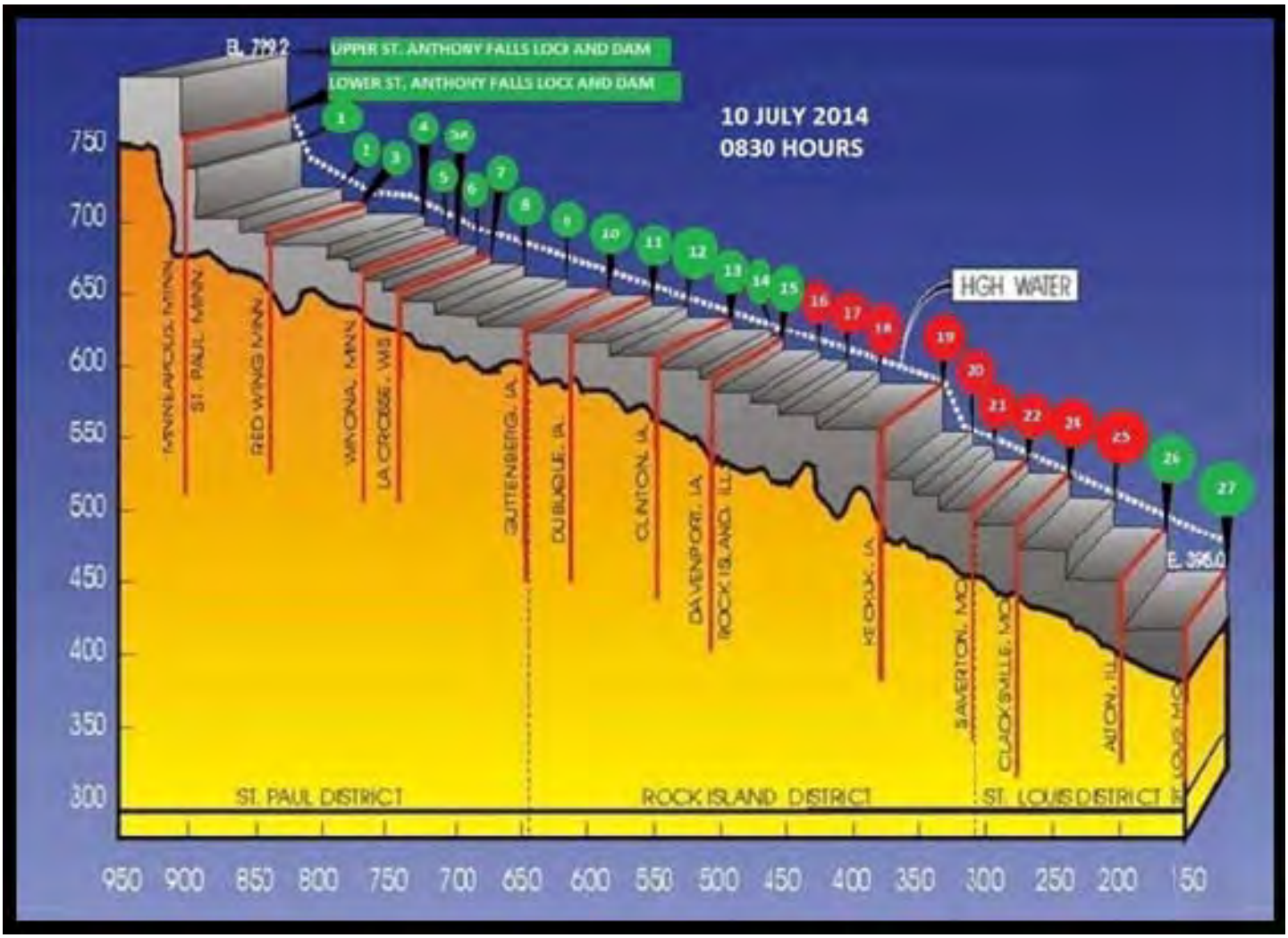
Debris buildup behind a St. Paul District lock. *Photo by Patrick Moes (St. Paul District)*

Flooding (continued)

trees and other items to move past the gates on the dam but doesn't help to prevent a buildup behind the gates of the lock.

On a positive note, the deluge ended the drought for the upper Midwest.

Mississippi River flooding at St. Paul, Minn.
Photo by Patrick Moes (St. Paul District)



Fraud unit saves money, helps USACE Build Strong

Dedicated to catching fakers who are diverting money intended for civil works construction projects, the Fraud Investigation Unit (FIU) is having another great year protecting the integrity of the workers compensation system. Based in Vicksburg, the unit's excellent success rate is also catching the attention of Big Army, and the potential for future annual savings could extend into the tens of millions of dollars for taxpayers.

The Federal Employees Compensation Act provides medical and compensation benefits to Corps employees who are injured in the line of duty. Most program participants are honest and deserving of help, and they often come back to work if they are able to recover from their serious injuries.

Unfortunately, there are also people who take advantage of the generous system, one that pays up to 75 percent of an employee's salary tax free.

Created to stem the flow of funds into undeserving pockets, the FIU has saved taxpayers over $75 million since its creation in 1995. Currently, the FIU is reviewing 65 cases for USACE, and the savings this year alone from successful investigations is almost $6 million.

"The primary goal of the program is to help commanders bring healthy employees back to work," said FIU Operations Officer, John Kisner.

"Our next goal is to remove undeserving individuals from the program," Kisner added. If the fraud is bad enough, the unit's investigation can lead to criminal prosecution.

"Our fraud team includes six highly specialized contractors who have served in many law enforcement roles during their careers," Kisner said.

"Every one of our agents is committed to detecting and stopping fraudulent activity, because not only does it help the Corps, it also helps our nation," he added.

Fraud impacts everyone in our organization and it is every employee's responsibility to report any incident, no matter how small or insignificant it may seem. To report suspected workers compensation fraud, contact the investigation unit through the Chief of Security and Law Enforcement, Carol Bridges, who is also the national fraud program manager for the Corps.

You can reach Carol at 601-631-7281, or by email at carol.bridges@usace.army.mil, or you can call the fraud hotline at 601-631-5212.

Welcome Aboard!

Lt. Col. (P) Torrey A. DiCiro assumed the duties of deputy commander, Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg, Miss., on July 9. He also serves as secretary of the Mississippi River Commission. He came to MVD from Joint Base Lewis McChord, Wash., where he served two years as deputy commander for the 555th Engineer Brigade. Prior to that he was commander of the Corps' San Francisco District.

DiCiro was commissioned a second lieutenant after earning a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., in 1993. He earned master's degrees in civil engineering and business administration from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 2001.

His military education includes U.S. Army Ranger, Sapper, Airborne and Air Assault, and Jumpmaster courses, the Engineer Officer's Basic and Advanced Courses and the Command and General Staff College. DiCiro is a registered professional engineer in the state of Missouri and a project management professional.

Ayaan Arrington
USACE Logistics Agency
Regional Property Book Officer

I am originally from Detroit, Mich., and I am married with four children. I am a combat veteran with 18 years of federal service. I served eight years in the U.S. Army serving at multiple duty stations, working as the property book non-commissioned officer in charge for the 116th Military Intelligence Brigade at Fort Gordon, Ga.; headquarters supply sergeant for the 502nd Military Intelligence Brigade in Yongsan, Korea; headquarters supply sergeant for Division Artillery at Fort Stewart, Ga.; and E. Company supply sergeant for the 1st Armor Training Brigade at Fort Knox, Ky. I deployed to Iraq in 2003 with the 3rd ID (Rock of the Marne) and participated in Operation Enduring Iraqi Freedom.

As a civil service employee, I have worked for the 1st Army Training Brigade as a supply clerk in the S4 office at Fort Knox, Ky.; supply technician with Arkansas National Guard; and property book officer for USACE Pacific Ocean Division. I also spent a short period of time working as a defense contractor for Mantech where I ran the Property Book Office as part of the Left Behind Equipment Program. I have worked my way up the career ladder to my dream job as a property book officer. I am very honored to serve as the PBO for MVD and can't wait to get to work.

Cpt. Correy Elder
Readiness and Contingency Operations
Operations Officer

I have twenty years of military service that includes the Mississippi Army National Guard and United States Army Reserve. As a prior enlisted Soldier and commissioned in 2000 through the Officer Candidate School, I have served in multiple areas of emphasis as an communication specialist, air defense officer in the national Capital region, logistics officer in Q-West Iraq, mobilization operations officer for Camp Shelby, liaison officer in charge, Warrior Transition company commander and battalion executive officer - all with the 177th Armored Brigade.

I have an associate's degree in science and technology and a bachelor's degree with a concentration in biology.

I am also a 2013 Mississippi Real Estate Training Institute graduate serving in the Jackson, Miss., area.

I am a resident of Madison, Miss., where I live with my wife, TaMarah, a daughter, Corie, and three sons, DeAndre, Donavon and Correy II.

Alicia Bounds pushes past the pain to conquer Warrior's Dash

Alicia Bounds knows no bounds when challenging her body, mind and spirit to overcome extreme obstacles that make the Warrior Dash one of the toughest running events in the world.

Alicia, a procurement analyst for the MVD Contracting Office, said she participates in the Warrior Dash to support St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, to get in great shape for the summer months and to claim a really cool warrior-style helmet.

The grueling race features a fierce 3-4 mile course with 12 extreme obstacles, including running through fire, crawling under barbed -wire, tunneling through mud as thick as peanut butter and climbing steep walls covered with mud, sweat and tears.

"The mud is so thick, you have to secure your shoes with duck tape, or they will get pulled right off," Alicia said.

After conquering the "Battle-ground," Warriors then celebrate with turkey legs, beer steins and live music at a post-race party where participants party like Vikings about to raid an English castle.

"Although the race is tough, it's a great way to build camaraderie," Alicia said. "Not only are you raising money for a wonderful cause, you are also pushing yourself to be a better athlete." To see a video of the event, visit https://www.warriordash.com/

Open Channels

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