



US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Vicksburg District

THE Water's Edge

Spring 2010

Earth Day

Progress of access road construction at ERDC
Update on Mississippi River Museum

THE Water's Edge

Spring 2010

Contents



**US Army Corps
of Engineers®**

News magazine of the
Vicksburg District
U. S. Army Corps of Engineers

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To teammates of the Vicksburg District...

I want to thank all of you for taking your time to show me around the District. I have been to the projects in Mississippi, Arkansas, and most of Louisiana. I am impressed by the variety of missions we execute and the positive attitudes of everyone involved. We will continue with a busy summer of activity with executing the ARRA contracts, preparing the FY11 operating budget, and reviewing our Operations Plan in addition to routine operations.

Safety continues to be a concern of mine. We need everybody on our construction sites to be vigilant. There are risks associated with every construction and maintenance project we have, even though it may seem routine. Every time I walk onto a site, I think I'm the person most at risk for an accident. Within the office place, we need to look at common hazards. Are you stacking boxes and books on top of cabinets just waiting for a fall? How about those extension cords and computer cables? Don't be the next person to trip!

We recently reviewed our Operations Plan and I want to share our progress. The design for the Operations Plan was to identify certain actions that, if achieved, move us from good to great. The Operations Plan does not capture everything we do. There are still numerous actions that we need to execute to standard as part of our routine business. We did well meeting the goals associated with our civil works and regulatory surveys and we are

well on our way to achieving regional interdependence. The regional planning and real estate realignment are on track. We continue to struggle with our Overseas Contingency Operations support. We have about 10 folks volunteering to deploy but we are having trouble matching skills to available jobs. David Tate and Daniel Carney join Ed Claypool and Jason Motherhead as our current deployees. Darrel Johnson and Vince Kirtley recently returned; I thank them both and their families for their sacrifices.

The one systemic problem area we have that covers several items is the lack of specifying how we will achieve the goal. An example is our new employee orientation, which includes very important classes. We are not identifying each person that needs to attend the classes, insuring the supervisors have cleared the work

schedule, and following up with the new employee to see that his/her needs were met by the training. If you do not know how you fit in, we need to help you do that. Once you can identify a specific task that achieves a goal, you will be able to help the District support the Division and the Headquarters in their mission accomplishment.

By June, we all should have identified what specific action we are taking to achieve one of the objectives in the Operations Plan. Do not make this harder than it needs to be. Pick one item and continue to do your normal job. Congratulations to the Leadership Development Program class of 2010. If you have signed up for a response team or a PRT, stay ready.

Thank you all for your service to our Nation!

Colonel Jeffrey R. Eckstein

Supporting Tasks

- 1 Improve Emergency Response (1a.1) Jonathan Pennington
- 2 Enable Volunteers for GWOT/OCO (1c.1) LTC Raimondo
- 3 Drive Regional Interdependence Among Districts (2a.2) Robert Wood
- 4 Efficiently and Safely Deliver Quality E&C Products Resulting in Timely Projects (2a.2,2d.1) MAJ McRae
- 5 Deliver the Lakes, Rivers, Regulatory Missions (2c.1, 3c.1) Jimmy Waddle
- 6 Assess current status of relationships with local and regional stakeholders and develop/execute plan of action to improve relationships (2b.1) MAJ McRae
- 7 Build and Sustain a World Class Civilian Workforce (4a.1) Tim Shows
- 8 Strategic Communication (4b.1) Frank Worley
- 9 Improve Accuracy of P-2 Data (4c.1) Doug Kamien
- 10 Build the Bench (4d.1, 4d.2) MAJ McRae
- 11 New Employee Orientation Program (4d.1) Doug Kamien

● GREEN ● AMBER ● RED

2010 Vicksburg District OPERATIONS PLAN

US Army Corps of Engineers®
Vicksburg District

District honors Earth Day with varied activities

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO

PHOTOS BY ALFRED DULANEY AND KAVANAUGH BREAZEALE

Have you ever walked in a forest, or along a lakeside, or strolled in a park, and noticed the beauty of it all? Well, sometimes Mother Nature needs help in maintaining her beauty, and that is where the Corps plays a major role. The Corps strives to make environmental protection a part of our daily lives.

April 22nd marked the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, a day designed to inspire awareness and appreciation for the earth's environment. Some team members at the District made a personal commitment to show their appreciation for our environment by participating in several events as outlined below:

Regulatory Branch

Team members of the regulatory branch of Operations Division kicked-off the annual Earth Day celebration on Friday, April 16. The team assisted South Park Elementary School by clearing the school's nature trail, and repairing signs listing the common and scientific names of the vegetation in the school's "Classroom in the Forest."

The Earth Day activity provided a great opportunity for Regulatory volunteers to reach out to the community, celebrate our natural resources and help others recognize the value of our environment. This Earth Day celebration concluded on April 22 with a luncheon and the presentation of the Larry N. Harper Regulator of the Year Award. This award is presented in memoriam to a former District employee.

Louisiana Field Office



Adopt-A-School Committee members trim crepe myrtle trees on the campus of Vicksburg High School. Pictured are team members, left to right, Rodney Parker, Brian Crawford, and David Randolph.

The Louisiana Field Office (LFO) honored Earth Day by participating in a clean up of Bayou Sweep. The clean up netted 4.5 tons of trash being picked up in less than a one-mile bayou area.

The clean up began at 8:00 a.m. and ran until noon, and was the first organized clean-up of that area since 1979.

Danny Massey, of Delta Disposals, organized the event in less than two weeks. Danny provided dumpsters at three locations on the Bayou: Water Front Grill, Library Lounge and Cypress Inn.

The LFO also hosted the 5th Annual Take it Back Event. This event, held from 10:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. at Bawcomville Recreation Area in West Monroe, resulted in the restoration of landscaping destroyed by flooding. Participants assisted with rebuild-



Regulatory personnel, left to right, Jeremy Stokes, Bert Turcotte, and Chalres Allred place a tree identification marker along a nature trail outside Southpark Elementary to help students understand the ecology around their school.

ing flower beds. Plants were provided by Plant World of West Monroe. Lunch was provided through donations from Popeye's Chicken, Clear Water, Harvest Foods, Frito Lay and Brookshires of West Monroe.

In a cooperative effort of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF), LFO celebrated Earth Day by planting white oak seedlings along the John Haygood Nature trail in areas of dead or dying trees, on the north side of the Tom Merrill Recreation Area, and on the grounds of the Durden House Environmental Education Center. NWTF donated the trees for planting, as well as volunteers who assisted with the planting.

A short Earth Day program was presented. Discussions included land stewardship; the preservation and protection of our natural resources; and seedling survival/tree planting techniques. Students were given information on the Corps as well as extra seedlings to plant at home.

District Adopt-A-School

The District's Adopt-A-School committee members donated time to beautifying the campus of the District's adopted school, Vicksburg High School (VHS).

Approximately ninety-five crepe myrtle trees aligned around the campus of VHS were in need of trimming. The team trimmed the tree limbs and new growth, as well as placed fresh pine straw at base of trees.

Enid Lake hosts cleanup day

Volunteers for Waste Management and Corps personnel at Enid Lake recently conducted their 7th Annual Enid Lake Clean-Up Day. Volunteers met at designated areas around the lake and were instructed on the day's activities and potential safety hazards by the Enid Lake ranger staff. During the event Corps team members and employees of Ferguson and Williams Inc. teamed up with 300 volunteers with one thing in mind, picking up trash.

Despite high water levels, the volunteers managed to collect 80 compacted cubic yards of trash and 84 tires from the Corps' access roads that surround Enid Lake.

Natural resource management projects such as this not only enhance Enid Lake's beauty, but also promote natural resource stewardship among communities surrounding the lake and visitors who frequent Enid Lake. This volunteer effort contributes greatly towards the implementation of the Corps' Environmental Operating Principles for the preservation and enhancement of the environment for future generations.



Col Eckstein actively participates with the Clean-Up.

Oil and Gas Exploration at Bayou Bodcau

BY TOMMY JONES, FORESTER, BAYOU BODCAU DAM AND RESERVOIR
PHOTOS BY TOMMY JONES, RANDALL BORDELON, AND SUZANNE ODOM

I'll have to admit that I was a little naive when I first started working with oil and gas exploration on Bayou Bodcau. Like most, I pictured the drilling rig and the old fashioned "rocking horse" pumps. After working as a forester for the Corps for 19 years, now I understand that it encompasses much more. I am continually amazed at the different aspects of oil and gas exploration. Recent innovations in drilling techniques, improved technology, increased fuel demands and the recent discovery of the Haynesville Shale in our vicinity will ensure no shortage of challenges.

We currently have eighteen well sites and sixteen pipelines located at Bayou Bodcau. This doesn't sound very impressive, but when you consider what it takes to properly manage these facilities you begin to understand the challenge. It's a process that begins with a request from an interested applicant. Sometimes the request is received at our office and forwarded through the Louisiana Field Office to Real Estate, and other times it is received by Real Estate. Real Estate is responsible for distributing the request to Operations/Management (ODM), Project Natural Resources/Environmental Compliance, Regulatory (ODF), Water Quality (ECHW), Office of Counsel and also Environmental/Economics Branch for review. The Bodcau staff is responsible for conducting the initial site inspection. We report any concerns to the District. For instance, the site may affect wetlands, be in a designated natural area, or be in an area that is known to have a culturally significant site. In some cases we are able to negotiate with the applicant to alter the location, the process, or size of the project to reduce the environmental impacts. Coordination between the field office and the District is crucial throughout the process. After we agree on a final location and process, we are responsible for completing the Environmental Baseline Study, the Right of Availability and timber appraisal. We recently had two 42" natural gas interstate pipelines constructed across our property. Both projects submitted an Environmental Impact Statement for review; each contained more than 900 pages.

Upon completion of the required preliminary work, Real Estate personnel give permission to proceed. As stewards of our property, we are responsible for insuring the work is per-

formed in a manner that is compliant with the terms of the instrument. While we are monitoring the construction phase of this activity, the existing oil/gas facilities require routine inspections. Over the years, we have discovered saltwater spills, leaks, damaged pipelines, leaking pipelines and leaking storage tanks. All problems and concerns are reported to the District. Periodic ERGO inspections are performed on facilities to insure environmental compliance. Some of the facilities are more than 50 years old, so as each facility is constructed, the long term demands on our time increases.

What happens when it comes time to restore the sites? Most of the drill sites and pipelines have temporary work zones that require restoration after initial construction is complete. What's the policy for properly filling the pit once drilling is complete? Again, close coordination with Real Estate, Regulatory and Project Natural Resources/ Environmental Compliance is vital to determine the restoration and mitigation requirements. Wells that are "dry holes" or are no longer producing must be properly closed and restored. What is the best way to restore a 1-3 acre site? Do we want it reforested? Would it be more beneficial if it were seeded with native grasses? Maybe it should be left to regenerate naturally to provide valuable cover for various animals. These options are discussed with the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to determine what would be most beneficial for each particular site. Along with the facilities comes the demand for access roads, seismic surveys and other requests that have to be managed.

As previously mentioned, recent innovations in drilling techniques, improved technology, increased fuel demands and the recent discovery of the Haynesville Shale in our vicinity will ensure no shortage of challenges. The Haynesville Shale is forecast to be the fourth largest gas field in the world! The rigs required to drill these wells cost \$8 million dollars. They are drilling more than two miles deep and have the ability to turn the drill pipe horizontally at these depths.

The two large pipelines that crossed our project utilized horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to bore under the bayou. They were able to drill 30 feet beneath the creek bed, a distance of 4,000 feet with enough accuracy to push a survey



Horizontal Directional Drilling (HDD) for the Gulf Crossing Pipeline.



Gulf Crossing Pipeline wetland delineation/ protection



XTO Atkins Well #25 Pit Closure.

Continued on page 6

Excavators working to prepare the proposed road alignment.

Work at ERDC moves a step closer to connecting campuses

BY JONATHAN BOONE, PHOTOS BY MICKEY GALLUP

The earth-moving equipment is in high gear as progress on the Engineer Research and Development Center's (ERDC) Internal Access Road construction project continues. For twenty-two years employees of (ERDC) have endured an inconvenient, time consuming commute when traveling from the Information Technology Lab (ITL) to the remainder of the ERDC facility. Personnel stationed at the ITL who desire to reach other destinations at the ERDC facility must use the public street network, including Porters Chapel Road and Wisconsin Avenue, to reach the access points at Halls Ferry Road or Brazos Circle- a distance of approximately 2.75 miles. The ERDC staff think that the overall security and efficiency of the facility would be improved by providing direct, internal access to connect all laboratories.

In 2009 the Vicksburg District was challenged to provide comprehensive construction plans, specifications, and construction quality assurance to make this project a reality. On September 8, 2009, the contract was awarded to Demolition and Construction Management Services of Vicksburg.

Wisconsin Avenue was closed to public traffic in early February to facilitate the excavation required to build the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge and Internal Access Road that will connect the ITL to the remainder of the ERDC campus.

The contractor has completed all phases of the clearing and grubbing work to make way for the proposed road alignment. Approximately 47,000 cubic yards of soil has been hauled from the area North of Wisconsin Avenue since the project started. It is anticipated that an additional 28,000 cubic yards of soil

will be hauled from south of Wisconsin Avenue to reach the vertical alignment of the proposed road. The 110-ton capacity Link-Belt bridge crane was mobilized to the site in early March and will begin driving the deep pile foundation that will support the Bridge. The work crews for the road and bridge will work simultaneously to complete the project. The anticipated contract completion date is August 2010.



A construction crew from Key Constructor, Inc., drives the first of two test piles for the Wisconsin Avenue Bridge. The activity is being monitored using a pile driving analyzer and the technical expertise of Brad Acrement of the geotechnical branch of Engineering and Construction Division.

Continued from page 5—Oil and gas exploration

stake out of the ground on the other side, which greatly reduced the environmental impacts.

A company recently applied for a permit to conduct a large seismic survey. After learning that we required a cultural resource survey prior to beginning any earth disturbing work they changed their technique totally. The "cable-only" method was then revealed; the equipment would all be laid above ground or



Pump leaking saltwater at Dal-Long Well Location.

in the water. Recording operations would be supported by helicopter to minimize impacts.

The demand is here! A lot of money is being spent to meet this demand. The effort spent to manage oil/gas exploration on our property will continue to increase. A new policy adapted to changing technology will be crucial in enabling us to properly manage these activities; it will continue to be a challenge.

Archaeological and historical research aid in culmination of Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center

STORY AND PHOTOS BY RODNEY PARKER, ARCHAEOLOGIST

Corps archaeologists are working in conjunction with Pan American Consultants Inc.'s archaeologists to monitor the construction being performed at the Lower Mississippi River Museum and Riverfront Interpretive Center. There has been a collaborative effort by archaeologists and the construction crew to minimize the impacts of the construction on this historic property.

Both parties were initially at a stalemate, with opposing ideas on how to approach the idea of having archaeological and construction crews working simultaneously within the same area. After much deliberation and brainstorming, work has proceeded with few obstacles. Within the project area, the remains of an early 20th century freight depot were found, as well as a late 19th century shingle factory and mill. Due to excavations at various portions of the site, artifacts found have included low fired bricks, intact glass bottles, and many types of ceramics.

The Corps is also contemplating integrating portions of the Mississippi River Basin model, located in Clinton, into the landscape of the museum.

Through archaeology and historical research the Corps hopes to shed light on the importance that this historic site played in the cultivation of Vicksburg as a local and regional focal point.



Above: District and contract archaeologists excavate in a trench while the construction crew looks on at the museum site.

Left: Jennifer Ryan, archaeologist, unearths a bottle with the inscription "Vicksburg Steam Bottling Works."

Leadership Development Program members attend Government Affairs Institute at Georgetown University

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO

PHOTO BY BRIGETTE TERRELL, NEW ORLEANS DISTRICT

A four-day briefing conference recently held at Georgetown University was attended by one of Mississippi Valley Division's Emerging Leaders, Gabe Harris.

The intent of the Leadership Development Program (LDP) is to identify and develop a cadre of potential leaders who can operate effectively at the highest levels of leadership within the Division and the Corps.

Harris, a civil engineer at the District and acting strategic planner, stated that the conference, held on Capitol Hill, was organized and directed by The Government Affairs Institute (GAI) of the university. The conference included discussions on Congress, visits to various Congressional Committee Hearings, and to both the House and Senate chambers to get a first hand look at the process.

Participants were briefed on how bills become law, appropriations, the differences between the House and Senate, and how each functions. Guest speakers included members of Congress, Congressional and committee staff members, lobbyists, news



Above: Harris, right, along with a tourist, stands in front of the White House.



media, and policy consultants. The briefings covered aspects of Congress from both the inside and outside. Participants gained a better understanding of Congress' role and its relationship to the Corps and the reasons we operate the way we do.

Harris stated that he and other LDP participants were also afforded the opportunity to sit in hearings with Gen. George W. Casey, Chief of Staff of the Army, and LTG Robert Van Antwerp, Commander of the Corps.

Group social events included a special tour of Washington, D.C., with the highlight of the tour being the role that the Corps had in the design and construction of our nation's capitol. The social events afforded the LDP team members another opportunity to network with each other.

The program complements and builds on regional leadership programs, with the objective being to develop future managers with a perspective on leadership.

Left: Gabe Harris pounds a gavel while taking advantage of sitting in the chairman's seat in the Hearing Room of The Rayburn House Office Building.

Forward Engineer Support Team deploys



Brig. Gen. Michael J. Walsh, right, looks on as Command Sgt. Maj. Harry L. Collins, left, and Col. Richard W. Dean II case their detachment's colors during the 579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M) deployment ceremony. The team will deploy to Afghanistan in support of overseas contingency operations.

BY MARK ABUEG—PHOTOS BY ALFRED DULANEY

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers deployable detachment cased its colors yesterday as it prepared for movement to Afghanistan.

The Soldiers and Civilians of the 579th Engineer Detachment (Forward Engineer Support Team—Main) were honored by family, friends and the Vicksburg community during a deployment ceremony here in front of the Vicksburg District building. Other U.S. Army organizations, including the Mississippi Valley Division, Vicksburg District, Engineer Research and Development Center, and the 412th Theater Engineer Command, gathered to pay tribute and send off the team.



Barbara Hutchinson, center, wife of Capt. Willie Hutchinson, left, meets with Brig. Gen. Michael Walsh, commanding general of the Mississippi Valley Division, during the 579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M) deployment ceremony. Hutchinson will deploy to Afghanistan with his fellow FEST-M members

under field force engineering concepts to provide seamless general engineering support to the Afghan country. The unique engineering team will also assist in the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan in order to promote the security of our nation and democracy he said.

“By engaging in these efforts, you seek to prevent those regions from becoming safe havens for those who would threaten our homeland, our allies, and our national interests” Dean said as he addressed the FEST-M. Dean admits that while certainly unique in scale and complexity, the mission in Afghanistan will also pose dangers to his deployed detachment.

“Notwithstanding these risks, you, as soldier and civilian personnel working in these war zones are essential to the success of the stabilization and reconstruction efforts and future stability of Afghanistan,” he said.



Stephanie Daniel, right, and Willie Daniel, daughter and son, respectively, of Patricia Daniel, second from left, meet with Command Sgt. Major Harry Collins, the 579th Engineer Detachment (FEST-M) command sergeant major.

Brister promotes to assistant chief, project management branch

BY ALICE BUFKIN, PHOTO BY ALFRED DULANEY

Jacob Brister was recently promoted to chief of the project management branch of the Programs and Project Management Division.

Brister's duties will include supervision of project management teams that are part of the command team that participates in the executive direction of an annual civil works program that averages more than \$300 million. Included are large and complex flood control and hydroelectric dams and reservoirs, large navigation locks and dams, flood control dams and reservoirs, mainline levees on the Mississippi River and tributaries, and large-scale

river stabilization structures.

Brister began his career with the District as an economist in 2003.

He is a native of Choudrant, Louisiana, and a graduate of Choudrant High School. He earned his Bachelor of Science degree in business from Louisiana Tech University and a Master of Science in economics from Alcorn State University.

He is married to Kara Kelly Brister, formerly of Pineville, Louisiana, and they are the parents of two children. He is the son of Ramona Peden of Ruston, and Larry Brister of Choudrant.



Jacob Brister

District selects Waddle as Chief of Operations Division

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO
PHOTO BY ALFRED DULANEY

James (Jimmy) Waddle was recently selected as chief, Operations Division.

He will serve as technical advisor and consultant to the District Engineer concerning emergencies and District Operations and Maintenance (O&M) programs and work activities, and will manage the large, complex and geographically dispersed Operations organization and work program.

Other duties include serving as chief of Mississippi and Arkansas Lakes projects, flood control, navigation, hydroelectric power production, water supply, mat sinking and dredging, and regulatory functions within the District's jurisdiction.

Before assuming this position with the District, Waddle served as chief of the Business Technical Division for the Mississippi Valley Division/Mississippi River Commission.

Waddle is a native of Mississippi and graduated from Mississippi State University in 1983 with a bachelor's degree in civil engineering, and in 1996 earned his master's degree in construction from Arizona State University. He is a registered professional engineer in the state of Mississippi. He is a mem-

ber of the Society of American Military Engineers and serves as the committee chairperson for the National SAME/Army Engineering and Construction Camp.

Waddle began his career with the Vicksburg District in 1983 as a structural design engineer in Engineering Division.

In addition to other assignments, he has served on three major deployments for the Corps. He was chief of Engineering/Construction and Project Management for the Gulf Region Central District in Iraq from December 2004 to April 2005. He served as Deputy Commander of Task Force Hope Mississippi from September 2005 through November 2005. He also served as chief of Engineering/Construction for the Gulf Region Central District in Iraq from September 2008 to April 2009.

Jimmy is married to Donna Waddle and has three children, Jennifer, Julie, and Matthew.



James Waddle

Handy receives Modern Day Technology Leader Award

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO
PHOTO BY ALFRED DULANEY

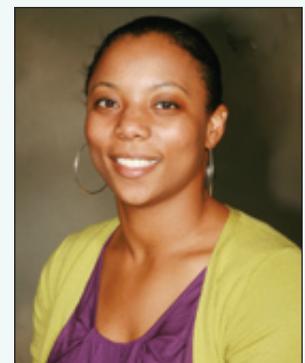
Joelle Handy, a civil engineer at the District, was recently selected as a Modern Day Technology Leader at the Black Engineer of the Year Awards Conference held in Baltimore, Maryland.

Handy was recognized for this award based upon her outstanding work ethics and great interpersonal skills in the performance of her duties as an engineer at the District. Begin-

ning her career with the District in May 2009, she has been assigned to several projects with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009, in the design branch of the Engineering and Construction Division.

A native of Jackson, she is a graduate of Callaway High School, and earned her Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Jackson State University.

She is the daughter of Joseph and Joyce Handy of Jackson.



Joelle Handy

DISTRICT TOUR



MEMPHIS

DISTRICT TOUR



ARKABUTLA LAKE

SARDIS LAKE

Oxford
ENID LAKE

Philadelphia

LOUISIANA

Stogsdill receives President's Award

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO—PHOTO BY CHARLES SMITH, GRENADA LAKE

Wayne Stogsdill recently received the prestigious President's Award from the National Water Safety Congress. Stogsdill received the award at the annual International Boating and Water Safety Summit (IBWSS) held in Daytona Beach, Florida.

The conference included training, programs support, and on-water/in the water skill-based hands-on education classes, and many other networking opportunities for sharing of ideas among Corps team members from various Districts, and others.

Stogsdill's selection was based on his efforts involving the three-year mandatory life jacket wear program that is ongoing at the four Corps lakes in Mississippi. The test program was designed to determine whether the additional life jacket requirements will

improve wear rates among water-based recreation user groups and consequently decrease water-related fatalities.

After extensive review, the national data indicated public fatalities most often occur in accidents involving small classes of vessels, those less than 26 feet, and among swimmers in non-designated swim areas. Thus the life jacket wear requirements were developed and are being tested.

Stogsdill, operations manager for the Mississippi Project Management Office, is a resident of Senatobia and earned his Bachelor's Degree in forestry from Louisiana Tech University. He received his Master's Degree in forest resources from Oklahoma State University.

He is the son of Janice Stogsdill of Haughton, Louisiana, and the late Wayne Stogsdill. He is married to the former Jennifer Cox, and they have four children.



Arlyn Hendricks, president of NWSC, presents Stogsdill the award.

National Military Fish and Wildlife Association selects MVD Commander for award

Brigadier General Michael J. Walsh was recently selected as the recipient of the 2010 National Military Fish and Wildlife Association (NMFWA) Award for Conservation Partnerships. Since becoming the 35th commander of the Corps' Mississippi Valley Division (MVD) in 2008, BG Walsh has continuously challenged Mississippi River partners, users, and Division personnel to adopt a comprehensive approach to ecosystem restoration and management. BG Walsh coined the term "America's Inner Coast" as a unique battle cry for preserving and restoring the River's watershed.

As president of the Mississippi River Commission, BG Walsh oversaw the first comprehensive vision statement created for a sustainable Mississippi River Watershed. As leader of the Mid-West Natural Resources Group, a consortium of 14 federal agencies, he developed a statement of opportunity and action for the Mississippi River Watershed in 2009, signed by all 14 federal agencies. Three memorandums of understanding were signed under his leadership by The National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited, and the U.S. Forest Service. Their purpose was to further the concept of promoting sustainable ecosystem restoration projects and improving public awareness and communication.

This award category recognizes those who promote public awareness of the military role in conserving the nation's natural resource legacy. This includes both DoD personnel who

promote better external understanding of natural resource conservation on DoD lands, and external organization representatives who promote external awareness of these issues. Recipients may include, but are not limited to, volunteers, educators, negotiators, public affairs personnel, journalists, and DoD natural resource personnel, non-profit staff, and non-DoD government staff.

The NMFWA is a non-profit organization consisting of professional resource managers working to protect and manage wildlife and other natural resources on DoD lands. Members include wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, botanists, ecologists, range conservationists, foresters, cultural resource managers, and wildlife enforcement agents. Members may work for the DoD or other federal agencies, state agencies, universities, conservation organizations, or private businesses. All members, however, are involved in some aspect of the conservation and management of natural resources on military lands.



Brigadier General Michael J. Walsh

Social Media 101 — another way of communicating

BY LEAH MORING, GRENADA LAKE

What is Social Media? This term is not only new to most of us, but also to Webster's Dictionary. But, if you are a friend of Facebook or Twitter, you are already part of the social media rage!

Social media does not yet have an official definition, but currently Wikipedia defines it as:

Social media describes the online technologies and practices that people use to share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives. Social media can take many different forms, including text, images, audio, and video.

The internet is a haven for the social butterfly. Some examples of free popular social networking sites are MySpace, Facebook and Twitter, with Facebook currently being the most popular. Facebook allows anyone above the age of 13 with a valid email address to become a user. Users add "friends," send messages, pictures, and basically, share the day-

to-day happenings of their life! Fans can also join networks organized by colleges, workplaces, major cities, or play games and shoot the breeze with friends.

Each social media site is different and is used differently. Twitter is another popular social networking and micro blogging site. To quote Twitter, "it lets you keep in touch with people through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What's happening?" It allows one to read and send messages known as "tweets" up to 140 characters in length. The tweets are posted on the author's page and sent to their followers! It consists of different names and different services, but it is all about communication.

Other types of social media applications can be used for almost anything. Got a cool video? Upload it to You Tube for everyone to see. Want to quickly find out the top headlines or comment on them? News share with Digg; Grandparents want to stay in close contact with the grandkids—use Flickr to store and share

photos. These are just a few of the social media sites available on the internet. Of course, the best part is that you can access them on most cell phones. Sites typically use technologies called blogs or micro blogs, forums or message boards and podcasts. As the definition points out, these are just tools that allow users to read and share their information in forms such as text, pictures, audio, and video.

Thanks to technology, social media is constant. Conversations and interaction between individuals and groups make social media an evolving trend. The social media movement has transformed the broadcast forum of one person reaching many into a people-powered dialog system of many reaching many. Social media usage has an important role in our ability to deliver the message; whether it is the Corps' story or your story—it is only a tweet away!

Become a friend of Bobber (Water Safety Mascot) on Facebook and tweet him on Twitter!

Vicksburg Leadership Development Class begins team building

BY STACY THURMAN, CONTRACTING DIVISION

The Vicksburg Leadership Development Class (VLDP) of 2010 includes 12 aspiring individuals. These team members include varied backgrounds and different cultures; they represent many professions within the District, yet all work toward a common goal.

VLDP is affording us the opportunity to enhance our abilities while working as a TEAM to reach that common goal. The program not only aids in building working relationships, but it also allows us to address many diverse projects within the Corps and our community.

Our orientation and first team building experience, conducted at Eagle Ridge Conference Center at Hinds Community College, taught us many facets of becoming leaders. Each of us was given the opportunity to identify our own unique behavioral style. It doesn't matter if you fall into the category of the "dominant director," the "interacting influencer," the "steady

relater," or the "cautious thinker," we all have a critical role in achieving the same goal. We are all team players on the same TEAM. This will be an exciting year for us; we appreciate all the support from fellow VLDP members as well as other Corps employees.

For all of you new to the Vicksburg District, Welcome Aboard! You will be hearing from us really, really soon!

And, so you will recognize faces as well as names, we are pictured below, left to right:

Lee Grant, Adam Staples, Tony Lobred, Amanda Hanks, Toni Lowe-Fisher, Cynthia Lewis, Pam Samuels, Jessica Strider, Stacy Thurman, Sandy Gerbitz, Teresa Gallagher, and Andrew Strickland.



2010 VLDP Class

Get ready for the media

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO
PHOTOS BY ALFRED DULANEY

While watching a person being interviewed on the News, have you ever gotten the impression that the person being interviewed was nervous, or perhaps just totally uninformed? As a Corps employee, have you ever wondered if you could possibly be that person ...what would your reaction be?

Most of us know that public speaking is supposedly the number one fear. Most of us probably agree, but it doesn't have to be that way. Sure, nervousness is just plain human instinct, but the key of public speaking is being prepared.

Being prepared simply means practice, practice, and practice. To help ready district employees for media scrutiny, the Public Affairs Office recently hosted 3-days of intensive communication training. This training not only offered tips for maintaining control in media interviews and public meetings, but also allowed participants to hone and practice their communication techniques in role-playing situations using realistic projects and issues.

The main purpose of communication training is to ensure that Corps personnel speak with one voice when delivering core messages. Whether you are speaking on a Corps project or promoting Corps

reform legislation, media coverage can be a powerful tool for achieving your goals. This training provides practical advice for working with all types and levels of media in an effort to get our story told.

An organization can gain positive or negative publicity when a spokesperson is quoted in the newspaper or interviewed on television news. Media training provides invaluable insight into handling the media effectively and efficiently. Ideally, we want to maintain control of media interviews and conduct them in such a way to portray the Corps as a partner with the media - after all, they are a major communication outlet for spreading the Corps' message.

Have you ever seen a person being interviewed and while attempting to answer a question, he/she just rambled on and on, totally losing the audience? When this happens, usually way too much is said. This training provided the key - how to "answer the question and shut up"! It provided tools like bridging and flagging - for staying on topic and returning to the core message.

However, no matter how prepared, there is a possibility that you will get caught off guard and find yourself in an ambush interview. Imagine this scenario: You've just left a meeting on a highly publicized Corps project. Some citizens say that the project will be beneficial to the community; others say that the project will endanger wildlife. You are walking across the parking lot to your car when suddenly a reporter's camera is in your face! Questions are being asked but you don't effectively hear them because you are startled at the camera, and by the unexpected interview.

What do you do? This training prepared participants for just such a situation by sharing tips for remaining calm and in control, while emphasizing honest, factual communication and timely follow-up.

The training was fun and very informa-



Above: The instructor makes remarks about what can be expected during training sessions.

Below: Frank Worley directs participants to break into groups.



tive, and because the scenarios were so real life-like, it even made some participants nervous - we may have even seen some sweat! In the end, everyone agreed that the training was very beneficial.

"Most people may not be put in front of a camera or interviewed in detail by a reporter. However, when and if that happens to me, this is one class that I will be thankful for. It gave me media exposure without the potential for a bad outcome if I misspoke. It was a good experience and I recommend the training."

-Tom Shaw, PPPMD

"Being caught off guard and put on the spot can actually happen when dealing with some of our projects. It was nice to have an opportunity to learn how to deal with these situations in a setting that won't end up on the front page of the paper or on the news. Hopefully, I'll remember what I learned if I ever have a reporter interrogating me."

-LeeAnn Riggs, PPPMD

"Since I had no previous experience with the media, I embraced this opportunity. It was a very enjoyable workshop, with some entertaining and insightful teachers. This training laid a great foundation for the do's and don'ts of conducting yourself with the media. I would urge everyone to take this training."

-Rodney Parker, PPPMD

If you're interested in taking this annual media training please contact Frank Worley at 1-5053, or e-mail him at



Above: Jennifer Ryan is playing it cool during ambush interview.

Below: Rodney Parker is trying to talk his way out of the ambush.



Ben Robinson, Leah Moring and others study project to be discussed and videotaped.

Volunteer's adversities not affecting crafty hobby

"When life gives you lemons, make lemonade"

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AMY SHULTZ

Volunteering for the Corps is a wonderful way to gain rewarding experiences while giving back something to the community. At Lake Ouachita, volunteers play an important role in protecting the natural resources and maintaining recreational facilities.

Hollis Wayne Shultz is one such volunteer who goes the extra mile to assist the Corps by building waterfowl nesting boxes and bluebird houses for the natural resource program, but this is only part of his unique and amazing story.

Shultz was born in a log cabin located at Grapevine, Arkansas in 1935. His dad was a carpenter by trade, and beginning at the age of six years old, Shultz began learning the trade from his dad. In 1953, Shultz joined the Army and served in the Korean War until 1956. From an early age, he knew that he wanted to be a pilot, so after completing his military service, he obtained his pilot's license and began flying crop-dusters in Dallas, Texas.

For 32 years, Shultz flew all over the world, serving as an agricultural pilot throughout the United States, Australia and Peru. During his flying years, he experienced a number of adventures, including flying tropical fish to South America, and delivering dynamite to Alaska. However, with some of the adventures came some close calls. While flying over the Everglades, he crashed

his plane and broke his left leg; in July 1986, while flying a crop-duster near Dumas, Arkansas, his plane's engine failed, causing the plane to plummet to the ground, resulting in him suffering a broken neck from the crash.

After undergoing 12 years of rehabilitation, he was able to return to work. It was at this time that he learned that he was suffering from macular degeneration, an eye disease that gradually diminishes sight, and eventually causes complete blindness in most cases.

Shultz has been diagnosed as being legally blind, with eyesight of 10/350 in his best eye. He explains it best by saying, "I just have a large blind spot in the center field of my vision, I still have some peripheral vision, just nothing straight ahead."

Shultz attended the Southeastern Blind Rehabilitation Center in Birmingham, Alabama on two separate occasions to be trained on various skills. Shultz stated, "They've got a great program and I couldn't do the things that I do without them." The blind institute has provided equipment for Shultz to use in carpentry, a brail talking computer and magnifying viewers. The saying, "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade," is precisely the path this gutsy volunteer has taken. He continues to work through his adversity.

From 1995 to 2001, he volunteered at Arkabutla Lake. Arkabutla Lake's park manager Bill Fly stated, "Mr. Shultz volunteered countless hours above and beyond the 20 hours a week asked of volunteers, and his many skills made him a valuable asset to our organization. For several years he was looked upon in much the same fashion as a full time temporary employee."

In September 2001, Shultz and his wife of 34 years, Beverly, moved from Arkabutla Lake to Hot Springs, Arkansas, to be closer to their son, Jon, and his wife, Amy. Jon is the head band director at Lake Hamilton High School, and



Shultz assists park rangers, left to right, Byron Erickson, Joe Bailey, and Jake Huey, with installing nesting birdhouses.

Amy, a park ranger at Lake Ouachita.

Shultz started building bird houses as a hobby. He said that initially, a nurse in Birmingham that had helped him at the institute for the blind owned a log cabin and wanted a log bird house as a replica, so he learned how to construct log birdhouses and gave her one as a present. Since that time, he has constructed many birdhouses for family members, neighbors, and acquaintances.

He also builds decks, entertainment centers, frames, etc. The craftsmanship in his work is amazing. He currently volunteers his time mowing six of his elderly neighbors' lawns, and in 2009, he started volunteering at Lake Ouachita. To date, he has logged more than 150 hours, and has built more than 35 bird houses and waterfowl nesting boxes. He also assisted the natural resource rangers with placing the waterfowl nesting boxes that he constructed.

Shultz has been an extremely beneficial member of the Lake Ouachita Natural Resource Management Team and a true inspiration to all of those who have had the wonderful opportunity to work alongside him. He is a true American hero who, when adversity strikes, seeks out opportunities to assist those around him—leaving a legacy for others to follow.



Shultz proudly displays one of his log cabin birdhouses.

A day at Grenada Lake, “tweet on over...”

BY LEAH MORING, PARK RANGER

“Grenada Lake, how may I help you?”

“Yes ma’am, I will be glad to send you some information on the lake...”

Lake visitors, being greeted with true southern hospitality, can be given information by many different types of media. Whether the communication is by telephone, mail, email, or through social media outlets such as Facebook and Twitter, reaching the public is easier and faster than ever. It doesn't matter whether the visitor has called on the phone or has heard of Grenada Lake by word of mouth, information is what they are looking for, and clear communication is what they will receive.

The Grenada Lake website is a great place to gather lots of helpful information. Maps, directions, rules and links to websites on the weather and the reservation system are at your fingertips. To make a reservation, go online at www.recreation.gov, or call and make a reservation on the phone. If you are a spur of the moment type person, the lake does offer non-reservable sites that are available on a first come-first served basis. Once the research is done and you are on your way to Grenada Lake, the true fun can begin.

At the lake, your first stop should be the Visitor Center (VC). The VC provides incredible displays and information on the history of the area, the Corps and the dam itself. While you are there check out the videos in the newly renovated the-

ater. Watch the 50th Anniversary Film, Bobber the Water Safety Dog cartoons, or enjoy our own rangers in water safety public service announcements. If you have any questions or if you need a map, the VC staff or rangers will gladly assist you.

Next stop, North Abutment Campground, a camper's paradise...

Traveling north across the top of the dam, visitors are able to see the two rivers, the Yalobusha and the Skuna, merging together and forming Grenada Lake. The lake has been in operation since 1954, and people have been benefiting from the lake and all it has to offer ever since.

Starting with camping on the north end of the dam, the North Abutment Campground has 88 campsites. The campground was completed in three phases with the last phase finished in 2009. North Abutment Campground meets Class A campground standards which include 40ft of level camp pad surface, with water and electrical hookups (50 and 30 amp). Five shower houses are placed throughout the campground along with three dumping stations; picnic tables are on each site along with a grill and a fire ring.

The cost for an overnight stay at North Abutment Campground is \$18 per night. After you have setup camp, you can sit back, relax and enjoy the great view of Grenada Lake. Now, campers have the benefit of camping with a view of the new 16-acre lake complete with its own beach,



playground and fishing areas.

If you're still looking for things to do at the lake, launch your boat and enjoy crappie fishing, bass fishing, skiing or just go for a pleasure ride. Spanning more than 35,000 acres, Grenada Lake has plenty of room to have fun.

If you're the type that wants to keep your feet planted, so to speak, fish the outlet channel (spillway). Not only does the lake have great fishing, but with more than 90,000 project acres, there is a lot to explore. There are many trails for biking, walking, hiking, hunting and bird watching.

When your large group gets hungry, picnic pavilions can be rented at the VC. For smaller groups, there are picnic tables and grills readily accessible in each of our day use areas. If you don't want to grill, or need supplies, the city of Grenada is just minutes away.

Ready for more action? Playing in the sand and waves at one of our six swimming beaches provides great entertainment for young and old. If golf is your game, you are in luck, the Dogwoods is an 18-hole golf course located at the nearby Hugh White State Park.

Are you persuaded yet? For more information, give us a call, check us out on the web, follow us on Twitter, or become our Facebook friend! See y'all real soon!

Grenada Lake VC, (662) 226-1679, www.mvk.usace.army.mil/lakes/ms/grenada.

Corps of Engineers vs First Engineers

BY JEFFREY LOCKWOOD, DEGRAY LAKE FIELD OFFICE

PHOTO BY CHRIS LANGSTAFF

The battle between man and beaver is a long standing conflict. As precipitation totals exceeded an all time high last year, the opportunistic dam builders seized the moment and expanded their territory along the Lower Lake.

The North American Beaver (*Castor Canadensis*) is the only species of beaver in the Americas. The beaver is the largest rodent in North America and the third largest rodent in the world. Adults usually weigh 33–77 lbs, with 44 lbs a typical weight, and measure over three ft in total body length. Much older individuals can weigh as much as 100 lbs.

During the winter, ranger staff began

to notice an increasing amount of water encroaching onto the road leading to the “Duck Pond” wildlife opening. Eventually, a large portion of the food plot became inundated. The fall planting of clover was destroyed. Although only an acre or so was affected, it was an important one.

Following a short investigation, the cause was discovered. A series of newly constructed, small dams had served their purpose well and were holding the flood waters as best they could. Through efforts which involved use of a track hoe and a little manual labor, the waters are flowing once again. Trapping efforts are



Jake Williams stands atop a beaver lodge at Lower Lake of DeGray.

underway to hopefully control the beaver population of the area. These troublesome varmints have proven to be a worthy adversary and tough to capture.

Hopefully, Mother Nature will be more accommodating in the upcoming year and we will get a break from the high water that plagued the district in 2009.

Condos for Crappie

STORY AND PHOTO BY JOHNNY CANTRELL
OUACHITA PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

Sometimes you never know how being in the right place at the right time can produce a solution to a problem! This happened to me during a visit to the Centerpoint High School Agriculture Department, in October 2008, to check on the progress being made on some projects the students were building for me. This was my only purpose for stopping by the Agri Shop that morning, but I was about to get an offer for a solution to a problem I had been working on for some time as a biologist for the Ouachita Project Management Office.

For the past 30 years or so, the Corps has been constructing fish attractors from discarded Christmas trees, cull hardwood brush and even old automobile tires, to produce shelters for various species of game fish. Our biggest provider of Christmas trees was the Hunter Christmas Tree Farm in the nearby community of Manchester. We had just recently completed the job of cutting and removing the last of the Virginia Pine trees deemed too large to sell. The farm was going out of business due to the owner's retirement, and would leave the Corps looking for another source of fish attractor material.

As I entered the Centerpoint Agri shop, I asked one of the students to direct me to Jerry Fendley's office. This was Jerry's first year at Centerpoint and I had not yet met him. After the introductions, we moved to the shop area where we discussed other matters; as I was about to leave, the conversation turned to fishing. Jerry is an avid crappie fisherman and

wanted to know if he could build a few crappie condos for DeGray Lake. Crappie condo is a "localized" slang term for bamboo structures built with a 5 gallon bucket of concrete as a base. We discussed the protocol for members of the public adding fish shelters to our lakes. As we discussed fishing on our three Arkansas lakes, I couldn't help but notice the beehive-like activity of several Centerpoint Agri students working on various projects all over the spacious shop area. While Jerry continued to talk about his passion for fishing, my mind was beginning to envision these same students building crappie condos - lots of crappie condos!!

Thomas Edison may have summed up the situation best when he said, "Opportunity is missed by many people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work." I remember interrupting Jerry's fishing stories to see what he thought about getting his students involved in building additional crappie condos. He liked the idea but needed to get permission from his high school principal to allow the students to construct the condos during their "shop time."

A few days later, after permission was granted for the students of his natural resource management (NRM) class to take on the project, a partnership was established. Personnel from both Lake Greeson and DeGray Lake would provide enough quickrete to build a hundred condos. Students would solicit buckets from logging contractors, lumber mills, auto mechanic shops and even some restaurants in the area. All buckets containing petroleum products were pressure



Fendley with his NRM students.

washed to clean out the residue before adding the bamboo and concrete. Bamboo, growing on an area located near the school, was donated to the school to finish out the materials list.

Fendley's NRM students, 20 in number, started construction on the condos on February 10. The project consumed about 750 hours which included gathering the bamboo, cutting it into specified lengths and adding it to the buckets of concrete. In all, just fewer than 200 condos were completed. Several of the students were able to spend a few hours on the lake with Corps personnel during the placement stage of the project. The condos were dropped at pre-determined sites in DeGray Lake and Lake Greeson. Amy Spence, one of the young ladies in the class, had this comment about the project, "Last year, when we were working with the Corps building crappie condos, I had a lot of fun. Working with the guys and getting to actually go out on the Corps' barge and help put them in the lake was super fun!" Amy has decided

Continued on page 18

Giving Back

STORY BY SHEA STATEN, PHOTOS BY SHEA STATEN AND HOUSTON HARTLEY, SARDIS LAKE

A couple of years ago, Logan Tucker, a Scout with Troop 77 of Senatobia, was selected to participate with a youth waterfowl hunt held at Sardis Lake. It was during this hunt when Logan became interested in wildlife habitat and committed to playing a part in waterfowl conservation.

To earn his Eagle Scout honor, Logan decided to build and place wood duck boxes along the Clear Springs Nature Trail at Sardis Lake. This area is ideal for wood duck habitat. Due to the volunteer efforts put forth by Logan and the Boy Scouts of America Troop 77, these wood duck boxes will produce years of successful nests. Because these boxes are visible from a safe distance by nature trail visitors, visitors will be able to see wood ducks utilizing the boxes. Hopefully this sight will cause one to develop an interest in and enhance respect for waterfowl and wetland conservation.

Hooah to Tucker for his efforts!



Securing the bird house are left to right park ranger Shea Staten, Logan Tucker, and Will Lacefield.

District architect helps children make or become artistic masterpieces

"I want children who are physically challenged to become pieces of art"

BY SHIRLEY SMITH, PAO

Sirobe Carstafhnur, architect in the design branch of Engineering Division says that she was always interested in children's art. Even as a child, she often envisioned ways to expose children to the arts. While at Mississippi State, she made arrangements for various student organizations to host arts and crafts days for youth within the Starkville community. "An arts fun day with kids is something I really like and plan to continue coordinating," Carstafhnur stated.

The idea for Techno-color Rewind (TCR) developed in 2006 when she worked for Dale and Associates Architects in Jackson. TCR is an arts and crafts day for children at the Blair E. Batson Children's Hospital in Jackson. The event gives the young patients the opportunity to transform into a work of art, and affords them the opportunity to create their own masterpieces.

"One afternoon I overheard a client mention his foundation that focused on the children at Blair E. Batson. I asked if there was a way I could collaborate with him on his next event and incorporate the arts day idea. He was intrigued by the idea, but did suggest that some of the children might be immobile or fatigued which could make it difficult for them to participate," Carstafhnur stated.

To provide the opportunity for all of the children to join in, she immediately contacted a friend of hers, Jackson artist/photographer Josh Hailey, who Carstafhnur says is an expert at painting actual people. She stated, "I wanted the children who weren't able to make art pieces to become a piece of art themselves. We can make kids be anything they can imagine by using skin sensitive paint, and then conduct a photo shoot to document their transformation. Josh committed to the idea, so I began the process of raising capital and networking to formalize the event."

Carstafhnur stated that the first event was a complete suc-



Sirobe Carstafhnur



cess. The children, as well as many of their parents, had a wonderful time. Charitable donations came from various agencies as well as from her family and many friends which afforded the purchase of large brightly colored plastic gift bags. The bags were filled with toys, stickers, hats, caps, and many

other items. They used the additional money to purchase the paint and all supplies for the makeover and for the Imagination Station.

May 21st will mark the return of the event. In 2007, Carstafhnur left school here to study abroad. Upon her return in the fall of 2009, she received a message from her friend Josh suggesting it was time for TCR to make a comeback, and she agreed. She stated that the agenda of day will remain the same as the previous event, with one small change. This year, her goal is to raise enough money to purchase more costly art supplies such as easels, canvases, and oils for the hospital to use all year.

"As researched by Cathy Marchiodi, creating art can enhance a patient's comfort and recovery. Therefore, we are trying to offer another alternative for the staff to console the hospital's young patients," Carstafhnur stated.

As Pablo Casals stated, "The child must know that he/she is a miracle, that since the beginning of the world there hasn't been, and until the end of the world, there will not be another child like him/her."

"With TCR, I aspire to let the young patients know that they are a one-of-a kind masterpiece."

—Sirobe Carstafhnur

Condos for Crappie—Continued from page 17.

she will major in biology when she enters college in the fall of 2010.

The crappie condo partnership has been featured on crappie.com, one of the most popular websites for fishermen wanting to exchange information. Listed under Forums, there have been more than 13,000 hits from approximately 20 states, as far away as Iowa and Illinois for Building Fish Habitat on Lake Greeson and DeGray. Some posted notable comments include: "My FFA chapter, many, many moons ago never did a project that neat"; "The cooperation is a textbook example of how it should be for sure!!" One individual from Texas, when he heard

the concrete mixer at the school needed repairs, posted: "If we can pitch in a few bucks to help fix it, please let me know or maybe we can rent you one."

Jerry Fendley states, "This project has, by far, been the most popular project I have ever been a part of since entering the teaching field. We have had more positive comments from our community on this than any other project we have worked on and I hope it becomes an annual part of my natural resources management class here at Centerpoint."

Although Jerry admits that maybe he was a little over enthusiastic about taking on a project of such magnitude

(200 crappie condos in about 2 months) he won't have to worry about building that many in the future. Because of his efforts, three other schools in the area - Mena, Kirby and Mt. Ida High School - have come forward and requested to take part in the program during the 2010-2011 school year. A total of 400 shelters will be constructed with 200 going to Lake Ouachita and 100 shelters going to Lake Greeson and DeGray Lake. Partnerships can certainly produce successful programs for the students of our area schools, while contributing greatly to the Natural Resources Management Program at Ouachita Project Management Office.

Corps Family is definition of a community

BY SARAH KOEPEL

What defines a community? Sociologists, anthropologists, and physiologists have been arguing over that definition for centuries. Most would agree that, simply put, a community is a common place where people interact socially. One thinks of school, church, neighborhoods, and college sports (WAR EAGLE!!) as primary examples. But when I think about community, I think about the Vicksburg District.

My husband, and fellow Corps employee, Chris and I moved to Vicksburg from Indianapolis, Indiana, last March. He was working at the Indiana Department of Transportation as environmental supervisor/supervisory archaeologist and was program director of the National Council on Public History. Along with our then nine-month old son, Sebastian, we drove over 700 miles to begin our careers with the federal government and left the comfort of a city we knew and friends we had made.

Upon arriving, we were immediately welcomed with open arms. We were introduced to lots of people, given suggestions on places to live and daycares to use, invited to dinner, and even asked which team we supported...Mississippi State or Ole Miss! In addition to that, our Vicksburg District co-workers helped prepare us to become good team members and to implement the Corps mission.

As we began to acclimate to our new



Chris and Sarah Koeppel with son Sebastian.

jobs, we began to notice how close the Corps employees were to one another. At Engineer's Day, healthy competition ensued during sporting events and cook-offs; local schools were adopted by the District; people laughed and cried during the Combined Federal Campaign Kickoff; welcome home parties were planned for co-workers returning from tours over seas; retirement party blowouts occurred; and local children and families were supported during the Salvation Army's Angel Tree program. The community in the Vicksburg District was proving to be more than mere social interaction, it was a family.

Within a few months of settling in, Chris and I were happy to discover in July, that we were pregnant with our second child. We later learned it was a girl and that she would be due March 16. As with other life celebrations, our 'Corps family' planned to throw a baby shower to welcome our

daughter, Eleanor. We felt the excitement in our respective offices as another baby was set to join this large family. But that party was never to be- as tragically at 30 weeks, a previously undetected heart defect was discovered and I had to have an emergency C-section. Our daughter was born January 8, 2010, and passed six days later on January 14.

As expected, our family and close friends provided love, prayers, and support during that time. Quite unexpectedly, we also received an abundance of support, prayers, and love from our co-workers at the Vicksburg District and throughout the entire Corps. Our co-workers brought gifts to the hospital, donated time, raised money, formed prayer circles, delivered food, came out in droves at Eleanor's memorial service, and formed an incredible support system: a system that is still in place months later. Making it through this extremely difficult time has been a little easier knowing that support is there.

So, back to my original question: What defines a community? I think of a community as a group of people with different backgrounds and experiences that come together as one, in times of joy and sorrow. This group of people selflessly gives and does not expect anything in return. What I suspect is that community is intrinsic in the hearts and souls of the people in the Vicksburg District; Chris and I are honored to be a part of it.

Mid-February Snow Blankets Vicksburg



VICKSBURG
NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

District Field Offices & Services

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Vicksburg District
 4155 E. Clay Street
 Vicksburg, MS 39183
 www.mvk.usace.army.mil
 email: cemvk-pa@army.us.mil.

Lake Ouachita	(501) 767-2101
Lake Greeson	(870) 285-2151
DeGray Lake	(870) 246-5501
Sardis Lake	(662) 563-4531
Arkabutla Lake	(662) 562-6261
Enid Lake	(662) 563-4571
Grenada Lake	(662) 226-5911
Bayou Bodcau	(318) 322-6391
JBW Waterway	(318) 322-6391
Ouachita-Black Rivers	(318) 322-6391
Golden Age Passports	(601) 631-5287
Aerial Photography	(601) 631-5709
Corps Wetland Permits	(601) 631-5289
Apply, ask questions, or report violations	
Contracting & Bids	(601) 631-7706
Vendors, status of bids, specs	
Community Support	(601) 631-5223
Tours, speakers, volunteers	
Historical Questions & Research	(601) 634-7023
Mississippi River History Center	
Real Estate Issues	(601) 631-5220
Corps impacts to your property	
Employment Questions	(601) 631-5859
Vacancies, status, qualifications	
Historical Photographs	(601) 631-5021
Environmental	(601) 631-5410

**Other Vicksburg Engineer/
Federal Organizations:**

Mississippi Valley Division
 (601) 634-5760

Engineer Research & Development
 Center
 (601) 634-2504

412th Engineer Command
 (601) 636-1686

168th Engineer Group
 (601) 313-5290

Vicksburg National Military Park
 (601) 636-0583

U. S. Coast Guard Cutter Kickapoo
 (601) 636-8304

U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service
 Ecological Services
 (601) 629-6607

U. S. Army Recruiter
 (601) 638-1203

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 Vicksburg District C/PAO
 4155 Clay Street
 Vicksburg, MS 39183-3435

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