



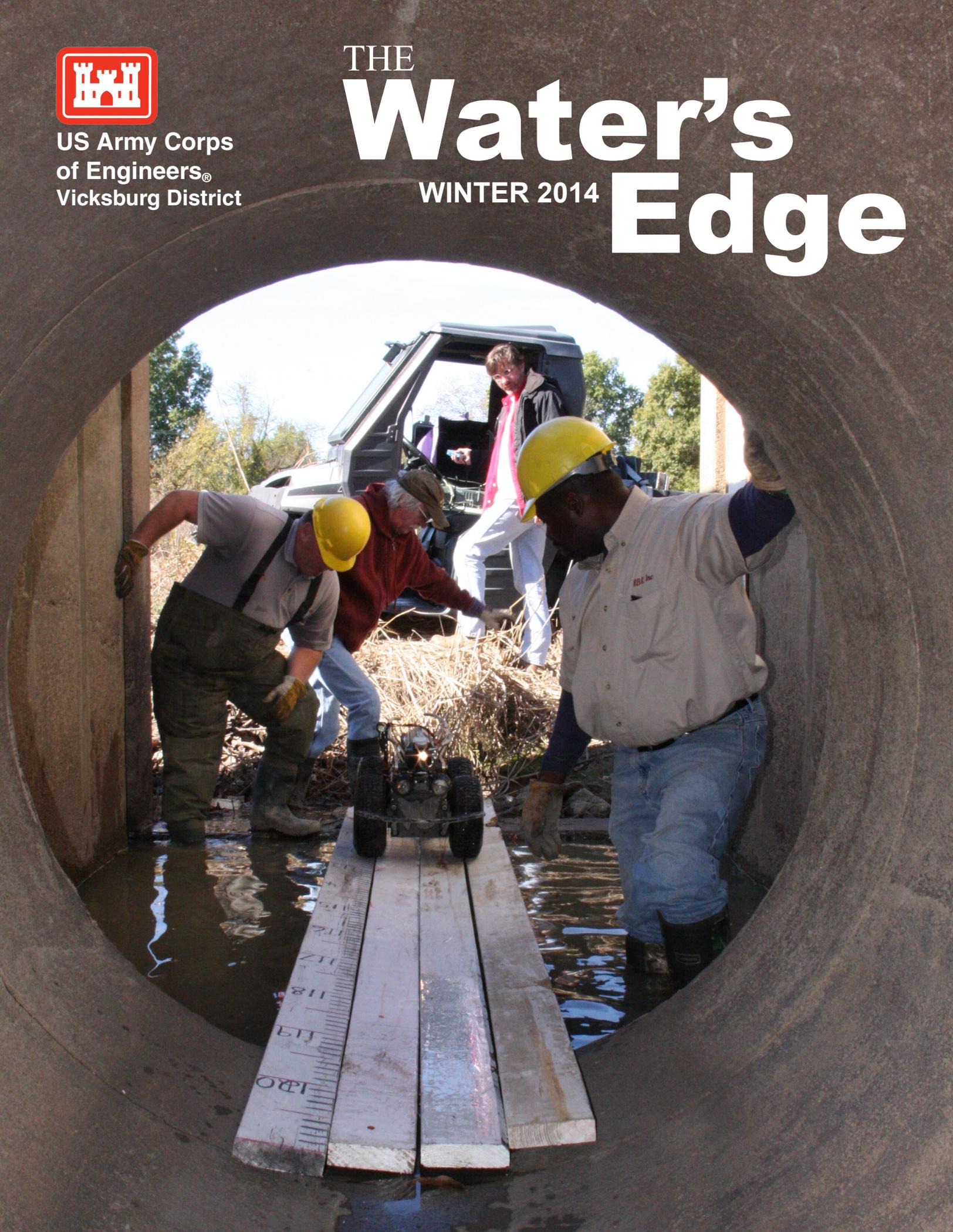
US Army Corps
of Engineers®
Vicksburg District

THE

Water's

WINTER 2014

Edge





US Army Corps of Engineers®

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

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District partners with Jacksonville District to restore America's Everglades
Wood duck boxes enhance duck habitat at Lake Ouachita



On the Cover

Walter Mattingly, far left, assists contractors Harvey Watson, left, and Ron Hill, right, with sliding camera mounted tractor inside pipe, while Andrew Tomlinson, top right, looks on.
Photo by Kavanaugh Breazeale

Commander's Corner

with Colonel John W. Cross



Hello Vicksburg District team members

I hope you all are having a happy, safe and productive New Year! There are many exciting things happening around the District as we begin 2014. I thank each of you for your support during the 2013 Holiday Season with the CFC campaign, the Angel Tree project and other charitable activities across the District. We exceeded our 2013 goal and provided 140 children and elderly citizens with gifts. It was a great season of giving.

The Mat Sinking Unit (MSU) is supporting the Memphis District, working to complete critical revetment before the flood season on the Mississippi River north of Memphis. The MSU has had a great season and continues to work through very difficult weather and river conditions to deliver the mission. As you know, the MSU is one-of-a-kind in the world, and has a highly trained, specialized and professional team. The MSU team is diligent with its duties and strives for mission accomplishment.

This winter season, the lakes had a series of Disabled and Wounded Warriors hunts. The impact that our fellow team members have on the great Americans who participate in these hunts is immeasurable. I am very honored to be a member of the Corps team that made these events a success.

The District recently rolled out the MVK app for your “smart-phone” and tablet to serve as an information medium. Bucky Wall in the Public Affairs Office developed this app to enable the public and District team members to obtain information about the District. To make the app better, Bucky needs our input, so feel free to provide any suggestions for possible improvements. Bucky’s goal is to make this app a model for other districts to emulate. A great article outlining some of the basic functionality is included in this Water’s Edge. Download it from your app store and have fun!

As we look forward into 2014, there are many new and exciting changes for the District. Some of these changes are:

- Backfilling of positions at our lakes offices (long overdue).
- Safety Awards are back! We are working to implement a return of cash and other awards into key areas of operations.

- Improvements to safety in our operations with focus on the MSU.
- A rebalance of our MSU workforce by increasing our seasonal positions.
- The hiring of temporary rangers this summer at our lakes offices to help with summer safety.
- Increased Disabled and Wounded Warrior Hunt opportunities.
- Increase our visibility and participation in the fields of science, technology, engineering and math by seizing more opportunities with our educational institutions and our most valuable resource-our youth.

I really enjoy talking to everyone, learning something about you and understanding what you do. As I get around the District, let me know how you are doing! Always feel free to let me know the “happenings” in your area. There are many ways to do this from my open door policy, lunch with the DE (new program for 2014!), command climate survey, or my favorite - just bend my ear when you see me!

We all serve our Country and are a Family that works as a Team to provide value to the Nation! Thanks for all you do and I look forward to serving you in 2014!



Col Cross, right, discusses unique work of Mat Sinking Unit with Joel Brown, chief, revetment section.

Blakely Mountain Dam is site for tabletop exercise

By Shirley J. Smith

Contributing writers are Sam Stacy and Brad Martin

One of the missions of the Corps' Vicksburg District is to conduct emergency operations, which requires training and thorough planning.

Considering the fact that there are various types of emergencies, the Corps must be prepared at all times for whatever the situation or emergency requires. Due to the nature of emergencies, training and planning play key roles in ensuring the readiness of Corps team members.

What if a dam failed????!! Will we be prepared? Preparing for such an emergency also requires preplanning and interacting with other agencies. The Corps' emergency assistance is always supplemental to the maximum efforts of state and local agencies and must be coordinated through these agencies.

That is why the tabletop exercise was held at Blakely Mountain Dam in early December. The purpose of the tabletop exercise serves the same purpose as a fire drill... practicing, reviewing plans, and following step by step procedures... just in case.

The Corps is required by Public Law 92-367 to maintain the integrity of our nation dams to provide for public safety. Regulation ER 1110-2-1156 is the guidance on how this is to be performed and requires a Dam Safety Program for each dam. There are many factors and processes in a dam safety program. One of them is that an Emergency Action Plan be maintained for each dam.

The Emergency Action Plan is a written document. It includes basically "What to Do" in case of an emergency at the dam which may result in dam failure and resulting flooding downstream. It includes a notification flow chart which has all the phone numbers of key Vicksburg District personnel which includes Emergency Management, the District Dam Safety Committee (department heads for each Division and branch chiefs from critical branches such as hydraulics, structures, geotechnical), Corps lake personnel, county and city emergency responders and city officials.

The Emergency Action Plan also contains hydraulic inundation mapping showing areas which would flood in case of loss of the dam and lake.

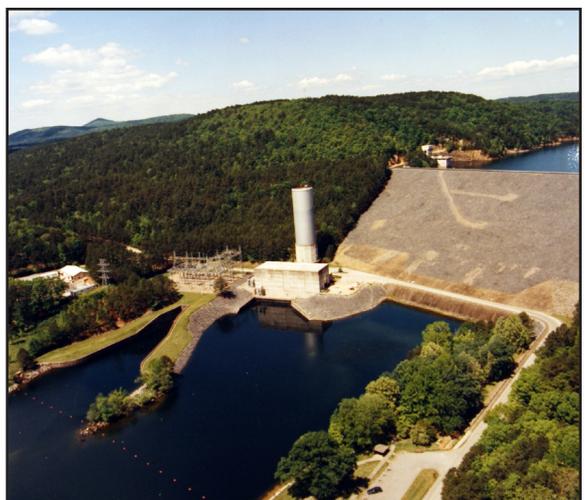
The other requirement from ER 110-2-1156 is to per-

form periodic tabletop exercises. That is basically to take the Emergency Action Plan and go through a practice scenario where there is imminent dam failure and it is a practice run following the Emergency Action Plan. None of the dams are expected to fail but it is important to ensure everyone involved knows what to do in case of an emergency.

District, Division, Corps lakes' staff, and dam safety personnel were present at the exercise at Blakely Mountain Dam. Key members of the public were also in attendance including county emergency responders, county and city officials, and personnel with the National Weather Service, Entergy, and the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management.

The scenario was staged by Brad Martin, the dam safety manager with Mississippi Valley Division. Martin stated that the scenario was designed to run through the emergency action plan. The given data is fictional, but could be real. Martin stated that he staged a scenario that got progressively worse to ensure that proper procedures are undertaken in case of a real life emergency.

The event served as an opportunity to reduce disaster risks by strengthening relationships with interagency partners. It also served as another opportunity to test systems ensuring that all would work as necessary in the event of an emergency. ◀



Blakely Mountain Dam, site of tabletop exercise.

Camera mounted tractors inspect inside of pipes

Story and photo by Kavanaugh Breazeale

The recent guidance per the Corps' Inspection Checklist has determined that all pipes must be inspected for cracks and possible failures every five years. With these standards, pipe inspections are important and an on-going process for the Vicksburg District and the Corps of Engineers.

Andrew Tomlinson and Walter Mattingly in the flood control and hydro power section of the project resource management branch perform these duties with enthusiasm. By using camera mounted tractors, they inspect and record pipe conditions for inspection by the structures branch of the engineering division.

Three camera mounted tractor are used to inspect pipes with the size of the pipe determining which robot will be used. Tomlinson and Mat-

tingly control these tractors by computer and send them into the deep dark depths of these pipes to video and photograph the inside. These robot type wheeled machines are called "tractors" and have five different sized wheels for multiple applications.

They can use these tractors to inspect pipes as small as six inches to as large as 72 inches and go as deep as 80 feet of water. These camera mounted tractors were originally designed to inspect city sewer lines and were small in size. With the application of larger pipes, the robots have become larger and stronger in design.

Pipes were installed and designed by the Corps to have a 50 year life expectancy but new technologies have produced a stronger type of polyethylene pipe that is being installed to prolong the life of the original pipe. These pipes are forced through the existing pipe to extend the life span.

"Sometimes in deep water, when we lift the camera to the highest point, we run into trouble", stated Mattingly.

"If the arm on the robot holding the camera is raised too high, it will become top-heavy," he said.

The camera sends still shot photographs and video images to a computer. These images are transferred to electronic media and reviewed by the district's engineering team to determine if there are issues in the pipes. There are over 1000 pipes in the district that need continual inspections. ◀

Harvey Watson, left, and Ron Hill, center, watch as Walter Mattingly, right, inspects tractor.



District partners with Jacksonville District to restore America's Everglades

By Lance Gullett, Vicksburg District
and Michael Collis, Jacksonville District
Photo courtesy of Jacksonville District

The Vicksburg District Operations staff is assisting the Jacksonville District with its Everglades restoration mission. In 2008, the Jacksonville District completed construction on a component, called the 8.5 Square Mile Area, of the Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park project. After testing the constructed features, the Corps determined that minor design refinements were necessary.

Jacksonville District personnel evaluated many alternatives and in coordination with the local sponsor, the South Florida Water Management District, and the Department of the Interior (DOI), who is funding the project, it was determined that a new seepage collection canal and a gated culvert system were needed. These were needed in order to make the 8.5 Square Mile Area's features function as they were intended.

The project itself, which consists of

multiple components, is near completion, and funds for implementation of the design refinements had to be accomplished at a minimum cost. Jacksonville District personnel evaluated its options for constructing the new seepage canal and determined that Vicksburg District's expertise, flexibility, and ability to conduct the work was the best option. Vicksburg District personnel had conducted other maintenance and repair efforts for the Jacksonville District in the past, and their excellence and professionalism made Jacksonville's decision an easy one.

The Vicksburg District staff began construction in late August and by early December had cleared, grubbed, and excavated nearly 4,000 linear feet of canal. Special heavy equipment was ordered to ensure capability of breaking through the limestone in order to dig the canal. Since the work

was being performed on the border of the Everglades, preventative measures were taken to prevent potential environmental impacts from the ongoing construction work.

The seepage canal has been fully constructed, and the gated culvert system is scheduled to be constructed in May 2014, once the necessary supplies arrive. Not only has the Vicksburg District's Operations staff been assisting on this effort, but their contracting staff has been assisting with this effort as well and has made the contracting process efficient and timely.

The Vicksburg District has played an important role in the 8.5 Square Mile Area project, which once completed, will serve as an integral piece of a \$417 million restoration project which will aid in the restoration of America's Everglades. ◀

Aerial photo shows newly constructed seepage canal.

District team members working on the seepage canal and test cell repairs were:

Jesse Huskey
Rodney Bell
David Johnson
Bobby Poff
Richard Selby
Robert Earl Upchurch
Dwight Williams
Kerry Wyatt
Lance Gullett
Jerry Price
Ronald Perkins
DeWayne Kelly

Wood duck boxes enhance duck habitat at Lake Ouachita

Story and photos by Amy Shultz

Wood ducks are medium-sized ducks that breed in wetland areas. The male ducks have beautiful, multi-colored plumage. The population of the wood duck was declining as a result of severe habitat loss and market hunting both for meat and plumage for the ladies' hat market in Europe in the 19th century. By the beginning of the 20th century wood ducks had virtually disappeared from much of their former range. In response to the Migratory Bird Treaty established in 1916 and enactment of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, wood duck populations began to recover slowly. By ending unregulated hunting and taking measures to protect remaining habitat, wood duck populations began to rebound in the 1920s. The development of the artificial nesting box in the 1930s gave an additional boost to wood duck production.

The Lake Ouachita's natural resource ranger staff has been constructing and placing wood duck boxes around Lake Ouachita for approximately 40 years. Annually, the natural resource management staff service replaces and builds new boxes to replace old, dilapidated duck boxes or to establish a duck box in a new area.

The Lake Ouachita wood duck boxes are constructed out of cedar. Cedar shavings are placed in the nesting area to provide nesting beds for the ducks, and keep lice, mites, and other bugs from infesting the box. Each year, the natural resource personnel and/or volunteers construct new boxes. In January the staff will revisit and clean existing boxes and replace damaged boxes with the newly constructed ones.

Global positioning system locations of the boxes are mapped and recorded. The number of specific boxes utilized as nesting habitat is also recorded. When checking the boxes, in addition to remnants of wood duck eggs, rangers have also found owls, squirrels, honey bees, raccoons, and even snakes utilizing the boxes, so checking the duck



David Pennington measures an area on the wood duck box for placement of number.



Byron Erickson engraves the location number on a wood duck box.



Pictured is an artist rendering of a wood duck.

boxes is an exciting adventure! You haven't lived until a squirrel has run down your back, or you reach in and pull out a black rat snake!

Lake Ouachita has a 45-50% success rate of wood duck hatching in the boxes. Approximately 60 boxes are currently located around the shoreline of Lake Ouachita, and the plan is to add 10 additional boxes this year. The boxes are placed on trees or poles near the water line so the young ducklings can crawl out of the nest and land in the water. ◀

Public Affairs Office offers new app and maps for District

By Bucky Wall

The Vicksburg District has released an app for your cell-phone or tablet. The app is a great source for learning about the services offered by the District.

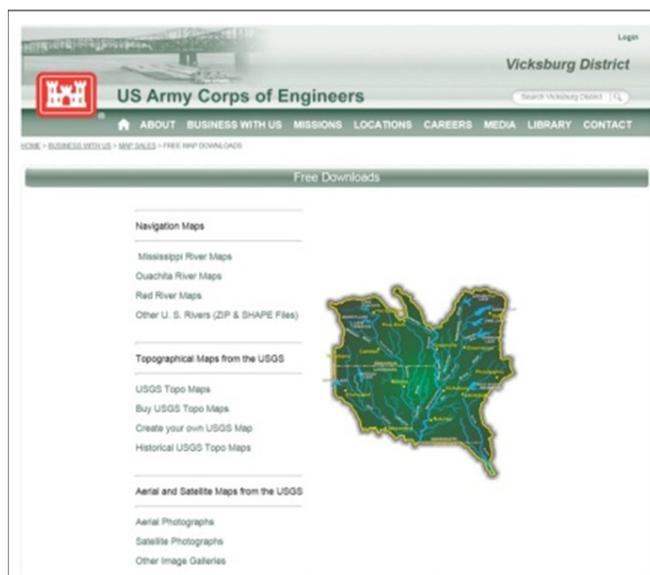
The app is available, at no charge, on the App Store for iPhone, iPad, iPad mini and iPod touch. It is also available for all Android devices on the Google Play Store and Amazon App Store. (Search for “USACE Vicksburg”)

Here are some of the items contained in the app.

- Water level observations for the District and forecasts from the National Weather Service listed by state and watershed in graphical format.
- Info on how to sell your goods and services to the Corps of Engineers through the Contracting Office including a Twitter feed that lists contracts being offered.
- Social media, news and photos from the Public Affairs Office including a Facebook feed, Twitter feed and pictures in Flickr.
- Info from the District’s Emergency Management Office for times of crisis and the ability to push out alerts and messages to subscribers.
- Water safety information and the Corps’ entire safety manual for your eReader
- Permits info and notices from our Regulatory Office’s website.
- Tons of info on all of the recreational areas in the District and instructions on how to make reservations through Recreation.gov.
- Ways to find our offices in the District and contact us here at District Headquarters (HQ) using interactive maps from Google.
- Free map downloads of major rivers including the Mississippi, Red, Ouachita, and others.



Beginning in September, the Public Affairs Office offered maps in PDF and Zip file format for the public to download at no cost. The link to the service is located on the District’s website under the “Business with Us” menu item. The maps include the Mississippi River, Ouachita River, Red River in PDF and many more from across the country.



District archaeologist receives award for work with Tribal Nations

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Alfred Dulaney

Sarah Koeppel, District archaeologist and Tribal Liaison, and who was also selected as the District's 2013 Scientist of the Year, recently received a Certificate of Appreciation for her work in regulatory, signed by the Deputy Commanding General for Civil and Emergency Operations, Major General John W. Peabody. The award also credited her creative thinking, communication skills, and positive relationships with federally recognized tribes for ensuring the success of several high profile civil works projects.

The Certificate of Appreciation was presented to Koeppel by Mark L. Mazzanti, chief, Programs Management Division, Directorate of Civil Works for Corps Headquarters and Senior Tribal Liaison Dr. Georgeie Reynolds. It was presented to Koeppel during the Corps' annual Consulting with Tribal Nations training and Tribal Liaison meeting held December 2-6, 2013, in Washington D.C. This training is an opportunity for Corps team members and representatives from other federal agencies to meet with tribal leaders to discuss consultation policies and procedures. The meeting also served as an opportunity for Corps Tribal Liaisons to share challenges and best practices.

Koeppel has worked at the Vicksburg District for five years. During this time she has introduced a new internal cultural resource and reviewed procedures for regulatory permits, resulting in expedited evaluation times which improve service to our customers.

Along with Regional Planning and Environment Division South archaeologist Jennifer Ryan, and former District archaeologist and Tribal Liaison, Chris Koeppel, she has hosted three tribal consultation meetings with District leaders, which has greatly improved relationships with Tribal Nations interested in the District's undertakings.



Col Cross presents Certificate of Appreciation to Koeppel.

Recently, she led the effort to rebury prehistoric human remains unearthed during a District activity. Senior leaders and tribal elders worked together to reinter the individuals removed, allowing the District to fulfill its Trust Responsibility to a Sovereign Nation. She has also worked with various project offices to perform cultural resource surveys, provided cultural resource law training to rangers, assisted in accidental discoveries of prehistoric and historic resources as well as shipwrecks, and has regularly provided articles for *The Water's Edge*, *Ranger Update*, and Mississippi Valley Division's publication, "Our Mississippi," and wrote the District's first Historic Properties Management Plan.

Koeppel, a native of Evansville, Indiana, earned a Bachelor's Degree in Anthropology from Auburn University, and a Master's Degree in Anthropology from Western Michigan University.

She is a member of several professional organizations and serves as coordinator of the Network of State and Provincial Archaeology Education for the Society for American Archaeology; she is a Registered Professional Archaeologist, and is an active volunteer for many local and national organizations including the Sherman Avenue Elementary School PTO and Ronald McDonald House in Jackson.

She is married to Mississippi Valley Division team member Chris Koeppel, and they are the proud parents of two children. ◀

The District has new Deputy for Programs and Project Management

By Shirley J. Smith
Photo by Alfred Dulaney



Patricia Hemphill

Programs and Project Management's deputy is a civil engineer and former Deputy chief of Programs and Project Management Division.

Patricia Hemphill, a Vicksburg native, recently received the highest civilian position within the Corps' Vicksburg District.

As Deputy for Programs and Project Management, Hemphill has the authority to make managerial deci-

sions regarding civil, environmental and Support for Others programs and projects. She serves as the senior advisor to the Commander, management staff of the District, customers, and local representatives on local program operations.

She interfaces daily internally and externally to assure that corporate efforts result in quality projects on time and within budget. She provides leadership in establishing and maintaining effective management processes and a work environment conducive to effective integration of technical functions of planning, engineering, construction, real estate, contracting, and resource management with programs and project management.

Hemphill's applicable education and training for this position include being a 2011 Senior Fellow, Excellence in Government Partnership for Public Service, Harvard University's JFK School of Government, Cambridge, Massachusetts, and Army Management Staff College at Ft.

Belvoir, Virginia, receiving a degree in Sustaining Base Leadership Management Program, and earning her Bachelor of Science Degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University.

Her previous assignment was serving as full assistant to the Deputy for Programs and Project Management and chief of Programs and Project Management Division. She ensured successful annual operating budget execution and program planning and execution.

Hemphill formerly served as deputy chief of Programs and Project Management Division where she collaborated with the District's technical elements and had prime responsibility for managing the District's studies and projects through a matrix management structure. She ensured adherence to principles defined in the project management business process which includes schedule and cost, improving study and project continuity and customer interface and ensuring consistent application of policy.

She is a graduate of Warren Central High School and is married to Glenn Hemphill. ◀

Vicksburg District Command Cyber Readiness Inspection (CCRI)

USCYBERCOM will conduct a CCRI of the Vicksburg District from 7-11 July 2014. An initial network assessment and scan has been conducted at MVK to determine compliance of all network devices and MVK's network security posture. Full-site assessments and Site Assistance Visits will begin in early March. MVK and all USACE network users are reminded to comply with CAC, PC and telephone usage guidelines, and

to report possible malware infections or spillages to the Enterprise Service Desk.

Four items of note include:

1. Please be sure to keep your CAC on you at all times. Never leave it unattended as this is a very serious security violation and poses a significant threat.
2. Label and store away all office-related media (Hard Drives, DVDs and CDs, Tape Drives, etc.).

3. Identify, sanitize, and excess all legacy equipment no longer in use.
4. At least twice a month, please leave your laptop powered on and connected onto CorpsNet overnight to ensure it receives all of the latest patches and updates to maintain system IA compliance.

For any questions comments or concerns, please contact Brian Crawford, 1-7292, District IT Chief.

District gets new Contracting Chief

By Alice Bufkin

Photo by Alfred Dulaney



Lynnieste Cosey-Mayfield

The District announces the selection of Lynnieste Cosey-Mayfield as chief of the Contracting Office.

Cosey-Mayfield has more than 26 years of extensive contracting experience with multiple government agencies. She has held positions with the Aviation Systems

Command in St. Louis, Missouri, the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration in the Washington, D.C. area.

She joined the District's contracting team in 2002 where she has served as team leader and branch chief with responsibilities of executing and overseeing the service and supply contracts of various contract types and at various thresholds.

Her duties as chief of the Contracting Division include serving as the principal procurement official and primary contracting officer to contract for supplies, services (including construction and architect-engineer), utilities,

and agreements via any authorized contracting method on behalf of the United States.

She is a member of the National Contract Management Association.

"The Vicksburg District Contracting Office is mostly a 'fee for service' organization. In an environment where the District's budget is steadily decreasing, the challenge is to continue to provide the same quality level of service with reduced resources. My personal goal is to lead the Vicksburg District Contracting office in providing high quality services without compromising morale and quality of life for the office's employees," stated Cosey-Mayfield.

In fiscal year 2013, the Vicksburg District contracting office awarded 836 contract actions and obligated approximately \$128 million that benefited communities in Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi.

A Vicksburg native and graduate of Warren Central High School, she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English with an extended minor in Business Administration from Jackson State University. She and her husband, the Reverend Gregory Mayfield, are the parents of two children. ◀

Col Cross presents an Achievement Medal for Civilian Service to Eugene Wall

By Shirley J. Smith

Photo by Kavanaugh Breazeale



Eugene "Bucky" Wall received the award for his exceptional achievement from August to December 2013 while serving as a public affairs specialist. His inventiveness, resourcefulness, and diligence led to his creation of the Vicksburg District's first smart phone application. He successfully navigated Army Corps of Engineers-Information Technology, the Army, Department of Defense, Google, and Apple requirements and overcame many obstacles while producing a user-friendly application designed towards accomplishing the Corps' mission.

His exceptional technical ability and tireless efforts reflect great credit upon himself, the Vicksburg District, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. ◀

Pictured left, Col Cross presents Achievement Medal to Wall.

CHRISTMAS KICK-OFF PROGRAM

Photos by Alfred Dulaney



DELIVERING ANGEL TREE GIFTS



RETURNING OCO DEPLOYEES AND RETIREMENTS

Photos by Alfred Dulaney



Year ends with several retirements at District

By Shirley J. Smith

Photos by Alfred Dulaney

Just as each year has an ending, each year here at the District ends with several team members having ended their Corps career, and listed below are some of those team members.

One such team member is Paul Eagles, who is also a Scoutmaster with Boy Scout Troop 102, ended his Corps career at the end of December 2013, but will continue his duties with Boy Scouts. Eagles was a senior project manager in the Programs and Project Management Division. His duties included managing the New Orleans to Venice project with the New Orleans District. He worked with regional teams which include all districts within the Mississippi Valley Division. He supervised two project managers assigned to these projects through the design process and awarding of the contract. After the contract is awarded the New Orleans District manages the project through construction.

Eagles began his career with the Corps in 1978, about the same time that he volunteered to be an assistant scout master. He worked at Waterways Experiment Station, now the Engineer Research and Development Center, from 1978 until 1986 when he began working for the District as a study manager trainee in the Planning Division, working on water supply issues that eventually became the Mississippi Delta Study. He worked his way to project manager in 1998 and in 2000 was promoted to senior project manager.

He stated that two of his most memorable moments were when the District signed the \$9 million Feasibility Cost Sharing Agreement for the Southeast Arkansas Study in Little Rock, Arkansas with Arkansas' Governor Huckabee being present. The other occasion was when the

first contract was awarded in 2012 for the New Orleans to Venice project. "There was a lot of pressure to get these projects under construction, it was a big deal, and it took a lot of interaction between our Commander and the Commander of the New Orleans District because of the interaction between our projects and those under construction by New Orleans," Eagles stated.

Eagles scouting career has traveled a similar path to that of his Corps career. His scouting began when he was in elementary school, a Cub Scout, and he remained with scouting and became a Boy Scout, then an Eagle Scout, throughout his high school years. After graduating college and becoming employed with the Corps he became an assistant scout master. During that time Eagles recalls a trip to Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico, where he took the boy scouts on a back-packing trip. Eagles stated that one of those boy scouts, William Emerson, became a co-worker of his at the District.

Eagles later married and had two sons who became Cub Scouts and eventually Boy Scouts. About the time Eagles became Scoutmaster his sons reached the rank of Eagle Scout. During that time another opportunity arose for a Boy Scout trip back to Philmont Scout Ranch, this time with his wife and sons, making it a family adventure.

Now that Eagles sons are grown he is still involved with scouting, serving as a Scoutmaster. He stated, "Boy scouting teaches young men to be good citizens. It helps them to learn to make wise choices; it builds integrity; it teaches leadership."

When asked if he will continue with scouting after

(Continued on page 15)



Henry Dulaney presents a gift to Eagles.



Chuck Mendrop with family at retirement ceremony.

(Retirements, concluded from page 14)

retirement, he stated “Yes, that will be one of my easier tasks; I can give more focus to scouting without competition from the job.” Other than scouting Eagles stated that he has chores at home to complete, and of course, he plans to spend more time with his family, and squeeze in time for hunting and fishing.

Charles “Chuck” Mendrop is retiring after more than 35 years of service with the Corps. He began his career in 1978 as a civil engineer technician in the foundation and materials branch.

He retired as the director of the dam and levee safety production center of Engineering and Construction Division. He was responsible for developing and directing the center to manage the regional execution of complex, non-routine, dam and levee safety modifications, engineering

assessments, risk and reliability analyses, and infrastructure security.

He said that his most memorable event during his Corps career was the 2011 Historic Flood.

Other retirees were Helen Butler, administrative assistant for hydraulics branch of Engineering and Construction Division, 29 years of service; Howard Zeigler and Vernon Smith of construction services branch of Engineering and Construction Division had a combined 78 years of service; Louise Acuff and Myra Dean of Programs and Project Management Division had a combined 75 years of service; Sandra Ford, Engineering and Construction Division, 32 years of service; Leonard Murrell, Operations Division, 36 years of service; and Ken White, Real Estate Division, 41 years of service.

Happy and enjoyable retirement to all. ◀

Project manager returns after 10-month deployment

By Alice Bufkin
Photo courtesy of
Afghanistan staff

When senior project manager Mike Renacker’s plane landed at the Jackson-Medgar Wiley Evers International Airport on December 4, 2013, he was returning from a more than ten-month deployment at Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan.

Mike served as the program manager for Military Construction (MILCON) for Regional Command East in Afghanistan. While assigned to the 101st Airborne Division, he managed all military construction projects for the eastern half of Afghanistan. The MILCON program (138 projects totaling \$1.3 billion) consists of \$600 million ongoing construction projects and \$740 million construction program in support of the NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan.

He also served as the liaison between the U. S. Army and the Corps, playing a critical role in ongoing base planning, coordinating efforts between

infrastructure lines of effort, and assisting in realigning base resources and personnel to a more streamlined operation. This work helped towards transforming Bagram Air Field into the only strategic aerial base in Afghanistan to support future operations.

Renacker was awarded the NATO Medal, the Commander’s Award for Civilian Service Medal, and the Secretary of Defense Medal for the Global War on Terrorism for his outstanding service.

“My work in Afghanistan challenged me to move beyond my boundaries; I found myself learning new skill sets and successfully putting them to use. I met many brave men and women during my deployment and I was honored to have served with them,” Renacker stated.

He is a member of the Programs and Project Management Division where he is responsible for six individual programs that include construction and

flood damage restoration and environmental restoration and planning.

He earned a Master of Arts Degree from the University of West Florida in historical archaeology. He and his wife, the former Melissa Andrews, reside in Clinton with their two children.

The District continues to play a key role in defense operations both at home and abroad by deploying members of its workforce continuously in support of the U. S. Army’s mission in Afghanistan and other foreign fields. ◀



Mike Renacker

District hosts local math competition

Story and photos by **Kavanaugh Breazeale**

The District and the Vicksburg Chapter of the Society of American Military Engineers recently sponsored a 2014 math competition at District Headquarters.

The competition, designed for 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students, is based on the national MATHCOUNTS format emphasizing problem solving skills designed to prepare students for the upcoming MATHCOUNTS regional competition. It recognizes students with mathematical minds and promotes the importance, challenges, and excitement found in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Fifty-five students from Porters Chapel Academy, St. Francis, St. Aloysius, Vicksburg Junior High, Warren Central Junior High, and home-schooled students participated.

The 2014 winners are: First Place - Victoria Gong - Second Place - Jack Dowe and Third Place - Matthew Cross. The team award went to St. Aloysius with team members being Victoria Gong, Jack Dowe, Connor Clark and Greyson Parman.

The Vicksburg District has partnered with local schools for the past 23 years. Its team members serve as mentors, tutors and proctors during state testing. They also serve as science fair judges and regularly speak to students on various topics such as engineering, math, science, and technology. Vicksburg District sponsors the Mississippi River Class at Vicksburg and Warren Central High Schools and has adopted Vicksburg High School since 1998 and Sherman Avenue Elementary since 2008. ◀



1st place winner, Victoria Gong, center, is pictured with Col Eckstein, left, and Col Cross, right.



2nd place winner, Jack Dowe, center, is pictured with Col Eckstein, left, and Col Cross, right.



Pictured with Col Eckstein, left, are Matthew Cross, 3rd place winner, and his dad, Col Cross.



Shown with Col Eckstein, left, and Col Cross, right, are Team Award winners from St. Aloysius, from left to right, Connor Clark, Jack Dowe, Victoria Gong, Greyson Parman.

District reaches goals despite *Shutdown*

By Shirley J. Smith

The Vicksburg District has held its annual Combined Federal Campaign Kickoff Program for as long as any present day team member can remember, but, not so this year. Due to the governmental shutdown in late September, the annual program was not held, but the shutdown did not shut out the giving spirit of the District.

The 2013 goal for the District was \$50,000 and due to the generosity of caring folks as those here at the District, we met and exceeded our 2013 CFC goal! The 2013 CFC theme was The Future Is in Our Hands, and team members reacted accordingly.

Deborah Hall, the District's 2013 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) chairperson stated, "I have been honored to serve as your chairperson for the 2013 CFC. After having served on this committee for nine years I can truly say that the Vicksburg District team plays a big role with the overall goal of United Way's West Central Mississippi Chapter of the CFC, and thanks also for helping us to exceed our goal by 4%, having a total of \$52,181 here at the District."

The District Outreach Committee's two projects were the local Salvation Army's Angel Tree and the Commu-

nity Storehouse Food Pantry. The giving tradition of the District prevailed again through these projects which resulted in District team members donating non-perishable food items for the Food Pantry and purchasing gifts for 140 children and elderly within the local and surrounding communities.

The District has assisted the local Salvation Army with the Angel Tree project for more than 20 years and this project has proven to be a successful one with a guaranteed reward – helping those less fortunate.

Brooke Southerland, District Outreach Committee's 2013 chairperson stated, "This is my fifth year serving on this committee and I was happy to serve as the 2013 chairperson. Accomplishing our goals requires a bit of extra time but it is all worth it especially when you see it all coming together. Just the sight of the bags of gifts donated by our team members warms the heart because all donations and gifts will be highly appreciated by less fortunate children and the elderly; they too will have brighter Holidays because of our team effort."

Thanks for contributing to such worthwhile causes! ◀



Corps staff members assist with Santa's Switchboard

By Rick Dwyer

Deputy project manager, Ouachita Project Management Office

Brian Westfall, natural resource specialist at Ouachita Project Management Office, and I assisted the Park and Recreation Department of the City of Hot Springs with its Santa Switchboard program. We played the role of Santa and made phone calls to children around the Hot Springs/Garland County area.

Children aged to 11 years were eligible to participate. Forms were distributed to many of the grade schools within the Hot Springs area for those interested in participating in the Santa Switchboard program. Parents completed information about the child, including the name of the school the child attends, pets' names, names of siblings, their Christmas wish list, etc. They also indicated which night of the two selected nights was the best time for "Santa" to call.

On the nights of the witchboard calls, volunteer Santas along with Mrs. Claus, gathered for a short instructional meeting followed by a free dinner provided by Newks. There were five couples of Mr. and Mrs. Claus, armed with bells and Santa hats, in separate rooms making calls. Most calls started with Mrs. Claus explaining to parents that this is Santa's Switchboard calling. Parents then put the child on the phone. Mrs. Claus spoke to the child briefly, with a

lead-in to Santa, ringing bells as he came in from feeding the reindeer!

Children were flabbergasted when Santa asked about their pets by name, or when they were asked about their teacher by name. One girl told Santa all about her visit to the doctor to have a cast put on her arm. Some of the calls were very uplifting, such as when children asked for items only for their siblings, or wished for Grandma to feel better. One young lady was so happy Santa had called that she broke into song and recited every word of Rudolph the Red Nose Reindeer!

Total time for the switchboard calls usually lasts about 2 ½ hours depending on the number of forms received or as long as Santas' voices last! More than 142 children received the Santa Switchboard call this year, and those not reached received Christmas letters from the City of Hot Springs. The Santa Switchboard has become such an enjoyable and heartwarming event that it might not seem like Christmas unless we make Santa calls! This was the fourth year that I participated with the program and the third year for Westfall, and it was both fun and rewarding as usual. ◀



Brian Westfall double checks his list with his wife Yvonne.



Rick Dwyer checks his list with a City of Hot Springs employee.

Two District engineers achieve licensing

Story by Kavanaugh Breazeale
Photos by Bucky Wall



Heather Sibley Taylor Bradley

Two civil engineers in the geotechnical branch of Engineering and Construction Division, Heather Sibley and Taylor Bradley, recently obtained their Professional Civil Engineer license. Only a licensed engineer may prepare, sign, seal and submit engineering plans and drawings to a public authority for approval.

Heather Sibley began her Corps career in the analytical section of the geotechnical branch in June 2009. She was born in Jackson and reared in Phoenix, Mississippi. She graduated from Yazoo County High School and earned a Bachelor of Science degree in civil engineering from Mississippi State University. She is married to Caleb Sibley and they reside in Bentonia.

Taylor Bradley began his career in the investigation and inspection sec-

tion of the geotechnical branch. He is a graduate of St. Andrews Episcopal High School in Ridgeland and earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in biology and a Bachelor of Science Degree in civil engineering from the University of Mississippi. He resides in Jackson.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the world's largest public engineering organization and it has a firm commitment to preserving and enhancing our natural environment. The Corps strives to manage and conserve natural resources and is an organization in which you can build a career to match your hopes and aspirations. Now more than ever, there is a need for people who can respond quickly and effectively to challenges. For more information visit our website at www.mvk.usace.army.mil. ◀

Successful Waterfowl Hunt at DeGray Lake

Story by Jeffrey Lockwood
Photo by Marty Adair

The annual waterfowl hunt for the mobility impaired was held January 11th and 12th. Five hunters from across the state made their way to DeGray for two days of duck hunting. One of the coldest Arctic blasts in twenty years had just made its way through the state. This pushed the ducks farther to the south, which resulted in fewer ducks than normal for the hunt. In typical Arkansas fashion, temps rebounded nicely into the 50's, which made for great hunting conditions for the event. Twenty-five birds were harvested during the weekend.

The Lower Lake serves as the perfect location for the event. The shallow depth, backwaters and adjacent hardwood stands provide ideal habitat for wintering waterfowl. Hunters are transported to selected sites and placed on individual blinds or on the shoreline which provides a dry, level

surface. As the only Corps sponsored duck hunt in the state, the demand for the slots are high. As always, dedicated volunteers provided 75 hours of service.

Thanks to local sponsors, plenty of good home cooked foods were donated. Brookshire's, SAV-U-MOR and WAL MART of Arkadelphia, National Wild Turkey Federation, (Caddo River Longbeards chapter) and Rothwell Marine of Hope all provided donations for the hunt.

"After spending a weekend with these guys you really appreciate what they go through on a daily basis. Normal, everyday tasks that most of us take for granted can be obstacles for them. But they persevere and press on," stated park ranger Jimmie Ward.

Tony Lequieu of the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission said it best, "We all work together to give individuals with disabilities the chance to prove to themselves that they can accomplish many things. We all hope this op-

portunity will open an interest in other activities while reducing the anxiety of trying something new". In addition to the hunters, the staff and volunteers look forward to this event each year. New friends, as well as memories, are made every January around breakfast, a spread of decoys, or a campfire. ◀



Pictured after the hunt are front row, left to right, Ray Austin, Vince Kirtley, Josh Lockwood and Billy Fryar, and back row, left to right are Jeffrey Lockwood and Roy McKim.

Arkansas' Becoming an Outdoors Woman Workshop yields plenty of fun

By Shana M. Thomason

Photos courtesy of Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and Mary Thomason (aka Annie Oakley)

Having grown up in rural Arkansas where camping, hunting, fishing, kayaking and other outdoor activities are a way of life, I always considered myself to be an outdoors woman. As such, I wondered if I would enjoy the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" workshop. Not only did I enjoy it, but I learned new tools and techniques during the workshops and met lots of interesting and amazing "outdoor women." This year, 155 women from across the nation came together at C.A. Vines 4-H center for this unique workshop designed specifically for women.

The annual event began 21 years ago when the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC) partnered with the national "Becoming an Outdoor Woman" (BOW) organization to create a workshop consisting of three days of outdoor skills training. According to the AGFC website, "This workshop is for you if":

- You have never tried these activities, but have hoped for an opportunity to learn.
- You are a beginner who wants to learn and improve your skills.
- You know how to do some of the activities and wanted to try some new ones.
- You are looking for the camaraderie of like-minded individuals.

During the workshop, I chose four out of 32 classes offered, including: bowhunting, pioneer woman skills (tomahawk throwing; building a fire with flint), Dutch oven cooking, canoe and kayak paddling, markswoman-ship, scuba diving, boating skills, high ropes course, trees and keys and many more! To get out of my comfort zone and try something I'd never done, I chose turkey calling. What did I learn? By the time the class was over, I knew which colors to wear and which colors not to wear; when to call; where to call; how to call and lots more turkey tricks all learned from a charming little lady who has 50 years of turkey hunting.

My other workshop choices were canoeing and kayaking, markswoman-ship, and ATV riding. What a great way

to spend the weekend: go kayaking, shoot a few things and ride 4-wheelers! AGFC partners with local, state, and federal agencies that provide experts to help with the workshops. Volunteers assisting with teaching the classes included Arkansas State Parks, the Corps, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, U.S. Forest Service and others.

Natural resources specialists Brian Westfall and Renea



Shana Thomason kayaking in a pond near the 4-H Center in Ferndale, Arkansas.

Guin taught "Basic Motor Boat Skills." Westfall stated, "I have proudly served as a BOW boating workshop instructor for 18 years. During this time I have been impressed with all the participants, especially where backing a boat trailer is concerned. I really get a kick out of the ladies when they've learned to back a trailer. They always proclaim, 'Wait until my husband sees this!' I can back the trailer without jack-knifing! That's what the workshop is all about, giving women the confidence and ability to excel in a sport that has been traditionally male associated." Guin agrees, "I am always surprised that there are women who think 'I can't do that', when they haven't even tried. This program allows them to see all the possibilities that are out there for them and gives them the confidence that they CAN do that. It's always a pleasure to watch these ladies learn something new. I never give up on trying to learn something new myself!"

There were several highlights of the weekend for me. One was markswoman-ship. AGFC provided a variety of firearms, and for 3 ½ hours I, along with 20 other ladies, shot hundreds of rounds of ammunition while learning proper loading and handling techniques. With women ranging in age from 18-83, and skill sets from novice to expert, there was plenty of competition! Classes ended with an Annie Oakley shoot-out contest where each lady shot at quarter-sized bulls-eye targets. I'm proud to say that my mother-in-law won the contest.

BOW was a great way to get away, learn something new, and have fun while meeting new and interesting people. Arlene Green, coordinator of the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman workshop said, "I love BOW because it lets me share my love of the outdoors with about 150 ladies every year. This program empowers women to do things they would not have considered doing otherwise.



An instructor with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission instructs Shana Thomason on target shooting at a turkey target.

Women arrive here with the 'can't do' attitude but after completing the workshop they have a new attitude of 'can do' and unafraid to try new things."

I'm already thinking about which workshops I'll try next year. ◀

Lake Ouachita hosts 2013 annual Mobility Impaired Deer Hunt

By Joseph Bailey
Photo by Daniel Adams



Pictured after the hunt are, left to right, Joe Bailey, Mike Wade, Samantha Norwood, and Jerry Norwood.

Lake Ouachita hosted its Annual Mobility Impaired Deer hunt on November 16-17, 2013. This hunt is a joint effort between the Corps and the Arkansas Spinal Cord Commission. This hunt gives hunters a unique opportunity to participate in a well managed deer hunt designed to meet their special needs. The drawing for the annual hunt was held during the month of September when four hunters were selected.

The hunters' excitement was very rewarding not only for the hunters but for the staff as well, and made the preparation and dedication efforts for the event well worth it. The designated hunting stand areas were off limits to public hunting at the time of the event.

This year's hunt was held near Lake Ouachita's new office building. Many compliments were received about the facility and its amenities, making the experience that much more memorable for the Lake Ouachita staff who worked flawlessly to coordinate and conduct the hunt.

Although the hunt was held in November, the high temperatures were more reminiscent of summer, and the deer obviously enjoyed the warmer temperatures and were plentiful during the hunt- although just one doe was harvested.

Lake Ouachita personnel enjoyed meeting the hunters while making new friends in the process, and are already looking forward to next year's hunt! ◀

DeGray Lake hosts classic Disc Golf Tournament

Story and photos by Steven Rodgers

DeGray Lower Lake disc golf course was the location of the inaugural DeGray Lake Classic Disc Golf Tournament on Saturday, November 9th, 2013. The event was hosted by tournament director Doug Trantham of Full Blown Disc Golf and sanctioned by the Professional Disc Golf Association. Participants received mini marker discs with water safety logos from DeGray Lake personnel.

About thirty participants were expected for the tournament but the actual count was fifty six. Forty nine players preregistered and seven registered the day of the event.

It rained unexpectedly, but as tee time approached, the rain stopped, which allowed for improved playing conditions. Players competed during two rounds of eighteen holes.

The tournament champion was Cam Colglazier of Mobile, Alabama. Colglazier is a traveling professional sponsored by Prodigy Disc Golf. The payout was \$305 for acquiring a score of 89 for 36 holes. This came in at nineteen under par.

Disc golf is one of the fastest growing sports in the world. When the DeGray disc golf course opened in 2010, there were 3,800 courses in the U.S. alone; now there are more than 5,000 disc golf courses.

One of the reasons for disc golf's popularity is

that persons of all ages are eligible to participate. During the DeGray tournament, eight players were under the age of sixteen. Another factor for the popularity is the cost to play. Most courses are free and beginners' discs can be purchased for \$6 to \$10. Frisbees can be used to play, but the actual sport uses heavier plastic discs that were patterned after the Frisbee.

DeGray Lower Lake disc golf course was a nine hole course from 2010 to 2011. The Keeping DeGray Lake Beautiful organization provided a \$5,000 grant for the original nine holes. Nine local businesses provided an additional \$200 each to sponsor a hole. A grant from the city of Caddo Valley allowed for the expansion to 18 holes in 2012. The full course allows for tournaments that bring revenue into the local community.

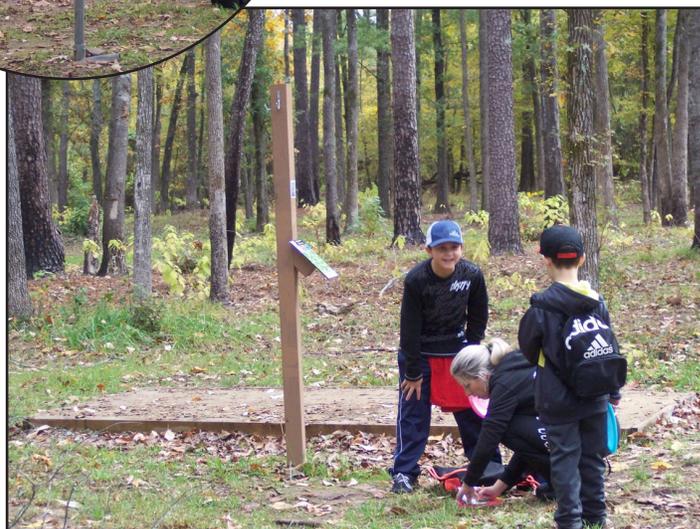
Several organizations have contributed to the construction of the course. The DeGray Lake maintenance staff, RBS contractors, DeGray ranger staff, volunteers, Clark County inmates, and Arkansas Department of Corrections inmates participated in the construction of DeGray Lower Lake disc golf course.

The annual DeGray Lake Classic, other tournaments, or just recreational players have a well maintained and safe place to enjoy the sport of disc golf. Hope to see you soon at DeGray Lower Lake disc golf course! ◀

A participant throws the disc during the tournament.



Disc golfer Laura Meyers on Tee #14 at the tournament.



Kim Pratt, tournament participant, assisted several children with disc golf.

Lake Greeson hosts Squirrel Hunt for Wounded Warriors

Story by Marty Reynolds

Photo by Dan Funderburk, Lake Greeson

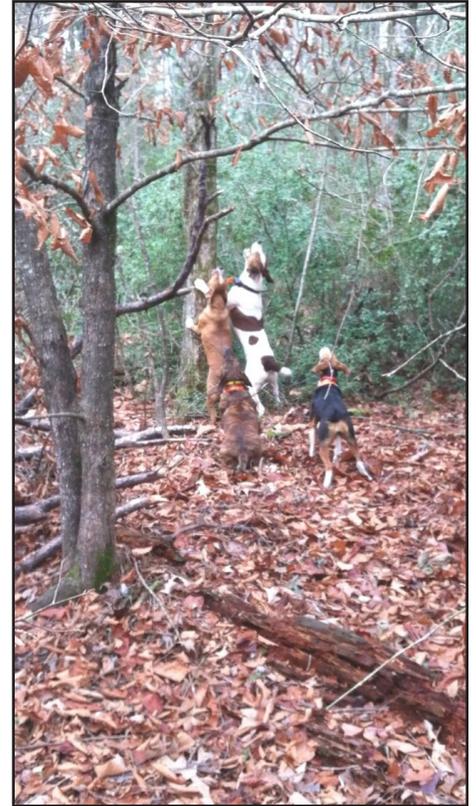
On January 25th and 26th, 2014, Lake Greeson Field Office partnered with the Wounded Warrior Project to host a special squirrel hunt for wounded warriors. Hunters arrived Friday night, January 24th, at the Kirby Landing Motel, which served as the hub of their activities for the weekend as they hunted various sites around Lake Greeson. Organizers of the hunt were Corps personnel from Lake Greeson and John Nolan, Jr., USAF, retired, of Patriots Alumni and Louisiana Sportsmen.

The eight participants in the hunt were from Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas. Four were wounded warriors, two were retired veterans and two others were friends of the group. The hunters were transported to different areas by volunteers and Corps personnel. Squirrel dogs, owned and trained by Lake Greeson park ranger Dan Funderburk and his dad Mike, were used for this particular hunt; this greatly added to the success of the hunt. Many had not hunted squirrels with dogs before.

The hunters harvested a total of 27 squirrels. One particular group of hunters came upon a very steep hill where the dogs had treed a squirrel at the top of the hill, and the group was complaining, dreading to have to drudge up the hill for the squirrel. One hunter saw one of the dogs coming back down the hill with something in its mouth – it was the squirrel he was after; it apparently had fallen from the tree and the dog “retrieved” it. It was as if the dog sensed the unwillingness of the group to go up the hill, and took matters in his own paws!

Meals were prepared by Lake Greeson Field Office personnel, courtesy of gracious donations from local businesses and the Lake Greeson Sportsmen’s Alliance. A local band known as the “Bear Creek Boys” performed free live music on Saturday during the day in honor of the wounded warriors and veterans.

A special thanks to the following Corps employees for logistical support during the event: Ranay Floyd, David Bradford, Shannon Herrin, Robin Lammers, Tammy Fant, Kenneth Forga, James Pedron, Eric Jenkins and David Ross. A special thanks also to Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Wildlife officers Frank Sigman and Ronnie White who provided a safety briefing for all hunters prior to the hunt.



Trained hunting dogs have treed a squirrel.

Hunters had a wonderful time at this event. They had a great time sharing stories, hunting, listening to music and eating a delicious home-cooked meal. It was a great feeling for us to give back to those who have given so much. ◀



John Wilburn, land use ranger at Arkabutla Lake, is being pulled behind a tractor on a tree planter. He repetitively places tree seedlings in a slit in the ground made by the tree planter. The tractor’s wheels close the slit in the ground to give the roots good soil contact to ensure survival of the tree seedling.

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Vicksburg National Military Park
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