KANSAS CITY DISTRICT'S NEWS MAGAZINE

HEARTLAND ENGINEER

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JANUARY - MARCH 2015

POWERING into 2015

EMPLOYEE PROFILE

Ann Ewy,
Manager, FUSRAP
Photo provided

Ann Ewy is a Chemical Engineer that works as a technical manager for the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Actions Program. She started working in the district following graduation from Kansas State University in 2002 as a Department of Army intern. During her time as an intern, her mentors in the district encouraged her to become involved in a professional organization. She chose to get involved with the Greater Kansas City Post Society of American Military Engineers.

Ewy quickly got involved by becoming a young member committee co-chair her first year in the organization. During her 12 year tenure, she served on numerous committees, was elected to the National Board of Directors, a three year term, and was elected as the Post President for 2014. This made her the first female president and the first young member to be elected to that position. A young member is considered anyone in SAME that is 39 years or younger.

During her time on the national board, she was selected as the National Young Member of the Year, a National SAME recognition.

Ewy said she enjoys the opportunities that SAME gives her and enjoys mentoring other young members and getting to know the different people and organizations involved.

"SAME has such a diverse membership and I've always looked at it as bringing people together that want to work and help support the federal government and the military," said Ewy. "It is a great networking opportunity and the leadership and exposure that I have gained meeting people and really understanding all the different disciplines that are available has been rewarding to me."

Ewy considers her highest accomplishment in SAME as being inducted into the Academy of Fellows in 2015. That investiture ceremony will be held in Washington, D.C. in March.

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ON THE COVER: The completion ceremony for the Stockton Power Plant project was held on Jan. 7. Photo by Jennie Wilson.

COL Andrew Sexton

Happy 2015 Heartland Engineers! We have made it through the coldest part of the year and we're heading into spring. It's very clear that winter hasn't slowed us down and we have all hit the ground running at full speed.

In last December's column I mentioned we would soon complete the replacement turbine at the Stockton Lake Power Plant. Job well done Kansas City District, we did it and reached a tremendous milestone more than six years in the making.

Immediately following the holiday season, I had the opportunity to be part of a long awaited and anticipated ceremony regarding the completion of our replacement turbine. What a great way to start a new year. This project has been in the works since the blade failed in February of 2009. With the help of more than $40 million of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds and over $6 million dollars of Southwestern Power Administration customer funds, the turbine is complete and has been fully operational since January 15 of this year.

The Stockton power plant provides clean renewable energy to more than 2.6 million end-users throughout the state of Missouri and is one of 24 hydroelectric plants included within the grid of hydroelectric power marketed through the SWPA. Congratulations on a job well done to Robin Wankum, Pete Hentschel and the rest of the team for their tireless efforts in taking on this monumental challenge and bringing it to fruition.

We should soon witness another tremendous milestone as the district is on track to turn over our largest military construction project ever. Later this year we will complete and turn over to Fort Riley a state-of- the-art healthcare facility constructed for our deserving Soldiers, veterans and their family members who've proudly served our nation. It's been a long and sometimes difficult road to travel, but we are almost there.

Since the break, many of us in the district have been on the road so to speak, proactively and communicating with our customers and stakeholders sharing information, thoughts, concerns actions etc; in an ongoing effort to cultivate new, while fostering existing relationships with those our various missions directly or indirectly impact. We do this through a host of recurring meetings. Recent strategic engagements include the annual Navigators Meeting, Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee and the Missouri Levee District Drainage Association meetings. Attendance at these meetings is vital to the ongoing collaboration and information exchange with those we serve.

This January the District issued the Biggest Loser Challenge with the intent of increasing awareness of Health and Wellness within the district encouraging participants to engage in a healthier lifestyle while participating in a friendly weight loss competition. CPT Poling who has spearheaded this effort has informed me that collectively at the time of this writing, the district participation is at more than 90 employees who've lost over 500 pounds. I applaud any employee that takes the initiative to increase a healthier lifestyle. Go Losers!

Finally, I'm certain many of you are preparing for this year's Corporate Challenge. I'm confident that we will once again, post a strong showing, possibly even better than last year's impressive third place finish.

Again, thanks for all you do for the public we serve and remember, your successes continue to provide a greater quality of life to those we serve as we build a better future for the Heartland.

Indication of Successful **Pallid Sturgeon Reproduction**

Story provided by the Missouri River Recovery Program

During 2014 Missouri River field sampling, the Missouri Department of Conservation captured the first two genetically-confirmed larval pallid sturgeon near the mouth of the Missouri River. Tissue samples from the two were confirmed through laboratory analysis at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. Monitoring crews have additional larval sturgeon remaining to be tested in the coming months.

The pallid sturgeon is an endangered fish species native to the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers, and significant work has been conducted by multiple state and federal partnerships to help aid its recovery.

The sampling efforts performed by the MDC were funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers through the Missouri River Recovery Program. The two larval pallid sturgeon were confirmed through laboratory analysis and will undergo additional testing to determine if any further information can be gleaned from these two fish. Determining the degree of reproduction that is occurring and why sturgeon don't seem to survive the first year is still a critical need.

"This doesn't mean we've turned a corner, but there's some natural reproduction occurring," Joe Bonneau, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha District's threatened and endangered species chief. "It remains to be seen what it means, but it's a big deal and the main point is getting those answers which becomes a lot more plausible when you start finding fish."

These fish, and hopefully others in the future, will help answer those questions.

"This info will be used in conjunction with all other information collected through our monitoring and focused investigations. In turn, this will help to make more informed decisions regarding management actions on the river," shared Todd Gemeinhardt, Kansas City District's habitat assessment monitoring program manager.

The MRRP is a collaborative, comprehensive effort led by the Corps in partnership with multiple entities and stakeholders. Through the MRRP, the Corps implements actions required by the Endangered Species Act to avoid jeopardizing three federally protected species, the pallid sturgeon, least tern, and piping plover on the Missouri River. The program includes development of aquatic habitat. It also includes ongoing data collection and monitoring to determine if these actions are effective.

Anthony Civiello holds up an age zero sturgeon that was sampled from the Missouri River near Lexington, Mo., in July 2014. The sampling is completed through the Corps' Habitat Assessment and Monitoring Program. Photo by Diana McCoy

Jason Farmer (left), Rick Morrow (center) and Marcus Miller (right) measure and record fish captured in a trawl on the Missouri River September 2013. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Photo by Trisha Dorsey

FEM Implemented in the District

By Amy Phillips

In 2013, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers developed a Maintenance Management Improvement Plan to implement a Facility and Equipment Maintenance system that would be an integral part of the work flow at the operations projects.

The FEM system had been used since 2005 at district power plants at Stockton and Truman lakes but the rollout of implementing this to all 18 lake projects and the Missouri River project gained traction in 2013.

The MMIP details the background, goals and the strategy for utilizing the FEM system to better manage our real and personal property assets at each of our projects. The program will help manage work orders for Operations and Maintenance at the projects. By implementing the system across all business lines, it will be easier to optimize the O&M efficiencies.

"This is part of the bigger asset management strategy of the Corps that has been looked at in the last five to 10 years," said Clint Mason, Asset Management Program manager.

FEM is a computerized maintenance management program modeled after the industry standard 'Maximo.' The program is designed to capture cradle-to-grave costs for maintaining and operating assets.

"FEM really is a maintenance work plan. It is a work order system that allows you to track what work gets done and what doesn't get done," said Stu Cook, Chief of Operations who has been instrumental in getting the program up and running in the Kansas City District.

"By tracking this information, you gain valuable information that is more effective and efficient in how we get maintenance completed," said Cook.

"The program is designed to give the district a better picture of what assets we have in the field, what condition they are in, how they are being maintained, how critical they are to the mission and provide a better grasp of our operations," said Mason.

The district has already entered the hierarchy of the assets into the system so now all maintenance is tied to the assets that we have.

Another part of the program is to develop preventative maintenance schedules and track all of the tasks that we do on a regular basis. Some of these include exercising the gates quarterly; opening the parks every spring; and closing the parks in the fall.

"There is a process that is followed with each of these tasks," said Mason.

The FEM system will give us the work order and a list of the work that needs to be done. It also gives the labor codes to be used, how long it will take and the crew that is required. The FEM system will also track repair maintenance that is completed when assets break or fail.

"It gives the tools that are needed and the steps that need to be done," said Mason. "It provides consistency in duties that may only be done once a year and makes it easier for someone that is new and has never done it before."

Mason, whose job as Asset Management Program Manager oversees the FEM program, said the program gives valuable information for tracking and working toward lessons learned.

"The program gives us a consistent format across all of our projects so we don't have to always rely on institutional knowledge," said Mason.

Mason is responsible for asset management and FEM is just one of the tools used in the whole asset management strategy that is going on in the Corps. The other five positions that support the asset management strategy are for the data collection, record keeping, data entry and the coordination with the maintenance leaders as part of the FEM program.

Mason's section is also responsible for operational condition assessments, annual inspections and other data we gather that goes into asset management to make decisions on where we spend our dollars.

"FEM will show us where we can save money, where we may need to request more money, and how we approach the decision making for where we spend our limited dollars," said Cook.

Headquarters has a goal of using the FEM system at the project level by fiscal year 16.

Clint Mason, Asset Management Program Manager, and Rachel Graves, Lead Maintenance Control Technician, present FEM training to operation project managers and rangers during a training session on Jan. 14 held at the Missouri River Area Office.
Photo by Jackie Thomas

Annual training held for Park Rangers/Managers

By Emily Coffin

Park Rangers and Park Managers from across the Kansas City District gathered together for their Annual Visitor Assistance Training on Feb. 23-25 at the district office. During the meeting, subject matter experts presented updates in conjunction with annual training. The group also received leadership perspectives from Col. Andrew Sexton, District Commander and Chief of Operations, Stu Cook. Additional topic highlights included presentations on the recent confirmation of Emerald Ash Borer at Rathbun Lake; Geographic Information System; an overview from the National Ranger Community of Practice member, Stanton Rains; and an open panel forum with Office of Counsel and Real Estate.

A common theme from the evaluations following the training revealed an appreciation for networking with peers and sharing first-hand experiences. The team also valued the input from our three Walla Walla District visitors, who offered a different perspective regarding uniform wear and the NWW Leadership Development Program.

Top: Kansas City District Park Rangers and Park Managers attended the 2015 Annual Visitor Assistance Training Feb. 23-25.

Left: Kansas City District Park Rangers review training materials during the annual training event held Feb. 23-25 at the district office.

Bottom: Park Rangers Samantha Jones, Stanton Rains, Ryan Williams and Jared Deckard received recognition from Col. Andrew Sexton during the Annual Visitor Assistance training as the Color Guard for the SAME Small Business Conference in December. Jason Hurley was also a member of the Color Guard.

Photos by Jennie Wilson

During the week of February 15-21, the Engineer Corps celebrated National Engineer Week. To recognize the work that the Army Corps of Engineers contributes to the Army and the Nation, Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick released the below message to Corps employees:

Corps Teammates,

In 1951, the National Society of Professional Engineers initiated National Engineers Week, an annual celebration of the profession of engineering. The February date was chosen to coincide with the birthday of President George Washington, who is sometimes known as our Nation's first engineer.

Three years later former President Herbert Hoover (a professional mining engineer) wrote an article for National Engineers Week entitled, "Engineering as a Profession." It read, in part:

"It [engineering] is a great profession. There is the fascination of watching a figment of the imagination emerge through the aid of science to a plan on paper. Then it moves to realization in stone or metal or energy. Then it brings jobs and homes to men. Then it elevates the standards of living and adds to the comforts of life. That is the engineer's high privilege."

President Hoover's words can also be applied to the legacy of the US Army Corps of Engineers. It has been our high privilege to serve the Army and the Nation for nearly 240 years, engineering solutions for our Nation's toughest challenges. Some of these solutions are explored in this Engineers Week video, and I hope you will take a minute out of your day to learn a bit more about our history of answering the Nation's call: http://youtu.be/4FZDRXnfQv8

To all the engineering professionals in USACE, and to the thousands of others who support the work we are doing around the world, Happy Engineers Week! Thank you for your service and dedication.

Thank you,

Tom Bostick
LTG, US Army
53rd Chief of Engineers

Essayons...Building Strong...Army Strong!

Melvern Lake supports annual event

By Amy Phillips

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers at Melvern Lake sponsored the annual Klondike Derby Boy Scout event on Jan. 23-25 at the Turkey Point Campground.

The annual event promotes winter activities that are fun and challenging and camping to Boy Scout units from several different counties in Kansas. The event tests scouting skills while the scouts take their Klondike sled on a trip through one of three courses. There are courses for Webelos, Boy Scouts and an extreme course for the older scouts. Each of the challenges is set up for the types of skills that are expected for the different age groups. The event encourages fun as well as safety.

"The event follows the rules in the Guide to Safe Scouting so that all participants are safe," said Ken Roamer, event organizer.

According to Roamer, this event is a long-standing tradition in the council and it is the most popular event of the year next to the summer camp.

Some of the challenges the groups participated in during the courses include a simulated water rescue, a river crossing, working on lashings, knots, navigation through entanglements and Global Positioning System navigation. Those participating in the extreme course also had challenges in shooting sports such as archery, black powder rifles, .22 caliber rifles and shotguns.

One of the courses was the blind obstacle course.

"We just had to trust each other and build a stretcher to carry a team mate while we were blindfolded. We walked through the obstacle course and our team mate had to give us directions. He had to trust that we weren't going to drop him and we had to trust him to get us where we were going," said Joseph Cedarquiest from Auburn.

Teams competed against other groups from around the region with an estimated 700 Boy Scouts and volunteers at the event. The teams consisted of six to 10 scouts per sled grouped by age. The sleds were constructed prior to the event and are pushed, pulled or carried along the course.

Skills were gained throughout the challenges.

"At the beginning we didn't do so well, but by the end of the day, we did really well as a team," said William Kralicek from Hoyt, Kan.

According to Roamer, the 2015 event was successful because of the participation and the great support from the Corps throughout the planning and execution of the event.

"The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lakes have long been a good partner and we hope this continues in the future," said Roamer.

Top: Park Ranger Heath Kruger receives recognition from the organizers of the 2015 Klondike Derby Boy Scout event on Jan. 24.

Middle: During the Klondike Derby, Boy Scouts engage in different challenges to include the hatchet throw. The three-day event was held at Turkey Point Campground in January.

Bottom: Boy Scouts interact with the Klondike Derby mascot during the 2015 Boy Scout Klondike Derby.

Left: Melvern Lake hosted the 2015 Klondike Derby Boy Scout event Jan. 23-25 at Turkey Point Campground. The event is a long-standing tradition.

Background: Klondike Derby participants take aim during the archery portion of the competition. The Annual Boy Scout event was held at Melvern Lake on Jan. 23-25. Photos provided by Melvern Lake Staff

Stockton Power Plant Back Online

Story provided by Southwestern Power Administration

After a catastrophic failure and nearly two years of major equipment replacement work, the Stockton Power Plant in Stockton, Missouri, is back online, generating low-cost, renewable hydropower and energy for electric consumers in the marketing region of Southwestern Power Administration (Southwestern).

"Stockton Dam is an important resource in Southwestern's portfolio of 24 hydroelectric projects – all owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers," says Southwestern Administrator Chris Turner. "We are thrilled to have this plant back online."

In February 2009, a piece of a turbine blade on Stockton's 45-megawatt turbine broke off, causing the plant to shut down. As the marketer of power and energy out of Stockton, Southwestern was forced to search for replacement power and energy so that it could fulfill its contractual obligations to its customers. In general, purchasing such replacement power and energy on the spot market or through short-term purchase agreements is much more expensive than generating the power and energy out of Stockton.

With funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, however, the Kansas City District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers repaired the blade and returned the plant to service the following year, which provided temporary relief to Southwestern. The plant was then taken out of service again in 2013 to begin the replacement and repair of major equipment. Funding for the replacement and repair of major equipment came from a combination of ARRA funds and funds provided through Southwestern's customer funding program.

"We appreciate Kansas City's efforts to repair the blade initially, even as they went forward with work to replace major equipment," says Administrator Turner. "For nearly three years we had the use of the plant, which saved a considerable amount of money we would have otherwise spent on replacement power and energy."

The 144-ton turbine runner is delivered via remote carrier to the Stockton Power House in December 2013. Photo by David S. Kolarik.

Turner explains that expenditures on anything related to hydropower, including purchases and replacement of major equipment, put upward pressure on Southwestern's rates, which are designed to recover the cost of all of Southwestern's expenses and operations, as well as the cost of the expenses and operations of the hydropower related activities of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. What's more, he says, the source of funding does not matter. Southwestern's customers repay the cost of expenditures regardless of whether the money is appropriated from Congress, received through special programs like ARRA, or financed through other alternative means.

Southwestern's customers in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas – all of which are not-for-profit municipalities, electric cooperatives, and military installations – bear the cost of all hydropower related expenditures, ultimately passing these costs on to over eight million end users who receive power from Stockton and the other 23 projects from which Southwestern markets power.

Turner notes that it is always Southwestern's focus to provide power and energy to its customers at the lowest possible rates consistent with sound business principles and says that Southwestern was glad to have the plant temporarily following the repair. But, he adds, the agency is even more excited about having it back for good following complete replacement of the turbine, main power transformer, and station service breakers, and rewind of the electrical generator.

"The whole project has been an astounding success. Southwestern commends Kansas City District on their excellent project management and engineering skills," he says. "The repair saved millions of dollars in purchased power costs, and the replacement of major equipment provided a more efficient unit with a greater range of operation, a longer run-time, and a 7 MW increase in capacity."

As for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, there is definite pride in a job well done. Col. Andrew Sexton, Commander and District Engineer of the Kansas City District, says, "This was an important project to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Southwestern Power Administration, and millions of people in the state of Missouri."

Kansas City District Maintenance Engineering Chief, Pete Hentschel, who, along with Project Manager Robin Wankum, acted as liaison between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Southwestern, Southwestern's customers, and the contractor who performed the major replacement work, adds his praise for the team effort it took to get the project completed.

"The Stockton Power Plant rehabilitation project was definitely a team effort," said Hentschel. "The partnership and commitment between the Kansas City District, Southwestern, and the power customers was significant in the successful execution and completion of the project. The Kansas City District really appreciates the support of Southwestern and its customers."

Left: Kansas City District Commander, Col. Andrew Sexton, and Southwestern Power Administrator, Chris Turner, dedicate the new turbine during a ceremony Jan. 7 at Stockton Power Plant. Photo by Jennie Wilson

District Implements Earned Value

By Amy Phillips

The Kansas City District has implemented the use of earned value management as a tool for project managers, supervisors, and teams to become more effective with monitoring and controlling projects while providing a reference for budgeting and scheduling future projects. The tool will help monitor budgets and design schedules on projects within the district.

"Earned value is a project management tool that allows you to actively track if you are on schedule and on budget and if you are maximizing your time and money," said Scott Mensing, project manager.

EVM is not a new technique to project management but is a tool that the district's project managers are beginning to employ to keep projects on schedule and on budget. By doing this, the district will save taxpayer dollars, be more cost effective and efficient for our customers, make resource changes early on in a project's lifecycle, and better plan for future projects.

"The purpose of this is to establish value added leading indicators to provide program managers and leadership visibility on project performance that supports timely and informed decision making on resource allocation and mission execution," said Tim Kurgan, Chief, Programs and Project Management Services Branch.

It is because of the district's desire to implement Earned Value, that a fiscal year operations plan initiative was developed. To oversee the implementation, a Project Development Team led by Kurgan was created with members from the real estate division, engineering division, environmental programs, civil works programs and military programs. The members include, John Dillon, Jason Lyons, Mary Lyle, Tammy Jones, Melissa Corkill, Eric Brandt and Eric Lynn.

With earned value, the project manager sets a planned schedule and budget for each PDT member over the life of the project based upon the budget and schedule provided by the PDT members and resource providers. The planned value is compared to the actual cost and earned value as the project develops. The planned value, earned value and actual cost comparisons allow the project manager to determine if the project is progressing on schedule and on budget and if not, allow for adjustments early in the project.

"We are not using the tool in a complicated manner," said Melissa Corkill, Section Chief for Civil Works Project Management. "We are using some very basic concepts to help our teams to understand what their budget is. If they are on schedule and if what they have completed has value greater than or less than what they have spent to date. This basic tool, when used wisely, can predict the future."

The PDT is working to define how the district is going to use earned value. They are responsible for developing and discussing the recommendations of how we implement the tool within the district and then present their findings to the command according to Kurgan.

They are currently using the tool on several projects within the district and consolidating lessons learned.

"We are using earned value management on the Topeka project, which is a civil works new start and a great opportunity for us to use it on a project that is just going into design," said Kurgan.

Other projects the district is using the tool on include Dodge City, an environmental project, and the National Geospatial Agency-West National Environmental Policy Act and planning efforts.

"Since the NGA project is considered a Mega project, when it is an authorized project, it will require the use of earned value," said Kurgan.

The tool is being used to monitor and control in-house design labor on our projects. This is just a small micro area of using earned value. Our next step is to use it holistically and include all aspects of the project including construction costs and real estate costs, according to Corkill.

"With earned value, you can foresee possible problems in the schedule or the cost of the project. When you can identify problems or issues earlier on, you can make plans to avoid delays in the project," said Mensing.

"The tool has a good benefit to us because we don't want to get 90 percent complete on a project and realize that we are over budget and behind schedule. It helps the team to communicate the progress on the project," said Corkill

It also makes us more efficient with taxpayer dollars and non-federal sponsor money. In the past, it was assumed that you got what you needed to get done if you had spent all the money that was allotted for the project.

The district is involved with teams at the headquarters level to keep up-to-date on what is going on nationwide. It is believed that there will be a Corps Wide implementation of earned value in the future.

Annual events bring visitors to district lakes

Top: A Clinton Lake Park Rangers' daughter at the annual eagle day event was photographed with an "I Saw a Bald Eagle" sticker. Photo provided by Clinton Lake

Bottom: A Smithville Lake Park Ranger helps a little girl view the bald eagles through a scope at one of the eagle viewing stations set up at the lake during the annual event. Photo by Trisha Dorsey

By Amy Phillips

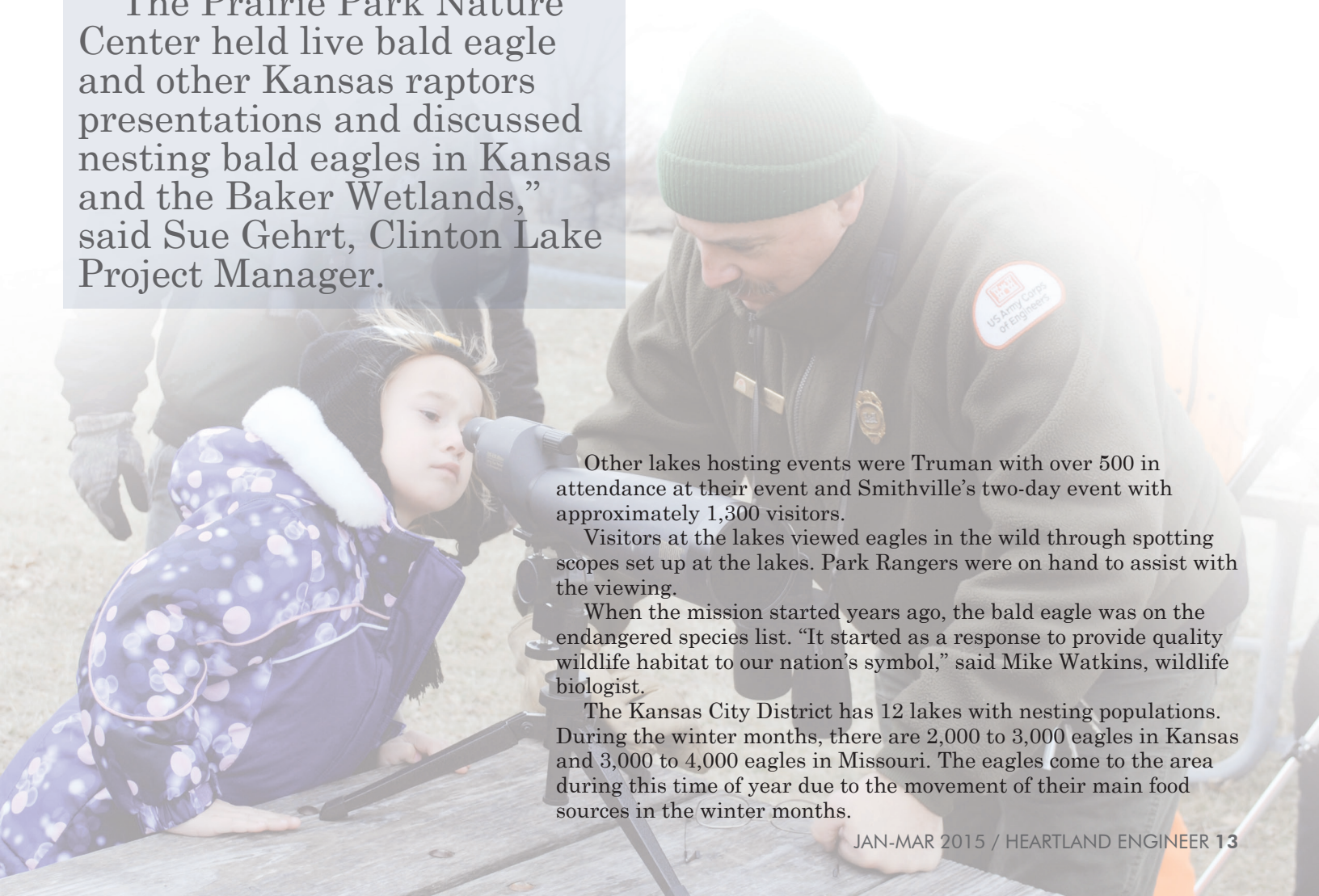
Each winter, several lakes within the Kansas City District hold an eagle day event for lake visitors to learn about migratory birds that visit the area annually.

The typical birds that migrate to this area during the winter months include: waterfowl, snow geese, Canadian Geese, Great Horned Owl, snowy owls, Whooping Cranes and eagles. These birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

This year, lakes holding eagle day events included Milford, Smithville, Clinton, Stockton and Truman. Tuttle Creek Lake's event was canceled due to inclement weather. The events bring thousands of visitors to the lakes.

Milford Lake held their event on Jan. 17 with around 800 people attending. Clinton Lake had a great turnout of an estimated 2,000 to 2,500 for their event on Jan. 24 which included many activities and nature exhibits. There were hands-on kid's activities such as making an eagle, a fishing game or dissecting owl pellets.

"The Prairie Park Nature Center held live bald eagle and other Kansas raptors presentations and discussed nesting bald eagles in Kansas and the Baker Wetlands," said Sue Gehrt, Clinton Lake Project Manager.



Other lakes hosting events were Truman with over 500 in attendance at their event and Smithville's two-day event with approximately 1,300 visitors.

Visitors at the lakes viewed eagles in the wild through spotting scopes set up at the lakes. Park Rangers were on hand to assist with the viewing.

When the mission started years ago, the bald eagle was on the endangered species list. "It started as a response to provide quality wildlife habitat to our nation's symbol," said Mike Watkins, wildlife biologist.

The Kansas City District has 12 lakes with nesting populations. During the winter months, there are 2,000 to 3,000 eagles in Kansas and 3,000 to 4,000 eagles in Missouri. The eagles come to the area during this time of year due to the movement of their main food sources in the winter months.

Healing through Hunting, Wounded Warrior Hunt

By Capt. Joshua Poling

The word sacrifice has different meaning to different individuals. Webster's dictionary describes sacrifice as; the act of giving something up that you want to keep especially in order to get or do something else or help someone. Your interpretation of sacrifice may be that of the short story by O. Henry, The Gift of the Maji, where a young couple sacrifices possessions dear to them to provide Christmas gifts to each other in a strange twist of Irony that renders the exchanged gifts useless. For Soldiers the term sacrifice can be vastly different, yet seems to find one common theme. Sacrifice for a Soldier means volunteering, understanding they may be called to forfeit their life for another, the ultimate sacrifice.

For some Soldiers the term sacrifice is known all too well. With the country exiting from a 14 year campaign in Afghanistan, as well as the eight years the U.S. spent in Iraq, many Soldiers that deployed have sacrificed in one way or another. Having served in both theatres and understanding what Soldiers experience, I leaped at the opportunity to guide local Wounded Warriors on a deer hunt. This hunt was meaningful to me not only because it is a sport that I love, but because I could give back to someone who gave more than most people are ever asked to give.

The story to be told here isn't so much about hunting as it is about repaying a Soldier, if only a fraction of what they paid forward. The hunt itself paired Soldiers of the Warrior Transition Battalion from Fort Riley Kansas with volunteer guides on a hunt at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Perry Lake, located in Perry, Kansas. Six Soldiers were selected to participate in the hunt at Perry Lake. The hunting experience of the participating Soldiers ranged from seasoned hunters to first time deer hunters. A great amount of time was put in by volunteers to ensure that the experience of the hunt was one to be enjoyed by all.

A blustery December day greeted the Soldiers upon their arrival to Perry Lake, Kansas. Given only 2 ½ days to execute the hunt, the Perry Lake park rangers and volunteers from USACE Kansas City District and Quality Deer Management Association of Atchison, Kansas had their hands full leading up to the hunt. Coordination between volunteers and the Warrior Transition Battalion, as well as setting up locations of camouflage hunting blinds began months prior, but the Soldiers would be on a much tighter schedule.

The first evening brought the Soldiers their first challenge. After a long trip from Fort Riley the Soldiers had to ensure that the rifles that they would employ for the hunt were zeroed. While some Soldiers had their own rifles, others were introduced to volunteers' rifles for the first time. With a frigid wind and nightfall rapidly approaching the Soldiers utilized the training instilled in them through the military to quickly and efficiently zero the sights of their rifles.

After ensuring that their rifles could successfully offer a clean shot on a deer, the group of Soldiers and volunteers gathered their gear and headed back to their provided cabins to prepare for the next morning's hunt. A delicious catered dinner at the local American Legion brought a pleasant camaraderie to the end of the first day as members of the American Legion, and the Wounded Warriors shared experiences of Soldiers

both past and present. The "war stories" as your grandparents or parents may have shared from their sacrifices during wars past, along with the experiences told from the current Soldiers brought forth a humbling experience.

The cold front pushing through from the first evening brought cooler temps and a continuous drizzle of rain throughout the second day. As if engrained in their minds the Soldiers arrived to schedule to meet up with their guides and traveling to their respective stands. I had the honor of guiding a young female Soldier and first time hunter into the field that day. Sharing experiences and lessons I learned afield, we spent the day in the hunting blind waiting for her first deer to present her with a shot. With dawn attempting to peer through the overcast sky, shots from the rifles of the Soldiers began to ring out in the still morning air. As the morning progressed texts began to filter into our blind with pictures of the other Soldiers' hunting conquests. The anticipation and excitement that a whitetail deer would soon walk out of the woods and into range kept the young hunter and me alert and attentive to our surroundings.

As the day began to dwindle and dusk quickly approaching, a group of three whitetail does appeared out of the shaded tree line. All the training from the Army through rifle marksmanship would soon be put to the test as the deer edged closer to the young Soldier's comfortable shooting range. With time of the essence before shooting hours closed we decided to take a shot at one of the deer. With the crack of the rifle the deer leaped into the air with a movement an educated hunter knows all too well indicating a successful shot. With darkness upon us we decided to allow the deer time to succumb to its inevitable fate. Unfortunately, upon arrival the next morning to the spot where we believed the deer perished we found the carnage that a pack of coyotes had left of the body of the deceased deer.

An unfaltering motivation found the young hunter sitting through another long day in the cold and rain. The end of this day would end with a happier story. With around an hour of shooting light left a group of deer entered the food plot to graze. The young hunter with keen precision was not only able to successfully harvest a doe, but also a 15 point buck that foolishly wandered into the field moments after the first shot rang out. Be it luck or determination, the young Soldier used the type of determination found amongst Soldiers to shake off the frustration from the first day's hunt and successfully harvest two deer during her first ever hunt.

The success of the story is that all Soldiers participating in the hunt were given the opportunity to harvest a deer. A total of eight deer were harvested among the six participating Soldiers while a couple of the Soldiers were being selective and waiting for the "BIG ONE" to come along. All the Soldiers were able to get their deer processed for their tables at a discounted rate and the young Soldier that had harvested the 15 point buck was presented with a free mount of her trophy.

The 2 1/2 days spent between Wounded Warriors and volunteers at Perry Lake Kansas left all with more than just the memory of the hunt. The volunteers were able to take away the warmness of the feeling of helping out another person through sacrificing their free time with friends or family. The Wounded Warrior hunters were able to take with them the peacefulness and tranquility connected with being in the outdoors. The hunt afforded them the opportunity to relinquish any everyday stresses they might face due to their injuries that would sooner than anticipated cut short their military career. It was an honor and a privilege to donate my time and I know I speak on behalf of the other volunteers when I say that any sacrifice of personal time that we made was shadowed by the opportunity to give back to these Soldiers that have sacrificed so much for this Country.

Left: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Perry Lake hosted Soldiers of the Warrior Transition Battalion from Fort Riley Kansas for a deer hunt Dec. 13-14.
Below: Two Fort Riley Warrior Transition Battalion Soldiers pose with a deer that was harvested during the Perry Lake deer hunt.
Photos provided by Perry Lake

USACE
Command Sergeant Major visits district

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Karl Groninger presented coins to Patrick Horton, John Holm, Cheryl Hines and Jimmie Pullium during a ceremony on Feb. 3. Photo by Jennie Wilson

Leadership Development Program students visit with Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Karl Groninger during a lunch at the district on Feb. 3. Photo by Amy Phillips

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Karl Groninger visits the sign shop at the Harry S. Truman Lake during his visit and tour on Feb. 3. Photo by Dennis Wallace

By Amy Phillips

Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Karl Groninger, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Cmd. Sgt. Maj., visited the Kansas City District Feb. 2 to 4 and met with Leadership Development Program students, presented coins, and visited several field offices.

He started his visit by having lunch with LDP students, Molly Boughan, Kenneth Kamp, and Meredith Harmon. During the lunch, he emphasized the importance of leadership and the recognition of our talented professionals for the work they do for the Corps and for the nation.

"Local heroes don't just wear ACUs," said Groninger.

The LDP participants asked questions and gained valuable information and insight about the Corps from a headquarters perspective.

"He explained his role as the eyes and ears for the leadership, inquired about our backgrounds, and asked if there was anything that we would change about the Corps if we had the chance," said Boughan.

Groninger pointed out the importance of communicating what we do for our friends and neighbors to increase the public's understanding of our mission.

After lunch, Groninger was briefed by the district small offices and presented coins to deserving Kansas City District employees for their exceptional service.

The second day of his visit, Groninger, accompanied by Master Sgt. Mark McKinney and Pete Hentschel, Chief Maintenance Engineering Section, visited the Harry S. Truman Lake project office and received an overview briefing of the lake project from Dennis Wallace, Truman Lake Operations Manager. He visited with staff at their duty stations and job sites and engaged and interacted with lake partners to include Warsaw Mayor Eddie Simons and Public Administrator Randy Pogue.

Groninger had the opportunity to meet with members of the Kaysinger Bluff Pioneer Heritage association and tour some of the historical buildings at the lake.

The final day with the district was spent at the Fort Leavenworth, Kan., resident office where he received a briefing followed by a construction project tour from David Manka, area engineer. He later met with resident office personnel.

During his tour, he enjoyed interacting with district personnel and recognizing them for the work they do that supports the Kansas City District, USACE and the American people.

"Cmd. Sgt. Maj. Groninger was genuinely interested in learning about the work we do," said Wallace. "His interaction with staff was a boost to morale and it was our pleasure to have him visit the Truman project."

USACE and USAES join forces

During the tour in September, the ECCC students were shown the Five Company Operating Facility by John Sponsel.

Story and photos by Capt. Mary Kearney

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U. S. Army Engineer School each play a key role in the Fort Leonard Wood community and the Engineer Regiment. On the surface, it is easy to get the two organizations mixed up as their acronyms are a homonym that sound alike but have different meanings. While the two organizations have different missions, they have partnered for years on Fort Leonard Wood to help further develop their students, employees and organizations as a whole.

The mission of the Corps of Engineers Resident Area Office on Fort Leonard Wood is to fulfill military construction on the installation. The Army Engineer School is responsible for generating the military engineer capabilities the Army needs and providing technical training to all Engineer Soldiers throughout the Regiment. Given their geographic proximity and mutual interest in developing future Engineer leaders, it is natural that a partnership between the two organizations would arise. This is accomplished by the organizations providing educational and developmental opportunities for each other's personnel. A great example of these opportunities is the exposure to USACE which junior officers in both the Engineer Basic Officer Leadership Course and Engineer Captain's Career Course receive during their course. The impact of the experience also extends beyond the Army to sister services and international students by way of the course's diverse student body. The exposure also provides a platform to educate Engineers about broadening positions available in the Corps of Engineers based on career timelines.

The USACE site tour for these Engineer officers consists of an introductory briefing regarding the USACE mission as well as visits to active construction sites. Military construction site visits take place across Fort Leonard Wood multiple times a year. USACE teams provide experienced representatives in the field of construction who give an overview of the site, conduct a safety briefing, and navigate students around the project. Typically the visits consist of 60-80 students who have never had the opportunity for an up close look at multimillion dollar construction projects. During the visit, curious students take the opportunity to ask questions about phases of construction, the quality assurance/quality control process in the field, or a multitude of questions ranging from site lay out to Leadership in Energy & Environment Design certification.

Jim Allison shows Engineer Captain's Career Course students the Medium Tactical Equipment Maintenance Training facility during a tour on Sept. 10, 2014.

"The Army Corp of Engineer tour was extremely beneficial to the future of junior Captains. After command, there are numerous opportunities to work with USACE. The tour helped give a perspective of larger construction sites and installation support," said 1st Lt. Jamal Olatunde after the tour.

Below is a list of construction sites that were visited over the last year:

- Basic Training III South Barracks and Dining Facility
- Five Company Operating Facility
- Medium and Small Tactical Equipment Maintenance Facility
- Advanced Individual Training Barracks (Building 1016)

District becomes the Biggest Loser

Information provided by the Health and Wellness Committee

The Biggest Loser competition is a weight loss initiative brought to the Health and Wellness Committee by Capt. Joshua Poling. Based off the TV show, "BIGGEST LOSER," this competition is a 16 week event to increase Kansas City District participation in Health and Wellness Committee events and awareness.

Starting on Jan. 16, the competition pits individuals and teams against one another to see who can lower their weight the most individually and collectively. Quarterly, $20 gift cards are given to the individuals who lose the highest percentage of their body weight (i.e 100 pound person loses five pounds= five percent).

The event will continue until May 1st when the finals are decided for the following categories: Most pounds lost total $25 gift card, highest percentage lost from start to finish $50 gift card, and the team with the highest team percentage lost will be awarded a scale for their respective office that will track their future weight loss goals.

Team "No Spanx U," pose during the Biggest Loser competition weekly weigh in on Mar. 6. Since the start of the competition on Jan. 16, the district as a whole has lost over 500 pounds.
Photo by Capt. Joshua Poling

The competition itself currently has 15 teams both at the Bolling Federal building and field offices encompassing 94 participants for a total combined starting weight of 19,226.5 pounds. The district as a whole has lost over 500 pounds collectively since the start of the competition! That is an average of 5.3 pounds per participant.

Participants are required to weigh-in every Friday together and are encouraged to bring their lunches to eat while members of the Health and Wellness Committee take their weight. Poling provides short presentations on health and nutrition and has lined up outside sources to come speak during these lunch hours as well. The weight is then tracked and calculated weekly through a excel spreadsheet developed by Poling who then puts out a weekly update for Biggest Loser participants to inform them how the teams are doing respectively and how much total weight has been lost by district personnel. Final date for the competition is May 1.

On May 1, there will be a final weigh in. Prizes are as follows:

- Team- Highest team percentage of weight lost from start of competition, prize is a scale for their respective office.
- Individual highest percentage lost over all, prize is $50 gift card
- Individual most total pounds lost, prize is $25 gift card

1st Quarter Awards

Coins Awarded: CFC Steering Committee:
Shelly Allen
Robin Corderman
Edward Kolodziej
Ronschall Love
Roschana Ross

Fairfax BPU Project:
Brenda Adams

Creation of PM-CJ How to Folder to support the Enterprise Data Warehouse Reports:
Whitney Wolf

St. Joseph Gatewell:
Glen Bellew
Ben Johnson
Scott Loehr
Angela Loewen
Scott Mensing
Paul Muller

Northwestern Division One Star Note:
Division's recognition for work on FUDS Team
Dan Jeffres
David Nelson

Division's recognition for work on Dam Safety Team
Jason Sheeley

USACE Excellence in Contracting Awards Program
Adam Hall
2014 Procurement Analyst of the Year

CP 18 Awards
Susan Abbott
2014 winner of CP-18 Journeyman of the Year

On Feb. 4 at the quarterly awards ceremony, Adam Hall was recognized by Col. Andrew Sexton as the 2014 Procurement Analyst of the Year.

The St. Joseph Gatewell project team was presented with district coins at the quarterly awards ceremony Feb. 4.
Photos by Jennie Wilson

2015 Kansas City Corporate Challenge

APRIL 24 - JUNE 27

KANSAS CITY CORPORATE CHALLENGE

PRESENTED BY BURNS & McDONNELL

APRIL/MAY 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					April 24 Kick-Off Party Walk	April 25 Disc Golf Golf
April 26 Disc Golf Horseshoes Golf	April 27 Darts Pool	April 28 Darts Pool	April 29 Darts Pool	April 30 Darts Pool	1	2 5K Golf Fishing
3 Golf	4 Darts Pool Dodgeball	5 Darts Pool Dodgeball	6 Darts Pool Dodgeball	7 Darts Pool Dodgeball	8	9 Golf Trap Shooting
10 **Mother's Day**	11 Dodgeball	12 Dodgeball	13 Dodgeball	14 Dodgeball	15 Volleyball	16 Golf Half Marathon Volleyball Racquetball
17 Volleyball Racquetball	18 Volleyball	19 Volleyball	20 Volleyball	21 Volleyball	22	23
24 31 Softball Table Tennis	25 **Memorial Day**	26	27 Bike Race	28 Bike Race	29	30 Softball

2015 Tentative Calendar

JUNE 2015

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1 Track Shot Put	2 Track Long Jump Shot Put	3 Track Long Jump Shot Put	4 Track Shot Put	5	6 Flag Football Tennis
7 Flag Football Tennis	8	9 Soccer (W)	10 Soccer (W)	11 Soccer (W)	12	13 Weightlifting Basketball Tennis
14 Basketball Tennis	15 Soccer (M)	16 Soccer (M)	17 Soccer (M)	18	19	20 Bowling Du/Tri Orientation
21 Du/Tri **Father's Day**	22 Swimming	23 Swimming	24 Swimming	25 Swimming	26 Tug of War Weigh-in	27 Tug of War
28	29	30				

2015 Tentative Calendar

www.kccorporatechallenge.com

Interested in Kansas City Corporate Challenge?

Have questions?

Talk to a KCCC PDT Member!

Ben Davis	x3273
Jennifer Kolarik	x2284
Diana McCoy	x3485
Matt Ward	x2382
KC Kamp	x3642
Josh Boeckmann	x3328
Angela Loewen	x3460
Andy Marske	x3371
Julie Forck	x2445
Shannan Teel	x3903