

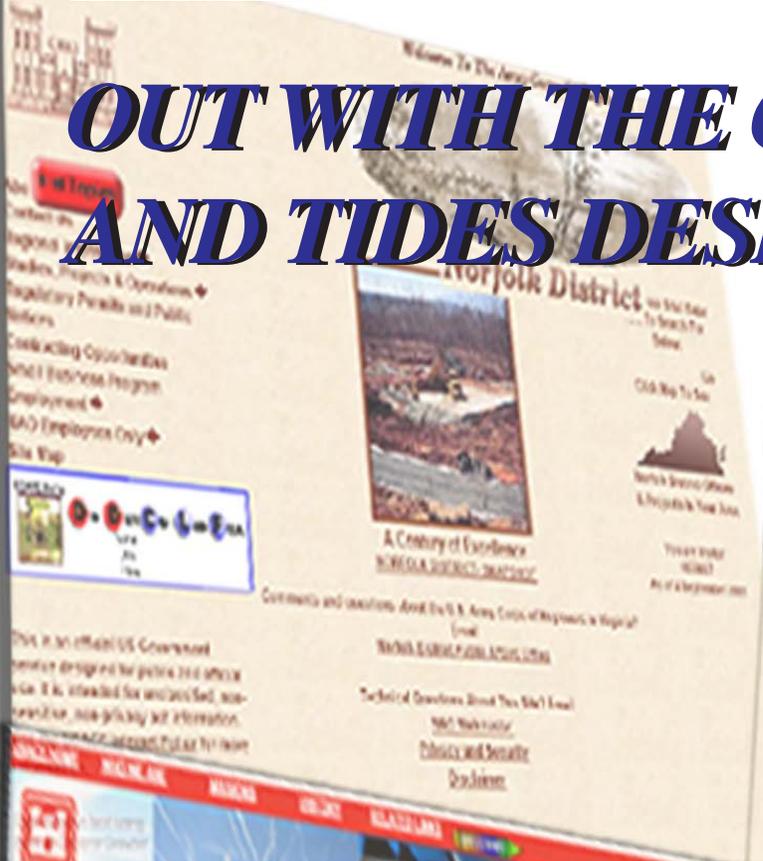


Vol. 20, No.1
Winter/Spring 2006

District Tides

NORFOLK DISTRICT

OUT WITH THE OLD WEB AND TIDES DESIGN...



AND IN WITH THE NEW!



In this issue...

Commander's Corner	2
District Safety	3
Moses Grandy Trail	4
Army Corps HUBZone contractor donation	5
The traveling dredge	6
What's on the bottom?	7
CPAC Moment	7
FNOD-Mechanically sifting for munitions	8
Cover Story: New Year, new website design	9
Deployed District employees send testimonials	10
Black History Month celebration	12
Project Updates	13
The tightest and coolest District	14
Around the District	15



Cover: Graphic rendering of old website and old version of *Tides* next to the current website and new *Tides*. (Graphics by Patrick Bloodgood)



Commander's Corner

Team Norfolk,

2006 has officially arrived and I want to take a moment to both reflect on the past few months and focus on what is ahead of us.

I hope each of you had a wonderful holiday season – it is so important to take time to celebrate with family and friends. I also know that some of you worked throughout the season on vital projects and deadlines and I want to thank all of you for your commitment to seeing the job through!

There are so many issues to touch upon but before I go any further, I must recognize those of you who have been, or are currently deployed, in the ongoing hurricane-relief efforts. It is your willingness to help and compassion for your fellow Americans that display so profoundly the District's vision of high quality, extreme dedication and concern for each other. I am proud that so many Norfolk District employees have volunteered to be "on the front lines," both here in our own country and abroad. I urge all of you to consider deploying in support of these missions.

FY07 Budget. Now that we are nearly three months into 2006, the District is moving full steam ahead. A flurry of activity is abounding with the budget process, BRAC and, of course, all the studies, projects and operations in which we are involved here in the Commonwealth.

The President's Proposed Civil Works Budget for FY 2007 was released in early February and includes \$4.733 billion in proposed new federal funding for the Corps' Civil Works mission. It is one of the largest budgets ever proposed for the Army's Civil Works program.

The budget only lists two types of appropriation by project - general investigations (what our Planning Branch works on) and Construction General (what our Engineering Branch and Construction Branch works on). Operations and Maintenance is listed as a lump sum. In NAD, each district is receiving funding for only two to four projects, which seems pretty austere. Please remember, the President's budget is a starting point for FY 2007 appropriations. Congress will now debate what should be in the appropriations.

This week, the Congressional team is in Washington, D.C. visiting all the Commonwealth's Congressional delegations, providing them informational briefings to help them determine which projects they would like to see in the Appropriations Bill. During this time period, before Congress debates the Energy & Water Bill, our local sponsors will conduct similar visits requesting consideration for their projects. We work closely with our sponsors to try to achieve consistency of message. Hopefully, the local sponsors will be given consideration and their projects will appear in the final bill.

The district's senior leadership is keenly aware that we could have a light civil works load in FY 2007. Fortunately, our Military Construction and BRAC workloads are very robust for the next few years. BRAC promises to exponentially expand our military construction program over the next six years. We are confident this workload can carry the district through the lighter times in civil works. As a district, we have a reputation throughout the region as an outstanding, full-service construction firm. I am proud to serve as commander of an organization that maneuvers easily through the various issues that could keep us from executing our mission.



Col. Yvonne J. Prettyman-Beck

Please see **Commander's Corner**, Page 3

Commander's Corner: Reflecting on the past looking to the future

Continued from Page 2

Project Management Review. In managing both our military and civil works project activities, it's essential we stay vigilant in managing their progress. The Chief of Engineers stressed, during the most recent commanders' conference, the importance of our constantly reviewing how we manage our military projects; from formulation, to award, to time and cost growth, and then to closeout. Additionally, he stressed the necessity of our staying closely attuned to the development of the Civil Works review process ... to bring this process on line, including maintaining an orientation of analyzing monthly Military Program and Civil Works Directorate Management Review input. The goal is to gain and maintain a firm understanding within each district of "why we are where we are."

Customer Satisfaction. One of the issues you will see an increased emphasis on this year is our effort to reach out to gauge customer satisfaction. Thanks to your hard work, we've had tremendous success in the district this past year in our relationships with our military construction program customers, as reflected by the results of the FY05 Military Programs Customer Satisfaction Survey. We came out on top in the North Atlantic Division and ranked tied for fifth among all districts within the Corps. Great job, team!

This year, while we'll work to raise the bar even further in our satisfaction ratings in military construction, we'll also be developing a mechanism that will enable us to assess customer satisfaction among our external partners, customers and local jurisdictions in relation to our Civil Works program. As we continue to develop that survey tool, we want to continue to

place emphasis on honing our relationships with those external audiences ... to provide the highest level of support and service possible to them. I am open to any suggestions that you may have about the best way to conduct these customer surveys and I look forward to hearing the results from each branch or section in the District.

Safety. Another emphasis will be the safety of our employees. Our Division Commander, Brig. Gen.(P) William Grisoli, has also increased his focus on making sure that our employees and contractors are safe as they complete their missions. Please watch out for each other and do your best to remedy situations that may lead to accidents. Our Norfolk District Safety Committee continues to do an outstanding job of finding ways to reinforce the safety message we adopted last year, but I want to remind you once again – "You are the key; make Norfolk District accident free!"

Vision. As we press ahead to meet the coming challenges, I want to emphasize the pride that I have for every one of you and my sincere appreciation for all you have done. I ask you to continue to remain focused on our district vision...

"The North Atlantic Region and Commonwealth of Virginia's primary public engineering organization responsive to our Nation's needs anytime, anywhere. One Team: Relevant, Ready, Responsive, Reliable."

I challenge you to find ways to make that vision a reality each and every day!

Essayons!

COL Yvonne J. Prettyman-Beck

District Safety by Oscar Harts

Cell phones and driving: Keep eyes on the road not on the phone

While driving down the road in the Commonwealth it is not uncommon to see a person with one hand on the wheel and one hand up to their ear, or to see people who appear to be talking to themselves; cell phones are all around us! According to a survey conducted by *Prevention Magazine*, 85 percent of the 100 million-plus subscribers regularly talk on their cell phones while driving. Compile that with a 1997 study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that found drivers who talk on a cell phone are four times more likely to be in an accident than drivers who don't.



When you're behind the wheel and your focus lies elsewhere, like tuning the radio, eating or talking on the cell phone, you are putting yourself, your passengers, other motorists and pedestrians in danger. Remember, in the case of cell phones; your to four times as much at risk of an accident.

Phone conversations that can cause you to be emotionally involved, like an argument or distressing call, can cause major distractions from the task of piloting one to two tons of steel down the road. That combination of being

distracted and driving can be deadly!

With the advent of newer technology, such as earpieces, voice recognition and speaker phones, cell phone manufacturers are attempting to reduce the risks by keeping your hands on the wheel and eyes on the road. However, this does not completely eliminate the distraction, still keeping you at a higher risk for injury or death.

The best policy of all is to turn the phone off before you drive. A missed phone-call will not kill; a missed light could. If talking on the phone and driving is unavoidable then there are some steps you can take to help reduce the risks:

See *District Safety*, Page 4



District Safety: Cell phones and driving

Continued from Page 3

Know the phone like you know the back of your hand. If you know where all the buttons and features are you can operate the phone with out even looking at it, keeping your eyes on the road and not at your flip-phone.

Driving and talking is already a distraction; do not to try and read and take notes at the same time, and for you Blackberry users out there, writing or checking e-mails while driving is not a good idea.

Make sure you keep the phone in an accessible area. Trying to retrieve a ringing cell phone from your purse or briefcase will cause you to loose sight of the road and focus on the interior of your vehicle.

While driving and talking on the cell, stay in the right hand lane of the highway. This tends to be a less demanding side of the road and with the slower drivers it

will help you keep from picking up some blue lights in your rearview mirror.

Remember if you must use a cell phone while driving use a hands free device, make sure to connect it before you put your car in drive so that you don't fumble with it while in motion.

Also, remember to try to avoid long social calls. Conversations that last a long time help to reduce your mental focus on the road and pull your attention more to the phone call.

As a reminder, District employees are prohibited from using cellular phones without hands-free devices while operating any vehicle on any Department of Defense (DoD) installation, or while operating any Government or leased vehicles regardless of whether you're on a base or not. Keep in mind that all DoD installations in Hampton Roads have restrictions on cell phone usage and

driving. Make sure you check with the installations security office or provost marshal to see what restrictions are in place.

Sources: *Prevention Magazine, New England Journal of Medicine,*

Safety Side Note:

Since the last edition of *Tides* the District has had five incidents of employees injuring themselves from a slip, trip or fall.

Always be mindful of the surfaces you are standing on or walking on that could pose a danger to you slipping, tripping or even falling off of. Also, look out for objects that may be around that could cause you to either lose your footing or trip over.

Please always keep in mind that you are key to keeping Norfolk District accident free.

Corps joins Chesapeake leaders to unveil Moses Grandy Trail



Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA-4th Dist.) (right), stands with other city leaders and direct descendants of Moses Grandy at the dedication of the Moses Grandy Trail. (Photo by Jerry Rogers)

By Jerry Rogers

Chesapeake's Cedar Road IV & V project, designed to provide a faster and safer connection between Deep Creek and Dominion Boulevard, was unveiled Jan. 20 as the *Moses Grandy Trail*, in honor of former slave Moses Grandy.

Chesapeake Mayor Dalton S. Edge, in acknowledging the attendance of Norfolk District's Deputy District Commander, Lt. Col. David Pedersen, cited the excellent partnership the city enjoys with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Mayor Edge was then joined by Congressman Randy Forbes (R-VA-4th Dist.) and several direct descendants of Moses Grandy during the unveiling ceremony.

Moses Grandy first gained national attention during a Chesapeake community ceremony in February 2004 that recognized the Great Dismal Swamp Canal as part of the nation's Underground Railroad to Freedom program. Grandy, a former slave, helped to build the Great Dismal Swamp Canal.

He also crewed for a time on a schooner that served the small ports of the Albemarle Sound. The narrative of his life and his journey to freedom has proved to be a true inspiration for people around the world.



Lt. Col. David Pedersen and Public Affairs Chief Terry McCann (left) look on during the dedication of the Moses Grandy Trail. (Photo by Jerry Rogers)



Army Corps HUBZone contractor gives to Habitat

By Patrick Bloodgood

When a 40,000-square-foot demolition and rebuild project gets underway, much of the old building material from the demolition is discarded into dumpsters and hauled off. This, however, is not the case on the 40,000-square-foot Building 32 project at Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR).

The Corps contractor, ARRIBA, is a Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) contractor that hires workers from economically depressed neighborhoods in the project area to fulfill the contract needs. Norfolk District, who



Richmond Habitat for Humanity Restore workers find places to store donated insulation. (Photo courtesy Rich Evans)

manages the project, contracted for ARRIBA to strip the 40,000 square feet of office space to the brick walls and then build it back out from scratch.

“This is what we are all about is to help folks,” said Jim Hart, president and owner of ARRIBA.

The ARRIBA path to helping people consisted of taking all the interior materials that were being torn out of Building 32 and donate them to Richmond-area charities.

According to Hart, their main problem was finding an agency that would take the recycled materials. After a month of searching, the material finally found a new home at the Richmond Habitat for Humanity Restore Center, where it can be reused in Habitat projects or sold to area contractors and residents at low costs.

“My first reaction was ‘wow’, followed by, now we need to make this happen,” said Richmond Habitat for Humanity Restore Director, Richard Evans.

“They came down and took a look at what we had and they wanted practically everything,” Hart said. “Ceiling tiles, light fixtures, doors, carpet, insulation, duct work, things that I didn’t even think they could use, they wanted,” he continued.

Hart said the Habitat staff were elated about the donations and were able to procure a tractor-trailer to haul the materials to their warehouse; so much material that it has taken more than 10 truck loads, and they are currently looking into even more warehouse space to accommodate the large donation.

“They were just so excited about it, they got us excited too,” Hart said.

ARRIBA has estimated that about 85 percent of the project has either been recycled or donated.

“It’s senseless to put it in a landfill; it’s just plain stupid,” stressed Hart.

The vision that Hart has is one that many private sector corporations do not share.

“It’s not cost-effective or profitable for private sector corporations to donate the materials. The only thing that we get back is the manhours spent packing and palletizing the materials for the donation, it’s much easier on the bottom line and quicker for the private sector companies to just discard the material,” said Hart.

“I think that is a true testament to ARRIBA’s commitment to doing the right thing in general,” said Evans

Habitat for Humanity has estimated the current value of the donation at well over a million dollars — all from one bay of the project. Another similar sized donation is planned once ARRIBA starts work on DSCR Building 32, Bay A.

“This [donation] would easily be within the top three as far as quantity, quality and type of material; and this by far will be the largest that I recall once phase two begins in a few months,” Evans said. “I wish they all could go so well, the relative ease in the process was created by ARRIBA and the Corps’ willingness to partner, and their understanding of our limited resources.”

“It’s a philosophy on life — you don’t go throw things away if somebody can use it,” commented Hart.



Donated insulation from DSCR is stacked at the Habitat for Humanity Restore warehouse. (Photo courtesy Rich Evans)



The traveling dredge

Story and Photos by Patrick Bloodgood

For the six-member crew of the Dredge Currituck, it's just another day away from home. This day is a brisk winter day that pushes up the waves to frothy white caps that roll past the Currituck as she trudges along Rudee Inlet in Virginia Beach, Va..

The crew's job this day is to dredge the inlet to allow pleasure craft, military and commercial vessels access to this strategic harbor of refuge.

The job seems tedious -- traveling down the inlet, dredging hundreds of yards of sand into the hopper only, to turn around in a small area and go back up the inlet to continue the process. The entire time the crew knows that Mother Nature will, over the course of time, undo all the work that was accomplished on this blustery day.

"Rudee Inlet itself we do four to five times a year. Three of those times we bring in the Currituck," said Gregg Williams, project manager. "Mother Nature has been trying to close it since it was built," he continued.

The city of Virginia Beach also maintains the waterway with its own dredge operations, allowing many watercraft safe access to the Inlet.

The Currituck repeats this same process in all different types of weather conditions week after week on many various Corps projects up and down the Eastern Seaboard, from Maine to Florida.

The Wilmington District-based dredge and its crew travel outside of their own district working on other district projects more than they remain in their own.

"Currituck started exclusively in Wilmington District; that has all changed because our mission is in high demand. We do the smaller, more nasty projects that are tougher on the gear," said Mitch Tillyard, assistant master dredge officer, who is at the helm of the Currituck navigating the 150-foot dredge in the narrow channel.

On average the Currituck is only working Wilmington District projects a month and a half out of the year, including maintenance and upkeep.



Dredge Currituck makes another run down Rudee Inlet.

The Currituck is manned by two crews working one week on, one week off. They meet the vessel wherever she has been navigated to for the next Corps project.

"If you don't mind the travel, don't mind the hotels, it's not a bad gig," said Tillyard.

The crews travel by van to the dredge when she is between Norfolk and Charleston; beyond that they fly.

Traveling so much one would think they get to see many different sites on the East Coast, but according to Main Dredge Control Officer Bud Gaskins that isn't the case.

"All work and no play - go to work in the dark and get off work in the dark," Gaskins commented.

Gaskin has been with the Currituck crew for almost 20 years and can remember when the dredge stayed almost exclusively in the Wilmington District.

"When I first started just about all our work was in North Carolina, but back in the '80s we started going to New Jersey, then to New York and then to Massachusetts. After 1991, that's when we started traveling everywhere," Gaskins said.

The crew of the Currituck is very dedicated and most of the members of this crew have many years under their belts, seeing many of the same projects again and again as they try to

fend off the continuing advances that Mother Nature puts forth.

The Rudee Inlet dredge is only a 10-day-long project and then it's off to New York for another

dredge. To this crew it's just another day's worth of work.

"Alright pick 'em up Bill, let's go to the dump site," said Tillyard referring to the dredge's drag heads as he pilots the Currituck to the beach where the crew will dump the dredged sand.

It is just one of many dump runs the Currituck will make at Rudee Inlet and at other dredge sites outside of Wilmington's boundaries.



Assistant Master Dredge Officer Mitch Tillyard (left) confers with Dragtender Bill Stahl while dredging Rudy Inlet.



Divers clear channel of debris

By Steve Baum

On Feb. 2, personnel from Operations Branch removed a major obstruction from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in the Thimble Shoals channel. The Norfolk District's Survey Team found the obstruction using underwater surveying equipment while conducting a routine survey along the channel.

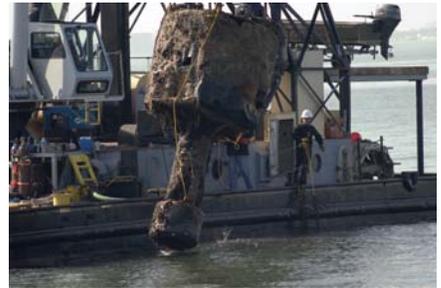
The survey team informed the Coast Guard of the situation and a buoy was temporarily relocated to the site to ensure that ship traffic coming in and out of the channel had safe navigation around the obstruction.

The Army Corps of Engineers Vessel ELIZABETH with a commercial dive team

spent nearly a half-day attempting to recover the obstruction from the depths below. At approximately 1:30 p.m., the dive team finally succeeded in bringing the obstruction to the surface and identifying it as a large sea buoy that had apparently been on the channel floor for at least 15 years. The buoy itself had many large dents in it from where it had been struck numerous times by vessels navigating the waterway.

After retrieving the sea buoy from the bottom of the Bay, it was turned over to the Coast Guard and the area was cleared for ship traffic to resume. The retrieval mission itself required close coordination with the Coast Guard, Virginia Pilots and the U.S. Navy, to

ensure that all the ship traffic would stay clear of the personnel working on and in the water.



Workers from Operation Branch haul in a sea buoy that was recovered from the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay. (Photo courtesy Steve Baum)

The CPAC Moment with Paula Bradshaw

Resumes purged and new definition of veteran

There are two items to discuss in this edition of the CPAC Moment.

The first deals with the fact that the Department of the Army regularly purges old resumes from the RESUMIX database. Your resume will be purged from the Army RESUMIX database if your current one has been in it for over 12 months, and there is no record of a self-nomination for an announcement within the last 12 months.

To find out if your resume is in jeopardy of being purged you can find out by going to the Army RESUMIX website and go to the ANSWER page. When you get to the ANSWER notification page, you will see a message approximately 60 days prior to the date when your resume will be purged from the RESUMIX database. The message will continue to be posted to your ANSWER notification page until you either

self-nominate for a job or submit a new resume. If neither action is done your resume will be purged.

You can access RESUMIX and ANSWER at the following website: <https://cpolst.belvoir.army.mil/public/resumebuilder/builder/index.jsp>.

The second item pertains to our veterans here in the District. The National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2006, signed into Public Law by the President on Jan. 6, expanded the definition of a veteran (for purposes of preference eligibility) in 5 USC 2108(1).

The new definition includes individuals who served on active duty for more than 180 consecutive days, other than for training, any part of which occurred during the period beginning Sept. 11, 2001, and ending on the date prescribed by Presidential proclamation or by law as the last day of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

New Branch and Deputy Division Chiefs named



Matthew T. Byrne Deputy Chief Technical Services Division



Terry A. McCann, Chief of Public Affairs Office



Betty Gray Waring, Operations Branch Chief,



FNOD -- Sifting for munitions

Story and Photos by Patrick Bloodgood

When the Former Nansmond Ordnance Depot (FNOD) closed its doors to manufacturing, shipping, renovating, processing and storage of ammunition, the rules of disposing of the hazardous materials were much more relaxed than today's stringent environmental standards.

Fast forward about 45 years to today and currently; work is ongoing to find and remove the disposed munitions at the site. In order to mitigate the mistakes of the past, the contractors have to meticulously sift through many layers of soil, laden with tree roots, muck and rocks in historically identified sections of the 975-acre property in an effort to remove mortar casings, 50-caliber rounds and other ordnance that the former Defense Department depot handled.

Until recently, the process of sifting through the layers of dirt to find and dispose of munitions was a hands-on, back-breaking process. Workers had to load the soil into hand sifters with shovels and then shake the sifters back and forth feverishly to reveal the fruits of their labor.

Today, with the help of technology introduced last September



Unexploded Ordnance Safety Officer Jerry Booth throws pieces of non-explosive munitions debris in a container for disposal.

and a few well placed blast plates and some minor modifications, a new ally has joined the FNOD clean-up crew. That ally arrives in the form of a mechanical sifter, by way of another Army Corps cleanup site in Colorado.

"When it first got here there were many people on site who were a little skeptical about whether it would work in our damp, clayey soils full of roots and wet leaves," commented George Mears,

FNOD project manager. "We deliberately set up testing that included the worst materials we would have to process on site, including the mud and muck, and it performed wonderfully."

Within its first few months of operation, the sifter has proved to be an extremely valuable asset to the ordnance investigation and restoration aspects of the FNOD cleanup.

"We recently took a significant budget cut, but with the arrival of the sifter, we've so far been able to carry on without seeing a reduction in productivity," said Mears.

This large piece of hardware has allowed contractors to expedite the process of removing ordnance up to six-times the speed it was moving before the sifter arrived, even after they recently had to scale back from two on-site crews

to one.

"On good days we can process up to 150 cubic yards a day," commented Mears, who added, "prior to the sifter, on our best days we could only process up to 25 cubic yards of soil."

Currently, the FNOD team is projecting the ordnance removal phase of the clean-up to be completed well ahead of the other ongoing environmental investigations, attributing this largely to the mechanical sifter.

"We were slated for a 2010 completion without the sifter, but now we are looking at 2008 for the end of ordnance removal," said Mears.



The mechanical sifter sits in the middle of the FNOD clean-up area where warning signs tell people to keep out.



Jerry Booth (center) directs Unexploded Ordnance Technician II Don Creef in the front end loader towards the mechanical sifter to dump soil into it. Senior Unexploded Ordnance Supervisor Brian Hodge (right) looks on.



Cover Story:

Change! New year, new Web site design

Story and Photos by Patrick Bloodgood

Heraclitus once said, "Nothing endures but change."

Nothing displays that more than the advent of a new year: New Year's resolutions that unfortunately many people have already broken. New numbers that have to be written on checks... The list goes on and on.

At the District, the New Year's changes are abundant with the many new and exciting projects, studies and directives that must be carried out.

One of the more visible changes that occurred so far is the district's Web site. Even as this issue is being released, work is ongoing to redesign the District Web site, as directed by Headquarters, USACE.

"All told between the two other techs and I, we have been putting in about 13 hours a day over the past couple of months," remarked IT Specialist Sylvester "Buddy" Sparrow, who is in charge of the technical end of the Web's redesign.

Many of those hours have been spent working to make each one of the District's estimated 15,000 Web pages conform to the template that was provided by headquarters.

"Through the web's project delivery team (PDT) we have come out with an easier website to navigate," said Sparrow.

Some of the many changes to make navigation easier include replacing the "fly-out" menus with drop-down menus in a side navigation bar. These menus appear when the user clicks on them and disappear after clicking again.

Also, a news section on the homepage has been added which is being used to keep the general public informed of events taking place within the District and of activities in their communities.



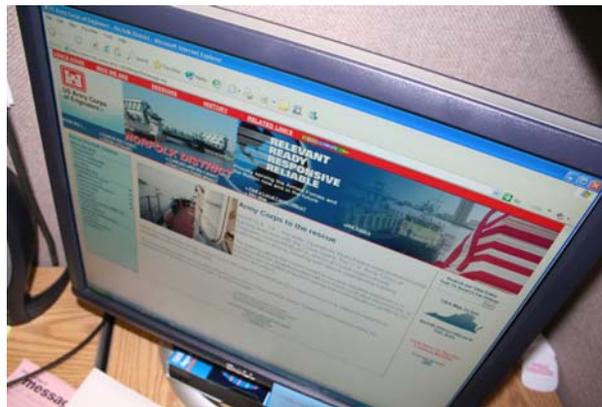
Sylvester "Buddy" Sparrow works on the website from his desk.

"I have received a lot of positive feedback on the site from inside the building; however, realizing that the site is more of a tool for the general public, we will be soliciting comments from many of our partners to find out what they think," Sparrow commented.

With that in mind, another planned Web site change is a more hands-on approach to how information is uploaded. Soon, sections will appoint their own staff member to handle populating information to keep their site current.

"The biggest problem that we have had in the past and still to this day is providing timely content to the web. People are busy doing the projects, so getting information to the web is oftentimes an after-thought," said Sparrow.

Though many changes have occurred to the Web which have eliminated some of the features that District employees are familiar with, Sparrow said the main goal is to make the District Web site both a pleasant and informative experience.



The opening page of the new website.



District employees remain deployed during holidays

In their own words...

Many of our fellow District team members have deployed to the hurricane-ravaged Gulf Coast region in recent months. A select few, however, decided rather than spend the holidays with their families and friends, they would deploy in support of the victims of this past year's unprecedented hurricane season. A couple of those team members found the time to pen a few paragraphs for this issue of District Tides.

JASON CASTRO

HANCOCK COUNTY, Miss.- Well to keep it short and simple, I am a Quality Assurance (QA) team leader here in Hancock County, Miss. My duties include supervision of my fellow QA inspectors, making sure the community is getting the full support of USACE.

We, as a TEAM, make sure the contractor is installing the temporary housing (T-Trailer & Mobile Homes) per the specifications provided and local building code. We also make sure all safety issues are addressed, maintenance issues are being handled through the maintenance hotline, and the well being of the occupants is satisfied per the contract. All our work is filtered through the FEMA TMs (Technical Monitor) on a daily basis.

Through the five months I've been here, I've seen many things, but what I remember the most is early-on about the first

month or so I was involved in the full process of occupying T-Trailers. On this day, I signed over a trailer to an individual that worked out of the EOC (Emergency Operation Center) in Hancock County. She had been sleeping in the same building she worked out of and was so HAPPY to receive the small, but much needed T-Trailer, that she started to break down into tears of joy. I had to ask her to stop before she caused me to do the same. Since then I knew I was here for the right reasons.

I was doing the job that makes a person realize that what you truly have, you never really knew—until you have lost everything like these folks have in Mississippi.

What makes a person volunteer for stuff like this and stay to the bitter end is beyond me. I do it for three reasons: First and foremost, if I was in their shoes I would hope someone would come to my aid and help, too. Second, my family supports me 100 percent. Third, the USACE gives me the opportunity to do so.

If the opportunity to help people in need should come again, yes, I would do it and

twice on Sundays. There's no better feeling than helping people in need. I will continue to support the mission of HOPE here in Mississippi, as long as I have the support of my family and command.



Jason Castro conducts a quality assurance check in Hancock County, Miss. (Photo courtesy Jason Castro)

JENNIFER ARMSTRONG

NEW ORLEANS - Currently, I am working in New Orleans building a temporary campus for the Southern University at New Orleans. SUNO's main campus is located in an area affected by 11 feet of flooding. The temporary campus has been constructed through two phases; the first phase which has been completed consists of 26 buildings. Included in these 26 buildings are classrooms, administrative offices, student services, a university center, computer lab, dining facility and bookstore.

The second phase has a total of 19 modular buildings and will have additional office space, library and some classrooms. SUNO anticipates a return of approximately 1,500 students and 500

faculty. We have several contractors on-site, including an 8A contractor, who has diligently worked to meet our deadlines.

On Monday, Feb. 13, we had a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the re-opening of SUNO. In attendance was the governor of Louisiana, the mayor of New Orleans and various state council members. We also sent invitations to the White House.



Jennifer Armstrong briefs Mississippi Valley Division Commander Brig. Gen. Robert Crear (left) in New Orleans. (Photo courtesy Jennifer Armstrong)

Please see Words, Page 11



Words: District employees talk about deployment

Continued from Page 10

This project means a lot to the Corps and to the city of New Orleans because it represents the collaborative efforts made by multiple organizations to restore normalcy to the community.

At first I thought being on the Corps' Ice Project Response Team (PRT) would be great experience and a wonderful chance to meet people from other areas of the country and other members of the Corps outside of our district. When I actually got down here and I saw just how devastated the region was and how destroyed these people's lives were, I realized how important everyone's assistance is.

I can't imagine losing EVERYTHING: photos from your past, a house you have worked a lifetime to attain, memories of a city you loved, pets and even loved ones. I met an older woman who lived here her whole life and would smile every time she passed the old house she grew up in. She cried because the tree she climbed as a child was gone. It's unimaginable.

Despite the tension and feelings some have for the Corps down here, I know what we are doing is moving this area back

Since Hurricane Katrina ...

- 62 District employees have deployed
- 27 District employees have re-upped beyond their 30 day deployments or re-deployed

to having conveniences and life we take for granted. This disaster has an immense learning curve no meteorologist could have forecasted and gaining the understanding of how this process should work allows me to perform these duties in the future more effectively.

I hope the people who have taken on the responsibilities we left at home receive as much recognition as we do. They are just as much a part of this as we are.



An aerial overview of flood damage in New Orleans shortly after Hurricane Katrina came ashore.

District Visitors



North Atlantic Division Commander Brig. Gen. (P) William Grisoli addresses employees from the Engineering Branch during his District visit on Jan. 5. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)



Vessel Captain Rick Bruton (middle) and Deck Hand Paul Salib (right) look on as USACE Command Sergeant Major Robert Winzenried takes a seat on the Army Corps Vessel HARRELL during a recent visit to Norfolk District. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)



Black History Month speaker supports multicultural America

Story by Jerry Rogers

"Today we find ourselves barely into the 21st century," said Dr. Benjamin Dixon, vice president of Multicultural Affairs at Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, Va. "Some of us are looking into the millennium with cautious hope, others are so hopeless and pessimistic that they have almost closed their eyes altogether...for fear of what they may see. I, for one, choose to view the new era as one more opportunity, although perhaps our final one, to get it right...to get it right about ourselves as a people, to get it right in our communities and in our homes and, maybe, even in our hearts and minds.

"I choose to believe that our society may be waking up to the reality that all men and women are indeed created equal. We have not only the right to pursue happiness for ourselves, but also happiness for each other. That the hope for the future rests not so much with us, but with our progeny...just as our elders understood it so many decades ago."

Those words of encouragement and hope highlighted Dr. Dixon's Black History Month address to more than 100 Norfolk District employees at Waterfield Building Feb. 8, and through a live internet broadcast feed to district field sites throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

After beginning his address by asking for a moment of remembrance, reflection and recommitment to the legacy of two Kings...Dr. Martin Luther and his wife, Coretta, who passed away the week before, Dr. Dixon asked, "Why should we continue to celebrate Black History?"

As we reflect on the legacy of the Kings, unfortunately, knowledge of the political and social environment in this country during the 1950s and '60s is

"I knew someone had to take the first step and I made up my mind not to move."
- Rosa Parks

"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

fading rapidly from our conscious memories, explained Dixon, who was active during the Civil Rights movement.

"Sadly, too many older Americans, and almost all young Americans think about this phenomenon as something that happened centuries ago, when, in fact, it



Dr. Benjamin Dixon speaks to Norfolk District employees during an observance of Black History Month. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

was less than 50 years ago. That's why we still have people asking, 'What really was the movement?' 'When did it start?' 'What was it like?' If our grandchildren asked us these questions, what would we say?" continued Dixon.

"Struggle is a never-ending process. Freedom is never really won, you earn it and win it in every generation."
- Coretta Scott King

"When our thoughts - which bring actions - are filled with hate against anyone, Negro or white, we are in a living hell. That is as real as hell will ever be." - George Washington Carver



February's celebration of Black History Month is an annual celebration that has existed since 1926. Much of the credit can go to Harvard scholar Dr. Carter G. Woodson, who was determined to bring black history into the mainstream public arena.

Woodson devoted his life to making "the world see the Negro as a participant rather than as a lay figure in history." In 1926, Woodson organized the first annual Negro History Week, which took place during the second week of February. Woodson chose this date to coincide with the birthdays of Abolitionist Frederick Douglass and U.S. President Abraham Lincoln — two men who had greatly impacted the black population. Over time, Negro History Week evolved into the Black History Month that we know today — a month-long celebration of African-American History.

Dr Dixon continued his address by citing several historical events during the great Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and '60s, which were instrumental in changing national policies; more importantly, changing people's hearts and minds.

He closed his address focusing on America's "promising" future and the fact that by the year 2050, 41 percent of the population will be black or Hispanic. "We may have different cultural histories, but in many ways we face the same social, economic and educational challenges," said Dixon. "In fact, diversity and a multicultural perspective require or acknowledge the need for strong, positive cultural distinction as a way of enriching our experiences and increasing our problem-solving capacity as a nation."



Project Updates

Corps delivers expanded MATES facility to Army National Guard

Story by Jerry Rogers

On Nov. 22, 2005, Norfolk District transferred for beneficial occupancy the final three structures of the \$17.9 million, 153,000-square-foot Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES) facility at Fort Pickett, Va. The project was delivered on schedule and well within budget, said Norfolk District Construction Representative, Kevin D. Arthur.

The Corps design-build military construction project, under the leadership of Chief of Engineering Branch, Peter G. Reilly, began in December 2003. The expanded MATES facility eliminates existing World War II vintage buildings, where much of the maintenance on more than 600 items of equipment from over 80 Army National Guard units in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia takes place.

"I see this project as one of several initiatives currently under way which supports Virginia's vision of making Fort Pickett the premier maneuver training center on the east coast, providing quality training opportunities to a variety of units," said MATES Superintendent Lt. Col. Tom Perkins.

Perkins has a long history with Fort Pickett and the MATES facility. In the 1980s, then-Army Staff Sgt. Tom Perkins repaired armored vehicles in one of the WW II facilities.

"For those of us who work at the MATES, this new facility provides us a safer working environment, one that meets the



The new MATES facility as seen by air. (Photo courtesy Pete Reilly)

most current construction requirements, and one that will accommodate just about any piece of equipment currently in the Army inventory," said Perkins. "This construction also gives us a facility that we can be proud of, especially when people ask you where you work."

Perkins' primary Corps point of contact during the construction process was Arthur. "One of my biggest concerns during the entire process was to phase the project in a manner that would allow us to continue our day to day maintenance operations simultaneous with the construction," revealed Perkins. "Kevin was instrumental in making this happen. By having the Corps involved with this project, it enabled me and my employees to concentrate on our mission and not so much with the construction."

The Guard's Project Manager for Facility Management, Bob Tabor, said his experience using USACE was a pure delight. "Many firms speak of their impeccable record of few change orders and project completions within budget. The USACE proved it. It was nearly a 'hands-free' experience for the client and we thank you for a job well done," said Tabor.

"Bottom line: I thoroughly enjoyed working with Norfolk District, and from my point of view, one of the smartest decisions we (The Army National Guard) made was to get the Corps involved in this project," added Perkins.

Two more Army family housing projects go RCI

Two major U.S. Army housing projects have recently been converted into Residential Communities Initiative (RCI) projects. The first, involving 3,000 sets of family housing units, occurred just prior to the holidays this past December at Fort Carson, Colo.

The units were originally privatized under a government contract, but the contract limited the services that the Soldiers could receive. Project Delivery team members Lanny Pricer and Todd Waldman worked with the stakeholders to facilitate the conversion from a contract to a real estate RCI project.

Under the new deal, the housing unit can be expanded to handle new troops

and allows the project to refinance at more favorable terms.

The second conversion occurred during the holiday season at Fort Benning, Ga., and marks the first time in history that the Army has transferred property during that time period.

For this project, Kathleen Germano and Todd Waldman worked with the stakeholders to transfer 4,055 family housing units over to the Fort Benning, LLC. The deal also allowed for the construction of new homes and rehabilitation of other homes at Fort Benning.

RCI is the Army's version of on-post housing privatization, a program that will improve the quality of life for Soldiers and their families. Under the RCI program, the Army transfers ownership and management responsibilities for on-post family housing to a private company, under a ground lease for at least 50 years.

The Army Corps of Engineers is the Army executive agent for RCI, with the Baltimore District handling contracting support, Mobile District responsible for performing environmental assessments and Norfolk District responsible, long-term, for handling all real estate issues.



The tightest and *coolest* District

By Patrick Bloodgood

On an unusually warm February weekend, 10 Norfolk District employees spent a Saturday surf side at Virginia Beach, Va. On any given occasion this wouldn't be out of the ordinary. On that day, however, these District employees put a new meaning into the "Coolest District".

This day, Feb. 4, these employees were a part of a team named *Cold to the Corps* and ventured into the frigid 40-degree water along with 3,423 other people in the 14th Annual Virginia Beach Polar Plunge.

"I don't think the Corps officially ever had a team before, and we thought it would be a good tradition to start," said *Cold to the Corps* team leader Laura Schreiber, a regional economist in the Planning and Policy Branch.

It took less than two weeks to recruit the team and at least one of the members viewed it as a great bonding experience for those District employees that participated.

"I did it to participate with people from work, to get to know them better, I mean we all know each other from around work but it was good to do something charitable and fun outside of work," commented Environmental Specialist Keith Lockwood.

Once these 10 Polar Plungers were poised on the beach to enter the chilly Atlantic Ocean they realized there was no turning back.

"It was like a mob scene running into the water; it was just a wave of people running into the water. If you wanted to turn around you couldn't," Schreiber said.



3,433 people start drying off after plunging into the frigid Atlantic Ocean. (Photo Courtesy Jon Reyes)

Once in the water the adventurously chilled employees said that it wasn't really painful but more like a numbness that came over the parts of the body that were in the water.

"The key is to stay in the water 'til you're totally numb, you just don't feel it when you get out," said District Plunge team member and Telecommunications Specialist Troy

Layman.

Apparently this is why Layman and Lockwood were able to stay in the crashing waves and splash around until they were herded out by Plunge officials.

"I came out after I was up to my neck in the water and Amy Bourne and Jeff Zoeckler [both fellow Plungers and District employees], questioned why my hair wasn't wet, so I went back in splashed around a bit until the divers kicked me out," said Layman.

"I came out and then I saw Troy still in there so I went back in and splashed him until he decided he was going to try and dunk me and I ran out," Lockwood recounted.

The plunge itself is a fund raiser for Special Olympics and is an all-day affair with entertainment, food and, of course, the Plunge into the ocean.

"We raised over \$900 total between 10 people," said Schreiber, adding, "A lot of people supported us in the District that weren't taking part in the plunge."

The total money that was raised this year from the Polar Plunge event set a record of over \$590,000.

As for the aspirations of participating in next year's Plunge, a couple of the team members said they would be out there braving the cold once again.

"Definitely do it again next year," commented Lockwood.

"I think we will do it again next year, I think everyone who did it this year will do it next and maybe we will even double our numbers," said Schreiber.

Cold to the Corps Members...

Amy Bourne, Regulatory

Jason Cash, Operations

Sarah Field, Engineering

Troy Layman, Information Management

Keith Lockwood, Operations

Jon Reyes, Engineering

Dan Sarino, Engineering

Laura Schreiber, Planning and Policy

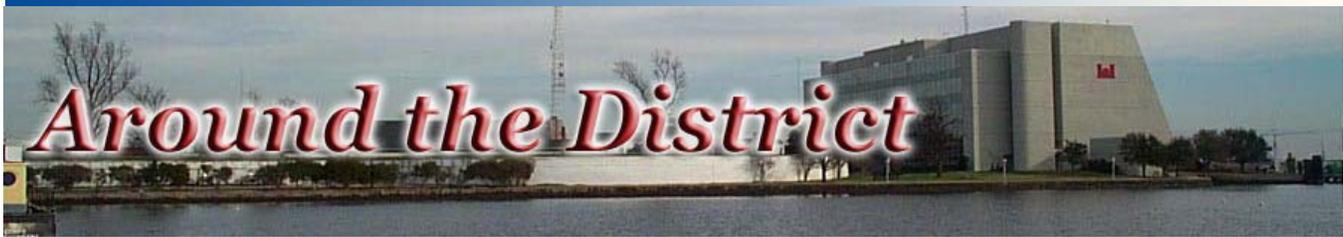
Gary Szymanski, Engineering

Jeff Zoeckler, Engineering



Members of the *Cold to the Corps* team warm up after their dip into 40-degree waters. (Photo by Jon Reyes)





Deborah Painter publishes article

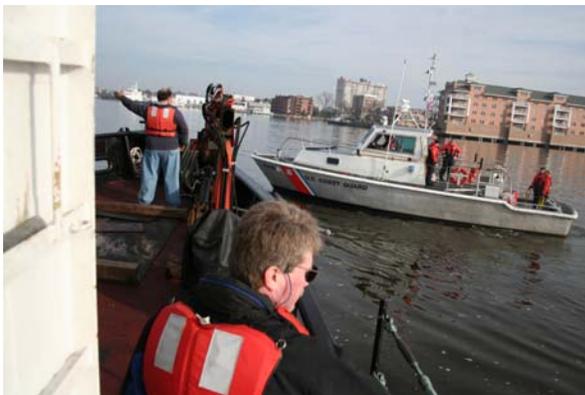
In the December 2005 edition of *"Fossil News: Journal of Avocational Paleontology,"* Debbie Painter, of the Planning & Policy Branch, recently published an article entitled "Heritage in Bronze," detailing her recent expedition to Louisville, Ky. and vicinity to examine fossils of the Ohio River and related historical and cultural items. Of particular note in the article was an accounting of the history of the statue of York, commemorating a slave who went with his owner, George Rogers Clark, as part of the Lewis and Clark epic journey across the North American continent. The base of the statue represents the rock formations at the present site of the Falls of the Ohio State Park.

New Route 17 highway opens with Corps in attendance

Alice Allen-Grimes of Regulatory attended a ceremony on Nov. 4, 2005, celebrating the completion of the new U.S. Route 17 highway, which can now handle 20,000 motorists a day, more than double the old road's capacity. In addition, the state-of-the-art, federally funded \$42 million highway was raised eight feet above the adjacent Great Dismal Swamp so it won't be as flood-prone as the old roadway.

Army Corps training with Coast Guard highlighted

Al Harris, Paul Salib and Steve Baum of Operations Branch were featured in a story that was broadcast by WVEC Channel 13. Military Reporter Mike Gooding and a photojournalist went out on the Army Corps Vessel *MOBJACK* to video tape a training exercise that was being conducted with the Coast Guard. A very positive story aired during the 5 p.m. newscast.



WVEC Reporter Mike Gooding looks on as Deck Hand Paul Salib motions to the Coast Guard. (Photo by Patrick Bloodgood)

Conference room looks and sounds better

On Jan. 3, the team responsible for upgrading the 4th floor conference room's audiovisual equipment completed the final

phase of this project. Team members: Buddy Sparrow, Troy Layman, Bernard Butts, Al Gates, Steve Dixon, Linwood Upchurch, Johnnie Saunders, Deborah Boatwright, David Monacelli and Alice Halgas significantly enhanced the district's ability to brief stakeholders. The in-house team completed this project ahead of schedule and at a fraction of the contractor's cost. The new multi-media equipment was unveiled during Brig. Gen. (P) Grisoli's district visit on Jan. 5.

87 children have a happy holiday courtesy District's annual Angel Tree donation

On Dec. 18, 2005, the Corpsaleers led the way to give 87 children Angel Tree gifts from Norfolk District employees. The annual gift-giving event benefits the children that reside at the St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children in Virginia Beach. The event is kicked off each year with the lighting of the Angel Tree and employee selection of an "angel" to buy gifts for. This year at the eleventh hour, 13 children were still unselected

until two anonymous employees graciously ran out and bought gifts for the remaining children the night before they were to be delivered. The gifts were



District Corpsaleers bring in gifts to the St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children. (Photo by Nancy Allen)

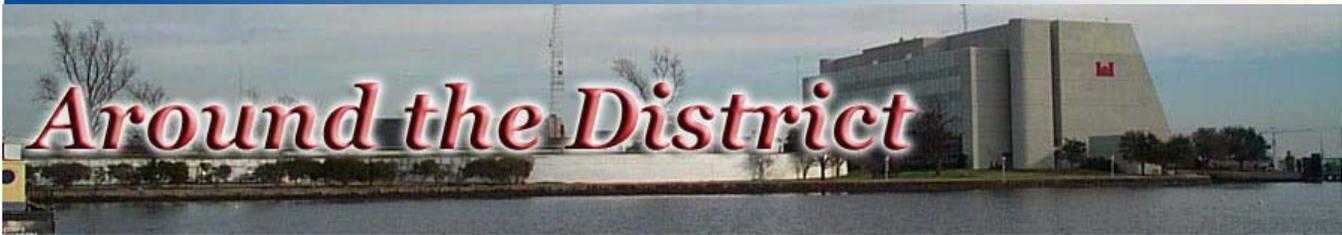
delivered to the children by the District's Corpsaleers who also sang carols to cap off the holiday festivities.

Army Corps regulator teaches local 5th graders

As part of the District's Speakers' Bureau Program, on Jan. 13, Peter Kube of Regulatory Branch taught 100 5th graders from Camp E.W. Young in Chesapeake, Va., on various agents that cause erosion and weathering and different shoreline stabilization strategies. The Camp E. W. Young Day Camp program provides unique opportunities to introduce urban students to nature. Norfolk District has enjoyed a longtime partnership with the Camp and the Norfolk Public School System, providing direct support so students can enjoy an annual educational cruise down the Atlantic Intracoastal

See *Around the District*, Page 16





Continued from Page 15

Waterway. Peter Kube also joined the students on a field trip on the shores of the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River to view the erosion taking place adjacent to the camp and to discuss various ways to control it.

Army Corps regulator publishes plant book

Harold Wiggins, a biologist in the Fredericksburg Field Office recently published a book entitled "Virginia Native Plants." The book and author received local media attention in the *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star* with an article focusing on the contents of the book and a brief history of Wiggins. The book itself focuses on wild plants that Wiggins has come across and has come to love in his 15 years of working in the Regulatory Branch at Norfolk District and also his previous profession of being a wetlands consultant in private industry. The book can be obtained online at www.lulu.com



The back cover of *Virginia Native Plants*. (Photo Courtesy Harold Wiggins)

Three engineers pass PE

Three engineers in the District have successfully completed the Principles and Practices Exam (PE). Yvette Brett, Ryan Nagel and David Gary all completed the exam which takes eight hours and consists of 80 questions; 40 questions in the morning on general engineering and 40 questions in the afternoon on a specific engineering aspect selected by the person who is taking the test. The PE is required if civil engineers are pursuing a professional engineering license, and has strict criteria that must be met before the test can be administered.

Corps assists local communities with hurricane planning

On Dec. 14 and 15, 2005, Paul Moye of the Flood Plain Management Services Section of the Planning & Policy Branch, participated in several workshops regarding hurricane evacuation assistance to communities in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Norfolk District as well as the contractor, Post, Buckley, Schuh, & Jernigan, in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, provided the hurricane

planning assistance to the Hampton Roads and surrounding communities.

Mark Mansfield briefs water resources professionals

On Dec. 5, 2005, at the request of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (VASWCD), Mark Mansfield, Chief Planning and Policy Branch, provided an overview of the Corps of Engineers civil works missions and programs at the 67th annual meeting of the VASWCD in Williamsburg, Va. The theme of the annual meeting was The Future of Conservation "The Next Step" and was attended by more than 300 water resources practitioners from around the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Sorority gets detailed look into Craney

On Nov. 19, 2005, Scharlene Floyd of Regulatory met with members of the Old Dominion University chapter of Delta Sigma Lambda Sorority to give them a detailed historical look into Craney Island. The discussion took members through a timeline of events on Craney Island. Many members were interested in the future of Craney Island.

Editors Note:

The following entry was not included in the previous issue of *District Tides*.

District employees take attendees of the Coastal Plain Native Plant Conference on field trip

On Sept. 17, 2005, Scharlene Floyd, Steve Martin and David Knepper of the Regulatory Branch took members of the Virginia Native Plant Society and employees of Norfolk Botanical Gardens to Fisherman's Island, where they showed the group various native plants found on the island. Floyd, Martin and Knepper also discussed some of the adaptations that the plants have to make to live in a barrier island environment.

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