

CORPS' PONDENT

Vol. 36, No. 5 September - October 2012



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Portland District



**Bonneville Lock and Dam
75th Anniversary Ceremony**

Be Involved ... Now More Than Ever



2012 Pacific Northwest Combined Federal Campaign



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Professionalism and preparedness

September was National Preparedness Month. The month was dedicated to our shared responsibility to be ready for disaster and the unexpected. I would ask you to consider a few things: have you prepared means to care for yourself and those close to you in the event of an emergency? Could you help if you found yourself facing crisis or disaster? What if you were the only help someone had?

While it may be scary to consider possible risks that threaten your family or community, here's a better approach: consider how to minimize or prevent such risks. As the Boy Scouts of America motto states, we should "Be Prepared." Being prepared to save a life requires training, planning and forethought; maybe even changes to daily routines, but I'd say it's worth it. For example:

- Putting a first aid and emergency kit into your vehicle before leaving on that trip (or checking the one you've already got, along with your spare tire and jack);
- Grabbing a life jacket and putting it on before going out on the water and ensuring others do, too;
- Taking a CPR course; a firearms safety course before handling firearms; or, a hunters' safety course before heading to the field.

Each of these measures can help prevent needless tragedy. I want you to consider these and other safety precautions whenever appropriate. If you think safety and preparedness take

too much time, doing without could take the rest of your life.

There's another way I'd ask you to be safe and provide for the safety of others. I urge each of you to take to heart and employ the techniques and tools highlighted during suicide prevention training. Use that information to look out for one another, both on- and off-duty. By taking the time to learn what the danger signs are, you can help others around you. As I write this article, the District is planning for a Suicide Prevention Stand Down as part of an Armywide effort to address this critical issue. It is my hope that the training assists all of us in recognizing the signs of someone who may be suicidal and provides the confidence to respond with appropriate support.

If you see or suspect something, act. Integrating these tools into daily life could help you prevent a needless tragedy. If you're feeling depressed, please gather the courage to ask for help. Help is available. Our website (<http://go.usa.gov/Y2BF>) has more information on the resources available to help you prevent suicide, but the even the best tools—like lifejackets—only work if you use them.

On a separate note, I'd like to take a few lines to address a different sort of preparedness: that of the professional public servant. As government servants, we are sworn to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and to obey the laws and regulations of our country. One such law is the Hatch Act, which dictates that government



Col. John Eisenhauer, P.E.

employees and workplaces maintain an impartial integrity toward all political candidates and campaigning. Prepare yourself by learning and remembering Hatch Act requirements before getting involved with any political effort. Decisions made carelessly can lead to poor outcomes.

I'd like to emphasize that the Hatch Act doesn't prohibit personal political opinions. Our freedom of speech and expression are paramount, and my commitment to that is both personal and professional. What the courts have decided is that the Hatch Act Reform Amendments of 1993 balance our First Amendment freedoms with the impartiality necessary for public institutions to function fairly and effectively. Following Hatch Act guidance is not only a legal requirement, but demonstrates respect for our political process and the perspectives of others.

Learn about the Hatch Act here: <http://go.usa.gov/Y2K9> — not just because we are bound by law, but because it's the right thing to do. 

COL Ike



Portland District People

Faith St. John is from Fountain Valley, Calif. She served in the U.S. Army for 13 years before joining the Portland District in June 2010 as a cook for the dredge *Yaquina* and has since been promoted to chief steward for the *Essayons* dredge crew 2.



Describe your job.

I am the “butler” of the ship. I ensure the ship is well-stocked with cleaning supplies and toilet paper, and I plan menus, purchase food and prepare all the meals for my crew. When we’re underway I am responsible for three meals and an evening snack.

How does your job fit into our District mission?

My work directly supports the crews who are responsible for maintaining the navigation channels. The ship’s crews are away from home for days or weeks at a time, so we’re not just feeding their physical hunger, we’re feeding their morale. I make sure they have hot meals in an atmosphere where they can unwind and relax.

What is most rewarding about your job?

I enjoy taking care of people and this job lets me do that. When I was in the Army I competed in culinary competitions and cooked for VIPs and distinguished visitors. It was interesting, but it wasn’t what I really wanted to do. I wanted to cook for “everyday” people, to make their meals enjoyable. This job lets me be creative, to make every meal better than the one before.

What are your career goals?

I am where I want to be. The chief steward is as high as I can go on this ship. My goal is to do my best at this job; make it the best steward department in the Corps.

What was your first job?

My first job was for Wienerschnitzel. I hated it and I was fired from it! I only worked there a month.

What’s your favorite movie?

I don’t have one favorite movie, but I really enjoy movies directed by Akira Kurosawa. He directed “Seven Samurai” the Japanese film on which the movie “The Magnificent Seven” was based.

What are some of your hobbies?

I like to volunteer outside of work. I was in the Army for 13 years and everywhere we lived I tried to give back to the community. I’ve walked dogs at animal shelters, cooked meals at missions and for Loaves and Fishes.

Who inspires you?

My grandmother raised me and she taught me to be a giving person like her. My husband is an artist, a contemporary painter, and he inspires me to think creatively. 



Corps of Engineers photos

Geocaching: a fun way to explore with the Corps



Adapted from an article by J. Patrick Barry and Jennifer A. Baker previously published in the Nov./Dec. 2008 issue of *The Interpreter*.

While outdoor opportunities like hiking, camping and water recreation are well-known within Portland District's boundaries, geocaching is definitely a hidden treasure. Part exploring, part hiking, geocaching is a high-tech scavenger hunt for containers hidden for others to find.

Geocaching started in 2000, in Beaver Creek, Ore. While there are many varieties of the sport, all use hand-held Global Positioning System receivers to determine the specific coordinates for a cache. If you're new to geocaching, a good starting point is www.geocaching.com where you can register for a free account and learn more.

Geocaching got a start at Bonneville Lock and Dam as interest in geocaching led park staff to discuss the possibility of establishing geocaches and GPS trails. In the spring of 2008, avid geocachers Steve and Carol Kennedy spent three months volunteering at the Bradford Island Visitor Center. Around that time, another geocacher and former

information technologist, Jennifer Baker started working for Bonneville Dam as a natural resources specialist. She worked with park manager Jim Runkles, park ranger Brian McCavitt and lead interpreter Pat Barry to set up four initial geocaches.

What's in a cache container? Maybe some swag--small "treasures" such as unusual coins, trinkets or inexpensive toys to exchange, and a small logbook to record the "find" or to leave a message. The log is where cachers jot down their thoughts and feelings on finding the cache, offer suggestions and note if the cache needs maintenance. Many geocachers also post their finds on the geocaching website.

Geocaching is not allowed everywhere. Caches may sometimes be considered an inappropriate use, litter, or encroachment into pristine wilderness areas. That said, Portland District has several areas that allow geocaching, either sponsored by the Corps directly or supported by private entities.

For example, Travel Lane County is currently developing a GeoTour along the McKenzie River corridor that will include a geocache near Cougar Dam.

They are working with Willamette Valley Project staff to determine an appropriate place to hide the geocache on Corps land. While the rest of the tour is still top-secret, more than 30 other spots span 70-plus miles from Eugene to the top of the Cascade Mountains. The route includes several favorite hidden hotspots, some unknown even to most locals. Everyone who visits 24 sites will earn a special "coin" designed by a Lane County artist. A second trail is planned to go live in the spring, taking geocachers from Eugene to Florence, and rewards cachers with a different "coin."

More District-specific geocaching information is available at <http://go.usa.gov/YaMF>. Descriptions of caches within Portland District boundaries can be found at www.geocaching.com using the seven-character code in parentheses next to each cache listed below:

- Go With the Flow (GC1CQ07)
- Ducks Float (GC1CQ0Y)
- Bradford Island History (GC1BQTM)
- Bonneville Landmark (GC1C0JJ)
- Green Power (GC2CD2A)
- Spearfish Park (GC20NKX)
- Take me to Lunch (GC2MVP5)

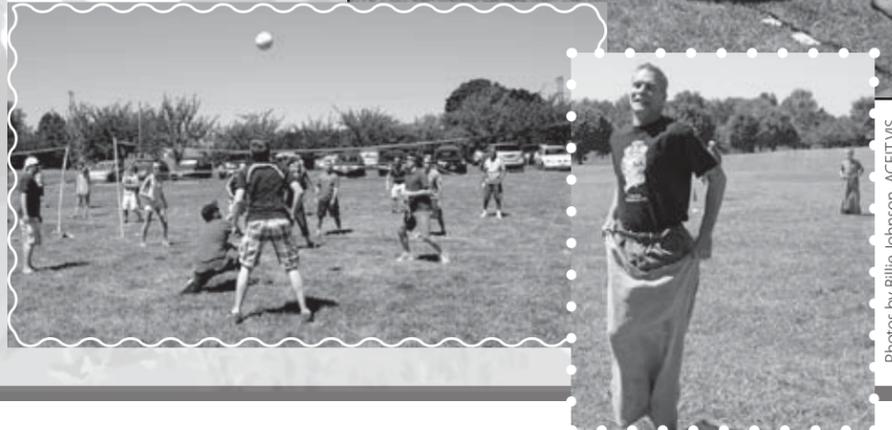
Corps of Engineers photos



Portland District 2012 Annual Picnic

Luau in the Park!

August 3
Noon to 4 p.m.
Blue Lake Park



Photos by Billie Johnson, ACETVIS



Bonneville Lock and Dam celebrates 75 years of service

By Diana Fredlund, Public Affairs Office

The 32nd President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt, returned to Bonneville Lock and Dam Sept. 15 to recreate his 1937 dedication speech during a celebration of 75 years of service to the Pacific Northwest which included music, games and family fun for all ages.

Bonneville Power Administration, which also celebrated 75 years of service, and the Corps of Engineers hosted a celebration under sunny skies that included a U.S. Army color guard, a motorcade of 20 vintage cars and remarks by federal, tribal, state and local officials and musical guests, all overseen by actor Gary Stamm, who portrayed the 32nd president.

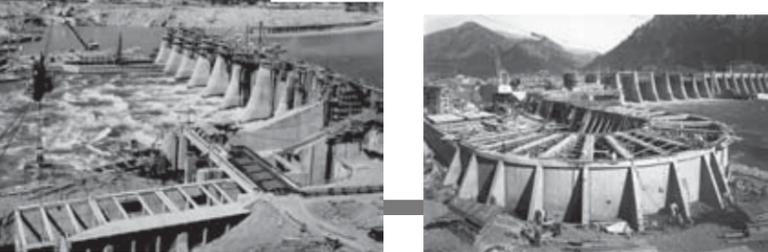
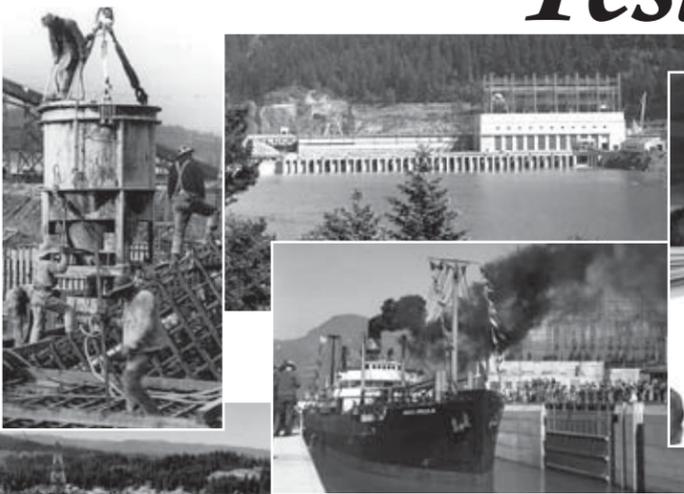
Supported by more than 25 Corps volunteers and park rangers from Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day dams, the day-long event brought more than 5,000 visitors to the Columbia River locale.

“The Bonneville Dam park ranger staff really hustled all day long and in the weeks preceding the event, ensuring everything was in place and any contingency was well thought out,” said Melissa Rinehart, the Corps’ volunteer coordinator for the 75th celebration. “Parking for the event was a major concern and many of the volunteers made sure everyone parked appropriately and kept the traffic moving. That was a huge undertaking.”

Musical guests The Wanderers, Recyclemen and Renegade Strings performed on the main stage and in the Bradford Island Visitor Center theaters, along with demonstrations on generating electricity and guided tours into Bonneville’s Powerhouse One.

Today

Yesterday



Corps of Engineers and BPA photos



District's blue-green algae testing emphasizes public safety

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

The Oregon Health Authority has issued a number of health advisories for district reservoirs over the past few years, prompted by high densities of blue-green algae. Cottage Grove, Dexter and Dorena reservoirs in the Willamette Valley, Lost Creek Reservoir in the Rogue Basin, and Willow Creek Reservoir in north-central Oregon have all been frequent targets.

But lately, leaders and residents of communities that depend on tourism dollars generated by our reservoirs have questioned whether these health advisories are necessary.

According to the OHA, blue-green algae are simple organisms (actually cyanobacteria rather than algae) that occur naturally in warm, calm, nutrient-rich waters, most often near the shore due to wind and waves. Blooms can occur anytime, but are most common between June and September.

If harmful algae are swallowed, they can cause diarrhea, nausea, cramps, fainting, numbness, dizziness, tingling and paralysis. Skin contact can cause rashes or irritation. Children and pets are at greatest risk.

The District's policy, according to David Tucker, Rogue River Basin Project Operations Section

chief, is to visually inspect developed recreation areas. If a bloom is noted, then water samples are tested. If high levels of potentially toxic algae are found, the Oregon Health Authority is informed and will then issue an advisory for the entire reservoir.

"Health advisories don't mean Corps reservoirs are entirely closed to recreation. We encourage people to enjoy camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, bird watching and other activities, while taking proper precautions to avoid water contact," said Patti Williams, Portland District's Natural Resources Management Section chief.

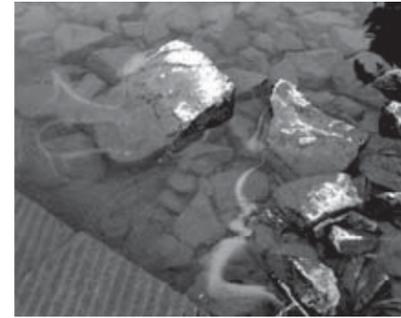
But there's no doubt that advisories scare away some potential visitors.

Only a few types of blue-green algae are known to produce toxins, so communities that depend on tourism dollars generated by area lakes and reservoirs aren't happy when the OHA declares a health risk based on tests that only confirm the presence of blue-green algae rather than its actual toxicity. They argue that testing for toxins makes more sense than testing for the presence of algae cells.

In fact, several communities in the Willamette Valley, including the city of Lowell near Dexter, Lookout Point and Fall Creek reservoirs, have contracted Oregon State University's Microbiology Department to perform an independent study of algae blooms in nearby reservoirs to determine if they are even capable of producing toxins.

But there are public safety issues with these new toxin tests that make District managers reluctant to use them.

"Toxin testing only tells us if the specific location being tested contains toxins at that moment," said Rogue River Basin Project Manager Jim Buck. "For example, we could test a thick bloom one day and find no evidence of toxins, but toxins could be present at other locations on the same reservoir the same day and we would not know. Toxins could also develop the following day at the tested location."



Corps of Engineers photo

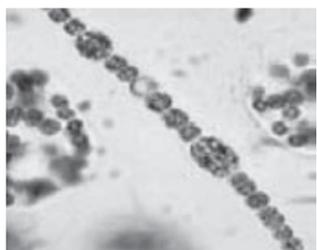
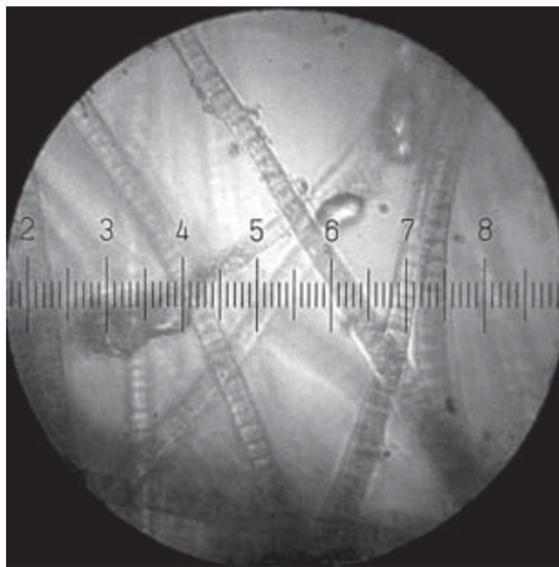
To ensure public safety, the frequency and scope of testing would have to dramatically increase.

The other main problem with toxin testing, Buck said, is that it does not reinforce our and the OHA's public safety message of avoiding areas that have a bloom. Visitors may start to assume that blooms that they see aren't toxic unless told otherwise – a dangerous assumption given the limitations of toxin testing discussed above. Public safety is far better preserved at far less cost by simply keeping lake visitors away from blue-green algae.

"Our current cell count testing procedure is state authorized, cost effective, familiar to the public, and reinforces key safety messages and principles," said Buck.

And as for those communities that rely on tourism at our reservoirs?

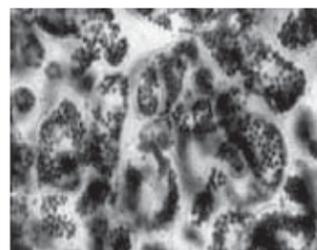
"We are aware of the economic impact to the recreation-based communities," Buck said. "We have expedited cell count water tests if a negative result would result in the advisory being lifted, especially prior to key holidays, like Independence Day. But when we weigh economic impact against public safety, we will always keep public safety as our top priority."



Anabaena



Aphanizomenon



Microcystis

Photos from Carole A. Lembi, Department of Botany and Plant Pathology, Purdue University

ALGAE BLOOMS IN OREGON

What is this stuff?

Algae are tiny, harmless organisms that live naturally in water. A harmful algae bloom (HAB), is actually made of cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae. Some cyanobacteria species create toxins that can make people and pets sick.

So, what's the problem? HABs can:

- Create toxins that can cause illness in humans and animals
- Pollute Oregon lakes and other fresh waters with scums
- Limit recreational activities in lakes, reservoirs and rivers
- Cause challenges for public water suppliers including taste and odor problems and water filtration difficulties

Why are HABs a health concern?

- Water contact can cause skin irritation or rash
- Swallowing water can result in diarrhea, cramps, vomiting and dizziness
- More severe reactions occur when large amounts of water are swallowed
- Children and pets are at the greatest risk

How can I keep my family and pets safe?

- Do not wade, swim or water ski in waters that have signs of an algae bloom
- Never drink lake or river water
- If you decide to eat fish from affected waters, remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking
- Never cook with natural water from areas suspected to have a harmful algae bloom
- If you or your pet becomes ill, seek medical or veterinary attention immediately

When in doubt, stay out!

Know the signs of an algae bloom. Don't go in water that is foamy, scummy, thick like paint, pea-green, blue-green or brownish red.

Learn more about HABs at healthoregon.org/hab or call 1-877-290-6767.

Common cyanobacteria that make up HABs in Oregon



Cybersecurity moves to the forefront in national and regional emergency preparedness

By Jeff Sargent, Oregon Federal Executive Board

In late July 2012, the New York Times reported that the top military official responsible for defending the United States against cyberattacks said there had been a 17-fold increase in computer attacks on American infrastructure between 2009 and 2011, initiated by criminal gangs, hackers and other nations.

This assessment by Gen. Keith B. Alexander, who heads the National Security Agency and also the newly created United States Cyber Command, appears to be the government's first official acknowledgment of the pace at which America's electricity grids, water supplies, computer and cell phone networks and other infrastructure are coming under attack. Those attacks are considered potentially far more serious than computer espionage or financial crimes.*

Alexander said his concern about the increase in foreign cyberattacks was that a growing number were aimed at "critical infrastructure," and that the U.S. remained unprepared to ward off a major attack. On a scale of 1 to 10, he said, American preparedness for a large-scale cyberattack is "around a 3."*

This drove the Department of Homeland Security to focus its 2012 National Level Exercise on cyber security. From March through June, headquarters-level federal agencies in D.C. went through exercises that included actually relocating all primary operations to regional offices outside of the beltway.

Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region X, took that a step further by collaborating with the Seattle and Oregon Federal Executive Boards to develop local tabletop exercises based on a similar cyber incident. These exercises bring federal agency managers and functional area specialists together to discuss implementing plans and procedures in the event of an emergency, finding gaps or conflicts and resolving them before a real incident occurs.

Both local FEBs have conducted such interagency exercises for several years.

This helps federal agencies meet mandates to test continuity of operations plans, as well as share knowledge and experience with other public and private sector agencies.



Gen. Keith B. Alexander

Both "Sound Response 2012," held in Seattle Aug. 14, and "In the Dark 2012," in Portland Aug. 16, explored the potential impact of a coordinated regional cyberattack. In this simulated incident, public and private networks and infrastructure were compromised, including phone and Internet services, power supplies, water treatment facilities and transportation systems. Seattle's exercise focused on re-establishing operations days after an attack had been detected and halted. Portland's event centered on devolution, or complete relocation, of essential operations while in the middle of such an attack.

Six facilitators supported 36 participants taking part at Portland's downtown YWCA, representing 19 different federal and local government agencies and private sector organizations, with another 60 participating in Seattle. The Portland District was represented by Jeff Hepler, acting chief of the Readiness Section, and Raymond Love, Northwestern Division's Continuity Operations Manager.

Feedback surveys were collected at the end of the exercise to gain insight into what was learned and needs improvement, for the preparation of the After Action Reports. Participants' comments included "need to work with other agencies in preparation for an emergency," "looked at lots of areas we hadn't considered," and "learned about holes in our emergency management plans and how to fix them." As Founding Father Benjamin Franklin said, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." * Courtesy of the New York Times, July 26, 2012





Diversity United, Building America's Future Today

By Mary A. Bretz, Equal Employment Opportunity Office

National Hispanic Heritage Month celebrates the historical and cultural contributions of Hispanic Americans. The observance was first established by Public Law 90-498, which was approved by the 90th Congress on Sept. 17, 1968. President Lyndon Johnson was the first president authorized to proclaim National Hispanic Heritage Week each year. President Ronald Reagan expanded the observance from a week to a month in 1988, and the 100th Congress enacted this into Public Law 100-402 on Aug. 17, 1988. The annual observance now begins Sept. 15 and ends Oct. 15.

That starting date, Sept. 15, is significant as the anniversary of independence for the countries of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. Additionally, Mexico and Chile celebrate independence on Sept. 16 and Sept. 18, respectively. Also within this 30-day period is La Dia de la Raza, or Columbus Day, observed on Oct. 12.

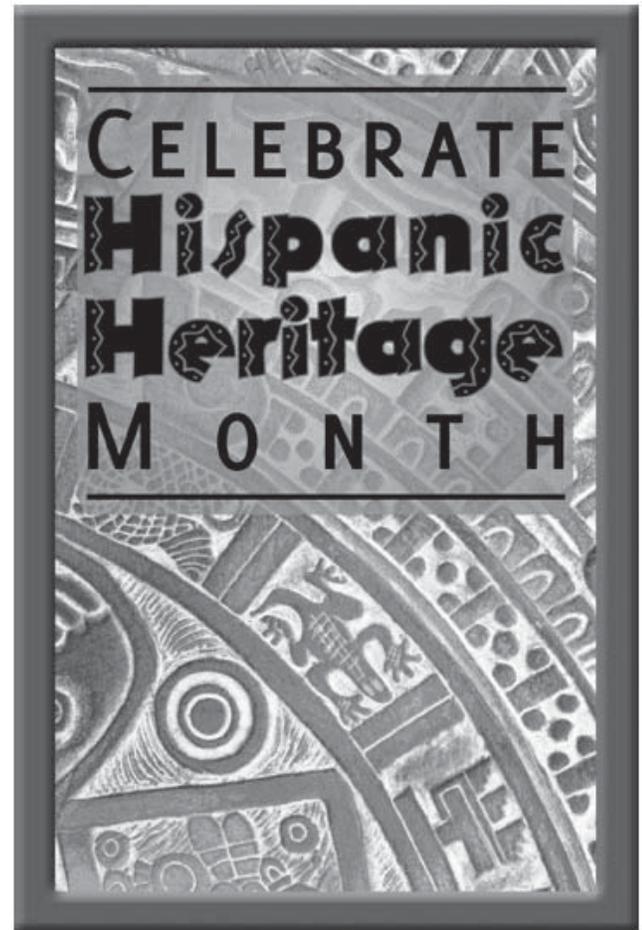
For purposes of this celebration, the term Hispanic includes persons with ancestry from the countries of Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela.

However, other Latin American countries including Caribbean and South American countries such as Brazil, Belize and the Virgin Islands are also included.

The theme for Hispanic Heritage Month is selected by the National Council of Hispanic Program Managers with the help of a wide variety of contributions from all interested parties. This year's theme is "Diversity United, Building America's Future Today."

At the U.S. Army website <http://go.usa.gov/rhBT>, this year's theme recognizes that "America's diversity is a source of strength, and Hispanic Americans have not hesitated to defend and show their allegiance to this nation in many ways, but especially through military service."

For more information about National Hispanic Heritage Month, go to <http://go.usa.gov/rhkV>, <http://go.usa.gov/rhZF> or <http://go.usa.gov/rhB3>. 





COMING SOON: NEW WILLAMETTE VALLEY ADULT FISH FACILITIES

By Scott Clemans, Public Affairs Office

The District is currently rebuilding the Minto Adult Fish Collection Facility on the North Santiam River, four miles downstream of Big Cliff Dam and seven miles downstream of Detroit Dam. Construction should be complete and the new facility operational next spring.

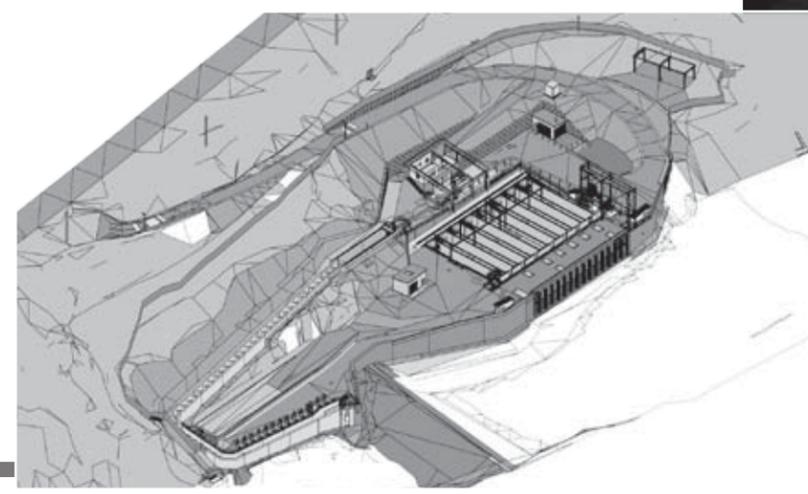
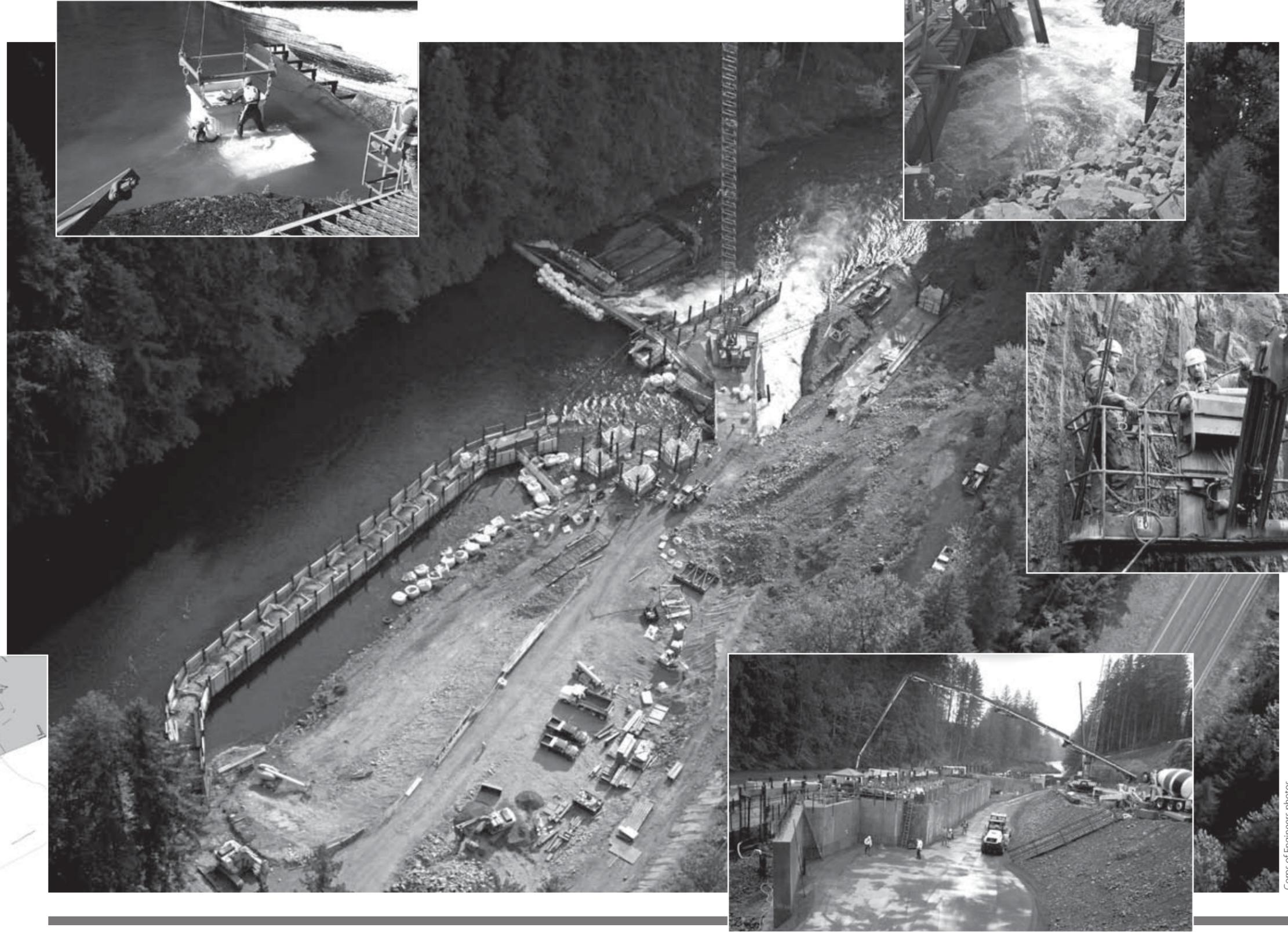
The District also starting work this fall on an 18-month upgrade of a similar facility at Foster Dam on the South Santiam River near Sweet Home. Upgrades to the facilities at Dexter and Fall Creek dams on the Middle Fork Willamette River near Lowell are in the early planning stages.

What's all the work for? The original facilities collected adult fish for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife hatchery program to compensate for habitat blocked by construction of dams. The new facilities will continue to support that mission, but are primarily designed to safely trap and haul wild adult fish upstream the dams via transport trucks, where they will be released to spawn naturally.

The facilities emphasize hands-off, water-to-water transfer, which dramatically reduces stress on the fish and gives them a better chance of surviving the trip to spawning habitat above the dams.

These upgrades are part of ongoing efforts to restore Upper Willamette River spring Chinook salmon and winter steelhead listed under the Endangered Species Act. They are actions specified in the NOAA Fisheries and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services' 2008 Willamette Project Biological Opinions. 

Visit <http://go.usa.gov/rSeB> for more information.



Corps of Engineers photos



Sharing the Corps' message

You are the face of the Corps. Share these messages with your family, friends and community.

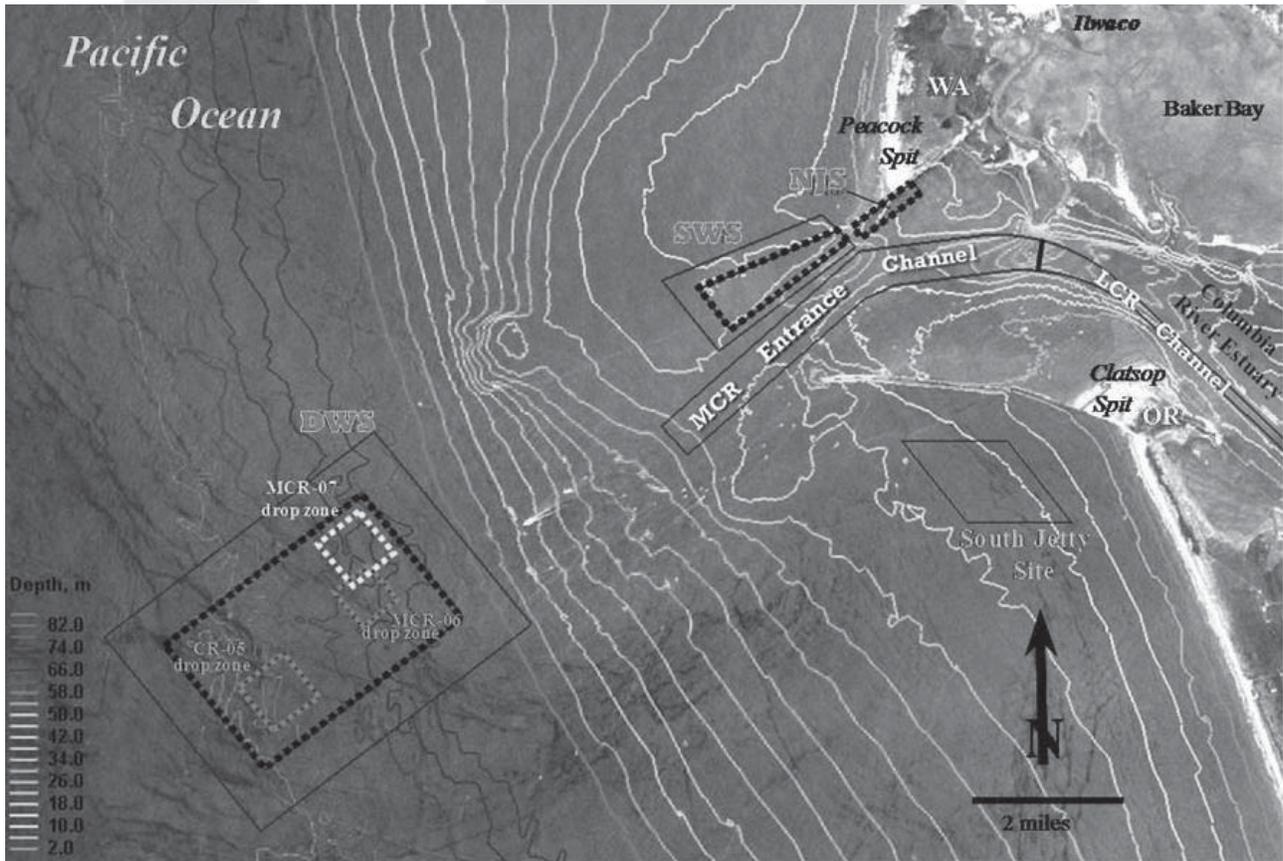
Corps celebrates new dredged materials disposal site near Astoria, Ore.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hosted congressional, federal and state officials Sept. 10 to celebrate the designation of a new nearshore disposal site. The Corps' dredge *ESSAYONS* placed the first materials in the new site, which is located near the South Jetty at the Mouth of the Columbia River.

The nearshore disposal site joins a network of disposal sites at the Mouth of the Columbia River, which are part of the Corps' Regional Sediment Management Plan. Additional nearshore sites include the Shallow Water Site, North Jetty Site and Benson Beach Site.

Using this site allows the Corps to keep dredged materials in the littoral cell. Material kept in the littoral cell will be naturally worked through the nearshore environment, and represents an opportunity for the Corps to engineer with Mother Nature. By placing clean sand in the nearshore site, the Corps helps protect the root of the South Jetty. Over time, as the dredged material moves towards the beach through natural processes, it should slow the rate of erosion at the jetty root.

This year, up to 300,000 cubic yards of clean sand dredged from the MCR federal navigation channel may be placed in the site. In future years, the Corps plans to place between 300,000 and 500,000 cubic yards at the site annually. 



Corps of Engineers photo and graphic