

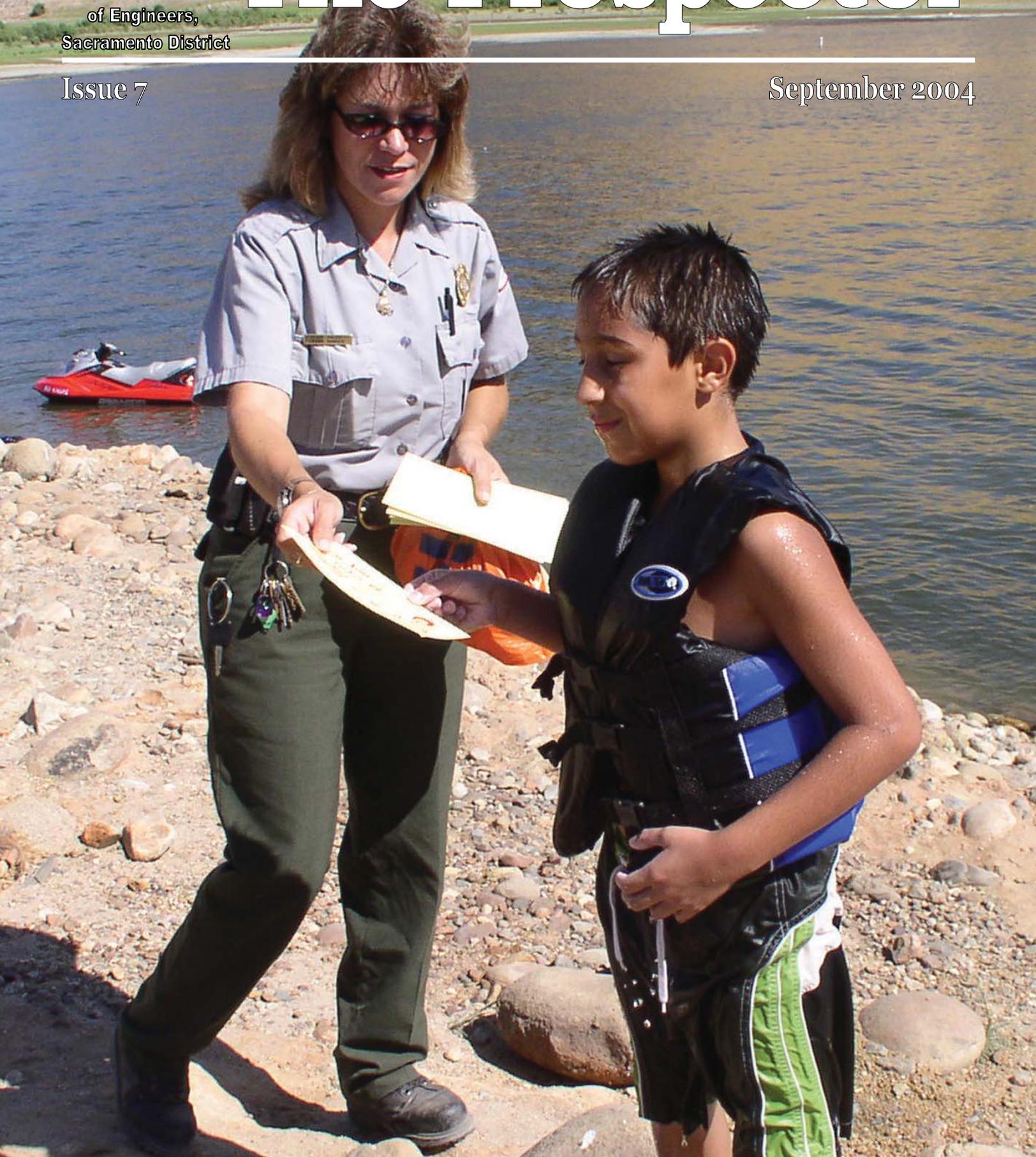


U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers,  
Sacramento District

# The Prospector

Issue 7

September 2004



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## On the Cover: Busted!!

Park Ranger Sylvia Guerrero catches a young visitor in his life jacket at Success Lake over Labor Day weekend, and rewards him with a coupon for a free ice cream cone.



Photograph is from Dwayne Urquhart. *There is more on the back page.*

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# SAME Camp teaches basic skills in construction and engineering

By David G. Killam

Kids from across the U.S. and foreign countries focused on basic engineering skills at the Annual SAME Engineering and Construction Camp. Prospective engineers between the ages of 16-18 were required to build cardboard boats and race them against other kids. The cardboard boats were covered with plastic tarps to maintain buoyancy. The effectiveness of a boat's design and construction determined whether or not it sank in the large swimming pool in which the race was held.

The camp, one of two sponsored by the Society of American Military Engineers (SAME), was held at Port Hueneme in Oxnard, California. From July 24 through July 30, Linda Ngim from Planning Division was one of 40 counselors who supervised the kids.

"These camps are held every year and are an excellent opportunity for kids to get experience in basic engineering, construction and working together in teams," said Linda. "Also, the kids can learn leadership skills and make new friends. As professionals, we can pass on the passion we have for engineering. Hopefully, these kids can sponsor this type of event when they grow up."

The kids were kept busy as they were up every morning at 5:30 a.m. and lights out were at 10 p.m. The kids also constructed storage sheds for Habitat for Humanity, went on environmental tours and toured a cement producing plant.

"The nature tours were conducted to help the kids understand that construction can have an impact on the environment," said Linda.



Photos by Linda Ngim

Kids at the SAME Camp (and below left) work to complete the construction of their boats.



## Meet the District's newest team -- American River Watershed

By Jennifer L. Gonzalez

You may have noticed that there has been a lot of moving going on around the building lately. Many of these moves are the result of the newly collocated American River Watershed team. The 31-member team is located on the 10<sup>th</sup> floor and is made up of representatives from Project Management, Engineering, Contracting, Planning, Construction, and Public Affairs.

The team is expected to remain collocated for the next 5+ years and is already showing signs of success in the first few weeks. "We are getting issues resolved in days rather than weeks," said Creg Hucks, Senior Project Manager. "It's like getting a new chip upgrade on your computer. The team just works faster and better with less effort."

The American River Watershed project is a comprehensive flood damage reduction and ecosystem restoration project that consists of four main components: the American River Common Features, Folsom Dam Modifications, and the Folsom Dam Raise Project and associated Folsom Dam Bridge. The project is expected to do approximately \$850 million in improvements and enhancements to Sacramento's flood control system over the next 15 years. When completed, the project will increase Sacramento's flood protection to a one in 213 chance in any given year, which will more than double the current level of protection.



Archive File Photo

## Featured Project



Archive File Photo

### New Enlisted Barracks, Presidio of Monterey

**Contractor:** Brittan/Garcia Joint Venture

**Design Team:** Temple-Andersen-Moore LLP

**Corps team Members:** Steven Scholten, Tilden Brooks, Dan Brong, Karl Mei, Ralph Cameron and Hans Nettel

**Start – Completion Dates:** The design-build procurement was awarded September 2002 with a completion date in October 2004.

#### Project specifics:

The project consisted of the construction of a new, 23,100 square foot Unaccompanied Enlisted Barracks facility to house upwards of 88 junior noncommissioned officers and junior grade enlisted students undergoing language training.

The building was of the Benham Blair (VOLAR) design, capable of housing two students per room and have a self-contained gas-fired heating systems, mechanical room, mail room and fire protection (detection/alarm) system.

The site of the building was sensitive to existing trees ( many Monterey Pines were saved) and a series of retaining walls designed by the contractor which allowed construction on hilly terrain.

# Monterey FUDS cleanup moves quickly

By Dave Killam & Cindy S. Vincent

When Jerry Vincent assumed control of the environmental clean up of the former Monterey Naval Auxiliary Air Station in 2000, he was facing a myriad of problems. The Monterey community seemed to be in the dark, and the clean up was proceeding at a snail's pace, which the local media felt was evidence of a "cover up."

Vincent is the Program Manager for the Formerly Used Defense Sites (FUDS) Program for the Sacramento District. FUDS is a program which environmentally restores defense sites that were owned, leased or under the control of the Department of Defense (DOD) prior to October 1986.

Vincent's first step was to reassess the FUDS effort at Monterey.

"The clean up had been taking place for seven years," Vincent said. "Work had been done on a piecemeal basis. We

needed to get information out to the community and the media. We needed to convince them that we were serious and would follow through to a remedy."

Monterey Naval Auxiliary Air Station was commissioned in 1942 to support, operate and maintain aircraft, as well as train personnel during World War II. In 1949 the Navy terminated its lease of the base with the county. Subsequently, the Naval Postgraduate School leased a portion of the site until 1982, when it was turned over to the Monterey Peninsula Airport District.

In 1991, after the Airport District removed two 50,000 POL (petroleum, oils and lubricants) tanks and cleaned up the soil around and underneath where the tanks had been, the Corps of Engineers installed groundwater wells which produced data showing evidence of a below ground toxic POL plume at the

airport. Additional investigations uncovered evidence of a TCE (trichloroethylene – a solvent that was used to clean airplane parts) under the airport, which had spread to the surrounding community. There were also records of five former target ranges, a possible medical waste site and a former firefighting training area at the air station.

After Vincent assumed control of the project, his team launched a massive outreach effort aimed at the public and local media. public meetings were held to disseminate restoration updates and to gather community feedback and concerns on the project. In 2002, the team established a Community Relations Plan that addressed community fears. By using fact sheets, community surveys and media interviews, the team gradually turned negative publicity into positive press.

"We also worked hard to gain support from the airport staff and their board of directors," said Vincent. "We established a Technical Review Committee with members of the airport staff and representatives from the City of Monterey, Monterey County Health Department, the California Regional Water Quality Control Board and members of the community."

The work was divided up into four phases: preliminary assessment, site inspection, remedial investigation and the feasibility study. Long term monitoring will determine the effectiveness of the remedy. Investigation also revealed that the Airport District had removed two 50,000-gallon POL tanks and had cleaned up the soil around and underneath where the tanks had been. Sacramento District's team also investigated sites for the target ranges, the medical waste and firefighting



Photo by Cindy Vincent

Mike Denico and Paul Brizuela assemble parts for the underground piping installation at the Monterey Peninsula Airport Treatment system.

**Article continues on page 5.**

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## Vincent's team received award for work done

training, but found no evidence of contaminants.

Vincent's team conducted a human health risk assessment in the area to determine if pathways of contamination exposure existed. Three routes of exposure were discovered: inhalation of contaminated chemicals by office workers at the airport; ingestion of produce irrigated with contaminated groundwater from personal wells; and skin contact and ingestion of contamination by construction workers at the airport. The health risk for all concerned was found to be within the Environmental Protection Agency's standards of acceptable limits.

The team decided to take two different approaches to cleaning up the toxic plumes: For the plume that spread from the airport to nearby Casanova Oak Knoll Park, the team decided on treatment remedy of in situ chemical oxidation. Groundwater would be

extracted through granulated activated carbon and released into a tank.

Hydrogen peroxide would be injected into the water and would mix with naturally occurring iron compounds in the water to form hydroxyl radicals, which would break down the contaminants. The groundwater would be reinjected into the ground. Contaminants would then break down into carbon, water and other non-hazardous compounds.

For clean up of the toxic plume at the airport, POL-contaminated water is extracted from the POL plume and pumped into a treatment system.

Oxygen, potassium and nitrogen are then added to the water. The water is injected into the groundwater, up gradient of the POL plume, where the POL plume serves as food for oxygen, potassium and nitrogen microbes. The microbes then stimulate biodegradation within the TCE plume. Both the TCE and POL

contaminates break down in the groundwater. For the final stage, water is extracted and filtered through activated granulated carbon, mixed with peroxide and then re-injected into the groundwater table down gradient of the TCE plume to create a hydraulic wall to prevent further migration of the TCE plume.

Contractors provided a huge amount of work on this project. EM Assist was responsible for the engineering and operations of the treatment system. Tetra Tech has been responsible for the

system's construction and maintenance.

"Throughout this process, we have received excellent support from the community and from Congressman Sam Farr's office. Congressman Farr's office has maintained an active interest and championed our cause by securing additional funding for us so that the clean up could proceed more rapidly," said Vincent. "With all of us working together – the team, the community, Congressman Farr's office, the regulators – it's been a synergistic effort. It's allowed us to move as fast as funding would allow. We've probably cut at least a couple of years off the project."

Local residents are happy with the progress. Richard Rucello said, "At first, due to the slow pace of work, I didn't even know an investigation was in progress. But a lot of dedicated people from the city, the airport and the Corps, worked together and came up with an excellent result – we found out that there was no direct threat to public health. It just shows that we can't fix what's broken unless we all work together."

In less than a year, the system has extracted and treated over 13-million gallons of water at the airport and more than 1-million gallons of water at Casanova Oak Knoll Park. Readings for TCE and POL in monitoring wells have decreased dramatically.

After this effort and the expenditure of approximately \$17 million, the team expects to issue its decision for a remedy of choice in late 2005.

Recently, Jerry Vincent received a Water Quality Award from the California Regional Water Quality Control Board. The award is for "outstanding efforts to protect or improve water quality." The award citation reads, in part: "Jerry Vincent took a personal level of interest in the project... Jerry made the extra effort to work openly with community leaders in the assessment and clean up process. In two years, this process converted previous community detractors into project advocates."



Photo by Cindy Vincent

Denico and Brizuela complete the underground piping while Timothy Chapman checks the injection wells at the Casanova Oak Knoll Community Park treatment system.

# U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to the rescue

By David G. Killam

It is not unusual for construction projects by the Corps of Engineers or other agencies to encounter significant environmental challenges. It's the nature of the work. Projects are usually in and around waterways, which provide much of the habitat for threatened and endangered species. From snakes to fish to birds and even beetles there are a number of critters and species that flood management projects interact with. Even with the best intentions, sometimes impacts are unavoidable.

When this happens, construction can be stopped or delayed significantly, costs go up and critical public safety projects are postponed. Resource agencies like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NOAA Fisheries, State of California Fish and Game and others are involved to make sure the particular fish, bird or other creature is protected. In the past, construction agencies fumed from the sidelines about the delays to their project. Construction agency personnel and local communities complained about the resource agencies' lack of concern for the "human environment" and the resource agencies complained about the construction agencies' disregard for the preserving the natural environment and for not following the Endangered Species Act. This repeated blame game results in increased costs, serious delays and significantly impacts the ability to stick to timelines and deliver projects on schedule.

Fortunately, this scenario is beginning to change, as agencies are working together better, realizing that everyone has to appreciate the other perspective and that time and effort can be saved by designing projects differently up front.

"Today agencies like the Corps are changing their practices, incorporating less damaging methods into the projects up front and have gone to great lengths to bring in the expertise we need to make sure we can anticipate environmental impacts and avoid them wherever possible," said Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, Mark Charlton. "We realize that the resources agencies have a job to do and we also realize that we have not always been reasonable in our approach. We need to find less damaging ways to get our jobs done and we are doing that today. We have also tried to bring in more biologists and scientists on our staff to help us work smarter and make sure our projects avoid and appropriately mitigate impacts," Charlton added.

According to Frank Piccola, Chief of the Environmental Planning Section for the Corps in Sacramento, his office has hired additional biologists and experts that the Corps needed. "A few years ago, we decided to expand our staff by hiring



Photo by Joe Hall, Santa Cruz Redevelopment Agency

**Construction work at the Porta Dam located on the San Lorenzo River.**

biologists, scientists and people from other environmental disciplines to expand our capabilities in that area. We also decided to expand our expertise in areas previously we were weak in. We brought in people like Mike Dietl, a fisheries biologist, who understands the issues we get into on many of our projects. Mike has expertise in the various species of fish that are listed and threatened and how we can best minimize and avoid impacts. We also have Jean Vaughan, another fisheries biologist. Mitch Stewart is an ecologist and Bob Koenigs is a PHD ecologist. In addition, we have 13 biologists and wildlife biologists. It has been immensely helpful for us to have these people on our staff who understand those important issues and can help us work better with USFWS, NOAA and others," added Piccola.

The Corps and USFWS now have monthly coordination meetings, so that they can be aware of each other's challenges, and to ensure that everyone is still speaking the "same language." There are also quarterly meetings between the District leaders and the Field Supervisor from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Gaining additional expertise helps the Corps better design and respond to workload priorities that involve environmental restoration projects. "Environmental restoration is one of our expanding mission areas. Environmental restoration projects are a priority for the administration and the community. Additionally,

**Article continues on page 7.**

## Fish & Wildlife keeps the Corps on track

projects with environmental restoration get funded today, while others don't," said Charlton. So while the Corps' increase in biologists and restoration specialists has been driven by workload it is also helping to bridge several gaps with other agencies.

"Today we are trying to be much better at working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State Fish and Game and others because now we have people who speak their language and can help us better adapt our projects," said Piccola. Corps biologists work with designers upfront to help make designs more environmentally friendly and also to schedule construction work to minimize impacts on various species.

An unexpected plus is that many former Corps employees have gone to work for USFWS. "It helps that these people are in place with Fish and Wildlife," said Piccola. "With their experience in the Corps, it's much easier for Fish and Wildlife to understand our unique problems and priorities."

Having more biologists working for the Corps has also made solving problems easier when we do get into problems on our job sites. Witness the San Lorenzo Project: it started out as a simple flood-control project. It consisted of 900 feet of a stabilization bank, built at the San Lorenzo River in Santa Cruz to prevent erosion. But last May, the discovery of an endangered fish in the vicinity of the work stopped everything. In order to be able to work on the riverbank, the design required that a small "porta dam" be built in order to isolate the bank so that contractors could remove the water or "de-water" it. But contractors quickly discovered they had a problem: a fish called the Tidewater Goby.

Part of the mission was to deal with the steelhead trout that were native to the river – they had to be moved out of the water trapped by the dam and back into the river. There was a plan in place, but as soon as environmental experts Tom Taylor and Dr. Camm Swift from Entrix Environmental arrived on the scene, they spotted 2-3 inch fish swimming in the pool of water alongside the trout. Dr. Swift recognized them immediately. Endemic to the general area, previously no one had ever spotted them in the San Lorenzo River. Dr. Swift alerted the Corps and the contractor was instructed to cease work.

"The contractor, Granite Construction, was very responsive," said Jim Baker, Project Manager from the Corps, "They stopped construction immediately."

Next, Dr. Swift notified the USFWS.

"Even though there was an approved plan in place to move steelhead trout out of the area, it doesn't necessarily mean that the same procedure could be used to move the gobies," said Dr. Swift. "Different species react differently to situations. What worked for steelhead, may not work for the gobies. If the same procedure were used and the gobies died, the Corps would be in violation of the Endangered Species Act."

In the meantime, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had

been made aware of the fact that Granite Construction was sitting idle, waiting for approval to continue work. Any lengthy delays in the project would add to its cost. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's responsibility was to issue a biological opinion on how to deal with the gobies, taking into account a number of variables.

"The Fish and Wildlife Service has to determine whether an action jeopardizes the continued existence of a federally listed species," said Roger Root, a biologist with USFWS.

"Jeopardizing a species' existence means reducing the likelihood of its survival and recovery in the wild. We have to remember that these are endangered species – there aren't very many of them around, so we have to do everything possible to ensure their survival. If a federal action is likely to jeopardize a listed species, then the Service has to determine if there are any reasonable and prudent alternatives available that will not jeopardize the species in question. If the Service determines that a federal action is not likely to jeopardize a listed species' survival and recovery in the wild, as was the case with the San Lorenzo River Project, then the Service has to quantify any incidental 'take' associated with the proposed action. According to the Endangered Species Act, a take occurs when a threatened or endangered species is harassed, harmed, pursued, hunted, shot, wounded, killed, trapped, captured or collected. The Service defines harassment as an action that results in a significant disruption of the normal behavior patterns of the species, such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering. Throughout this process, we also communicated frequently with the National Marine Fisheries Service."

"Given the complexity of the problem and the fact that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has up to 135 days to issue a biological opinion, it's amazing that they came back to us in only one week," said Mike Dietl, fisheries biologist for the Corps. "Scott Clark, Matt Davis and I worked closely with David Pereksta and Roger Root of the USFWS. Their assistance was invaluable – they made things happen."

So, you may be wondering: "What happened to the fish?"

According to Dr. Swift: "We dragged what's called a 'seine net' through the pool of water several times until we got all of the fish. We got 45 steelheads and 15 gobies. Since the water in the San Lorenzo River is cold: normally 14 – 19 degrees centigrade – we had to store the fish in an ice chest until we were ready to move them to the river. No fish were lost."

After that, the project continued.

"Agencies are working better today than before," said Diane Noda, Field Supervisor with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. "No doubt there will be more challenging issues in our future to resolve but everybody is committed to finding solutions," she added. "In this situation the Corps was being proactive and willing to work with our staff, to protect the species. That's how it's supposed to work."

## Jr. Olympics showcase area's best

By Tyler M. Stalker



Colleen Thompson-Kuhn

Every four years, a showcase of athleticism and nationalism captivates the world. And 2004 is no different. Although the Olympics have reached their finale, we, here at The Prospector, still have that Olympic spirit. So, we would like to congratulate Colleen Thompson-Kuhn on her hard work that qualified her for the 2004 Sierra Nevada Long Course Junior Olympics Swim Meet at UC Davis.

Colleen is the 13-year-old daughter of Jim Kuhn, from the Internal Review section, here at the Sacramento District. She is currently attending Rolling Hills Middle School in El Dorado Hills and swims for the Sierra Marlins, who compete against teams from throughout Northern California.

Swimming against mostly 14-year-olds, but also some other 13-year-olds, Colleen represented herself and her team proudly in swimming the 100-meter breast stroke against some of the top swimmers in Northern California.

"It was difficult," Colleen says. "I got really tired at the end of the last lap, but I loved the location at UC Davis. It was a lot of fun."

Colleen, who has only been swimming for two-and-a-half years, swims in a number of events including freestyle, backstroke, breast stroke, the fly and the Individual Medley; but she only competed in the breaststroke for the Junior Olympics.

"I like the breast stroke because it's easier for me to swim," Colleen says. "But it's hard to keep the tempo."

Qualifying for the Jr. Olympics takes hard work.

"The practice can be hard, especially when we do the huge main sets, like the 30+, where you swim as much as you can in 30 minutes," Colleen says. "But it's worth it because you get to meet a lot of people."

Others see that the practice is paying off.

"I am very proud of Colleen. She always tries her best and she is able to meet new friends at swimming," Jim continues. "She is very dedicated and she has had some great coaches with the Sierra Marlins and they have helped her improve immensely," says Jim.

While currently her time is occupied with friends, class and homework, next summer Colleen hopes to be making a splash at the Junior Olympics again in 2005.

"I hope to be able to compete in the Junior Olympics every year," says Colleen.

## Dennis Potter talks about Iraq

By Gary J. Britter

Reading about the Corps' mission in Iraq is not the same as actually volunteering for a tour of duty. The weather was hot and humid; the hours were long, but rewarding.

Dennis Potter from Construction-Operations Division returned to the Sacramento District after serving in Baghdad, Iraq, from March 7, 2004, to July 17. Potter deployed to the Gulf Region Division, Central District United States Agency for International Development (USAID) where he served as the UPO Reports Manager.

Potter was deployed for 122 days and worked primarily in the Baghdad "Green Zone."

"I volunteered for several reasons," says Potter. "I thought the work would be a challenge to help improve the lives of the Iraqi people. I had never been to that part of the world before and the exposure to a different culture would be interesting."



Photo from Dennis Potter

Dennis Potter in the "Green Zone" in Iraq.

As part of the work assignments, I assisted in the repair of the Al Mat, Tikrit and Khazir bridges; repairs of the fiber optic system from Umm Qsar to Baghdad and the building of the railroad line from Umm to Basrah, says Potter.

"The people that I worked with were very good, both professionally and personally," says Potter. "They were all

willing to take on any assignment handed to them."

In the past year, over 1,200 schools have been repaired and are ready for students to attend this fall. Many military and civilian groups have independently adopted schools and have shipped school supplies over to Iraq, says Potter.

The Baghdad area for the first time in 20 years has an operational wastewater treatment plant and in the next few months that number will jump to three, says Potter. The plants were non-operational due to years of neglect. The rehabilitation of these plants will go far in preventing further pollution of the Tigris River and enhancing the quality of life for the Iraqis.

"Being out in the field on these assignments was fun, exciting and sometimes scary," says Potter. "It was also hot, dusty and intriguing. To best describe my time in Iraq, Potter says, noting a quote from Charles Dickens' A Tale of Two Cities, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times."

# Congratulations!! Award recipients



Jim Hall

## Resource Manager of the Year

James E. Hall received the award in recognition of outstanding achievements and savings of countless man-hours and dollars, through the development of a regional data mart for use throughout USACE, satisfying the requirement to establish regional databases to support the Regional Business Centers and USACE 2012. Jim was also instrumental in developing changes to the Corps of Engineers Financial Management System.

## Hard Hat of the Year

Robert J. Meyer, Monterey Project Office, for the DoD Center renovation at Presidio of Monterey. *No photograph available at time of press.*

## SPD-RBC Champions Award



Photos by Michael J. Nevins.

Col. Light presents a coin to Kathryn Comeau. At right, Col. Light presents coins to the rest of the team pictured (from left to right); Col. Light, Sandra Jaenicke, Karole Ward, Christine Swenson, Nicole Gauthier and Scott Clark.

A six-member Performance Measurement Team of Scott Clark, Kathryn Comeau, Nicole Gauthier, Sandra Jaenicke, Christine Swenson and Karole Ward were awarded the "SPD RBC Champions Award" for developing a balanced set of measurements to conceptually assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the corps business process. From June 2003 to July 2004, the assembled team evaluated, analyzed and prepared a proof-of-concept to measure the organization's health in four major categories: Mission, Financial, Relationships and Workforce.

## Brian Anderson returns home, praised for a job well done in Iraq



Brian Anderson

Brian Anderson, from Engineering Division, returned to the Sacramento District from Baghdad, Iraq, July 18 after performing superbly as a team member of the largest construction effort in the world.

Brian deployed to the Gulf Region Division, Central District Victory Area Office, Baghdad Iraq as a Project Engineer. Brian was integral to the success in many projects for Camp Victory. His most significant projects were the 11KV feeder line upgrade throughout the base and the construction of the state of the art 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division Headquarters. Brian inherited the \$5.7 Million 1<sup>st</sup> CAV HQ's project, and completed the project ahead of schedule and within budget. He then began to make plans for an addition to the facility by adding a \$500,000 Tactical Sensitive Compartmentalized Information Facility (TSCIF). His efforts were integral to ensuring this addition was started in a timely manner so that completion would be on time and to standard. Because of Brian's professionalism and proven performance, he was selected to manage the Al Faw Palace projects after the previous manager departed. Additionally, Brian worked on the Australian Forward Logistics Area and the communication lines throughout the base.

Also, during his entire deployment, Brian kept the mission in mind and did what the mission required. He is a team player, has a super attitude, and he will be missed in Iraq. He is one of our American Heroes and we are glad to say he is part of the Corps of Engineers.

**[Complete awards list on page 10.](#)**

## And the August 2004 award recipients are...

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Office:</u>	<u>Award:</u>
Kathleen E. Anderson	Construction-Operations Division	Quality Step Increase
Jo A. Asbell	Logistics Management Office	Performance Award
Mitchell J. Bage	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Michael R. Bain	Real Estate Division	On the spot Cash Award
Betty Barner	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Morgan J. Barnes	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Susan L. Bayless	Logistics Management Office	Performance Award
Edward D. Beltran	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Larry M. Bergmooser	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Deborah M. Biziewski	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Lynette A. Blanchard	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Nicole Bugarin	Programs and Project Management Division	On the spot Cash Award
William R. Cameron	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Luis M. Carrillo	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Ruth N. Chandler	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Patricia A. Christie	Contracting Division	On the spot Cash Award
Guillermo Cortes	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Gary C. Fong	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Katheleen J. Fuente	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Hector Manuel Galvan	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Cynthia Gaul	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Donald G. Hamilton	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Bil G. Hawkins	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Beatrice E. Haydis	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Kelly A. Heather	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Gary L. House	Real Estate Division	Performance Award
Pamela R. Hubbard	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Eileen R. Imamura	Construction-Operations Division	Quality Step Increase
Darwin W. Jackson	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Joanne E. Jackson	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Ester M. Jones	Real Estate Division	On the spot Cash Award
Mamie L. Jones	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Linda G. Lebo	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Peggy A. Lentz	Programs and Project Management Division	On the spot Cash Award
Joann McDowell	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Rene McGaugh	Planning Division	On the spot Cash Award
Diane McNeally	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Barbara J. Morgan	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Henri V. Mulder	Engineering Division	On the spot Cash Award
Josefina C. Patague	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Kenneth R. Pattermann	Engineering Division	On the spot Cash Award
Rebecca Reyes	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Constance M. Rinchak	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Constance M. Rinchak	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Willistine Sandridge-Jones	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Ronald A. Schunk	Contracting Division	On the spot Cash Award
Stephanie Rae Segerman	Equal Employment Opportunity Office	On the spot Cash Award
David C. Serafini	Engineering Division	On the spot Cash Award
Joy J. Sharbutt	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Sharon Ann Sprayberry	Construction-Operations Division	Performance Award
Stephen E. Stoner	Engineering Division	On the spot Cash Award
Dwight J. Tenette	Logistics Management Office	Performance Award
Ella L. Thurston	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Daniel P. Tibbitts	Engineering Division	On the spot Cash Award
Daniel Valenzuela	Logistics Management Office	Performance Award
Thien D. Vu	Construction-Operations Division	On the spot Cash Award
Paul Williams	Logistics Management Office	Performance Award

# Update from Iraq

From Steve Stockton, Gulf Region Division

Family, Friends and Colleagues,

Greetings! It has been over a month since I last sent an update. Seems like everyday is Groundhog Day (as in the movie), but work is interesting and time really flies. If you like change you will like Iraq because change is constant, except for the weather which is generally sunny and warm.

## During the last month:

- Sovereignty was transferred to the new Interim Iraqi Government on 28 June, two days early. The Interim Iraqi Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister dropped by to visit our offices looking for an interim residence. I served as their real estate agent and made the sale. Unfortunately, I will not be collecting the 6% sales commission.
- Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) dissolved and AMB Paul Bremer left the country.
- The US Embassy has been established and AMB Negroponte is now Chief of Mission (COM) in Iraq.
- CJTF-7 (Combined Joint Task Force-7, LTG Sanchez) morphed into MNFI (Multi-National Force-Iraq, GEN Casey).
- Held four GRD Change of Command Ceremonies
  - o GRD MG Johnson to BG Bostick
  - o GRN COL Hobernicht to COL Ubbelohde
  - o GRC COL Williams to COL Thompson
  - o GRS COL Koning to COL Gerber
- Approximately 20% of the staff turned over.

I have included an article at the end that fairly accurately describes life in the International Zone (The zone formerly known as “Green”).

I was again successful in escaping the confines of the International Zone to visit a construction site at a powerplant near Nasiriyah and to attend the Change of Command ceremony at the Southern District in Basrah.

Take care and stay safe.

## Green Zone's future uncertain

By Evan Osnos, Tribune foreign correspondent

**BAGHDAD (July 12, 2004)**

— The non-alcoholic beer flows freely on this sweltering night at the Green Zone Restaurant and Coffee Shop.

The gas-station-turned-diner is loud and full: brawny security consultants with sidearms, Special Forces pedigrees and no last names; freshly arrived U.S. Embassy staffers, pinked by the sun, squawking into balky cell phones; and a jumble of others who round out life in the Green Zone, the singular slice of America that thrives in the heart of officially sovereign Iraq. But 14 months after the U.S.-led coalition walled off more than 3 square miles of the Iraqi capital and began creating an oasis that has come to be known as the Emerald City—complete with jogging routes, English pubs and a Hee Haw Country and Western Night every week—the transfer of authority to an interim Iraqi government last month has left the Green Zone's future in limbo.

The zone of U.S. and allied territory, which is centered on one of Saddam Hussein's former palaces, is trapped between the political need to hand prized land back to Iraqis and the practical demand for a secure refuge in a still-violent capital.

Rockets and mortars still strike the area several times a week, often around breakfast time. At bus stops, checkpoints and anywhere else residents tend to linger, concrete shelters are nearby to provide refuge during a barrage. Shrinking the target for those attacks is one benefit military commanders cite in

reducing the size of coalition-held territory.

Though no date has been set, the U.S. military is considering a plan that would hand up to 60 percent of the Green Zone to Iraqi control.

That leaves many of those who work or live inside the blast walls and concertina wire wondering how much of its U.S. and European flavor will—or should—survive.

“We are very keen to do whatever we can to send the message that things are changing for real,” said a Western diplomat who asked not to be identified.

The details of the zone today or in the future are sensitive to Iraqi and foreign officials—the U.S. Embassy declined a request for an escorted tour—who are intent on emphasizing that the political occupation is over, even as thousands of U.S. and allied staffers support the fledgling Iraqi government.

The Green Zone is a world unto itself. To the men and women who live inside, it is both fortress and prison—shielding them from a nation painfully unlike what war planners envisioned, yet distancing them from the very population they came to help.

The broad swath of real estate slices downtown Baghdad and stretches west across the city from the marshy banks of the Tigris River, encompassing residential neighborhoods, government buildings and the series of monuments that comprise the Iraqi equivalent of the National Mall. At its peak, the Green Zone held about 3,000 civilian staff and untold numbers of soldiers. There are 12,000 to 20,000 Iraqis who also live within the boundaries.

[Article continues on page 12.](#)

## U.S. to hand over some of “Green Zone” to Iraqis

### Razor wire walls

The zone is surrounded by 14-foot concrete slabs and coils of razor wire. U.S. and Iraqi troops run six checkpoints around the edges, searching cars for bombs, checking IDs and questioning pedestrians.

During much of the past year, the U.S.-led occupation controlled Iraq from the blue-domed expanse of Hussein’s former Republican Palace, a symbol of unrivaled dominance that was not lost on Iraqis or the Americans. But on June 28, that occupation system officially expired and the nations that once made up the Coalition Provisional Authority have splintered—on paper, at least—into individual embassies.

But finding the physical space to hold major new embassies is not as simple as the pen stroke that created them. Britain has taken pains to emphasize the end of its role in the defunct Coalition Provisional Authority by accelerating the effort to move the 100-member British staff into a new embassy even before renovations on that building are complete. Heralded by bagpipes, new British Ambassador Edward Chaplin raised the Union Jack last week on the site of an old school once run by Hussein’s Baath Party, selected after six months of searches and construction.

U.S. Ambassador John Negroponte has raised the flag on a temporary site within the zone to serve as the first U.S. Embassy here in 13 years. As in so much of Iraq these days, security is paramount. Francis Ricciardone, the U.S. diplomat who is overseeing the transition to the new embassy, estimates that it will cost \$1 billion to run the U.S. mission in the coming fiscal year, with the largest share going to logistics and security. The new embassy has 51 armored cars and 90 on order, he told the House

Armed Services Committee last month. For now, the temporary embassy will hold 40 or 50 top staff members while about 1,700 other members of the embassy operation will remain in Hussein’s Republican Palace, despite Iraqi requests to return the palace.

### Heavily guarded checkpoint

For now, life in the Green Zone continues in the tense balance between security and a seemingly imposed sense of normalcy. The busiest route into the Green Zone is a gate beside the Baghdad Convention Center, where Iraqis go to apply for jobs or seek information on detainees in U.S. custody.

The entrance is a series of checkpoints, linked by a snaking path of concrete slabs, snipers’ towers and heavy canvas bomb barriers filled with dirt.

When the zone cafeterias run by U.S. military contractors get monotonous, diners seek a range of rough-and-ready restaurants, such as the Pizza Inn, the Alone Star Cafe or one of two neighboring eateries known as Chinese Restaurant in Front and Chinese Restaurant in Back. Air-conditioned shuttle buses run by contractor KBR cruise the streets. British-trained Nepalese Gurkhas, wearing khaki safari gear, stand at the door of many buildings, checking IDs yet again.

Most foreign residents of the Green Zone live in sprawling parks of simple white trailers. Bechtel, KBR and other U.S. corporations involved in reconstruction have their own enclosed compounds within the zone, adding a thin but cherished measure of exclusivity. Few people can confidently say how the future of the Green Zone will look, and who will fall inside and outside its lines. The uncertainty carries the greatest stakes, perhaps, for people such as Isaac Ho, manager of the Chinese Restaurant in Front, who emigrated from China’s Guangdong province to build the simple eatery on a former trash lot.

### Restaurant owner’s dream

“Everything is changing so fast, nobody has told us what will happen,” Ho said. “We have spent \$600,000 already. . . . If they let us stay, then we will make the most modern and state-of-the-art Chinese restaurant.”

Whether Ho’s plot ends up in U.S. or Iraqi hands hinges on where a crucial line is drawn.

According to a military plan that has been approved by several top commanders, the U.S. and its allies would draw a new barricaded line within the Green Zone and transfer control of its outer area to Iraqi forces. Iraqi leaders can then decide what to do about the zone’s walls, said Army Col. Mike Murray, architect of the plan and commander of the 1st Cavalry Division’s 3rd Brigade Combat Team, which controls the zone. The plan would give Iraqis responsibility over symbolic sites such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Crossed Sabers monument, a pair of towering archways built in the shape of Hussein’s forearms clutching angled swords.

**Editor’s Note:** *This article was first published by the Chicago Tribune on July 12, 2004. The Sacramento District has simply provided the article for its readers. Any views are not necessarily those of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or of the Sacramento District.*

**For more information on the Gulf Region Division, visit:**  
[www.grd.usace.army.mil](http://www.grd.usace.army.mil)

*Can I help you?*

Ideas from throughout the Sacramento District to better serve its customers.

With this issue of the Prospector, the Editor inaugurates a new column focused on customer service. The intent of this column is to share tips and techniques from throughout the District on how people are delivering better service to our partners, customers, and stakeholders. This first article is from the Executive Office.

The Executive Office recently committed to a simple act that we think improves communication and service to our customers. As you may know, we get many letters on a range of issues from our customers and partners every day. If you have ever written a letter to a large bureaucracy, you probably wondered if the letter was received, let alone acted upon. To address this situation, the Executive Office now acknowledges every letter we receive within 24 hours. Simply, we call the letter writer and let them know we received the letter and that we are forwarding it to the right office (if it is not addressed specifically to the District Commander for action) for attention. This extra phone call adds nothing to our costs, takes only seconds, and yet we have had several customers and partners remark “Wow! Thanks a lot!” as we undertake this simple initiative. We don’t get all letters that flow into the District, and so we’d like to challenge all District support staff to adopt the same standard—a phone call within 24 hours acknowledging the receipt of letters. Join us in the simple customer service initiative!

- Col. Light

**The Way Ahead**

*“Keeping our commitments means doing what we said we would do. When we do this, our customers will come back. And when they do, they will often bring more work.”*



Col. Ronald Light

In last month’s column, I wrote that project delivery is the Sacramento Engineer District’s core function, or what some would call our *main thing*. I’d like to share with you some of my thoughts on project delivery, and how well the *commitments we make* in the context of project delivery either doom the District, or ensure its longevity.

Most of you probably understand that the Sacramento Engineer District, like all Corps of Engineer Districts, is *project funded*. In simple terms this means that our customers, partners, and stakeholders pay us to deliver projects and services to them. For every project or service we deliver, we add what amounts to a service charge. This service charge pays for nearly everything in the District, from our salaries, training, and travel, to our electricity, building rents, and right down to every paper clip and pencil. When you get your paycheck, when you use your computer, when you attend a training course, remember that it’s customer money. Why does this matter to you?

The reason it matters is that today, more than ever before, our customers and partners can choose who they want to deliver their projects and services. Some choose to go to our counterparts in the US Navy. Some choose to use the General Services Administration. Some create their own structure “in-house” and deliver projects and services for themselves.

When our customers and partners go elsewhere for their engineering, real estate, environmental, or you-fill-in-the-blank requirements, there are fewer dollars coming into the Sacramento Engineer District. And, simply put—and why all of this matters to everyone in SPK—

*customers equals work equals project funds equals jobs*. You don’t need to be a mathematician to quickly see that if the customers stop choosing the Sacramento Engineer District that the District will have to reduce the number of people on board. We probably all want to avoid that situation; we probably all want to keep the District viable.

The good news is that each of us plays a role in maintaining a financially healthy District. One of the most fundamental ways each of us can affect the longevity of the District is by *keeping our commitments*. This means keeping our commitments to our customers, stakeholders, and partners, but it also means keeping our commitments to ourselves and to each other. It means fulfilling agreements in project management plans. It means fulfilling agreements in our own personal individual development plans. It means keeping schedules, meeting design review timeframes, and being on time for simple things like meetings. Said another way, keeping our commitments means *doing what we said we would do*. When we do this, our customers will come back. And when they do, they will often bring more work.

I suspect most of us want to be a part of a good organization. We want to have pride in what we do, and who we do it for. Part of my vision for the Sacramento Engineer District is that together we make it the best place for the best people to work. Keeping our commitments—doing what we say we will do—is a fundamental ingredient towards that goal. I pledge to you that I will strive to keep my commitments; please join me in striving to keep yours.

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### **We're on the Web!**

See us at:  
[www.spk.usace.army.mil](http://www.spk.usace.army.mil)

## **Recent Retirements**

**Gary Britter** -- Public Affairs Office  
**Ralph Cameron** -- Construction-Operations Div.  
**Bob Childs** -- Planning Division  
**Bea Haydis** -- Construction-Operations Division  
**Nolan Jackson** -- Logistics Management Office  
**John McCain** -- Construction-Operations Division  
**Jeanne LeCureux** -- Contracting Division  
**Chris Payne** --Engineering Division

## **New Chief in IMO**

Michelle Kuhl has been announced as the new Chief of the Information Requirements and Planning Branch.

## **John Gilbert selected as Maintenance Supervisor**

John Gilbert has been selected as the new Maintenance Supervisor at Bryte Yard Maintenance Facility.

## **Labor Day fun in the sun**



*Photo from Dwayne Urquhart.*

Park Ranger Rick Briggs and a group of kids show off their coupons for free ice cream for wearing their life jacket at Success Lake. The Lake had a good turnout for the holiday weekend.

[Click here: Back to "Inside this issue."](#)

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