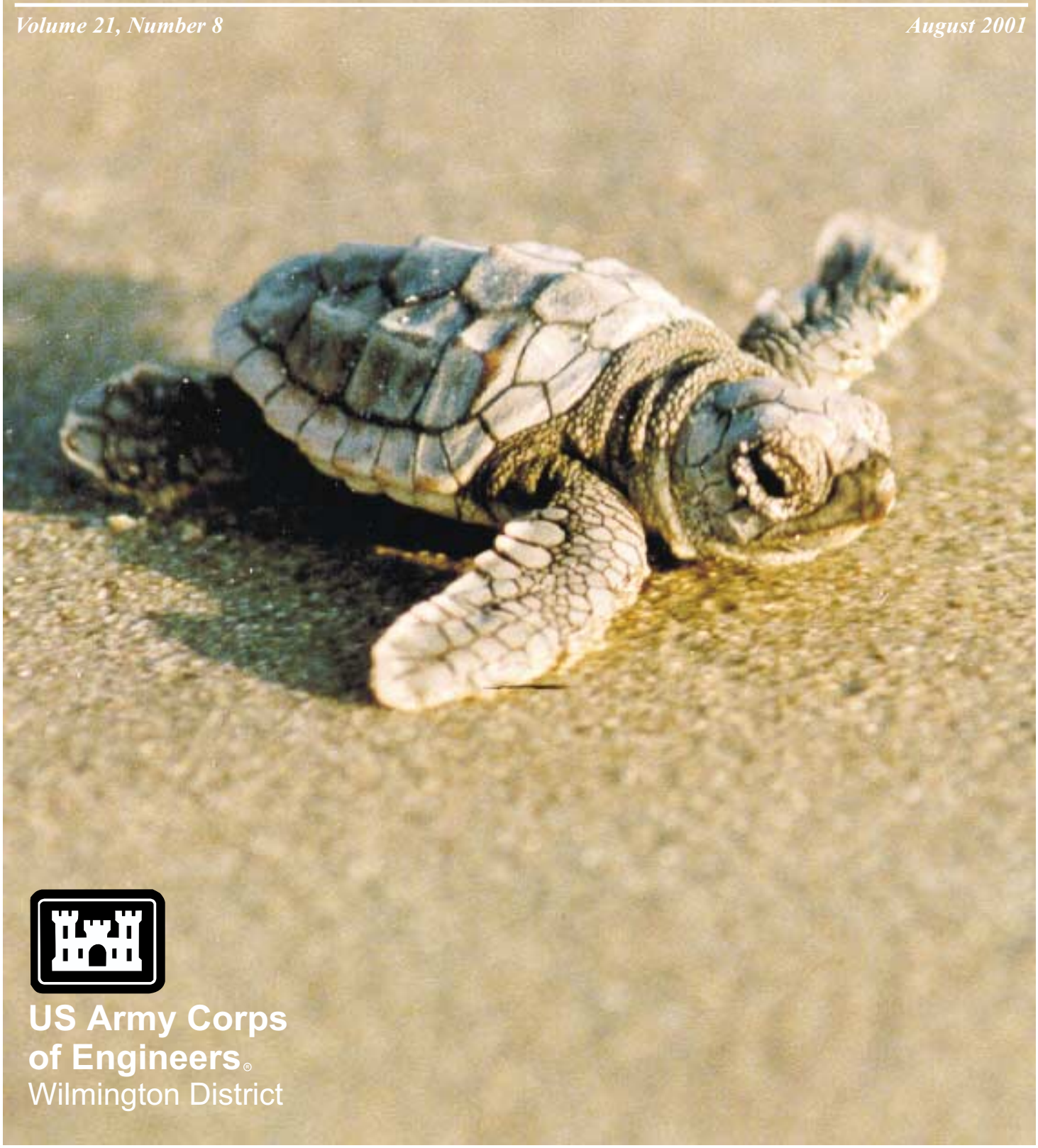
Wilmington DISTRICT NEWS

Volume 21, Number 8 *August 2001*



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Wilmington District

Wilmington DISTRICT NEWS

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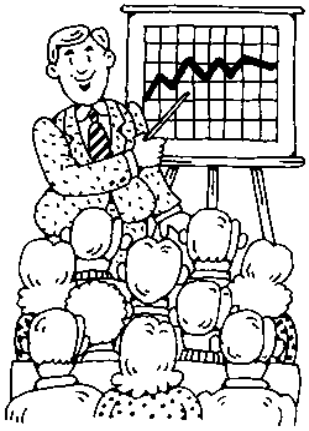
Speaking Out



Wayne Bissette, Glen McIntosh, and Eugene Tickner attended the Brunswick Beaches Consortium Meeting on July 19. The event was held at Sunset Beach, NC. The group made a presentation on the status of the Brunswick Beach Renourishment Projects.

Paula Carper along with Park Rangers from WK Scott (Crystal Dillard, Student Co-Op Wildlife Biologist; Julie Mullins, Student Co-Op Interpretive Ranger; and Jory Triplett Field Office Assistant) staffed the Corps Water Safety Exhibit at the Heritage Festival in Wilkesboro on July 28.

Bob Sattin, Chief of Navigation Branch, was guest speaker at the Cape Fear Waterways Management council Meeting. He provided information on all of the current and fiscal year 2002 proposed dredging projects.

The Public Affairs Office has launched its new web site. It is located under "News and Information" on the District home page.
This new site has an abundance of information including:

- The current issue of the Newsletter (In Color)
- An archive of Newsletters dating back to April 2000 (In Color)
- Press Releases dating back to February 1999
- A new and improved Speaker's Bureau Page
- A Community Page highlighting the District's involvement in the Community (including Corps Day 2001 photo's)

We welcome your feedback and ideas for improving the site.

Cover Photo by Jane Reece, Caswell Beach Sea Turtle Coordinator

Security Advisory

ITEM 1: Effective immediately, TEAM members who work beyond normal duty hours, on weekends or on holidays should park their vehicles in front of the building in a well-lit area. Before leaving the building, scan the parking area for strangers. Call 911 if an unsafe situation exists. Wait for the police to arrive before going out to your vehicle.

ITEM 2: Exercise extreme caution when driving on Darlington Avenue. Congested pedestrian and vehicle traffic is expected due to the opening of the new Learning Center on August 23rd. Also, there will be two public school bus stops near the Corps property entrance. Please obey the speed limit of 25 mph.

ITEM 3: When exiting the district motor pool, please wait for the gate to close completely before driving away. This will discourage intruders from sneaking into the motor pool.

ITEM 4: When returning a government vehicle to the motor pool, lock the doors after exiting. A recent inspection found four vehicles left unlocked. Future violations will be reported to supervisors and the district commander. Also, equipment and other items should be removed from government vehicles nightly or stored in locked containers out of sight.

ITEM 5: The Wilmington District has upgraded its security camera system to allow 24-hour taped surveillance of Corps property by means of 17 cameras located throughout the property. A new radio system allows immediate contact will law enforcement officers.

Chief of Security and Law Enforcement, Billy Lee, explains the improved survey capacity of the Corps' new closed current TV system (CCTVs) to Teagle Jacobs, former security co-op.

Why the Castle?

By Christine Bruske

We see it every work day the red and white Castle, the symbol of the Corps of Engineers. It's pinned to our Commander's uniform, stamped on our publications and displayed on our website. Recently, several TEAM members have asked about the origin and historical significance of the Corps' distinctive emblem. Simply put, they ask "why the castle?"

Definitive evidence of the original castle design and its adoption was destroyed in a fire in 1838. However, a study of historic maps and other records seems to indicate the castle insignia evolved from the Corps' oldest and most time-honored symbol, the Essayons Button.

The Essayons Button is the Corps' oldest and most time-honored insignia.

The button design was likely conceived or commissioned by Col. Jonathan Williams, grandnephew of Benjamin Franklin, sometime after the establishment of the Corps at West Point in 1802. Williams was appointed the first Chief Engineer of the Corps and the first Superintendent of the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Images on the button commemorate the very important work conducted by Col. Williams to fortify the New York Harbor and the harbors of other vital Atlantic Coast cities. The work began in 1807 and was completed with great speed to protect the United States against invasion by foreign powers engaged in the Napoleonic War in Europe and during our own War of 1812 with Britain.

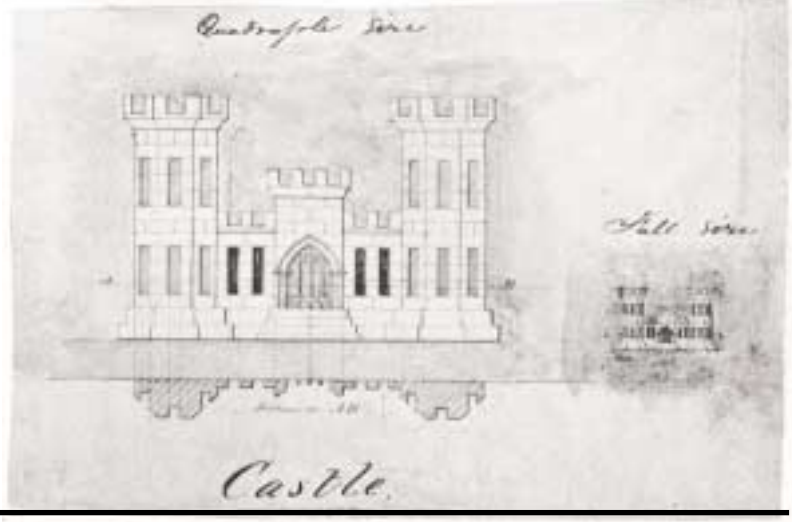
It is interesting to note that the button design included an eagle holding in its beak a banner displaying the word "Essayons." As legend goes, when Williams and other Corps leaders were presented with engineering challenges some pronounced "impossible to accomplish," the response was "Essayons" a French word meaning " we will try."

Many young West Point graduates were called upon to assist their Chief in the planning, construction and mapping of these fortifying or "fort" structures. The forts, fully armed and staffed, often resembled castles. More than a dozen forts remain today as national monuments and many have been renamed as castles.

West Point Cadets were part of the Corps of Engineers from the date of the Academy's establishment in 1802 until after the Civil War in 1866, when the Academy came under the control of the Army-at-large. West Point Cadets were the first to wear the turreted castle as part of a new uniform design approved in 1839. Then in 1840, the same castle design was incorporated into new uniforms for the Corps of Engineers.

More than 80 years later, in 1921, the turreted castle was made the official symbol of the Army Corps of Engineers. Scarlet and white were designated the official colors. Scarlet symbolizes the Corps' shared heritage with the Artillery. White, which was the original color of the Infantry, symbolizes the Corps secondary mission.

Today, the turreted castle design is a registered trademark for the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.△



This is the original pattern design sent to "John Smith Fraser Clothing Warehouse" in 1840 for use on the Corps of Engineers uniform.

MacArthur's Castles

In the spring of 1903, Douglas MacArthur graduated at the top of his class from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers and his father, General Arthur MacArthur, presented him a pair of gold castle insignia pins for his uniform.

Just before World War I, Douglas MacArthur transferred to the Infantry and became the youngest division commander in France. MacArthur went on to a distinguished military career serving as Superintendent at West Point, Army Chief of Staff, and Commander-in Chief of Far East and United Nations Commands during the Korean War.

In 1944, towards the end of the Korean War, General Leif Sverdrup was appointed Acting Chief Engineer on General MacArthur's staff. The following year, MacArthur presented Sverdrup with the Distinguished Service Cross and also gave him a very special gift - the castle insignia given to MacArthur by his father upon his graduation from West Point.

MacArthur said the castles meant a lot to him, but they deserved to be worn by a "real engineer" with pride and distinction. MacArthur asked Sverdrup to promise one thing - that the castles would never end up "in a museum somewhere." MacArthur retired from the Army in 1951.

Several years later in 1975, General Sverdrup told the story of MacArthur's castles to then Chief of Engineers, General C.W. (Bill) Gribble, Jr. After recounting the story, Sverdrup pulled the castles from his pocket and said to Gribble, "General, these castles are now yours. They have great significance. Wear them proudly but promise me, as I did General MacArthur, that they won't end up in a museum."

General Gribble made an immediate pledge to pass on MacArthur's castles to his successor, beginning a tradition that is honored to this day. Each successive Chief of Engineers has worn MacArthur's castles, as MacArthur had hoped, with pride and distiction.

General Flowers was wearing MacArthur's castles during his visit to the Wilmington District in March.

Lieutenants get a taste of USACE

By Christine Bruske

Junior Engineer Corps Officers are leaving the Army at an alarming rate. As a result, the Corps is filling less than 15 percent of its authorized Junior Officer slots. The Wilmington District has two open slots for Captains, neither of which has been filled in more than five years. Our Deputy Commander, Major George Shepard, has pioneered a program aimed at retaining Junior Officers by giving newly commissioned West Point graduates early exposure to the important engineering work done by the Corps.

Left to right: LT Dana Savage, LT Christian Dietz, LT Juliza Ramirez, LT John Barnwell. LT Kelly Green.

"Officers who chose the Engineer Corps spend their first five years working as soldiers not engineers," said Shepard. "They're in field units. They're placing minefields and blowing things up." Officers who want to work as engineers are often enticed by civilian job opportunities. Many end up leaving the military when their service obligation is complete.

West Point graduation ceremonies are held in June, but second lieutenants don't start their Engineer Officer Basic Course (EOBC) until mid-September. This three-and-a-half-month gap between assignments ends up being a waiting period with new lieutenants doing odd jobs like filing, answering phones or cleaning supply rooms.

"I thought it would be great if these new officers could spend their summer working here in the District," said Shepard. "It would give them a chance for some hands-on engineering experience before they head out to their field assignments. Maybe they'll like what they do here and decide to stay with the Corps."

"I've only been here two weeks and I've already learned so much," said Lieutenant Juliza Ramirez. Ramirez is one of five who will spend part of their summer here in the Wilmington District. "We studied all about the military aspects of the Corps, so it is great to get some exposure to civil works," she said.

The West Point curriculum strongly emphasizes Engineering Science. All cadets, regardless of their majors, must take and pass 15 semester hours of engineering, math and science in order to graduate.

"I didn't really know what to expect when I came here," said Lieutenant John Barnwell. "But, it's really shown me how the whole engineering process works from planning to completion. It let's you know that you're not alone in trying to solve problems or build projects. You see how the Corps is a resource with a wealth of professionals. Everyone's trying to set you up for success."

Ramirez and Barnwell have been assisting Corps Economist Bob Finch by collecting mapping data for the Bogue Banks Feasibility Study. "The lieutenants have done some impressive work," said Finch. "With their help, the study is moving along quickly and saving about 40% over what contractors would have charged to do the work.

"This has been a very positive experience," said Ramirez. "Residents have been very nice. They let us go onto their property and take our measurements with no problem. Some of them even pull out their blue prints for us. They seem to value what the Corps is doing."

Lieutenants Dana Savage, Kelly Green and Christian Dietz will continue the data collection after Ramirez and Barnwell depart to attend their basic officers course. Savage, Green and Dietz will work in the District until September.

Major Shepard launched the West Point program in January after cadets selected their branch of service. SAD Commander Major General Anderson expanded the program to provide opportunities in districts throughout the South Atlantic Division. Twenty-four of the 100 cadets who chose the Corps of Engineers Branch volunteered to participate in the program.

Lieutenant Barnwell hopes next year more cadets will take advantage of the program. "I think there would be more participation if someone would visit West Point and give Cadets a briefing about the program. Then they would understand what a great opportunity it is."

If the Corps continues to lose engineers and is unable to fill Junior Officer slots, future District Engineers may take command without having any USACE experience.△

Lieutenants Ramirez and Barnwell measure and record first-floor elevations of a house on Bogue Banks.

Endangered Flower

By Carmen Barnes, Forestry Student Trainee, Falls and Jordan Lakes

The smooth coneflower grows in two protected sites at Falls Lake.

The smooth coneflower, Echinacea laevigata, is a very special flower. It is included on both the federal and North Carolina endangered species lists, and is being cultivated in two protected sites at Falls Lake. The purple coneflower, a similar-looking cousin of the smooth coneflower, is a popular choice of local gardeners and can be easily mistaken for the endangered variety.

The smooth coneflower is a perennial herb--delicate in appearance with a purple center and deep pink, pale pink or white drooping ray petals. Once abundant along roadsides, in meadows and in open woodlands, the smooth coneflower is now a rare find. Its natural "prairie-like" habitat is quickly disappearing as commercial and residential development claims more land. The smooth coneflower is also prized and picked for its beauty and suspected medicinal properties.

Woody vegetation and tall brush must be kept at bay to maintain the protected areas at Falls Lake. Smooth coneflowers thrive in full and direct sunlight. Many years ago, natural fires and larger herbivores created open ground areas perfect for smooth coneflowers.

Today, Wilmington District TEAM members work hard to simulate natural ground clearing in an effort to boost the smooth coneflower's survival rate. Armed with loppers, brush axes, weed eaters, safety glasses and sunscreen, Forester Carol Banaitis, Conservation Biologist Michael Hosey and Forestry Student Carmen Barnes set out to conquer the site's encroaching vegetation.

After a full day of physically demanding work, rapidly growing sweetgum trees, yellow- poplars, the dreaded poison ivy, and other plants that compete for the smooth coneflower's habitat, were eliminated.

In the future, the sites will placed on a regular burning schedule, making maintenance of the smooth coneflower habitat much more manageable. Thanks to the diligent efforts of our dedicated TEAM members, an endangered species survived and will grow another year.△

Combat Training at Jordan Lake

By Christine Bruske

Pararescueman jump from a C-130 and parachute to Jordan Lake. △

The 24th Special Tactics Squadron converged on Jordan Lake for an important nighttime training exercise. Activities began just after dark with Air Force Pararescuemen, known as PJs, jumping from a C-130 and parachuting to the water. Zodiacs, which are inflatable boats, were also dropped to the lake by parachute. Combat Controllers, who serve as air traffic controllers, called in helicopter *Medevacs* and directed them through the darkness to recover "victims."

Air Force PJs must develop and maintain the skills necessary to go into any environment to recover crashed aircraft and rescue survivors. Jordan Lake is 65 feet deep in areas near the dam and provides the perfect training zone to practice water crash rescues.

"This is a great partnership between the Corps and our military colleagues at Pope Air Force Base," said Park Manager Ralph Duckson, who coordinated details of the training exercise. "We pre-approved the drop zone and arranged for some extra security to keep the public and the airmen safe. It all worked together well and it's a great benefit to our national security."

The training exercise was one of several exercises that will be conducted by various Air Force Special Tactics Squadrons at Jordan Lake.

Once in the water, pararescuemen locate and recovery "survivors" and equipment. △

Combat controllers call in Helicopter Medeavacs that lift "survivors" to safety. △

Saving Sea Turtles

By Christine Bruske

Congressman Mike McIntyre and Oak Island Mayor Joan Altman at the dedication ceremony for the Sea Turtle Habitat Restoration Project.

It was a warm summer night. The phone at the Oak Island police station was ringing again. It seems another 400-pound sea turtle had wandered into the street in search of a place to lay her eggs.

Police and volunteers mobilized quickly, as they had done so many times before, intent on locating the turtle and redirecting the vulnerable creature back into the sea. This time, they were too late. The loggerhead turtle was hit and killed by oncoming traffic. The 100 to 160 eggs she was carrying were lost. Also lost were hundreds, maybe thousands, of eggs she could have laid in the future.

This sad story is true. It happened nine years ago and it ignited a passionate crusade by the citizens of Oak Island to rebuild a natural sea turtle nesting habitat along their shore. Mayor Joan Altman came to the Wilmington District Corps of Engineers for ideas and answers. After many years of study, coordination with federal and state agencies, planning and finally construction, the Sea Turtle Habitat Restoration Project was complete in May 2001 - just in time for the nesting season, which extends through November. Turtles are already laying their eggs and the project's first hatchlings have made their way to the sea.

Instincts and memory compel sea turtles to return to their birth beaches to lay their own eggs, but chronic erosion and coastal storms swallowed up Oak Island beaches and then the dunes. With no sand in sight, sea turtles were laying eggs in crevices under houses and in gravel driveways. At least 38 sea turtles have wondered onto busy streets in search of a suitable nesting site. Diligent "turtle volunteers" have saved all but two from being hit and killed.

"Sea turtles are a part of life here on Oak Island," said Mayor Altman. "Restoring the turtle habitat is restoring our way of life."

The citizens of Oak Island paid $1.4 million towards the sea turtle project. The state of North Carolina contributed $4.3 million to go along with $5 million in federal funds. The one-time beach building project has an estimated life span of 10 to 15 years and will not require additional sand.

The 1973 Endangered Species Act protects a variety of sea turtles. Loggerheads and green sea turtles are most common to the Oak Island area with a rare visit by the Kemp's ridley turtle.

"Sea turtles don't mate until they're 30 years old. They lay three to five nests in a year, but they only nest every three years," said Tina Pritchard, Oak Island's Sea Turtle Coordinator. "It's hard to survive in the ocean. That's why every turtle and every egg is so important."

Pritchard explained that sea turtles can live about 100 years and female turtles that survive can lay as many as 100,000 eggs in a lifetime. Eggs and hatchlings have many predators, however. Foxes, raccoons, feral cats, ghost crabs, birds, blue fish and even humans all take their toll on turtle survival.

"This project is the first of its kind," said Corps Biologist Trudy Wilder. "But, the word is spreading. I've gotten calls from the State Port Authority in Volusia County, Florida. They want to do a similar project."

"The whole district TEAM worked hard to make this project a success," said District Engineer and Project Manager Doug Greene. "We had a lot of help from the town and from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. It was a good collaborative effort."

Skeptics of the Sea Turtle Habitat Restoration Project speculated that turtles would reject newly placed sand as a suitable nesting site. The project clearly shows that turtles do use newly placed beach quality sand for nesting.

The Town of Oak Island is collecting data on the 2001 nesting season and will continue to collect data throughout the life of the project. The data will be compiled into annual

reports and submitted to the Corps of Engineers and the North Carolina Wildlife Commission, satisfying one of the many requirements for obtaining a permit to build the turtle habitat.

"The sea turtle project shows that people and turtles can live together successfully," said Mayor Altman. "It's been a long time coming, but I believe the effort was worth while for people and for turtles."△

△ ***This adult female loggerhead turtle returns to the sea after digging out a nest approximately 2 ft. Deep and leaving 100-160 eggs.*** ▷

Top Photo by Jean Beasley

△ ***Tracks in the beach sand left by turtle hatchlings making their way to the sea.*** ▷▷

Photos by Jane Reece

Flood-fighting authority underpins Emergency program

By Penny Schmitt

"People think of hurricane response when they think of Wilmington District's Emergency Management mission," says Ron Stirrat, the Districts Director of Emergency Management. "But our federal flood-fighting authority under Public Law 84-99 is really the daily bread of Emergency Managers Corps wide. It's what allows us to work every day, to jump into the fight immediately, and transition to national disaster support effectively."

Public Law 84-99 covers Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies. The law funds and enables the Corps to

- *Prepare for all types of hazards.*
- *Conduct emergency operations.*
- *Plan advance measures.*
- *Rehabilitate flood control works.*
- *Provide emergency water supply.*
- *Mitigate hazards.*

"This law is the reason that we have a functioning Emergency Management program ready to activate on a moment's notice," Stirrat explained. "As the recent severe flooding in West Virginia demonstrates, serious problems can come up in a small region and call for an immediate response. Under the law, we can act right away."

When bad weather strikes, the Corps can bring federally funded help to the area rapidly. The District Engineer examines the situation and declares an emergency when a river reaches or exceeds flood stage, local resources are fully occupied in the fight, and the state needs help to complete the response.

The law is also a critical bridge to national disaster assistance under the Stafford Act when major damage occurs. "Until the President Declares a National Disaster and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) comes on line to give us assignments, we do not have authority to take on a response. Public Law 84-99 bridges that gap. Under the law, the governor can ask the Corps to initiate a post-flood response to a major flood event, hurricane or coastal storm while a National Disaster declaration is being determined.

How does this work? "At the same time the governor is sending a request for help to FEMA, he can request us to start a post-flood response. We have a ten-day time period in which we can activate our response and get to work. While the state is waiting for the wheels to turn in the Stafford Act process, we can already be clearing emergency access, restoring critical public facilities, or removing logjams that threaten public safety. Work can begin to activate emergency response contracts and begin to assemble the people needed to move ahead."

The bottom line? Public Law 84-99 ensures that the Corps can plan, prepare and instantly respond to emergencies. The 2001 Hurricane Season predictions have intensified recently as a result of higher water temperatures in the Atlantic Ocean. The number of named storms is now expected to be 12, and the number of expected major storms has been raised from two to three.

We are ready!

The Corps' Emergency Management TEAM can respond quickly to floods.

Sister District shares CAP work

By Penny Schmitt

Wilmington and Charleston District engineers visited Brunswick County sites to take a first look at four proposed Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) projects. As part of the South Atlantic Division Regional Business Center effort, Charleston will be Wilmington's workload-sharing partner for the site visits, feasibility study, and follow-up design work.

The Continuing Authorities Program authorizes the Corps to support local governments with site inspections, feasibility studies, design, contracting, and 65 percent of the cost of an approved project. These projects are small in scope, but can have significant local benefits in reducing flood damage and protecting public facilities.

- *"We must answer four questions," said Doug Greene*
- *Does the project fit the CAP authority guideline?*
- *Can we bring a good engineer solution to the problem?*
- *Is there a positive benefit / cost ratio?*
- *Does the local government understand and agree to its cost-sharing responsibilities?*

On this day, the Charleston / Wilmington team visited two proposed project sites. The first, a Section 14 project to stabilize a bank and protect public property, took the group to Southport, where a sewer pumping station stands near a gradually eroding beach. "This station is critical," said Jim Smith, of Southport's Department of Public Works. "Our other stations are tied together. If one goes out, the others can take up the slack. This stand-alone station serves 200 or more structures. We'd be in trouble if we lost it."

The engineers walked the ground, sketched a map of the site, measured, checked the frequency of wind-driven waves, asked about prevailing wind patterns and storm events. They determined that it would cost about $100,000 to replace the pumping station. They were pleased to learn that the Town of Southport owns the right of way on which the project would be built. Some educated guesses about the amounts and types of material needed to stabilize the area led them to think that the costs of stabilization might be reasonable.

"We'll probably go ahead to a feasibility study," said Bob Kiestler, of Wilmington District's Project Management Division. "A first look indicates that we could have a viable project."

The next site visit took the team to Town Creek, where Hurricane Floyd caused significant flooding, and local residents complain of repeated high water. With several stops along back roads to synchronize maps, the engineers toured small creek-side and upland neighborhoods, examining the terrain, noting where homes had been destroyed or removed because of flooding, and getting a sense of potential for structural or nonstructural solutions related to CAP Section 205 flood damage reduction projects.

"It's sometimes hard to keep it straight in your head that a *structural* solution refers to things we might do to the stream or watershed, while a *nonstructural* solution refers to elevating, moving, or buying out homes," said Doug Marcy of Charleston District.

The economics of such projects are more complex than those presented by the Southport project. "We'll get a very close look at this area," said Lisa Metheney, the Charleston District Planner and Economist. "This may or may not result in a Corps project, but we'll likely be able to pass on information that the local government can use on its own."

The Charleston team headed back up the country road, while the Wilmington team returned to the District office to prepare for the next day's meetings with Brunswick County officials about two more projects. "It's great to share perspective with another District," Kiestler said. "This is a new enterprise for us, and we'll be deciding as we go along whether we will pick up the contracting and construction. We certainly think our customers will benefit from the depth of perspective we can bring together."△

Wilmington District Engineer Doug Greene coordinates CAP project with Charleston District Economist Lisa Matheny and Geotechnical Engineer Tom Murphy.

Moravian Creek CAP project begins construction

By Ben Lane

WILKESBORO, North Carolina-In June, a construction contract for the CAP Section 205 project at Moravian Creek was awarded to Aldridge Brothers, Inc., of Robbinsville, North Carolina. Construction is scheduled to be complete and providing flood control benefits by March 2002.

Like other CAP projects, the Moravian Creek project required local sponsorship, a feasibility study indicating that the Corps could provide a solution, a positive benefit-cost ratio, and cost-sharing by the sponsor.

Sited in the town of Wilkesboro, the project is downstream of North Carolina Highway 268 and School Street. Nine businesses that back up to Moravian have been damaged time and again by five- to 15-year flood events. Because the buildings are very close to the creek, they afford limited space for construction and mitigation of damage. Yet the plan protects the buildings against a 15-year flood, and will provide substantial economic relief.

The project includes a 960-foot concrete flood barrier, Fabriform bank protection, clearing and snagging, grading and grass to reduce siltation, and native trees and shrubs to stabilize the bank.

The Town of Wilkesboro executed a Project Cooperation Agreement with the Corps in 1998. The town has provided all the lands, easements, relocations, rights of way and borrow or disposal areas needed for construction and maintenance. Wilkesboro also supported 25 percent of the project costs, at $232,000. The Federal share of the project is $696,000. When the project is complete, the Corps will provide a maintenance manual and turn the project over to Wilkesboro.

Although this project required several years of effort and planning, it will give Wilkesboro welcome relief from many more years of plaguing floods and economic damage.

Congratulations to Peggy Conner, Field Office Assistant at John H. Kerr, for winning the fourth quarter Safety slogan contest

HR Corner

Modern DCPDS replaces PPI (Legacy DCPDS)

Compiled by Jeff Whiting

The Department of Defense is deploying an automated human resources system, the Modern Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (MDCPDS), that will link all military branches under the same personnel system. Army officials say, "Our ultimate goal is to implement a modern personnel system that will serve as a platform for 21st century technology and that is responsive to our customers' needs." The Army's Southeast Region, with its Civilian Personnel Operations Center (CPOC) headquartered at Fort Benning, GA, began using the new system June 22. Now all the Army installations and activities throughout the continental United States are using the Modern System. The Korea and Europe Regions will deploy in October.

The Modern System uses new technology to simplify processing personnel actions, accessing civilian work force information and standardizing the way personnel services are managed. Unlike the legacy system that was centrally maintained in San Antonio, TX, the Modern System operates in a network environment with the database maintained on servers at the respective CPOCs and has drop-down menus, point-and-click maneuvering, and cut-copy-paste capability. Organizational and employee data can be displayed in a variety of different formats that can be modified, filtered, sorted and exported for use in other applications such as an Excel spreadsheet. One of the advantages of the new system is that managers and supervisors will be able to track the status of personnel actions from their desktops and retrieve personnel information regarding their team members. Additional enhancements will be made as the system and users' needs mature.

Using MDCPDS will take a period of adjustment - and training is a key element of the system's success. Wilmington District held three sessions of Modern System training on July 10, 11, and 12. Forty-four end users received a thorough indoctrination and became functionally literate in "Modernese." A walk-in clinic to resolve difficulties that may have arisen during actual operation and a full make up session are scheduled for August. Ultimately, users will appreciate the benefits of increased access to information, enhanced productivity, reduced redundancy and improved operations. MDCPDS will significantly improve the access of up-to-date information for managers and personnel specialists.

For more information on the Modern System, see the Web site, http://cpol.army.mil/home/home.html, under "Modernization."

Operations Plan Update

Recruiting new TEAM members

By Penny Schmitt

Every month, we see "New Faces in the District" featured in our newsletter. How do they get here? Our District's Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, our Division Chiefs, and other members of our TEAM are striving to ensure that we build the right mix of technical skills into our Objective Organization for the future.

Angie Pennock, Regulatory Specialist, was a Corps Co-Op 1999-2001 while obtaining a Master's Degree in Biology at UNC-W.

Cheryl Parks, Contract Specialist, was a Corps Co-Op 1995-1996 and 1998 while working on her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at Cape Fear Community College and Shaw University.

More than 100 recruitment actions for positions ranging from student co-ops to senior staff members are currently under way. We know that we are competing with attractive, high-paying employers for skilled and highly-educated TEAM members. Yet we also know that the Wilmington District, like the whole Corps, offers a world of exciting work to do that makes a difference to the lives of millions of people throughout the nation.

This year, our Operations Plan emphasized recruitment efforts directed toward people entering our career fields as they continue or complete their education. We pledged ourselves to contact at least 12 area colleges and universities about job opportunities this year. We doubled that goal, contacting 24, including nearby UNCW and Cape Fear Community College, as well as schools like Texas A&M, Penn State, and Northwestern State University of Louisiana.

For the first time, we kept detailed records of student applications. Since the beginning of fiscal year 2001, which begins October 1, 2000, we have received 118 applications from students at 26 colleges, universities, and high schools. The student applicants were majoring in many career fields that interest us, from business to engineering to environmental, geology and forestry programs. We have hired 26 students.

Are these jobs just nice-to-have spots while you're in school? At Wilmington District, student jobs can lead to long-term careers with the Corps. Patty Hargrove, now a GS 13 supervisor in our Information Management shop, began her career with Wilmington District as a student. Regulator Angie Pennock converted this year from a student position to a full-time permanent position. Cheryl Parks, of Contracting Division, also converted from a student position to a career job. Not every student who works with us finds a career home, but the opportunity is there for those whose academic and on-the-job work makes us want to keep them, and who find the Corps an attractive career home.

Pat Hargrove, Chief of Support Services Branch for IM, was a Corps Co-Op 1980-1986 while earning her Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science at UNC-W.

This year, the District will be attending career fairs at UNC Wilmington and at North Carolina A&T State University, and will intensify our outreach efforts to regional colleges and universities.

These efforts, part of our Operations Plan Objective 1.3, will help to make Wilmington District a vibrant TEAM alive with young talent for the future.△

New Members to the District

Beverly Deering, Equal Employment Opportunity Officer. Beverly transfers to the District after a thirteen-year tour at the U.S. Army Maneuver Support Center at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri where she served in various career fields. Most recently, she worked as a Budget Analyst serving nine separate garrison activities. Beverly also served as the installation's Equal Employment Specialist with duties as Installation Complaints Manager, Affirmative Employment Manager and Federal Women's Program Manager. Beverly and her husband Joe have three children: Tommy, Patrick and Caitlin. She and Joe are natives of Bucks County, Pennsylvania.

John McCormick, Civil Engineer, Coastal Section of Hydrology and Hydraulics. John and his wife Erika and daughters Emily (4) and Jenna (1) recently moved to Wilmington from Philadelphia, PA where he worked with the Philadelphia District's Hydraulics Branch on various Coastal Engineering Projects. Prior to Philadelphia, John worked at WES in the Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory and attended Virginia Tech and Old Dominion University.

Jack Nelson, Supply Technician with the Engineer Yard. Jack joins the District after serving at the Military Entrance Processing Station in Raleigh, NC. He is retired from the US Army, 82nd Airborne. He and his wife, Deanna "Joy," have two children, TJ and Torrie.

Carmen Barnes, Student Trainee Forestry, at Falls Lake. I have just finished working my third semester at Falls/Jordan. Carmen will graduate in May 2002 with a BS in Forest Management and a minor in Environmental Science from North Carolina State University. She hopes to find a career in natural resource management and environmental education.

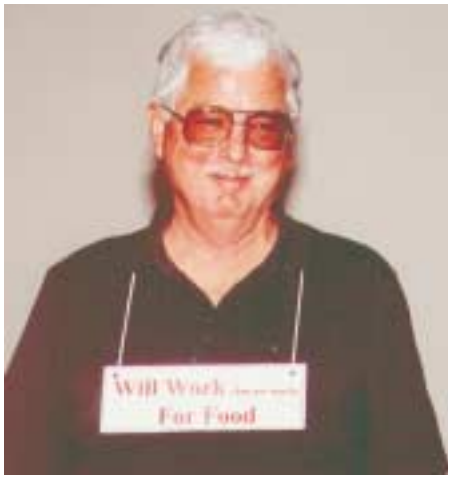
Cindy Edens returns to the Wilmington District as Office Automation Assistant for **Operations.** Cindy worked as a Voucher Examiner in Finance and Accounting from 1990-1997, but left to be at home with her baby. Cindy's son, David is now five years old. Cindy, her husband Dan, and David live in Wilmington.

Katie Fancher, Student Trainee, Resource Management/Finance and Administration. Katie is currently a sophomore at UNCW, after transferring from ECU. She plans to major in Accounting and she is a native Wilmingtonian.

Keith Odberg, Computer Specialist, IMO Customer Assistance Center. For the past 9 years, Keith has worked at Philpott Lake, Bassett VA. He has served within the Corps as a Park Ranger and as an Office Automation Assistant.

Julie Mullis, Park Interpreter at W. Kerr Scott. Julie is an English Instructor at Wilkes Community College and for eight seasons served as an interpretive park ranger on the Blue Ridge Parkway. She has a Masters Degree in English Education from Appalachian State University. She and her husband Joe have a three-year-old daughter, Hattie.

Good luck to **June Pauley** in her new position as Emergency Management Specialist for the U.S. Department of Energy in Washington, DC. Major Shepard presented June with the 30-year service pin at her send-off celebration. △



Best wishes to Navigation Survey Technition **Wilkes Burdette** as he retires from the Corps after 20 years of service. We'll all miss Wilkes' great sense of humor! ▷

Congratulations to Kris and Pedro Mejia, daughter and son-in-law of **Jim Butler,** on the birth of their baby girl **Emma Maite Mejia.** Emma was born July 26, weighing in at 7lbs. Mother and baby are resting comfortably at home in Rockville, Md.

John Edge, Civil Engineering Tech., Navigation Division, was recently reunited with his family in a joyous celebration after 46 years of hard work and exhaustive searching. John and his brothers and sister's were separated by adoption when they were young children. The siblings are excited to be together after such a long period.

Corps Family News

Retiree News

There was a nice crowd of 18 attending this month's luncheon. The following retirees and spouses were present: Max Grimes, Virginia Uzzell, Jean and Dan Grimsley, Sherria and Lawrence Crawley, Paul and Gloria Woodbury, Dorothy K. Everette, Edith and Jim Vithalani, Joe Lewis, Sylvia and Rex Phillips and their granddaughter Lauren, Bob Venters, Eric Matzke, Bettye and Bob Swart, and Bob's mother, Bessie Swart (still going strong at the age of 93). Someone saw Joe Lewis coming through the door and the comment was made that he apparently got his money counted early this month. Joe did express some concern about the additional two dollars accredited to his account this month, but that would provide funds for his lunch.

During the week of 23 July, Max and Gwen Grimes visited relatives in the western mountains of NC From there they visited with friends near Crossville, TN. Max was on top of "Max Patch Mountain" where the Appalachian Trail crosses, while there a rain shower came up and wet them good. In early June, Eric and Betty Matzke celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary, Aug. 11, by taking a family cruise to the Eastern Caribbean. Their children and spouses were with them. Eric and Betty plan to fly out to San Jose, CA on Aug 18 to spend several weeks with their son, Rick, and his family.△

Loaning Life Jackets

By Christine Bruske

The Wilmington District Corps of Engineers oversees five lake projects. All five projects have active "Life Jacket Loaner" programs. Parents are encouraged to borrow and use the life jackets to protect their children, and themselves, from drowning.

Tragically, two adults and one child have lost their lives by drowning in our lakes this year. The first drowning victim was a grandfather who jumped into the lake in an attempt to save his grandson who had fallen out of their fishing boat. Rescuers found two unused life jackets in their boat. The second victim was a 7-year old girl who was playing in the water with her parents just a few yards away on the beach. The girl was not wearing a life jacket. The third victim was a 23-year old man who swam a little beyond the designated area to retrieve a floating toy. He was not wearing a life jacket.

Contrary to what we see in Hollywood movies, drowning victims do not splash around in the water for several minutes yelling and screaming for help. Instead, they usually slip quietly under water, unnoticed, as their tired bodies struggle to push toward the surface and their lungs succumb to the urge to breath. Between 7,000 and 8,000 deaths due to drowning occur each year in the United States.

Parents at John H. Kerr fit their children with "Loaner Life Jackets".

Learning to swim is the first line of defense against drowning and three of the Wilmington District lake projects offer swimming lessons in partnership with organizations such as the YMCA, the American Red Cross and state Departments of Parks and Recreation.

Protect yourself and your family when in or around the water. Learn to swim and wear life jackets!△

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