

WILMINGTON DISTRICT NEWS ONLINE

OCTOBER 2006

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LOCK AND DAM TWO IS SITE FOR “BROWN WATER” NAVY TRAINING

In the film “Apocalypse Now” actor Martin Sheen’s character rides up a South Vietnamese River into Cambodia with members of a fictional “Brown River” Navy group. Fast forward to September 2006; it’s the return of a real Brown River Navy, this time running up and down the Cape Fear River for realistic training before deploying to Iraq in March.

Riverine Squadron One, which makes its home at Little Creek Naval Amphibious Base at Camp Lejeune, made good use of the facilities at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wilmington District’s Lock and Dam Two when it conducted the first of two phases of small unit riverine craft training by the Special Missions Training Center, also based at Camp Lejeune. The Navy is taking control of the squadron from the Marine Corps, and it’s

the Navy’s first active duty “brown water” mission since the Vietnam War. Sailors will assume a mission Marines held on the Euphrates River located north and south of Baghdad. According to Marine Corps Major Roberto Martinez, the officer in charge of the Special Missions Training Center, the facilities at Lock and Dam 2 provide a realistic setting that sailors need before heading over to Iraq.

“There are pump houses and other buildings like the Corps’ buildings that are located along rivers in Iraq,” Martinez said. “And the Cape Fear River is very similar to rivers in Iraq which makes this training about as realistic as it can get.”

Marines and Sailors will use the Wilmington District’s facilities at Lock and Dam 2 this fall for additional training. ■

UP FRONT**“GREAT WORK IN FY06, MORE TO COME IN FY07!”****Colonel John Pulliam, DC**

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Wilmington District,

Welcome to SAW's brand new on-line newsletter! I know, some of you bemoan the fact that "everything is going electronic these days." And there is something solid and comfortable-feeling about a newspaper in your hand. But with the advent of the SAD "Spectrum," our region's premier new (hard copy) quarterly magazine,

we thought we'd distinguish between the SAW and SAD papers by going this route. There are also a number of advantages to shifting to an e-paper: it's cheaper, quicker to get out, much more easily scaleable to the amount of news you need to publish, and--I like this one the most--much more faithful to get into the hands (so to speak) of every team member! So, heck...if you still want it in hard copy, just hit "print". Ha!

As we close the books on FY 2006, I look back over the wonderful things we've done for the people of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia (and--through our dredge fleet--every state on the Atlantic Coast from Rhode Island to Florida) with great pride, and hope you share in that feeling. The way I count it up, we went something like 15 and 2 on big cases, big projects, big issues. From Roanoke Island Festival Park, to Terry Ramsey's "Legends of American Recreation" award, to the AIWW Inlet Crossing job, to Wilmington Harbor Anchorage Basin, to Safety Officer Bill Harris finding a way to get protective gear to our Regulators and other field workers, and on and on, it

has simply been a year chock full of hard work...and victories. Each of those victories means something for our customers or our own work force (and in most cases, both). I'm excited to be marching into FY 2007 alongside such incredibly talented and hard-working folks as you.

And we have new talent in the team--a lot of new talent. I've run out of fingers with which to count our new teammates who have come aboard over the past three months--we are excited to have all of them alongside us. They include, particularly, LTC Pat Tilque, our new Deputy Commander, and Chris Brayman, our new DPM. We also have a new Division Commander, BG Joe Schroedel, who will be down to visit us in the middle of October. I think you'll really enjoy getting to know and working with all our new teammates.

So sit back, grab a cup of coffee or tea, and have a read of SAW's first edition in the on-line chapter of our District magazine! ■

Best Regards,

JP

Wilmington District News Online is an unofficial publication authorized under provisions of AR 360-1 published each month by the Wilmington District Public Affairs Office to keep District employees informed of current District news, activities and achievements. Send submissions for **Wilmington District News Online** to henry.g.heusinkveld@saw02.usace.army.mil or penny.schmitt@saw02.usace.army.mil

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STRONG LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT SKILLS ARE NEW DEPUTY DISTRICT COMMANDER'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SAW

The Wilmington District's new Deputy District Commander, Lieutenant Colonel Patrick Tilque, comes to SAW with familiarity about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and a solid background in leadership and management.

"I really believe in having open dialogue," the Green Bay, Wisconsin native said. "In any organization there's a professional side, but there's also a personal side. It's okay to agree and disagree on issues as long as it's done professionally and with courtesy. You can argue all you want in a meeting just as long as both sides shake hands on a personal level once they've left the meeting."

LTC Tilque's leadership skills have been honed during his career in such assignments as the Chief of Engineer Operations of the Engineer Staff, Third Army Forward

in Kuwait and in the execution of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. In addition, he was the Executive Officer for the 169th Engineer Battalion at Fort Leonard Wood, MO and was the Group Engineer for the 702nd Military Intelligence Group at Fort Gordon, GA.

"Leadership is taking care of people, listening to different points of view. It's team building. People here have 10, 20, 30 years of experience and every day something new comes up. We can learn a lot and draw from that experience, especially now which I think will help smooth out the rough edges as regionalization evolves."

LTC Tilque plans to make the most of his tour with the District. He wants to learn more about the political side of how and why decisions are made in the Corps and



LTC Patrick Tilque, DDC

with its stakeholders.

"There's a lot to learn about the workings of the federal government which is different than being a Soldier. I want to know more about the Corps' role in hurricane response, and more specifically, operations in Emergency Management. This is an excellent stepping stone in my career and I want to help improve this organization as well as I can." ■

BRAYMAN HAS NEW OUTLOOK AND STRONG RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING SKILLS TO OFFER AS DEPUTY DISTRICT ENGINEER FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Christine Brayman is a people person and has a global outlook on life. She's bringing a change to the Wilmington District, not just as the first woman and non-engineer to hold the position as the new Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, but also as a leader with strong relationship-building skills.



Christine Brayman

"It's very important to be able to communicate with stakeholders as well as all different levels of government from local mayors to members of congress. Relationships and good communication are important, both internally and externally," the upstate New Yorker said.

Brayman, who holds undergraduate degrees in economics and political science from the University of Rochester and a Masters degree in public administration and public policy from Rutgers University, rose up in the ranks quickly in the Corps because of her willingness to explore new ideas, work new places, build relationships and listen to and grasp new ideas and concepts.

"I have exposure to a lot of the coastal issues, particularly budgetary and legislative issues from working at all levels of the Corps (Districts, Divisions, Institutes and Headquarters touching every Major Subordinate Command east of the Mississippi)" she said. "I understand the cradle to grave concepts of the projects we do and the project management business process concept."

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SOLDIER PROJECTS MANAGER'S COMBAT AND NATION-BUILDING EXPERIENCE HELPS MAKE DECISION MAKING PROCESS MORE FLEXIBLE

Having three “green suiters” onboard with the Wilmington District is rare. But Major Robert Hilliard is working in Project Management in an area that’s been missing a Soldier for the past few years. He’s well-suited to work for the District. He has a Civil Engineering degree from Auburn University, a Masters Degree in Engineering Management from the University of Missouri at Rolla, and another Masters Degree in Civil Engineering with a water resources focus from Montana State University. He’s also a combat veteran who took part in Operation Iraqi Freedom as Company Commander of Charlie Company, 70th Engineer Battalion, Third Brigade of the First Armored Division. Looking back at that experience just three and half short years ago he has a clear picture of what it took to adjust from a peacekeeping/humanitarian aid mission to tactical operations.

“My first engineering mission was to send my Soldiers out to try to find the guy who ran the local water office in Abu Ghraib,” the Georgia native said. “There was an electricity repair office that had no workers.

We always asked ‘Where are all the folks who run these places?’ ”

Hilliard said things became complicated when insurgents began their onslaught. Since the insurgency wasn’t expected to be so forceful and elusive, Army commanders were forced to shift their thought process to adapt to life-threatening situations.



Major Robert Hilliard

“There is a playbook for movement to contact, but a lot of it has to be improvised. You don’t know where the enemy specifically is, but you’re moving forward. When you’re “stationary” in a city and constantly covering the same route, you have to constantly adapt to changing enemy tactics. Eventually we were able to set up enough observation points and patrols to where we pushed the insurgents out of the city. We just couldn’t pinpoint their locations. Soon they were pushed out into the countryside where we could counter fire.”

Although there was a continuous battle against insurgents Iraq still had to be rebuilt. Hilliard said one of the keys to success for working with the Iraqis was to gain their trust and allow them to begin thinking again for themselves.

“I ended up taking over an area in Iraq that was all Shiite, about 300,000 people. These were very oppressed people and their city was in bad shape. We eventually helped them to



After a firefright, Hilliard, center, patrols in Abu Ghraib with 1 AD.

"You can't just say 'We're the Corps of Engineers. We know what to do.' You really have to foster a sense of community."

create a city council. The Iraqi leaders told us that Saddam Hussein's government controlled everything. The Army and the city council members worked together to get the city the basics it needed like fixing the sewer system and getting fuel for cars to go to work. I think the basic way we dealt with a municipality like that was treating people with respect. These were very smart people. I had people with PhDs, masters degrees or had years of experience. An Army commander couldn't just say that he knew what was best for the Iraqi people and expect results."

What Hilliard experienced in Iraq is something that he's bringing to the Wilmington District, albeit in a radically different position. He said engineer Soldiers who are doing tours in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers are bringing adaptation skills they were forced to learn in combat and Nation-building skills that apply to everyday Corps business.

"You can't just say 'We're the Corps of Engineers. We know what to do.' You really have to foster a sense of community. You have to work with the community. If I apply anything that I learned in Iraq to the Corps is that you have to constantly be in contact with the community and work with the leaders because they're representative of their constituents. And as the Corps gets more leaders who've been to Iraq or Afghanistan where they've had to think out of the box I think that's a nice complement, especially with the Project Delivery Teams and regionalization. Now we're getting leaders who've been in an adaptive environment. And to bring those together is very beneficial because they've got the experience to lead change."

Having experienced war and knowing Soldiers who were killed

in Iraq Hilliard said he had a "moment of clarity" recently when he went to his alma mater to watch a traditional performance at a football game.

"There's a raptor center at Auburn and a bald eagle flies around the stadium of 87,000 people before each game. I thought in that minute and half, 'You know, this is why our Army goes out and fights the fights so that 87,000 people can come together in this one stadium and not have to worry and not be in fear.' People from different backgrounds just having a good time. And I thought of all the people I knew who died for our freedoms. Our quality of life is so much better than other parts of the world. We just need to realize that." ■



70th Engineer Battalion Soldiers prepare for a change of command in Baghdad.

W. KERR SCOTT RANGERS GET CERTIFIED AS ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS

Two W. Kerr Scott Lake rangers were recently certified as environmental educators by the state. Rangers Miriam Fleming and Jory Shepherd both completed the required 200 hours of training to receive their certification through the states North Carolina Environmental Education Certification Program.

“This program fits extremely well with our goal of environmental stewardship,” said Ranger Fleming. “The required workshops help rangers learn new ways to present familiar themes thereby helping our education programs improve.”

Participants in the certification program must participate in seven workshops totaling 70 hours, complete 50 hours in outdoor experiences, 30 hours presenting programs, and 20 hours developing and executing a partnership within the framework of the certification.

“It sounds daunting,” said Ranger Shepherd, “but its really not. The time and effort you put into the program is really worth while.”

“Having two rangers certified

is a real boost for our program,” said Terry Ramsey, Operations Manager at W. Kerr Scott Lake. “We are in the planning stages for creating an environmental education center here at the lake which will provide education and stewardship opportunities throughout the region. Having certified environmental educators gives a level of credibility to the program as a whole.”

While an environmental education center is still in the planning stages, rangers at W. Kerr Scott are able to present programs to any group on a variety of topics such as forestry, hydrology, mammals, and ecology, just to name a few. Rangers can present programs at a school, but for a hands-on experience, teachers can bring their classes to the lake where the reservoir becomes the classroom. Two of the most popular programs are the “Forest as a Community” nature walk and the stream ecology programs.

“This is an untapped resource right in your backyard,” Ramsey said. “We encourage the local schools and



Jory Sheperd and Miriam Fleming

families who home school to at least visit us and see how we can benefit those they teach.”

For more information on how to schedule a visitor or field trip, please contact the Visitor Assistance Center at 336.921.3390. ■

“The required workshops help rangers learn new ways to present familiar themes thereby helping our education programs improve.”

Miriam Fleming

ON THE ROAD AGAIN WITH THE WOO TEAM

By Amanda Jones

For the week of August 8, 2006, The Woo joined forces again to learn more about becoming effective leaders, explore various District missions throughout the state of North Carolina and Virginia, and ultimately work on our class project. Our initial meeting at Falls Lake Visitor Assistance Center, led by our team facilitators, Michael Hosey and Mitch Hall, provided a background on the roles and responsibilities of the Operations Division of Wilmington District. During this session, we learned about the daily operations and importance of our reservoir projects like Falls Lake and B. Everett Jordan Lake. Tom Freeman, Falls Lake Manager, provided a detailed history of Falls Lake and related his experiences of managing the dynamic and sometimes conflicting goals of water supply, flood damage reduction, recreation, and wildlife management. We also had the opportunity to visit John H. Kerr Lake (Buggs Island Lake) where we got a 'behind the scenes' tour of the on-going turbine replacement at the powerhouse. Our tour, led by Rick Carroll, also took us into the bowels of the dam and provided a great explanation of how hydropower projects really work. We then got to explore the multitude of recreational opportunities provided by John H. Kerr Lake which was led by none other than Sherrie "Woo" Storm. Interestingly, there are 500 campsites at John H. Kerr Lake which makes this facility the largest Corps owned campground in Wilmington District. John H. Kerr's camp-



Woo Team members practice teamwork skills.

grounds were also listed in the 2005 Top 100 Family Campgrounds.

In addition to visiting projects in our Operations Division, we also had the opportunity to visit several projects from the Planning and Environmental Branch of the Technical Services Division. Hugh Heine and Mitch Hall facilitated a tour of the Pleasant Green Road Dam Removal project in the Eno River State Park in Durham, NC. By working with local partners, the Corps was able to facilitate the removal of this dam to allow for aquatic life passage through this section of the Eno River. Mr. Heine and Mr. Hall also provided a tour of a stream restoration project by the N.C. Ecosystem Enhancement Program which strives to restore impaired stream channels through natural bio-engineering techniques.

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THE JIM BUTLER SAILS ON



About a year past, we said good bye to our friend and Operations Division Chief Jim Butler, but his namesake, the 25-foot C Hawk survey vessel **Jim Butler**, plies the District's waters regularly.

The **Jim Butler** performed its first completed survey in December of 2005, and has replaced the Sanderson, now permanently stationed in Wanchese, as the primary coastal inlet survey boat. The **Jim Butler** also surveys other shallow draft projects.

The boat is powered by a single Honda V6 225 hp four stroke engine (sorry Jim, your Camaro's V8 would be just too much!)

Its survey systems include:

- **Knudsen 320 M/P digital depth sounder (200 and 28 kHz)**
- **Trimble single frequency DSM GPS/ beacon receiver system**
- **Trimble dual frequency MS750 RTK ready GPS**
- **TSS DMS05 motion reference system**
- **Computer processor (GETAC laptop) running Coastal Oceanographics 'Hypack' surveying software.**

When you see the **Jim Butler** on the Cape Fear River or in one of our inlets, the Corps flag and the name on the bow tells you ... Yep, that little giant is one of ours! ■

WOO TEAM CON'T.

Lou Adder from the NCSU Natural Resources Leadership Institute provided a wonderful presentation on resolving conflict through leadership skills. We also reviewed a summary of the book *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* by Roger Fisher and William Ury, which highlighted the four principles for effective negotiation. Ms. Adder also provided an interesting case study that showcased alumni of the program utilizing their leadership skills to resolve conflict. In addition to conflict resolution

and negotiation skills, we had the opportunity to become stronger as a team by completing a ropes course at Bond Park in Cary, NC. The challenges that we completed stimulated teamwork, encouraged cooperation, instilled trust, and bolstered our confidence while laughing harder than we ever imagined possible. As evident in the picture, just as a rope's strength is comprised from the strength of all its individual strands, it takes the strength and effort of every individual to make a team successful. ■

CHRISTINE BRAYMAN CON'T.

As for regionalization, Brayman welcomes it because she's seen first hand what it offers.

"The Corps' budget, not withstanding significant events like Hurricane Katrina, has been declining. And because of that we have to figure out how to do the things the Nation wants and expects from us more efficiently with less staff. On the flip side, events like Katrina brought so much work to us it simply overwhelmed a district like New Orleans and it overwhelmed a division as large as the Mississippi Valley Division. By regionalizing, we're going to take some of those peaks and valleys and smooth them out and make things just a little more contiguous. It will give people opportunities to work on more challenging projects."

Brayman realizes that change is happening rapidly throughout the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and that it affects organizations differently. However, she deals with change head on.

"I think there are a couple of things that motivate change. There's nothing like a sense of urgency. If demand for our services continues to be high with critical deadlines and the supply of our resources (funding, staff, etc.) is declining, you almost get to a point of crisis where if you're not proactive change will happen to your organization from outside. And that's not the best way to do things. But a sense of urgency makes people think out of the box. And I encourage thinking outside of the box. I encourage risk taking. People could try something different as long

as it's not illegal or unethical. We can change something if it doesn't work. If you make a mistake that's okay as long as you don't make the same mistake repeated times."

Brayman believes in living by example. As a very principled person she plans to help move the District in a direction that reflects Army values and the importance of relationships and communication particularly as the Corps continues to adapt to change in the Nation's needs with continuing constrained resources.

"If I am showing that I support different concepts, be it regionalization or other things, and I'm not just paying lip service to them, than as a leader, I can set a tone for an organization. I believe in the Army values. I believe in selfless service. I believe in passionate enthusiasm for your job. I think people will see that in me." ■

"I think there are a couple of things that motivate change. There's nothing like a sense of urgency."

Christine Brayman

WEBSITE HIGHLIGHTS

Law Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov/law/public/law.html>

The mission of the Law Library of Congress is to provide research and legal information to the U.S. Congress, U.S. Federal Courts and Executive Agencies, as well as reference services to the public. Their homepage contains three primary sections: General Information, Research Services, and Digital Resources & Links. The "General Information" section offers a very brief overview of the Library, and the "Research Services" section leads to information designed for those who wish to visit the Library and perform research onsite. The real substance of the site is found in the "Digital Resources & Links" area.



Jan Wutkowski

National Park Service: Antiquities Act

<http://www.cr.nps.gov/archeology/sites/antiquities/index.htm>

Established in 1906, The Antiquities Act was the first law to establish that archaeological sites on public lands are important public resources. This website was designed to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Act. After browsing a basic overview of the Act's primary provisions, visitors should consider the "Monument Profiles" section. Another way to learn about these monument sites is to peruse the interactive maps offered in the "Maps, Facts & Figures" area. The site also contains details on the various events that will take place over the coming year.

FactCheck.org

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

As the late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan once opined, "Everyone is entitled to their own opinion, but not their own facts." True indeed, and certainly a sentiment that motivates the staff at FactCheck.org, a project The project, sponsored by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania, is designed to monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by numerous politicians in their speeches, debates, news releases, and the always important, television advertisements. On their website, visitors can look through their latest FactCheck reports, which include rigorous examinations of the use of the term "amnesty" in political rhetoric and, of course, a host of recent campaign ads. Visitors will also be glad to know that they can view some of the television campaign ads that FactCheck reports on.

The Society for Historical Archaeology

<http://www.sha.org/>

With a membership base that ranges from newcomers to seasoned professionals, The Society for Historical Archaeology is a group whose work will be of general interest to those with a yearning to learn more about history and archaeology. Their "Projects & Research" area profiles a number of organizations and research teams who have submitted websites that document their own recent excavations, such as those around Harpers Ferry and West

Point. Finally, the site's "Futures" section contains helpful information on careers in archaeology and a guide to programs in historical and underwater archaeology.

Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2006-2007 Edition

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/home.htm>

The Department of Labor recently issued this tremendously useful Handbook in its online format, and for those looking for a new career, or those who are just starting out, it provides a wealth of helpful facts. Basic information for hundreds of jobs is made available in the Handbook, including such details as the training and education required for each position, along with expected earnings, future job prospects, and information on working conditions.

Charity Navigator

<http://www.charitynavigator.org/>

Charity Navigator was founded in 2001 with a rather simple premise in mind: "People are amazingly generous and helping others but are not always sure how to go about it." In order to aid individuals and organizations, Charity Navigator evaluates various charities and non-profits on a variety of metrics so that potential contributors can make informed decisions. Users can browse their database which allows you to search over 5,000 charity ratings, category or geographic region.

ONE FOR FUN!

Playing with Shadows: An Introduction to Shadow Puppetry

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/rtsedge.html>

UNCW STUDENTS HELP KEEP WATCHFUL EYE ON WETLANDS

It's late in the afternoon when most Wilmington District employees are getting ready to head home. But trudging into the headquarters building with soiled clothes and pants legs wrapped at the ankles to ward off chiggers and possible snake bites is UNCW student Liz Hair. She's a regulatory division co-op who's just returned from one of six counties where she either signs jurisdictional determination of wetlands or verifies that areas are wetlands.

"I learned about wetlands in school, their importance and why we have to protect them," the Fayetteville native said. "And I've always wanted to do something that was going to have some sort of what I consider a good effect on the environment. You've heard of 'no wetlands, no seafood' or you can look at the importance of wetlands to help clean water to reduce pollution. And I really like being outdoors."

Hair belongs to one of two co-op positions in the Wilmington District Regulatory Field Office. She got her start as a volunteer, logging numerous hours with hopes of moving into a co-op position. Now a paid staff member she not only helps provide the latest in cutting edge technology she brings from academia, but she works with the regulatory staff with technical duties and GIS work.

"Our program is pretty much OJT, but we also have formal training," said Keith Harris who directs the Wilmington Regulatory Field Office's co-op program. "We've been very fortunate to give training to them so that they can use their expertise and do everything that our regular staff does. We start them out small then give them more responsibility because they have the willingness and desire to do the job. We grade their work in a generic format and they get credit for that in

school."

Harris said the Wilmington District has a good relationship with UNCW's internship program. At least once a year a regulatory staff member who was hired through the co-op program goes to the university and lectures in environmental studies classes to explain the co-op program and what the Corps' role is in regulating wetlands. The students who apply for the positions, he said, are people who want to work for the regulatory program and who like the hands-on training the Corps provides.

"I've had as many as 60 to 70 people apply for a single co-op position. In fact, that's how we developed our volunteer program because there are so many students who want to get into the program."

Emily Burton, another co-op with an undergraduate degree in geography who's pursuing certification in environmental studies, was at first in awe of the organization that's often perceived as only renourishing beaches or building and constructing. She soon saw the green side of the Corps and readily accepted the co-op position.



Emily Burton



Elizabeth Hair

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UNCW STUDENTS CON'T

or building and constructing. She soon saw the green side of the Corps and readily accepted the co-op position.

“I got a lot of congratulations by getting the position,” she stated. “There are other agencies that provide positions, but they’re unpaid. I have worked for non-profits before, helping out ‘the little guy’ by doing work in my community. But I soon learned that working for the government offered the same thing, and I feel like I’m helping out my community by helping to preserve the environment.” What drives Hair and Burton is that strong commitment of wetlands preservation. What both are finding is that there are things they’re learning on the job that aren’t written in their text books. And that’s balancing wetlands preservation and development.

“There is a Catch 22 with seeing beautiful wetlands systems, you’re surveying them knowing they will be

impacted by development,” Burton said. “But it’s good to know that there are laws in place like the Clean Water Act that help minimize those impacts.”

Members of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulatory are called “the face of the Corps” because of their presence in and around the Nation’s wetlands. Burton and Hair soon discovered that diplomacy and a little bit of psychology go a long way when dealing with people who sometimes don’t understand federal rules and regulations.

“We’re not always sitting behind a desk,” Hair said. “We’re out interacting with the public and we really attempt to educate the public about the regulatory program. And the key to wetlands education is to explain that what a person does upstream in a wetlands area will affect everything else downstream. Then people begin to understand that.” ■



NEW RESIDENTS AT FALLS LAKE DAM

Story and Photos by Rebecca Warren

Here is a lesson in adaptation. With homes popping up all over the borders of Falls Lake, animals have been pushed from their natural habitats and forced to find shelter in unlikely locations.

On the morning of April 25th a visitor reported to the rangers at the visitor center that she spotted a den of foxes in a drainpipe just north of the dam. Ranger Steve Mason decided to check out the report and sure enough, playing in the culvert, were 3 kits (baby foxes) and their mom. The foxes, realizing they we—re being watched, ran

back into the drainpipe they have been calling home.

Two days later Ranger Rebecca Warren went to check on the new family only to discover two more additions, bringing the total number of kits to 5. Being a banner year for squirrels due to a record acorn crop in 2004, the vixen (mother fox) has a huge source of food to feed all those little mouths.

Although they prefer to make their homes in the safety of the forest, the red fox's keen sense of smell, hearing and sight have enabled it to live close to humans without being easily noticed. This family of foxes however, seems to enjoy playing out in the open on cool



spring mornings as long as they are viewed from a distance. Visitors to the dam, who have discovered the presence of these comical creatures, have been fantastic about respecting the fox's territory.

The staff at Falls Lake has kept a watchful eye on the foxes for several weeks. The vixen has been observed teaching the kits how to stalk prey and other behaviors that they will need to know to survive on their own. The day is soon approaching when all 5 pups will be forced from the comfort of the den and head off start families of their own. Till then, we will continue to enjoy their presence and their antics. ■

