



Wilmington

District News Fall 2014



**SPECIALIZED ARMY DIVING UNIT
INSPECTS PHILPOTT DAM**

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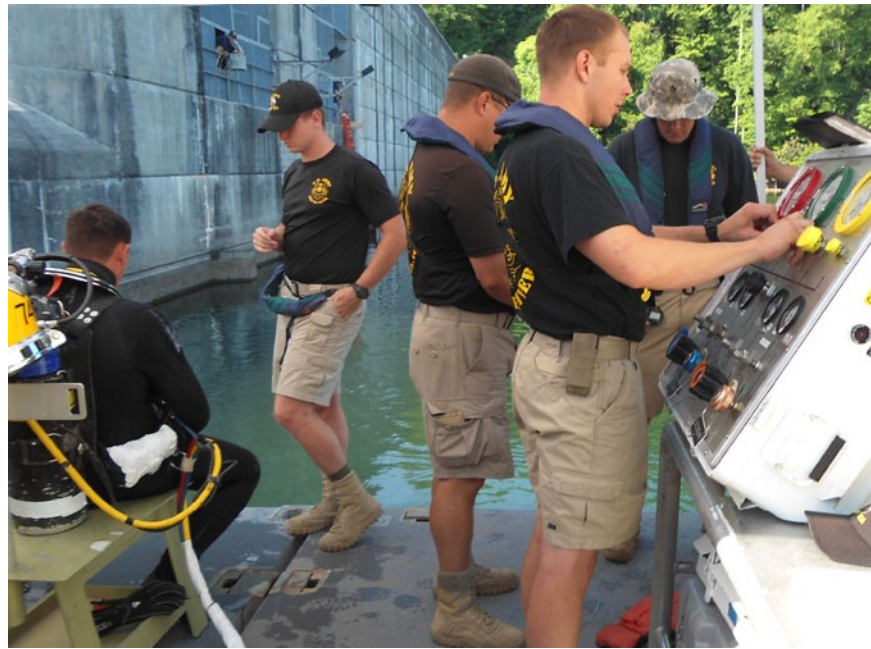
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Above-Army Dive Team members run through a pre-dive inspection. (USACE Photo by Powell Hughes)

Cover - Two Army divers, bottom, prepare to enter Philpott Lake to inspect Phipott Dam as their teammates run through pre-dive checks. (USACE Photo by Powell Hughes)

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Landers' Blog

Happy holiday season to the Wilmington District! Melody and I hope that you will take some time this holiday season to reflect on the blessings we each maintain in this wonderful country. I want to thank each and every one of you for your dedication to our organization and our Nation. Each of you truly makes a difference and your sacrifices go towards a much larger good to furthering a better country.

As I pass through the 120 mark of my command tenure, I remain amazed at the cadre of professionals that are the cornerstone of the Wilmington District...you. The leadership has recently published a strategic vision that is intended to take us from a good organization to a great organization. This initiative is supported by four primary lines of effort. I believe that if we can find ways to improve on our teamwork, individual and professional development, refining our execution practices and build upon our strong relationships. In my view these four are the underpinning for all the great technical work that we produce every day. To steal a phrase from JFK; ask not what the District can do for you, ask what you can do for the District as we work towards taking our organization to the next level.

SOME SIMPLE THOUGHTS: About 10 days ago we launched the revamped Wilmington SharePoint site. This site will be one of the primary ways in which we communicate. Although I am adamant about leveraging technologies such as this one to its fullest, I would submit we cannot lose the ability to talk to each other. Tools such as the SharePoint are tremendous in reaching a large volume of folks with a few simple key strokes. At times, we tend to remove the human dimension from every aspect of our work and personal lives and relegate ourselves to SharePoint, email, facebook and twitter. I would ask each of you to make an effort to strike a balance. I have to force myself to get out from under the emails and paperwork within my office and reach out to people from time to time. I would ask you to do the same. Get out from behind your desk and go ask a question face to face. Keep the human dimension and the relations/teamwork mentality alive.

HOT ISSUES: I think it is important that you understand what issues are currently at the forefront from my desk and what those things are that are consuming my time. The first is pushing the envelope on the WRRDA guidance for Carolina Beach. The Wilmington District is one of the first to seek specific guidance on a section of the WRRDA. I am frustrated at the pace at which this guidance is forthcoming. The District will look at the potential in leading a "Tiger Team" to draft the guidance we need

at the Division level and then subsequently at the HQ level.

The second is our ability to improve what I would refer to as battle tracking. A tremendous amount of discussion was given at the Division Governance on improving accuracy on scheduling, milestones and minimizing or eliminating carry-over funds for next year. The conversation also focused on the fact that the BG Turner will keep an eye on the 30 MILCON Projects within the Division, of which the District owns six. Priority emphasis needs to be placed on the scheduling, milestone management and accurate reporting for these six projects as they evolve over the fiscal year.

The last issue speaks to a strategic question. How does the Wilmington District account for the priorities of North Carolina and creatively intertwine those priorities into our budgeting process and advocate for mini funding pots along those same priority lines. I believe the current USACE process does not lend itself to offer a simple solution to this question so I am advocating some creative thinking in how to marry the two processes. I believe we as a District do not fully understand the priorities as they are seen from the Governor of North Carolina and would advocate we probably should.

Your reputation throughout our community, our State and across USACE is tremendous. Each of you plays a role in that reputation whether directly or indirectly. I am proud and honored to command this organization and it starts with each of you. Enjoy this holiday season with friends and family and be mindful of the safety aspect of the holiday season. My door and my ear are always open to you; reach out of the moment presents itself. From my family to yours, thank you for your support. We have an exciting year ahead. Building Strong!

COL Landers



Colonel Kevin P. Landers, Sr.

USACE Wilmington District holds Change of Command Ceremony

Story by Ann Johnson
Photos by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

WILMINGTON, N.C. - More than 300 Soldiers, Civilians, Family members, federal, state and local officials gathered July 11 at the battleship USS North Carolina for the Wilmington District's Change of Command Ceremony.

Col. Steven A. Baker relinquished command to Col. Kevin P. Landers Sr. in the ceremony marking the end of Baker's three-year command.

Maj. Gen. Todd T. Semonite, Deputy Commanding General, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, presided over the ceremony.

Semonite praised Baker for his competence and leadership.

"Steve has been a leader, a champion, a mentor, a coach and a friend – he has taken you through tough times with unprecedented success. Now, he must leave.

Col. Kevin Landers, Sr., Wilmington District's 54th commander, delivers remarks during the Change of Command Ceremony aboard the USS North Carolina July 11.



"And, just as I passed the flag from Colonel Baker to Colonel Landers, your loyalty must also pass from one to another."

The Corps of Engineers takes pride in attaining its vision of engineering solutions for the nation's toughest challenges, and Steve Baker has helped the North Carolina and southern Virginia region through some tough challenges, Semonite said citing a number of district accomplishments under Baker's leadership, including support to the warfighter through deployments of district personnel to Afghanistan and Iraq and significantly "stepping up" support to special forces at Fort Bragg.

"Since Fiscal Year 2011, Wilmington District has executed 110 SRM (facilities sustainment, restoration and modernization) projects at \$91 million and 21 MILCON projects at \$418 million for its customers at Fort Bragg and MOTSU (Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point)," Semonite said.



Fiscal Year 13 was one of the busiest for Joint Special Forces Command (JSOC), and Wilmington District stepped up to the plate earning high accolades from U.S. Army Special Forces Command and JSOC, according to Semonite.

"Your MVP performance was based on professionalism, team work, focus and positive attitude," Semonite quoted from a letter written by JSOC Financial Management Director Dick Hayford in a note to former South Atlantic Division Commander Brigadier General Ed Jackson Jr. about the District's efforts under Baker's leadership.

The last year has been a tough one, and Steve took you through some major challenges: sequestration, an 8-month continuing resolution, gaps in funding, increased oversight and a workforce furlough.

Under Baker's leadership, the Wilmington District secured and executed supplemental funds for the restoration of damages from several named storms, including Super Storm Sandy, the general said.

Super Storm Sandy was devastating to the region, Semonite said. HQ USACE played a key role in storm response efforts. The Corps needed a senior leader at Corps headquarters to direct operations, Semonite said. "We needed someone who could be calm under stress. I personally hand-picked Steve Baker to be the Corp's operations officer for Super Storm Sandy; he worked in

the operations center moving capabilities into and out of the Northeast during this devastating time for the region."

"Steve led a key effort in gaining the first ever "environmental justice waiver" from the assistant secretary of defense for civil works for the Princeville Flood Management Report . . . the Chief's (USACE Commander) Report for Neuse River Ecosystem Restoration, Surf City/Topsail Coastal Storm Damage Reduction and West Onslow Re-evaluation Report," Semonite said.

Another significant District accomplishment under Baker's leadership was the four-year Memorandum of Agreement with the state of North Carolina that allows the Corps to accept state funds to dredge in 22 shallow-draft navigation channels and inlets that are vital to North Carolina and its people.

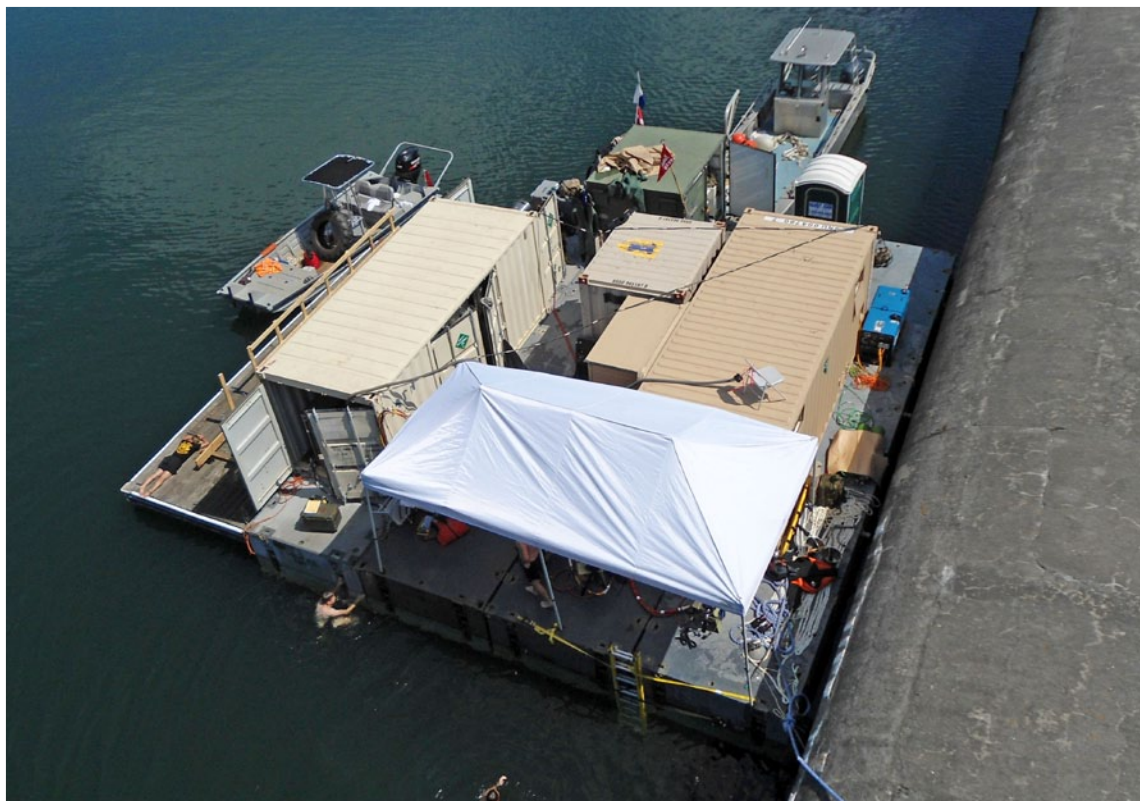
(Continued on page 21)

Center - Maj. Gen. Todd Semonite, then deputy commanding general, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, addresses Wilmington District employees and stakeholders at its 54th Change of Command Ceremony held aboard the USS North Carolina on July 11.

Right - Incoming Wilmington District Commander Col. Kevin Landers, center, receives the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers flag from USACE Deputy Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Todd Semonite as outgoing commander Col. Steve Baker stands at attention.



Specialized Army diving unit inspects Philpott Dam



Left - This mobile platform allows Soldier divers to set up shop where they dive. (USACE Photo by Powell Hughes)

Below - Army Dive Team members run through a pre-dive inspection. (USACE Photo by Powell Hughes)



Story by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

Their dives take them all over the world. They've deployed to such places as Honduras to remove a sunken trawler that was obstructing a vital navigation channel, and to the Middle East to support the Department of Defense. Here in the United States, they entered the Hudson River in 2001 to look for underwater damage to a Manhattan bulkhead after the World Trade Center collapsed, and they do regular maintenance on the Washington Aqueduct which supplies the nation's capital with drinking water.

This small, but sometimes high-profile Army unit found itself in Bassett, Virginia this summer performing a routine cleaning and dive inspection of Philpott Dam as part of its reservoir maintenance operations. These comprehensive inspections occur periodically to remove debris from the gate areas to ensure efficient sealing of the gates. While the surface temperature was hovering in the lower 90s, the temperature at which they inspected the dam was just above freezing. Despite challenging situations, Army divers are trained to adapt to local conditions to conduct specialized missions.

"The dive team inspects those hard to reach areas of the dam that you can't inspect unless you drain the lake," said Wilmington District Dam Safety Coordinator and civil engineer Powell Hughes. "They used a remote operated vehicle or R-O-V. We could see what they were doing on a display monitor."

The unit is comprised of five teams based out of Fort Eustis, Virginia with higher headquarters located at Fort Bragg. It's a regimental unit of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, but falls under the 20th Engineers at Fort Bragg.

"The Philpott dive mission is very ordinary for us and we take it very seriously," said 74th Dive Team Commander Captain Brian Wilson. "In some of our missions we've responded to Hurricane Sandy and helped pump out subway sections in New York City. We deployed to Port au Prince in Haiti after a major earthquake so that aid ships could pull into the ports

there, and we've done tire removal in Fort Lauderdale, Florida to remove toxic tires."

Wilson said that his Soldiers are some of the best fit in the Army. They're equipped with state-of-the-art equipment, and they dive at depths of at least 200 feet. The physical training standards are higher than regular Army PT standards for a reason.

"Mainly because of the effects the body undergoes under pressure," he explained. "We have to stay healthy, and staying fit increases the chances of any diving-related illness that might happen. The fatter you are the more gas your body absorbs when you're under pressure."

Wilson said that the problem is that it takes longer for certain gases to leave the system.

"So when you're working in an environment where there's low visibility and constant pressure, it's important to be physically and mentally fit," he said. "If something were to happen, your chances of survival are higher because you're physically and mentally tough to get out of the situation that you're in."

Tethered to all kinds of equipment, the team performs what's known as surface supply diving. Two-way communication devices allow the diver and team leader to communicate at all times. It's not as glamorous as scuba diving, but they'll dive in just about any type of water to perform their mission.

"It's a different kind of glamour," said Sergeant First Class Joseph Wulczynski. "We provide a service that most other Army units do not provide. While most everyone in the Army trains for a wartime mission, we do that as well and we also have a stateside, peacetime mission."

The team is tightly knit "We're small and tight-knit," said Staff Sergeant David Gills. "I think there are fewer than 130 of us in the entire Army. The ones who stay with the unit become like family. There are only four places where we can get stationed. You get to know people and you get to travel the world." ■

Diver 1st Class badge by US Navy, via Wikipedia



USASOC breaks ground on new Sustainment Brigade Headquarters

Story Courtesy of USASOC

FORT BRAGG, N.C. (USASOC News Service, Nov. 17, 2014) - The 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) officially broke ground on its 120,000 square foot brigade headquarters facility during ceremonies Nov. 13, 2014.

The \$27 million facility signifies a modernization effort that will greatly improve the support the 528th is able to provide to Army Special Operations Soldiers worldwide. Replacing the aging 528th headquarters building located on Gruber Road, the building and surrounding complex will provide more space and consolidate other units into one central location, including a modernized maintenance facility.

"Today, we commemorate the groundbreaking of the brigade headquarters, Special Troops Battalion headquarters and an adjoining maintenance facility," said Col. Daniel Rickleff, 528th Sustainment Brigade commander. "This marks a critical point in the brigade's history as we currently redesign and reorganize the brigade to best support Special Operations Forces globally and integrate under 1st Special Forces Command."

Soldiers, family members and honored guests of the 528th observed as Rickleff; Brig. Gen. Darsie Rogers, commander of 1st Special Forces Command (Airborne) (Provisional); Richard M. Holcomb, deputy to the commanding general of U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC); Brig. Gen. David Turner, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Col. Steven A. Baker, USASOC deputy chief of staff, engineers, took part in the symbolic first scoops of dirt.



The 528th Sustainment Brigade (Airborne) officially broke ground on its 120,000 square foot brigade headquarters facility during ceremonies Nov. 13, 2014. Taking part in the symbolic first dig is (left to right) Ben Polote, Richard Holcomb, Brig. Gen. Darsie Rogers, SAD Commander Brig. Gen. David Turner, Col. Daniel Rickleff, Sgt. Maj. Bradley Stout and Col. Steven Baker, Sgt. Maj. Tramell Finch and Lt. Col. Jesse Wightman. The facility signifies a modernization effort that will greatly improve the support the 528th is able to provide to Army Special Operations Soldiers worldwide.

"This project has been planned for quite some time and the facility is long overdue for this brigade," said Baker. "So it is a reason to celebrate, because today we are bringing the brigade out of their legacy-type facility and into the world class facilities they deserve."

Baker's reference of legacy-type facilities refers to buildings primarily built during World War II, the Korean Era or Vietnam Era for the purposes of training and providing housing. The current 528th Sustainment Brigade was originally an isolation facility and had many other uses since the late 1960s and early 1970s. The headquarters building has become outdated and much of the facilities' components are considered obsolete.

The facility and surrounding complex is due for completion in May 2016 and will be officially turned over to the brigade in October 2016. ■

Maj. Gen. Cox: "We only have one standard; the standard of excellence"



U.S. Army Maj. Gen. Kendall P. Cox.

Story and Photos by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

Before he left the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers earlier this year as the Deputy Commanding General – Military and International Operations - for his new job as the deputy commanding general of III Corps and Fort Hood, Texas, Maj. Gen. Kendall P. Cox visited Fort Bragg to get an up close look at the progress of construction by the Wilmington District's U.S. Army Special Operations Command Resident Engineer Office.

A third generation combat engineer, Maj. Gen. Cox has fond childhood memories of life on the installation from when his father was stationed there. He said he's impressed by how the Fort Bragg that he knew as a boy and young man has transformed into an almost unrecognizable installation.

"As a guy who grew up here, I've seen Fort Bragg transition from a World War Two fortress to a state of the art facility," he said. "The majority of the complexes that we built here today are the best that the Army has to offer. So our Soldiers don't lack for anything, the families don't lack for anything, and we're able to provide, what I consider, state of the art places to live, work and play."

Maj. Gen. Cox is a firm believer that the quality of a facility should be commensurate with the skills and abilities of the Soldiers who occupy them.

"That in and of itself is unique. You know, when you think about Fort Bragg not many people think about the special operations community that's here," he explained. "But if you understand the true significance of

the U.S. Army Special Operations Command, the Joint Warfighter Command, and the JFK Center, there's a large population of special operators here. And they do have unique requirements. So when we build facilities for them, they can't be of the like standard facilities for the rest of the Army. So just to be able to drive around and see the magnitude of construction that's going on here in the special operations community is just phenomenal. And it will truly provide for them, those unique requirements and capabilities so they can execute their wartime mission."

Maj. Gen. Cox said there are two things the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will never compromise. The first one, he said, is safety. He said there's never an excuse not to ensure the utmost safety for all contractors and all of the people who work on the jobsite.

"The second, of course, is quality. We only have one standard; the standard of excellence. And when you accept something that's less than that you've changed the standards. I want these Soldiers and their family members to have total trust and confidence in us as engineers to bring them a facility that everyone they walk into that facility some form of 'Wow!' immediately hits them and they're even more excited to go to work." ■

Army Maj. Gen. Cox chats with contractors and Wilmington District Chief of Construction Branch Dennis Lynch, second from right, at a construction site on Fort Bragg.



BUILDING STRONG | 9

USACE officials participate in FEDCON Summit 2014

Story by Ann Johnson
photos by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

Sen. Richard Burr kicked off the 2014 Federal Construction, Infrastructure & Environment (FEDCON) Summit on Oct. 16 at the Wilmington Convention Center. The event is co-sponsored by the North Carolina Military Business Center.

More than 24 federal agencies, an unprecedented number, participated in this year's event, according to N.C. Military Business Center (NCMBC) Executive Director Scott Dorney. NCMBC organizes the annual event which began nine years ago, and brings together federal government officials and companies that want to secure their business. All area military installations and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers districts with oversight of civil works and military construction projects in North Carolina were represented at this year's summit. USACE units participating included representatives from South Atlantic Division (SAD) and from Wilmington, Savannah and Charleston districts.

The two-year federal budget for FY 2014 and 2015 has money to address needed projects that went unfunded during the sequestration, as well as projects that should be funded before the sequestration begins again in FY 2016, Dorney said. This means more opportunities for North Carolina companies.



From left (seated): CDR Jeffrey Jasinski (NAVFAC MIDLANT), CAPT Jason Faunce (MCIEast, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune), and COL Donald Walker (USACE). Standing behind the panelists are LTC (Ret) Scott Dorney and CDR (Ret) Joe Angell (NCMBC), and at podium is CDR (Ret) Rich Anderson (Apogee Consulting). Active duty military panelists each talked about opportunities within their respective commands for small business at the 2014 Federal Construction, Infrastructure & Environment (FEDCON) Summit on Oct. 16 at the Wilmington Convention Center.

"The message of NCMBC is "opportunity," Dorney said. "Our military truly does mean business for your business. The hosts, sponsors and partners in this summit are confident that today's program will provide the critical market intelligence and knowledge of functional tools you need to help your company engage successfully in this market."

FY 2016, all military speakers noted, looks lean. "Sequestration impacts will become effective, once again, on Oct. 1, 2014," said Col. Donald Walker, deputy commander, South Atlantic Division (SAD), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If sequestration is not taken off the table, FY 2016 will look more like FY 2001 when it comes to the Corps' budget, Walker said.

"This (sequestration) is not an election issue; resources are already tight. I encourage you to make sure your voice is heard (by your elected officials)," Walker said. "There is some good news; SAD is poised well. Our end strength did not grow much, so we won't have to downsize much."

The SAD designs and builds major military facilities for the Army and Air Force in the Southeast. Serving 11 major Army posts and 13 Air Force bases, the division builds barracks, hospitals, office buildings, commissaries, and other facilities to meet the needs of the American military. Thirty-three multiple-purpose projects in the Southeast provide citizens with flood control, hydroelectric power, water supply, recreation, navigation and wildlife enhancement. The SAD operates and maintains more than 6,000 miles of federal navigable channel and 29 major harbors in the region. The division also has a growing



(L-R) U.S. Army Special Operations Command Combat Engineer Army Col. Steven A. Baker listens to Wilmington District Commander Army Col. Kevin P. Landers, Sr., give contractors a briefing on construction opportunities for small business within the District's boundaries during the Army and Air Force Issues Panel at the 2014 Federal Construction, Infrastructure & Environment (FEDCON) Summit on Oct. 16 at the Wilmington Convention Center.

environmental restoration workload, including the largest, single environmental restoration project in the world, the Everglades Restoration in south Florida.

Renovation, environmental and infrastructure projects are what contractors need to focus on in the near future as federal resources dwindle, said Col. Steven Baker, U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) engineer and former commander of the Wilmington District.

"While budgets are slashed and burned, USASOC is playing catch-up in planning, design and construction. We have \$1.5 billion in ongoing work worldwide. Our commander, Gen. (Joseph) Votel, will continue to push for continued funding." Votel is the commander of U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM). USASOC falls under the auspices of SOCOM.

In the interim, renovation is the name of the game, Baker said. "In lieu of a MILCON project to replace our old headquarters building, we are going to renovate floor by floor over the next 10 years to make it operate as a three-star headquarters."

Those companies interested in civil works projects in North Carolina need to know the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has four different districts operating in the state, Wilmington District Commander Army Col. Kevin Landers, Sr., told those attending the U.S. Army and Air Force Program and Issues session. The Corps' boundaries for civil works are defined by watershed, the reason Huntington, Norfolk, Charleston and Wilmington districts all operate in the state.

"At Fort Bragg, Wilmington District manages the U.S. Special Operations Command portfolio," Landers said. Additionally, the district manages military projects at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunnypoint (MOTSU). Outside of USASOC, Savannah District manages military construction at Fort Bragg.

All military officials participating in the summit concluded that renovation of existing facilities, environmental and infrastructure projects will replace new military construction as the Department of Defense moves into the lean years of



Army Col. Donald Walker, deputy commander, South Atlantic Division, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers talks to small business contractors during one of the breaks at the 2014 Federal Construction, Infrastructure & Environment (FEDCON) Summit on Oct. 16 at the Wilmington Convention Center.

FY 2016/17/18.

While the military construction boom is winding down in North Carolina, the state is still home to \$5.7 billion in total federal contracts including about \$3 billion with the Department of Defense, Dorney said.

This year's event featured some pre-Summit activities on Wednesday, Oct. 15, which included a site visit to the Wilmington District's new fish passage system at Rock Arch Rapids, Lock and Dam 1 on the Cape Fear River. More than 40 participants braved the rainy weather and traveled to the dam for a briefing on the design, construction and operation of the system, the Corps' first such project on the East Coast.

The river's lock and dam projects had made it difficult for fish to swim upstream, harming the fish reproductive cycle as well as depressing the fishing in locations upriver. The fish passage is intended to facilitate the ability of fish to migrate upriver to spawn.

The ramp, a \$13 million, two-year Army Corps of Engineers project, is the first of its kind on the East Coast and could serve as a blueprint for similar structures elsewhere if substantial numbers of fish use it to access spawning grounds upstream. The ramp looks more like a natural river rapids than a dam.

Large rocks were placed over the dam, extend downstream and create pools. Migratory fish can leapfrog over the rapids, resting in the pools between jumps. The project maintains the dam's integrity and upstream water level, which serves as the reservoir for potable water for Wilmington and Brunswick counties. If the dam had been removed to facilitate fish migrations, local governments would have had to locate another water source. ■



This year's FEDCON event featured some pre-Summit activities on Wednesday, Oct. 15, which included a site visit to the Wilmington District's new fish passage system at Rock Arch Rapids, Lock and Dam 1 on the Cape Fear River. More than 40 participants braved the rainy weather and traveled to the dam for a briefing on the design, construction and operation of the system, the Corps' first such project on the East Coast. The ramp, a \$13 million, two-year Army Corps of Engineers project, is the first of its kind on the East Coast and could serve as a blueprint for similar structures elsewhere if substantial numbers of fish use it to access spawning grounds upstream.

Regulatory's Shaver helps keep complex DOT project organized

Story and photos by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

Wilmington District Regulatory Project Manager Brad Shaver is part of a team of regulatory and resource agency officials who monitor work on the North Carolina Department of Transportation Improvement Project Section B. The project is the second and last leg of a phased permit the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers first issued in the late 1990s.

"The first step was to identify the need. In this case, the applicant was the North Carolina Department of Transportation," Shaver said. "The next step for us was to identify the study area; where the project needed to be located to be useful. If we avoided all wetlands that would be great, but that's not realistic."

Shaver said different corridors had to be identified as part of the study area. In addition, he said that when the jurisdictional resources are identified, all of the potential impacts are laid out side by side and officials choose the least environmentally damaging practical alternative.

"It's not always the least environmentally damaging alternative, but it's the least damaging because you have to consider cost, logistics and other factors that go into the decision."

Shaver said many DOT projects are reviewed through what is known as the Merger Process which blends decisions made under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) with specific guidelines for which the Corps' Regulatory Division has responsibility under the Clean Water Act.



Regulatory Project Manager Brad Shaver, second from left, goes over Wilmington Bypass plans with DOT and local agency officials.

"The blended process aids in the disclosure of environmental impacts, and creates a defensible, documented record of decisions by a team of regulatory and resource agencies that includes the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, EPA, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, and the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Division of Water Resources and Coastal Management). The Merger Process results in concurrence points which NCDOT can rely on as the project progresses toward permit application."

Shaver said that at the time of application NCDOT vetted through the merger team and saved in permit time processing since the project had already been reviewed for key components. One of the key components that had to clear the Clean Water Act guidelines was the determination of the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA). This decision weighs all of the conflicting aspects of a project, and determines which alternative best fits this description. ■

Left - Brad Shaver, center, discusses progress on a section of road that passes through wetlands. Although the wetlands will be impacted, all parties involved discuss ways to make the impacts as minimal as possible.

Inset Top Right - Brad Shaver jots down notes during a visit to a section of the project in Brunswick County.

Right - Pilings such as these for a future bridge are hammered into the ground by an explosives-charged machine. Brad Shaver makes sure the fringes of wetlands along the Cape Fear River are minimally impacted.



Lifelong love of math and science leads to rewarding career as civil engineer



Wilmington District civil engineers Laura Mathieu and Rolando Serrano check the progress of the Maintenance Dredging Morehead City Harbor Range A Project with concurrent beach disposal along Fort Macon. Mathieu was on a three-month rotation with the Wilmington District headquarters from the USASOC Resident Engineer Office at Fort Bragg.

Story and photo by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office
Illustration by George Jumara ACE-IT

When she was a young girl, Laura Mathieu said that she was always really good at math and science. She eventually got into engineering because her Dad suggested it, and said that she'd be good at it.

"I just had the technical mind," the Indiana native said. "I liked to build things with Legos and see how things worked."

As she grew older, her interest and love of math and science combined with concerns for the environment. She won a full collegiate

scholarship to Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terra Haute, Indiana after writing an inspiring essay which caught the attention of the school's admissions officials.

"When I was younger, I was a very big environmental advocate and I wanted to do my part to 'save the planet' which was a little extreme," she said. "So I wrote this story about myself...spurred on by a developer who cut down trees where we used to play. This spurred my passion for being environmentally friendly. I was really fascinated by combining science and sustainability, and that got me got me the scholarship."

Mathieu selected chemical engineering as a major with an environmental emphasis. She was one of five female engineering students in her class when she started school in 2001.

"I loved chemistry. It was my thing," she said. "I liked working in the lab and making things happen from mixing elements. I was still passionate about cleaning up the environment. But after a year, I took my first organic chemistry class and I decided I didn't want to take chemistry anymore!"

Mathieu said it was made clear to her quickly that she didn't want to pursue a chemical engineering degree any longer since most jobs would lead to the pharmaceutical fields after graduation.

"So then I asked myself how I could continue my passion to help clean up the environment, and my advisors said I should go into civil engineering."

What Mathieu discovered in college was that engineering "doesn't teach you how to be an engineer, it teaches you how to solve problems." In her junior and senior years in college she and her classmates worked together on projects as teams.

"They taught us how to work with different people."

Mathieu graduated with a degree in civil engineering in 2005. She veered more into construction than civil engineering when she entered the workforce, but she found it enjoyable and challenging.

"My favorite thing about engineering and what we do in construction is that whatever is in the design isn't always what you find in the field. There are existing conditions that you can't predict and plan for, so my job is to find a solution based on what's actually there and how to make it work within the requirements."

At the Wilmington District's U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC) Resident Engineer Office Mathieu has found a challenging niche. The pace of construction on the installation is on par with Fort Bragg's operations tempo which is heavily influenced by USASOC, the 82nd Airborne Division, and other high-speed units.

"Our job is more to oversee and manage the contracts," she stated.

"The best thing that we can do in the construction team, in my opinion, is be more forward thinking and being aware of what's coming up next. You know your schedule and you know where the contractor falls, so you can catch a lot of problems early on and that saves money and that saves

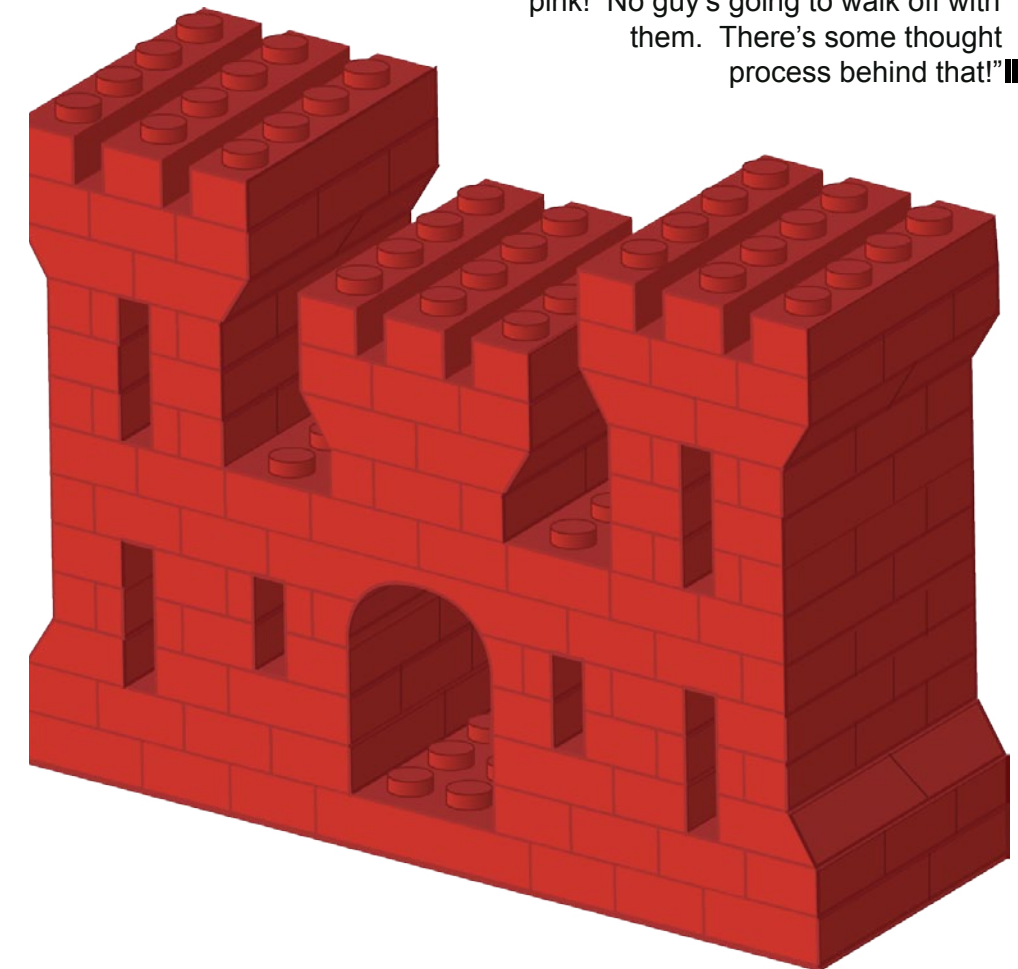
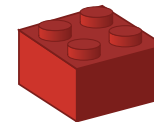
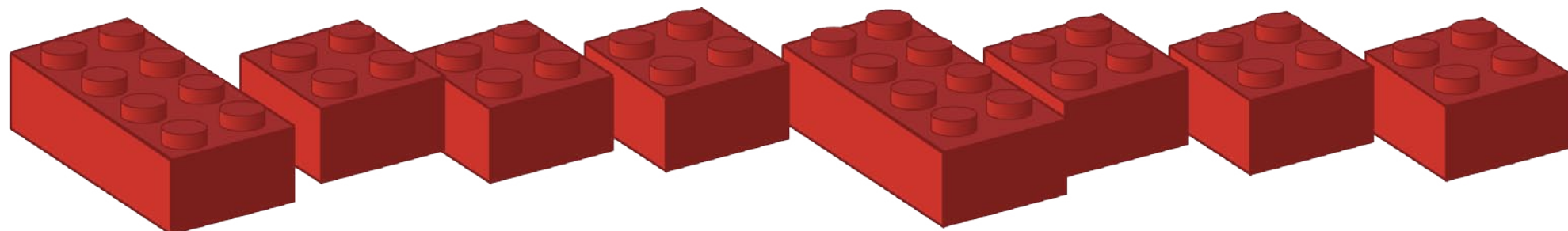
time. And in the relationship that you build with the contractor you need to have a level of respect for each other because at the end of the day you have the same goal."

Mathieu said she adapted a long time ago to working in a male-dominated field. She's a "people person," and loves to share the technical knowledge she's learned over the years with her colleagues. She feels that STEM programs are great for getting young girls interested in something they may have never considered.

"But you have to like it. If somebody has an interest in math and science there's absolutely a place for them in engineering. You have to reach students when they're in late middle school when they're making up their minds up."

An obvious question almost always seems to rise about women in engineering; can you keep your femininity in check working with a bunch of guys?

"My safety glasses are pink!" she said with a laugh. "They're OSHA and EM 385-approved, but they're pink! No guy's going to walk off with them. There's some thought process behind that!" ■



BG David Turner Visit to Wilmington District



SAD Commander Brig. Gen. C. David Turner answers questions from SAW employees during a Town Hall Meeting held on Nov. 12. (ACE-IT Photo by Liz Colunga)

During his visit to the District, SAD Commander Brig. Gen. C. David Turner (Left) met with a number of the District's stakeholders and partners including the commander of U.S. Coast Guard Sector North Carolina, Capt. Sean Murtagh. (ACE-IT Photo by Liz Colunga)



SAD Commander Brig. Gen. C. David Turner talks to SAW staff at the Fort Bragg Resident Engineer Office during his visit to Wilmington District and Fort Bragg, N.C. on Nov. 13. (USACE Photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

Engineer Repair Yard Chief Ken Bailey, Operations Division Director Robert Sattin, SAD Commander Brig. Gen. C. David Turner, and Deputy Chief of Plans, Operations Division, Donny Potter listen to Stephen Capps describe his duties as a machinist at the Engineer Repair Yard during the SAD Commander's visit to the Wilmington District on Nov. 12. (ACE-IT Photo by Liz Colunga)



Berry Mountain Loop Trail opens at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir

Story by Brad Carey
Ranger, W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in partnership with the Brushy Mountain Cyclists Club, announce the opening of the Berry Mountain Loop Trail at W. Kerr Scott Dam and Reservoir.

The Berry Mountain Loop is located adjacent to the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail (OVT) between Berry Mountain Park and Bandit's Roost Campground. The trailhead can be accessed from the paved parking lot located just past the Berry Mountain Park entrance on Highway 268 West.

The construction of the new trail was made possible through a Recreational Trails Program grant awarded through the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources in 2012 to the Brushy Mountain Cyclists Club (BMCC). The grant totaled \$34,000 with a required 25 percent match. The matching funds came via donated equipment and volunteer hours from a number of groups. The BMCC donated equipment and volunteer labor. Other volunteers included the Eckerd Youth Alternative Camp and the North Carolina Forest

Service B.R.I.D.G.E. Crew. Luke Sheets built one of two bridges on the trail as an Eagle Scout project. Horton Design of North Wilkesboro completed the design, trail layout and construction.

The Berry Mountain Trail is 4.5 miles long and consists of over 100 banked turns through varying terrain. Once the trail is completed, it will feature a unique flyover bridge at the intersection of the new trail and the Overmountain Victory Trail. The bridge will span the OVT while the new trail passes under.

Since 2003, the BMCC has built and maintains nearly 40 miles of multi-user trails at W. Kerr Scott in cooperation with the USACE. The trails have earned EPICS status from the International Mountain Bicycling Association. EPICS status is awarded only to trail systems that are built to IMBA standards that assure sustainability for generations to follow and as voted on by public comment. In addition, the trails have gained national attention through print media, social media and acclaimed mountain bike races. To learn more about the trails at Kerr Scott, visit the Brushy Mountain Cyclists Club website at brushymtncyclists.com. ■



Antiterrorism Awareness: See Something, Say Something

USACE story by Ann Johnson
SAW Public Affairs Office
Illustration by George Jumara ACE-IT

Senior Army leaders have designated August as Antiterrorism Awareness Month with the slogan "see something, say something." The purpose is to heighten vigilance and increase understanding to protect Army personnel from acts of terrorism.

Throughout the month, Soldiers, government employees, family members and others will have opportunities to further educate themselves on antiterrorism measures with help from the Wilmington District Security office.

"Every member of USACE plays an important role in preventing terrorist acts," said Lt. Gen. Thomas Bostick, Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). "By understanding the indicators of potential terrorist activities and reporting suspicious behavior to military police or local law enforcement, our community members enhance and extend USACE's protection posture."

The terrorist threat remains real. According to a recent article by the Heritage Foundation, there have been 60 terrorist plots against the United States since 9/11. Of the 60 plots, 49 could be considered homegrown terror plots. This means that one or more of the actors were American citizens, legal permanent residents, or visitors radicalized predominately in the United States. Their

research of media reports and court documents shows that military facilities were the number one target in these plots, followed by New York City and places with mass gatherings, such as the Boston Marathon, nightclubs and bars, and shopping malls.

While four plots were successful, and three foiled merely by luck or the swift action of private citizens, the rest were thwarted in their early stages by U.S., and sometimes international, law enforcement, the Heritage Foundation reports.

"Preventing terrorism does not require special training," said Wilmington District's Chief of Security. "Anyone can contribute to antiterrorism by observing their surroundings and reporting suspicious or unusual activities."



Suspicious or unusual activities include:

- People asking security-related questions
- Unfamiliar individuals in secure areas
- Loitering
- Unauthorized photography of military facilities, sensitive areas or access control points
- Unattended briefcases, suitcases, backpacks or packages
- Unattended cars left in parking lots, no-parking zones or in front of important buildings.

Prompt and detailed reporting of suspicious activities can help prevent terrorist attacks. Awareness is critical. For information on suspicious activity reporting, go to www.dhs.gov/how-do-i/report-suspicious-activity. ■



“Gone Fishin’”

By Dana Matics
Ranger, Falls Lake Dam and Reservoir

The regulars at the dam at Falls Lake are typically the first to notice something new and our staff isn't able to sneak too much by them. However, the new fishing pier that was installed over 3 days at the end of July appeared so quickly, it left some of our visitors to wonder if it appeared by magic.

Not magic, but certainly a great partnership effort by the staff at Falls Lake and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC). The end result of this partnership will be a universally accessible fishing pier, small parking lot, and universal access path to the pier. This will give those with limited mobility something they've not had before at the dam: easy access to the lake for bank fishing.

The NCWRC was able to provide and install the pier while the Corps will offer universal parking and access. To pay for the parking and associated access, the Falls Lake staff submitted an application to the Corps' Handshake Program which offers a source of seed money to Corps installations for worthwhile partnership projects.

Falls Lake was the recipient of \$30,000 from the Handshake Program for the parking lot and access, which was matched by the \$30,000 pier provided by the NCWRC.

Falls Lake staff hopes to finish the parking lot and access by spring 2014. For now, visitors can still enjoy the pier. If you plan an outing to Falls Lake, make sure to bring a fishing pole! ■

(Change of Command continued from page 3)

“The template the District created was the first of its kind in the nation, and has been used in other states and other Corps districts to better leverage federal and state funds to focus dredging efforts in channels that need it the most,” Semonite said.

Innovation such as this is needed if we want to continue to build partnerships and look for new funding methods during fiscally uncertain times, Semonite said.

These are tough times to be a commander, Semonite said, citing the delicate balance between taking care of people with a constrained federal budget.

“Taking care of your people during these times of a constrained budget will be your toughest challenge,” Semonite told incoming commander Col. Kevin P. Landers Sr. “Projects come and go, but the changes and challenges of the federal budget and workforce remain.”

Baker thanked the community leaders, partners, stakeholders and the District staff for their support during his tenure. He likened the District to the little engine that could, going from a small civil works District to a more balanced one that includes military construction and interagency support. “Chug, chug a chug,” he quoted. “I think I can. I think I can.”

“The District improved its culture, hired the next generation of leaders, and took on the challenges,” Baker said. “These new hires will leave a legacy that lives on long after I am gone.”

Also, under Baker's leadership, the District increased its military personnel during Baker's tenure, aggressively pursuing Wounded Warriors, specifically, the use of Operation Warfighter, hiring three Soldiers to support District operations at Fort Bragg, and implementing the use of the Personnel Force Innovation Program (PFI), providing the District with flexibility in filling critical manpower positions in DoD working capital activities by providing highly skilled Reservists on a reimbursable and fee-for-service basis. The District has employed nine service members since 2011 by using this hiring strategy.

Baker said the Army has a strange sense of humor. “I am getting ready to sleep in the bed that I have made,” he said. “I am about to become your customer.”

Baker will soon become the new USASOC engineer and a customer of the Wilmington District.

Wilmington District's 54th Commander, Col. Kevin P. Landers, Sr., told the crowd gathered for the ceremony that his charge for his speech was “to be brief, be brilliant, and most importantly, be gone.”

Landers acknowledged his parents “who have not missed a graduation or ceremony since 1988,” and credited them for providing him with the foundation needed to be where he is today.

“The foundation, work ethic and moral underpinning of Jim and Becky Landers are the reason I stand in front of you today,” he said.

He credited his wife Melody for keeping him grounded and playing the Command Sergeant Major role when he needs a little motivation. “In our short seven-year marriage she has weathered two deployments, participated in the casualty notification process and led from the shadows without any complaint.”

Landers talked about team work and the interdependence we have on one another.

“It is that very essence of teamwork associated with an organization that keeps me clamoring to continue to put on a uniform day in and day out,” he said, quoting Helen Keller, “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

Landers referred to a historical vignette penned in 1984 by Wilmington District Engineer Col. Wayne Hansen who wrote, “Our study of the past shows the interdependence of all levels of government. Without cooperation of federal, state and local agencies, Corps of Engineers projects could neither begin nor continue to completion.”

“I look forward to the challenges that lie ahead, but more importantly I look forward to those very partners that Colonel Hanson referred to 30 years ago as he captured the legacy of this great District.”

Landers assumed command of Wilmington District following a tour as a U.S. Army National Security Fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The Long Island, New York native is married to the former Melody Morrison Wilson from Grantsville, West Virginia. They have four children, Kevin Jr., 23, Megan, 21, Amanda, 19, and Justin, 17. ■

Former dredged material islands are perfect habitat for nesting seabirds



Story and Photos by Hank Heusinkveld
SAW Public Affairs Office

When visitors take the ferry from Kure Beach on Pleasure Island to Southport in June and July, it's hard not to notice a flurry of activity on one particular island located just upriver in the middle of the Cape Fear River. It's called Ferry Slip Island, and it's home to thousands of nesting seabirds and their young. What was once just

an uninhabited, typical dredged material disposal site more than 35 years ago has developed into some of the last nesting habitat for seabirds in southeastern North Carolina.

Recognizing a new role for the uninhabited, elliptical uplands in the Cape Fear River began in the mid-1970s when Dr. James Parnell, an ornithology professor from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, approached Wilmington District biologists to inform them that seabirds began using Ferry Slip Island for nesting. There were few, if any, historic nesting sites left on the beaches in and around Wilmington, so the birds adapted to the alternative site. The island, which is owned by the state of North Carolina and overseen by the Audubon North Carolina, slowly became a bird magnet during nesting season.

"We have several different species of water birds and several species of shore birds that nest here," said Walker Golder, Audubon North Carolina Deputy Director and Director of Coasts and Marshes. "We have brown pelicans, royal terns and sandwich terns, and laughing gulls which all nest in their habitats on the island. We also have American oyster catchers which are a large shore bird, and we also have willets which also breed here."

Golder said that to give an idea of the importance of this locality for the birds, Ferry Slip Island, together with nearby Pelican Island, supports about 20 percent of North Carolina's royal tern and sandwich tern breeding populations. He said these two islands are the only suitable nesting sites for those species between Cape Romaine, S.C. and Cape Lookout, N.C.

"The islands here in the Lower Cape Fear River also support about 20 to 25 percent of North Carolina's brown pelican population," Golder said. "And both of these islands are absolutely essential to them and essential to their recovery in this state."

The island is divided into two distinct habitats. Golder said pelicans prefer grassy, wooded areas, while terns prefer sand.

"What we did initially when we modified the island and when we knew it was going to become permanent habitat was to design it with sloped edges for a natural look," said Wilmington District biologist Jeff Richter. "The island was built using the 'Design by Nature' approach which

(Continued on page 24)

Left - Audubon North Carolina Deputy Director and Director of Coasts and Marshes Walker Golder explains to Star News photojournalist Matt Born how the Corps of Engineers helped design and sculpt Ferry Slip Island with dredged material to resemble a natural island with sloped embankments that allow for drainage and to lessen erosion.

Below - Pelicans and gulls take time out from foraging for food for their offspring on a spit on Ferry Slip Island.



A mother brown pelican tends to her chick in a pelican rookery.





What was once a dredged material disposal island is now nesting habitat for various seabirds like these brown pelicans.

(Seabirds continued from page 23)

imitated a natural island's structure and appearance. Our engineers and biologists and dredging contractors were able to create a perfect formula to used dredged sand beneficially to create the bird habitat."

The island is off limits to the public during the nesting season to lessen stress on the birds. During cooler months, Audubon North Carolina organizes volunteers to rid the island of excess vegetation and for general

maintenance. It's a year-round commitment to help preserve the islands as much as possible to keep them habitable for future generations of nesting seabirds.

"Shore birds are a part of the beach and people just take them for granted," said Golder. "We live near the ocean, so you see seabirds all of the time. Most people are never really going to see the island, but they can definitely see a reminder of the island when a pelican flies by." ■■



Volunteers work on tug boat "Dan" on National Public Lands Day at John H. Kerr Dam and Reservoir

By David A. Schwartz
Park Ranger/Volunteer Coordinator

National Public Lands Day (NPLD) 2014 was a great success at John H. Kerr Reservoir. Thirteen volunteers joined lake rangers to work on the restoration of tug boat "Dan", a 50-foot tugboat that served the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as a navigational work boat until it was decommissioned in 1992.

In desperate need of a new paint job, Dan received the attention it needed on NPLD with a new "first coat"

paint job around the hull. (Please see attached before and after composite picture.) Efforts are currently being made to use local Boy Scout groups to complete the painting on the outside of the upper cabin area.

Volunteers also assisted Park Rangers with minor landscape improvements in the Butterfly Garden in front of the Joseph S. J. Tanner, II Environmental Education Center (EEC). Trimming overgrown shrubs, raking out dead limbs, pulling out weeds and tidying up plants was all accomplished in this garden that highlights the entrance to the very popular EEC. ■





Left - Event organizer Matt Wall bows his head for a moment of silence in recognition of all those who never returned. (USACE photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

Below - The reading of the names of those who never returned home. (USACE photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

Right Top - Wilmington District Commander Col. Kevin Landers, Sr., was the keynote speaker for the Candle Light Service held in commemoration of National POW/MIA Day at the National Cemetery in Wilmington. (USACE photo by Hank Heusinkveld)

Right Bottom - POW/MIA Day event organizers Matt Wall, left, and SFC Dan Corbett, USA Ret., chat with Col. Kevin Landers before the event. Corbett was formerly assigned to the Central Identification Laboratory in Hawaii, and helped bring back the remains of six Americans who were killed in Vietnam. (USACE photo by Hank Heusinkveld)





SAW Commander Col. Kevin P. Landers visits with Michael Sorady, senior electrician, in the powerhouse at Philpott Dam and Reservoir. (USACE Photo by Rocky Rockwell)