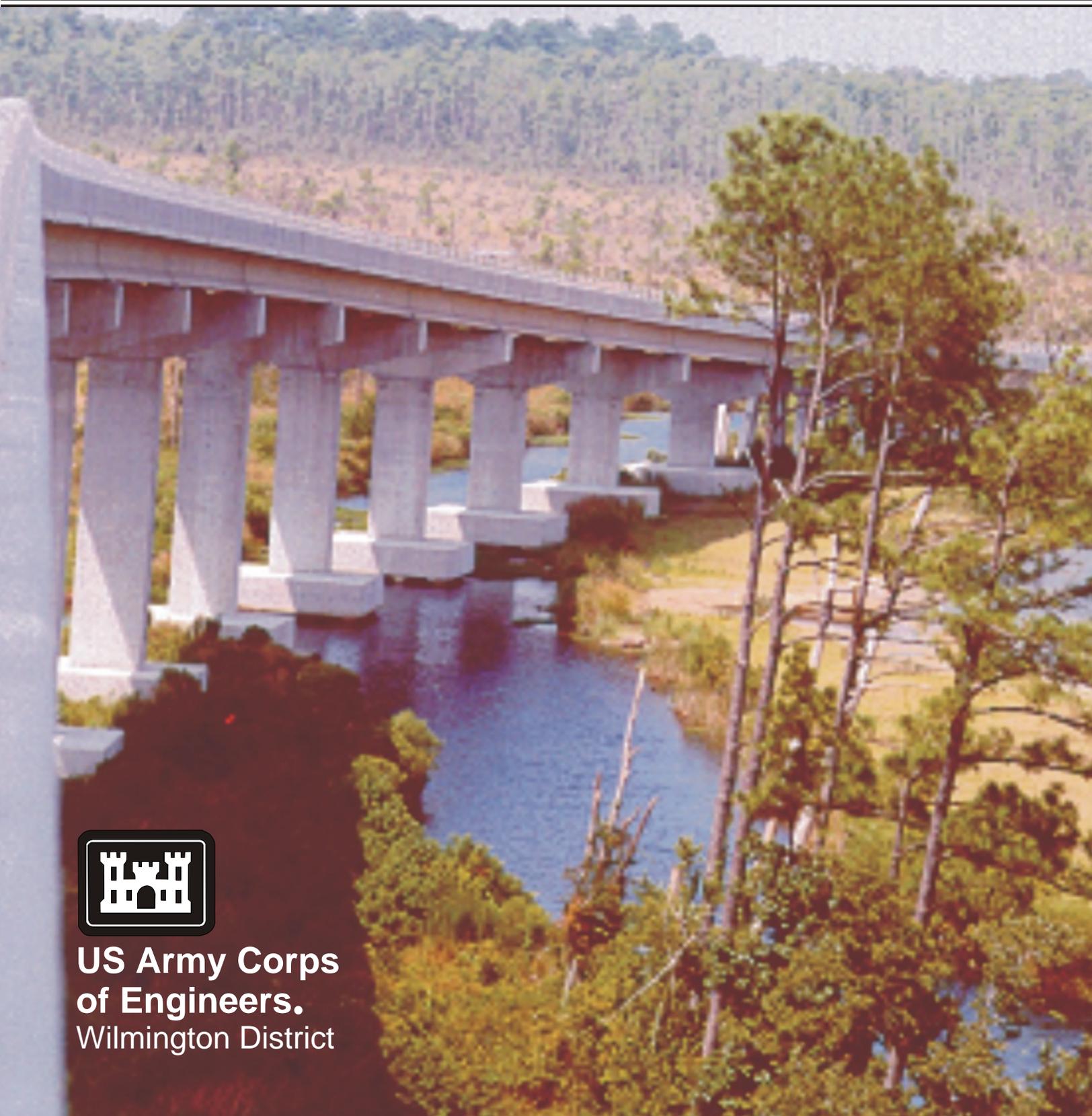


# Wilmington DISTRICT NEWS

*Volume 21, Number 9*

*September 2001*



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers.**  
Wilmington District

# Wilmington DISTRICT NEWS

Volume 21, Number 9  
September 2001

*Wilmington District News is an unofficial publication authorized under the AR 360-1. It is published monthly by U.S. Army Engineer District, Wilmington, reproduced, and circulated through distribution to CESAW employees. Submission of articles, photos, letters, and graphic arts of interest to the general readership is encouraged. Letters to the editor are welcome. All manuscripts are subject to editing and rewriting prior to publication. Deadline for submission of copy is the eighth of each month. All photos are official U.S. Army photos unless otherwise stated. The views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Corps of Engineers or the Department of the Army. Printed circulation: 750.*

**Address mail to:**

U.S. Army Engineer District,  
Wilmington

ATTN: CESAW-PA  
P.O. Box 1890  
Wilmington, N.C. 28402-1890

Telephone: (910) 251-4626

**Email:**

Penny.Schmitt@usace.army.mil

**Commander and District Engineer:**

COL. James W. DeLony

**Chief, Public Affairs:**

Penelope Schmitt

**Managing Editor:**

Christine Bruske

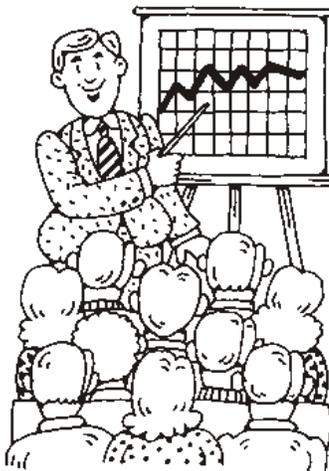
**Layout and Design:**

Susan Benton  
The Graphic Triangle  
Rocky Point, North Carolina

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stirling Receives Award.....	Page 1
Regional Fisheries Flourish.....	Page 2
The Waves Game.....	Page 4
Fairfield Bridge Dedication.....	Page 6
Scout Jamboree.....	Page 9
Operations Plan Update.....	Page 11
New TEAM Members to the District.....	Page 12
Retiree News.....	Page 13

## Speaking Out

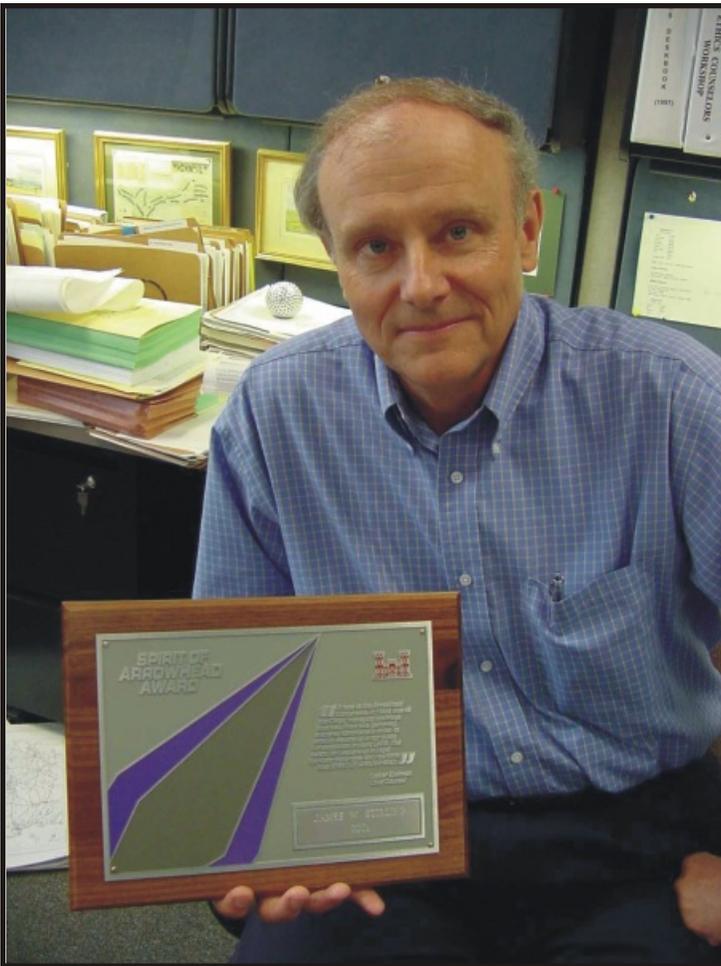


COL DeLony and Chief of Operations Division Jim Butler met with NCDENR Secretary Bill Ross and Directors of Divisions within DENR (Health & Human Services, Forest Service, State Parks, Wildlife Commission and Water Resources) at the Archdale Building in Raleigh to establish a charter and structure for recurring coordination meetings among the Corps and Directors for enhanced management of public lands and facilities at Jordan, Falls and Kerr Lakes.

COL DeLony gave an overview of the Corps contribution to North Carolina Marine Fisheries during meetings of the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission held in Wilmington.

Senior Project Manager Al Bjorkquist made a presentation to the Regional Civil Works Project Delivery Conference in Orlando, Florida. His presentation focused on planning and implementation of civil works projects along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway.

Parks Manager Dan Keir, Assistant Operations Manager R.G. Absher and Civil Engineering Technician Howard Varnam staffed a Corps Water Safety Exhibit at the Sneeds Ferry Shrimp Festival. Safety Sam, the Corps remote-controlled talking tugboat was a big draw and more than 500 people visited the Corps' exhibit. ▲



# Stirling receives Arrowhead Award

By Penny Schmitt

**W**ilmington District Chief Counsel, Jim Stirling, has been recognized with the Lester Edelman Spirit of the Arrowhead Award for 2000. The award recognizes a Corps attorney who best exemplifies leadership and excellence in service to clients, and who has made significant contributions to Corps-wide legal services.

We all know Mr. Stirling is a standout. Here are the reasons why he was chosen as “the best overall Attorney in the US Army Corps of Engineers”:

“He practices preventive and proactive law, rather than reacting. This empowers us to move forward into new missions and new work with a minimum of drag from unanticipated obstacles.”

Some important accomplishments in his role as the District’s Chief Counsel include:

- **Project Management Business Process:** He assigned a member of the Office of Counsel to support every project delivery team.
- **Federal Cost Sharing Agreements:** He helped craft project agreements that ensure compliance and quick resolution of issues throughout the cost-sharing process.

- **Project Review:** His proactive approach enables the District to identify potential legal issues at an early stage, avoiding obstacles during project development and execution.
- **Support for others:** He helped to craft successful agreements with the US Forest Service and the National Oceanic and Aeronautical Administration.
- **Real Estate:** Through his efforts, the district resolved several difficult and potentially precedent-setting real estate encroachment issues.
- **Emergency management:** He served as a key member of the team involved in the Hurricane Fran debris hauling fraud case.
- **Bribery case:** In cooperation with the Army Criminal Investigation Division and the United States Attorney, successfully brought a case resulting in a conviction for attempting to bribe a federal official.
- **Regulatory law:** Has dedicated the entire effort of one member of the District Counsel team to regulatory work, leading to highly knowledgeable insight and review of sensitive regulatory issues.

Add to that his service as Deputy Director and Deputy Commander, his superb support on EEO, Labor Relations, and Ethics issues, and we have a Chief Counsel who is more than 'sterling' he's pure GOLD!▲

# Fisheries flourish

## Regional fisheries benefit from Corps programs

By Penny Schmitt

Customers with fins, scales and shells? Yes! The Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, serves the 'consumer needs' of aquatic residents by promoting clean water, healthy living space, and added or enhanced habitat.

Better environments for fish are a natural outgrowth of the District's mission to provide North Carolina and the Roanoke River Basin in Virginia with water resource and navigation project management, environmental remediation and restoration, regulatory permitting, enforcement and coordination, and emergency response, recovery and mitigation.

"We consider the environmental aspects of our projects to be essential project features, not extras or add-ons," COL James W. DeLony told the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission recently.

In fact, some District projects and programs have the betterment of living conditions for marine and freshwater life as their primary objective. (See "Saving Sea Turtles" in the August, 2001 issue of *Wilmington District News*, and "Corps partnership revitalizes trout streams," in the June, 2001 issue.)

### Project addresses fisheries issues

Fisheries concerns play an important part in District project development. As the nation's lead agency for water resources management, the Corps develops and constructs many water resources projects.

"Every project we develop is done through an open process that welcomes the input of stakeholders from natural resources and fisheries interests throughout. From the day we begin studies to the time, years later, when we construct, monitor, and operate projects, we are working with others," DeLony said.



This healthy striped bass was caught in the Roanoke River Basin.

District projects that focus strongly on fisheries include a study of the Lockwoods Folly River for potential habitat restoration, a study of Currituck Sound to determine whether the area can be restored to freshwater fisheries, and a study of the Neuse River Basin that addresses water quality and fisheries issues.

- The large, multi-faceted project to deepen the Cape Fear River Harbor Channel offers good examples of the way Corps projects include fisheries needs, even when they are directed at other goals.
- Blast testing carefully examined the effects of blasting on endangered fish, and helped the Corps identify the most fish-friendly construction methods.
- At-work monitoring surveys the construction area for endangered fish, turtles, and marine

mammals, and modifies work schedules to ensure protection.

- Habitat construction created 30-plus acres of new estuarine habitat at Island 13, replacing more than double the amount of wetland habitat to be consumed in the project.
- Fish passage structure will be built at Lock and Dam No. 1 to enhance upstream mobility for anadromous fish.
- In-depth assessment is recording baseline conditions and populations for a wide variety of aquatic life before, during and after project construction.

"The monitoring program is of particular interest to us," said Frank Yelverton, the biologist assigned to the Wilmington Harbor project.

The District sought input from natural resources agencies and universities in designing a scope of work for its monitoring contract. "We want to ensure that our stakeholders have a say. Naturally our monitoring results are more credible if they know that we are gathering and analyzing the data they consider most important," Yelverton said.

Contractors from Versar Inc. and CZR Inc. are collecting data on intertidal fauna, surf-zone finfish, and shorebirds during each season of the year at four locations within the Brunswick County Beaches project area, and also at a control location. Monitoring began in November 2000, a year before beach construction work began, and will continue for at least a year beyond construction.

"We will do similar monitoring on the Dare County Beaches project, with added monitoring of beach material borrow site areas offshore," Yelverton explained.

A similar monitoring plan was recently completed by New York



Researchers sample marine life in the surf zone.

District for a 47-kilometer beach project. That study found rapid recovery within six months in the beach nourishment areas-- in all the studied habitats. "We will be adding to the sum of information on the effects of coastal engineering with our more southerly project data," Yelverton said.

### **Operations and Regulatory programs support fisheries**

The District's Regulatory program ensures that development meets the requirements of both federal and state laws that govern clean water, coastal zone management, fish and wildlife, and other concerns.

"The conditions of wetlands and streams affects the entire watershed and the environment beyond the mouth of our rivers as they enter the Atlantic Ocean," COL DeLony said. "Our Regulatory mission is critical to the quality of our freshwater, estuarine and ultimately our offshore environments, too."

The Wilmington District also operates navigation and flood control projects, keeping wildlife 'customer needs' firmly in mind.

"We have found new ways to operate our locks on the Cape Fear River to enhance passage for fish like the American and White Shad, which migrate from the sea to the river for spawning," DeLony said. "We will also add a fish passage structure to Lock Number One."

In addition to efforts at the Cape Fear River, the Corps works with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the Virginia Fish and Game Commission and others to manage fisheries at the District's five lake projects. "Healthy populations of game fish are an important resource. The way we manage our water releases, and the water quality, in our reservoirs affects the health of the striped bass population and other fisheries. We take sport fishermen and commercial fishing interests seriously!" DeLony said.

### **Corps empowered to boost fish habitat**

By Congressional mandate, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has several authorities that sponsors can call upon to help improve water quality and other conditions that enhance fish habitat:

**Section 216 Studies:** Under this authority, the Corps can review operations of an existing project. The Wilmington District currently has a Section 216 project under way to look at the full spectrum of operations around John H. Kerr Lake, in the Roanoke River Basin. Since the lake was impounded about 50 years ago, the area has seen significant development. Other changes on the river, like the impoundment of Lake Gaston, have affected the environment and habitats.

Wilmington District has also requested funds for a study to evaluate operations on the three Cape Fear River Locks and Dams. Once, these locks facilitated commercial traffic on the Cape Fear River. Now, recreational boaters are the locks' users, and efforts to promote anadromous fish populations are increasing.

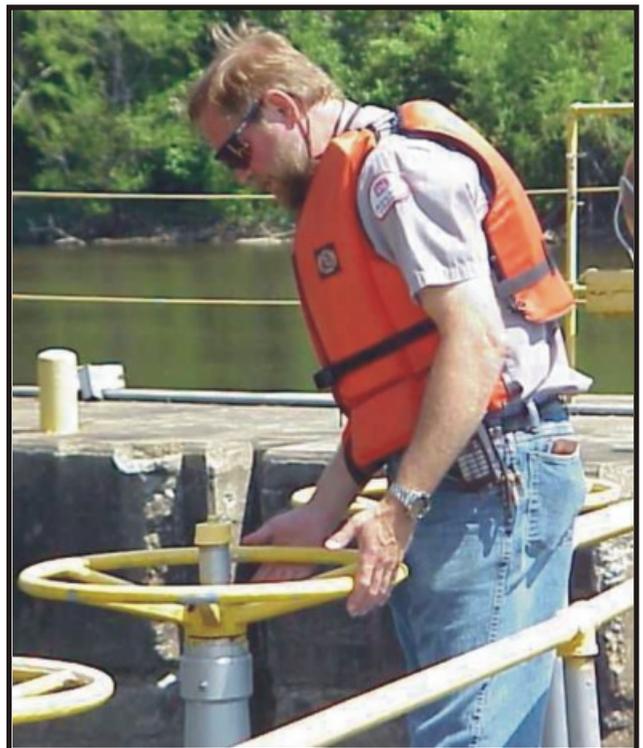
**Section 1135 Projects:** This authority

empowers the Corps to modify an existing project in order to make environmental improvements. The Wilmington District recently restored sea turtle habitat at Oak Island as a Section 1135 project.

**Section 206:** Aquatic ecosystem restoration is another type of project the Corps can undertake. Little Sugar Creek, in Charlotte and Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, is benefiting from stream restoration work that will make the urban stream healthy for aquatic life.

**Section 204:** The Corps is also able to make beneficial use of dredged materials to improve aquatic habitat, including wetlands, in connection with federal navigation projects. The Corps worked with the State of North Carolina and the Audubon Society to restore nesting habitat on Battery Island, under this authority.

"All these authorities are available to help improve habitat and water," COL DeLony said. "We are eager to work with communities, and regional and state authorities to find ways to promote healthy fisheries in our North Carolina and Virginia river basins, and along our coastline." ▲



Lockmaster Robin Hall adjusts lock gates to assist fish passage.

# Corps night at the Waves game

By Christine Bruske

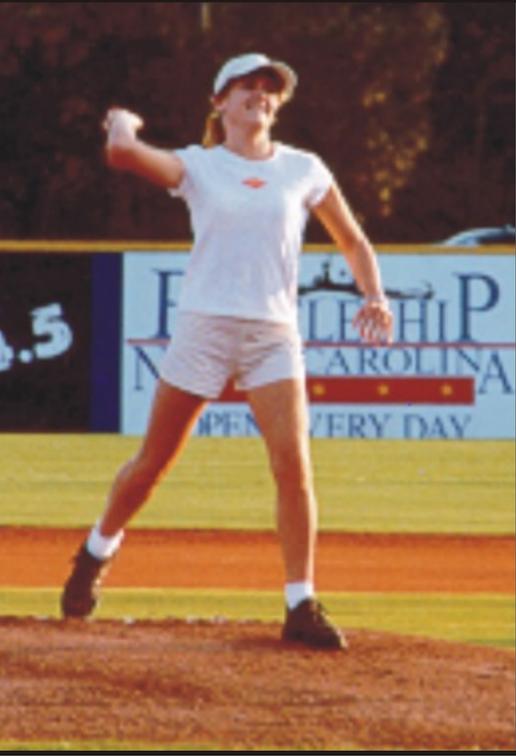
The Corps of Engineers night at the Wilmington Waves games was a homerun! More than 200 tickets were sold to Wilmington District TEAM members, their families and their friends.

Everyone brought lots of delicious food to share at the pre-game tailgate party. Chief of Technical Services, Ben Wood, showed off his superior grilling skills and made some great hotdogs and hamburgers. No one left hungry.

Our own Jory Triplett, Wilmington District's Employee of the Year, threw out the first pitch and set the game in

motion. Cheers rang out from the stands as Wilmington District TEAM members yelled support for the home town ball club. The evening was capped off with a spectacular fireworks display.

"It was great to have so many of our TEAM members together having fun," said District Deputy Commander, MAJ George Shepard. "I was really glad to see TEAM members from the lake projects. They had to travel a long way, but it sure makes a big difference when they're here. We all had a great time."▲





**This Page**

*Top: MAJ Shepard waves the Corps of Engineers flag.*

*Middle: Ron Stirrat with wife Jennifer and son Gregory.*

*Bottom: Anthony Josey, who did a great job organizing the Waves game event, with wife Shenita and sons Duane and Antuane.*



**Opposite Page**

*Top far left: Jory Triplett, Wilmington District Employee of the Year, throws out the first pitch.*

*Middle far left: Doug Green, Mrs. DeLony, Jim Butler and COL DeLony cheer for the Waves.*

*Bottom far left: John Roberts with wife Susan and Tom Corder enjoy the tailgate feast before the game.*

*Top left: "Crash," the Wave's big furry mascot.*

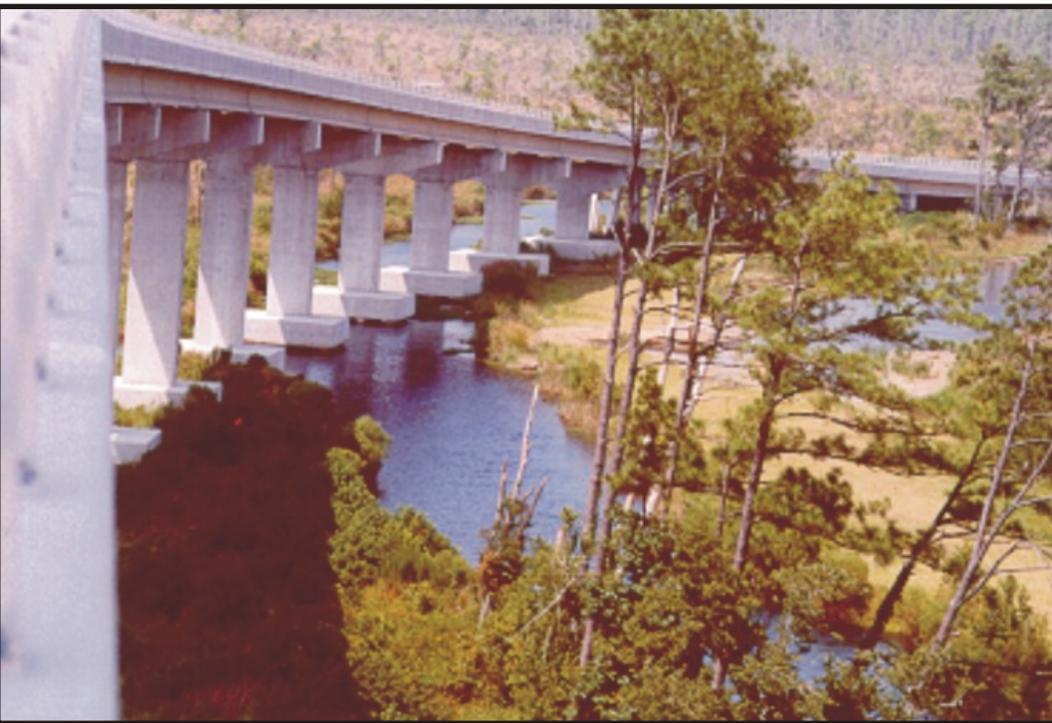
*Bottom left: Linda Linder and her family, who came in from Siler City to attend the game.*



# BRIDGE OPENS

## Chapter of Corps history closes

By Penny Schmitt



Fairfield Bridge

**F**AIRFIELD, North Carolina- In ceremonies hosted by the North Carolina Department of Transportation, the Wilmington District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers officially handed over the Fairfield Bridge to the state of North Carolina.

The last of five bridges built by the Corps to replace swing-span bridges on the Norfolk-to-Beaufort reach of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway (AIWW), Fairfield Bridge soars 65 feet above boat traffic passing below. The bridge's center span is 600 feet long, and the bridge structure extends for three quarters of a mile, with newly built highway approaches. Tidewater Construction, Inc., of Norfolk Virginia, served as the Corps' contractor for the project, which cost about \$15.5 million to build.

The Fairfield Bridge incorporates design features intended to enhance its durability. "We used epoxy-coated rebar (steel-reinforced concrete)," said Jim

Mullins, the Corps Resident Engineer for the project. "It was chosen with North Carolina Department of Transportation input. The material will resist the potential for corrosion from the slightly brackish water of the AIWW and the wetlands around the bridge."

The bridge replaces a swing-span bridge that was built in 1935, and had been operated by tenders on a 24-hour-a-day basis for its lifetime. The metal bridge structure was towed to sea and sunk as part of a project to construct artificial reef habitat for fish and marine life.

All the bridges are located in remote, rural areas of North Carolina. They support important transportation corridors, yet presented significant design and construction challenges due

to wetlands locations and hard-to-reach sites.

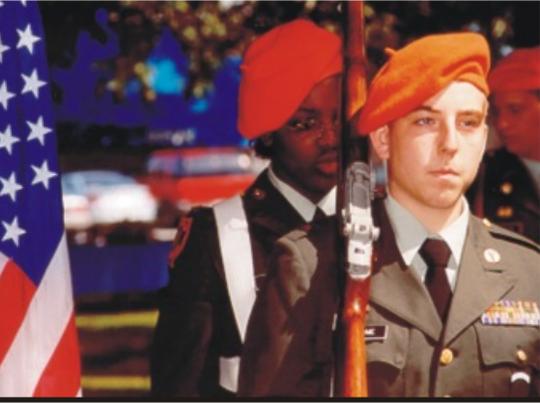
By the 1960s, the Corps realized that the original swing-span bridges were aging and becoming more expensive and difficult to staff and maintain. North Carolina state sponsors worked to obtain authorization for the Corps to replace five bridges in the River and Harbor Act of 1970. However, the Wilmington District did not begin construction on the first replacement until 1976 due to funding issues.

In 1981, the Walter B. Jones Memorial Bridge opened, replacing the Wilkerson Creek Bridge. In 1986, the new Coinjock Bridge replaced the old swing bridge of the same name. In 1994, the new Core Creek Bridge was completed. And in 1998, the Gene A. Potter Memorial Bridge replaced the Hobucken Bridge.



MAJ Shepard, NC Secretary of Transportation Lyndo Tippett and President of Southern Albemarle Association Carlisle Harrell cut the ribbon and officially opened the Fairfield Bridge.

"The new Fairfield Bridge is the final link in a chain of bridges that opens both highway and waterway traffic to free flow along the Intracoastal Waterway," said Major George T. Shepard, Deputy Commander of the Wilmington District. "We're proud to turn this beautiful structure over to the people of North Carolina."



*The Creswell High School JROTC Color Guard presented the colors for the Pledge of Allegiance.*

# Bridge families reunite

By Penny Schmitt

A gentle breeze cooled those gathered under pecan trees on the broad lawn donated for the occasion by Mrs. Dorothy Dudley. Dozens of homemade cookies and gallons of lemonade waited while public officials spoke. The Columbia

who led the Pledge of Allegiance, represented the many descendants of the bridge tenders at the event. Jenna is the granddaughter of Rufus Cutthrell, who was the last bridge tender to serve the Corps at Fairfield Bridge. Marianna is the granddaughter of Daniel Webster

North Carolina Secretary of Transportation Lyndo Tippet called the bridge “a shining example of what can happen when federal and state agencies work together.” He also noted that the Fairfield Bridge was just one of many examples of cooperation between the Corps and the Department of Transportation on Regulatory and Environmental issues as they affect transportation.

Tippet hailed the bridge as another important link connecting county seats and bridging rivers in coastal Carolina. “The Fairfield Bridge will speed passage for industries, and help farmers get their products to market. It will help motorists get closer to the national treasure we have here in the Matamuskeet Wildlife Refuge.”

Carlisle Harrell, President of the Southern Albemarle Association, spoke of the role local governments play in promoting better transportation corridors. The Association, made up of members from Beaufort, Dare, Hyde, Tyrrell, Martin, and Washington counties, has actively worked for roadway improvements to ease travel among the many small communities in coastal Carolina. ▲



*The Columbia High School Band played the National Anthem.*

High School Band performed the National Anthem. A Creswell High Junior ROTC Color Guard carried the flags. And best of all, the granddaughters of two long-time bridge tenders at the old Fairfield swing bridge led the Pledge of Allegiance. This ribboncutting ceremony for the new Fairfield Bridge was far more than a public encounter among agency officials celebrating a job well done. More than anything, it was a family reunion and a last, fond farewell for the many who attended.

“Webb” Sears, whose 41 years with the Corps made him the longest serving Fairfield Bridge tender.

Also present for the event was Bunk Carawan, who served at the Bridge, and many other family members related to bridge tenders Erwin Smith, Dallas Mooney, and Seth Potter.

“I’m double connected,” explained Marlis Smith. “My dad was Webb Sears, and my husband was Erwin Smith. I stayed up waiting for him to come home from work many, many nights.”

Jenna Knecht and Marianna Russ,

*Continued on page 8*

*More than 100 local residents attended the Fairfield Bridge ceremony. ▽*





*Five swing bridges along the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway have been replaced by tall, stationary bridges that do not require bridge tenders.*

“I can remember Daddy hiding our Easter eggs down at the bridge yard for us to hunt,” said Smith’s daughter, Kim. “That bridge was a big, big part of our lives, and I have to say we were really sad to see it go.”

Some truly far away memories were shared under the stately pecans. Janet Mrs. Dudley, the day’s hostess, was Queen of the first bridge ceremony held in the area--the opening of the Albemarle Sound Bridge--more than 50 years earlier. Dudley’s grandfather ran the rope-drawn barge that helped folks cross the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway before 1935, when the Corps swing bridge first opened. “We loved to go down to the waterway and swim. Of course our parents didn’t like it, they were afraid of alligators,” she recalled. Her sister-in-law, now widowed, remembers the time her yet-to-be husband leaned over the side of the bridge and accidentally dropped her high school ring in the water. “That old bridge was part of us,” she said.

North of town, the spectacular swath of steel and concrete that is the new Fairfield Bridge soars across the Intracoastal Waterway under a

glaring marshland sun. But those who live here will always see in its shadow the faint ghost of another bridge, and will remember the well-loved men who faithfully cleared the way for travelers by night and day.▲



*(L to R) MAJ Shepard, Paul Waff, Janet Russ, Jenna Knecht, Marianna Russ, and NC Secretary of Transportation Lyndo Tippett. The young ladies are grand-daughters of former bridge tenders Rufus Cutthrell (Jenna Knecht) and Webb Sears (Marianna Russ). Janet Russ is Mr. Sears’ daughter.*

# Corps promotes water conservation at 2001 National Boy Scout Jamboree

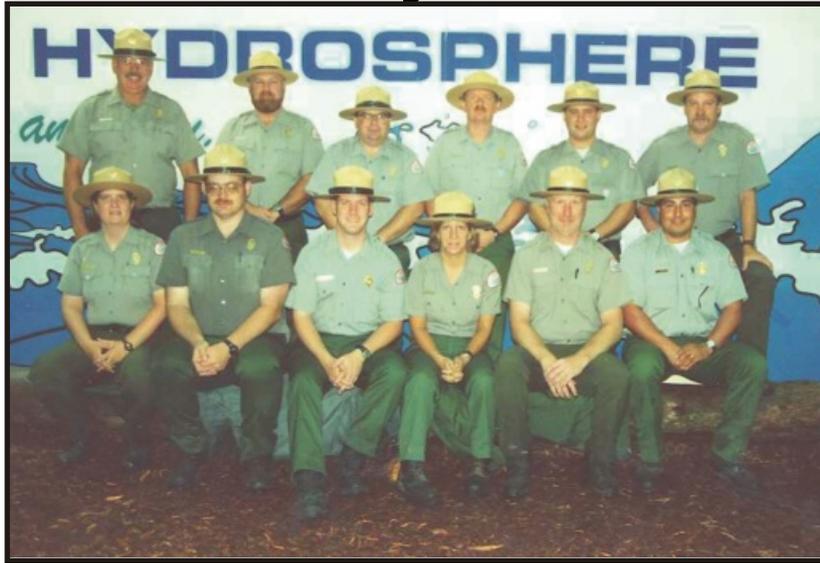
By Christine Bruske

Thousands of Boy Scouts and troop leaders from every state in the nation journeyed to Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia for the 2001 National Boy Scout Jamboree. The 10-day educational event has been conducted every four years since 1937 with the goal of giving scouts and leaders a clear understanding and deeper sense of commitment to the ideals of scouting. Jordan Lake Ranger, Mike Large, was selected by USACE headquarters to lead a national team of rangers in preparing and staffing the Corps exhibit for this huge event.

Imagine 17,000 tents and 3,300 patrol kitchens popping up in a matter of hours as nearly 40,000 scouts and leaders made camp on 12,000 acres. Fort A.P. Hill is located in the rolling hills of Caroline County, near Fredericksburg, Virginia and many historic Civil War battlefields. The 2001 jamboree theme was "Strong Values, Strong Leaders, Character Counts." The program provided training on the skills of Scouting and merit badge achievement, physical fitness, conservation, and the spirit of brotherhood.

The Corps Exhibit, entitled "Hydrosphere 2001," focused on teaching Scouts the importance of water conservation. "I accepted the challenge to manage the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers exhibit because I believe in the mission," said Ranger Large. "Pure, fresh, clean water is not an unlimited resource."

Scouts were taught that four



*Back row, left to right: Wilmington District Ranger Mike Large, St. Louis District Ranger Chuck Crocker, Ft. Worth District Ranger Robert Henderson, Albuquerque District Ranger Bob Mumford, New England District Ranger David Kratz, and Wilmington District Ranger Terry Ramsey. Front row, left to right: St. Louis District Ranger Pam Doty, Pittsburgh District Ranger Rodney Daum, Mobile District Ranger Aaron P. Wahus, Sacramento District Ranger Ella Thurston, Sacramento District Ranger Skip Sivertsen, and Sacramento District Ranger Robert Moreno.*

major challenges exist in maintaining a safe and easily accessible water supply. First, surface water, ground water and rainfall are unequally distributed around the earth. Second, pollution makes a great deal of water unusable. Third, modern conveniences and life style changes have resulted in an increased usage, and waste, of water. Fourth, the world's ever increasing population consumes more and more of our water resources each year.

Ranger Large selected Terry Ramsey, Assistant Operations Manager at John H. Kerr Reservoir, to serve as his top assistant. Rangers Large and Ramsey, together with George Tabb from USACE headquarters, then chose 10 rangers from other Corps Districts and two volunteers to staff the exhibit.

Work began on the exhibit at the John H. Kerr facility, one month in advance of the jamboree. The exhibit was then trucked in a huge container to the jamboree site where it took five days to assemble and inspect. Several plumbing and electrical elements, water pumps, a sink, a tub and even a toilet were featured components of the Corps working water conservation exhibit.

More than 11,000 scouts visited the Corps exhibit and participated in the water conservation training. "The event was a great success," said Ranger Large. "I think we got the scouts thinking about the importance of conserving water and all of our natural resources. Our TEAM of rangers did a great job." ▲



*The Corps hands-on water conservation exhibit showed scouts just how much water is used in modern-day household activities like bathing and flushing the toilet, as water flows into gallon buckets with each activity.*



*Scouts learned that it takes a lot of work to pump each gallon of water by hand, as was done in the early 1900's. It takes 10 pump repetitions to yeild one gallon of water.*

# HR Corner

## Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) Overview

*Compiled by Jackie Cook*

The Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) became effective in 1987, and almost all new Federal civilian employees hired after 1983 are automatically covered by this new retirement system. The Federal Employees Retirement System is a response to the changing times and Federal workforce needs. Many of its features are "portable" so that employees who leave Federal employment may still qualify for the benefits. The new retirement system is flexible. Covered employees are able to choose what is best for their individual situation.

The retirement system is a three-tiered retirement plan. The three components are:

Social Security Benefits, Basic Benefit Plan, and Thrift Savings Plan Benefits.

One part of the retirement benefit is Social Security. It provides monthly payments if you are retired and have reached at least age 62, monthly benefits if you become disabled, monthly benefits for your eligible survivors, and a lump sum benefit upon your death.

The basic benefit portion is financed by a very small contribution from the employee and from the Government. Basic Plan Benefits are a monthly payment depending on the employee's pay and length of service. As in most retirement plans, a formula is used to compute the payments under the Basic Benefit Plan. The average of the employee's highest 3 consecutive years of basic pay together with the employee's length of service are used in the benefit formula. Employees who meet the criteria also receive a "Special Retirement Supplement" which is

paid as a monthly benefit until the employee reaches age 62. This supplement approximates the Social Security benefit earned by the employee while the Federal Government employed them.

The third part of the Federal Employees Retirement System benefit is the Thrift Savings Plan. The Thrift Savings Plan is a tax-deferred retirement savings and investment plan that offers the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401 (k) plans.

The Federal Employees Retirement System is a flexible plan for a flexible work force - a work force that is more likely to work for several different employers during the course of a career. It allows for the fact that many employees may not retire from the Federal government. It also builds on the Social Security credits that employees already have or may earn in the future from non-Federal work.

Deposit for Service Ending before January 1, 1989 and Covered by FERS: You can make a deposit for service you performed before 1989 during which retirement deductions were not withheld from your pay. Interest is charged from the midpoint of periods of service and is compounded annually. Interest is charged to the date the deposit is paid in full or annuity begins, whichever is earlier. If you do not pay for a period of this type of service, you will not receive credit in determining your eligibility to retire or in computing your retirement benefit.

Deposit for Service Ending after January 1, 1989 and Covered by FERS: With certain minor

exceptions, a Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS) employee cannot make a deposit for non-contributory service performed after January 1, 1989.

Redeposit Service and Covered by FERS: You can repay any refund you received for any period of civilian service during which retirement deductions were withheld from your pay and later returned to you before you were covered by Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS). Interest is charged from the date of the refund and compounded annually. Interest is charged to the date full payment is made or the date annuity begins, whichever is earlier. If you do not pay for a period of this type of service, you will not receive credit in determining your eligibility to retire or in computing your retirement benefit.

### **Retirement information for CSRS and FERS employees**

For more information on both retirement systems, you may contact Jackie Cook, CPAC, at (910) 251-4874 or email [Jacqueline.L.Cook@usace.army.mil](mailto:Jacqueline.L.Cook@usace.army.mil) or see the Web sites below:  
<http://www.opm.gov/retire/html/faqs/faqs.htm>  
[Http://www.abc.army.mil/Information/ABCRetirement/Retirement.asp](http://www.abc.army.mil/Information/ABCRetirement/Retirement.asp)

# Operations Plan Update

## “We're the 'Go To' people” District TEAM says



By Penny Schmitt

“Who you gonna call?” Wilmington District doesn't offer Ghostbuster service, but our TEAM does have a number of special competencies that can serve the entire Southeastern region of the Corps, and maybe beyond.

Responding to the 2001 Operations Plan Objective 3.7, “Investigate, define, and develop a strategy to enhance current and potential areas of our regional competencies,” a cross-functional team identified twelve current competencies, and two potential competencies. The group has delivered a **Regional Competencies Notebook** that will be the basis for working with South Atlantic Division's Regional Management Board to make the best use of our abilities within SAD.

These are the areas in which the District currently offers specialized services or has unusually strong capabilities:

- *Congressional contacts website*
- *Dam Safety and instrumentation*
- *Deep Draft Navigation planning and design*
- *Environmental Restoration and Mitigation*
- *Hurricane and Storm Damage Reduction Planning*
- *Hydrographic Surveying*
- *Radio Frequency Management*
- *Residential Management System*

- *Shallow Draft Dredging*
- *Specifications / Construction Documents*
- *Underwater Archaeology*
- *Underwater Subsurface Investigations using the SNELL*

The team also identified two areas of great potential:

- *Infrastructure rehabilitation*
- *Watershed planning and management*

How did the team choose competencies? How will the District enhance and maintain its skills? How will we reach out to our sister Districts to assist them? A closer look at one or two areas of expertise shows the mechanics of the program.

**Environmental Restoration and Mitigation:** The team found that Wilmington District's Design and Environmental Resources Section has developed strong capabilities to design and create habitat. The District's Regulatory Division has also developed a strong expertise in evaluating streams and finding restoration and enhancement opportunities.

Because of a large workload in Continuing Authorities Projects focused on restoring aquatic habitat and working on work with state and federal agencies on stream management, the District has a highly

trained team and ample opportunity to train new TEAM members.

As for outreach, the Wilmington District is already supporting Mobile District with stream bank restoration design, and actively reaching out to other Districts and Wildlife organizations nationwide to promote streambed management techniques.

**Infrastructure Rehabilitation:** The team saw this as an area in which there is not a large current workload. Yet, due to aging infrastructure nationwide, there is a huge potential in primary mission and support for others. We currently have competencies in design, geotechnical, environmental, and construction.

The team recommends that the District use positions available in the Objective Organization to acquire the right skills, and to partner with state and local governments to get on-the-job training for interns.

As for outreach, the District plans to delay offering these services until we are fully functional in at least half the desired skill areas.

“We are proud to offer expert services in many areas,” said team leader Carroll Niesen, “and we are confident that we can use this plan to build the right skills to meet future mission requirements.” ▲

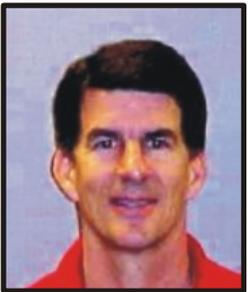
# New Members to the District



**L. Tonya Rabb, Student Trainee, Human Resources.** Tonya is currently a senior at Shaw University CAPE Wilmington. Her major course of study is Business Administration. Her minor course of study is Public Administration. She is a native of Currie in Pender County, NC. Tonya and her husband, Myron, have a daughter, Sirena.



**Debbie Miller, Regulatory Program Assistant, Asheville Field Office.** Debbie comes to the Wilmington District after a career with the US Air Force. Debbie and her husband, Dennis, have four children: Janice, Edward, Jessica and Grayson.



**John Hendrix, Regulatory Division, Asheville Field Office.** John arrived by way of the Jacksonville District where he worked in the Regulatory Field Office for 12 years. He is a Project Manager assigned to our Regulatory DOT Team. John and his wife, Patsy, have one daughter, Maeve, who is 16 years old.



**Patricia Prentiss, Secretary, Internal Review.** Patricia comes to the Wilmington District after serving as the secretary to the Brigade Commanders, US Army 6th Recruiting Brigade, North Las Vegas, Nevada. Patricia has two children, Katie and Allen, and two grandchildren Harley David and Clayton.



**Brian Albert, Co-op, Office Automation Clerk, Executive Office.** Brian is currently pursuing an Associate's Degree in Business and Marketing Education at Cape Fear Community College. Brian plans to transfer to UNC-Wilmington next year. He is from Pulaski, VA.



**Maranda Suggs, Student Trainee, Security and Law Enforcement.** Maranda is a freshman at Cape Fear Community College and will be majoring in Criminal Justice. Maranda has a career goal of becoming a Forensic Scientist. She is from Kannapolis, NC.



*Together, we can save a life*



Wilmington District TEAM members gave “the gift of life” during the local summer blood drive sponsored by the American Red Cross. Red Cross volunteers collected 25 units of blood from District TEAM members during the Friday morning session.

Not everyone who wanted to give blood was able to donate. Alan Piner, who has been a consistent blood donor since his college days, was not allowed to give blood due to recent heart surgery. Piner's donation would have earned him the distinguished “5-gallon pin.” “If you are in a position to give blood, then you can consider yourself

pretty fortunate,” said Piner. “You just never know when you'll be on the receiving end.”

The next American Red Cross Blood Drive for Wilmington District TEAM members is scheduled for Thursday, November 1, 2001 from 8:00 AM to 12:30 PM. The “blood mobile” will park in front of the Wilmington District building where the blood donations will be collected. Please mark your calendars and make plans to give “the gift of life.”

If you have not donated after September 6, you are eligible. Please support the Red Cross at this time of National need.▲

Congratulations and Farewell to Anthony Josey, Co-op Student in the Public Affairs Office. Anthony accepted a HUD Fellowship in Public Administration, Urban and Regional Studies, at Minnesota State University. At the



send-off luncheon, MAJ Shepard presented Anthony with the Commander's Award for his work in educational outreach programs and his exceptional contribution to "TEAM Spirit" within the Wilmington District. We send our best wishes to Anthony and his family as they make their new home in Mankato, Minnesota.

Good Luck to Joe Tanner, Operations Manager at John H. Kerr Reservoir. Joe retired and began a new career as a Baptist minister. Joe started with the Wilmington District 37 years ago as a part-time ranger at John H. Kerr. Joe served the Wilmington District in several capacities during his 34 years of full-time employment. Joe and his wife, Verna, will be missed.



Congratulations to Sharon Haggett on her selection for the GS-13, Senior Project Manager position in the Project Management Branch, Programs and Project Management Division.

Kudos to Penny Schmitt, Chief of Public Affairs. Her district newsletter article entitled "Corps Partnership Revitalizes Trout Streams" was recognized for Excellence in Verbal and Visual Presentation by Post-30-, a Department of the Army publication for communications professionals.▲



# Corps Family News

# Retiree News



By Bob Swart

We had a nice gathering of 16 with us this month. The following retirees and spouses were present: my wife Bettye and I, Lawrence Crawley, Max Grimes, Dorothy K Everett, Edith and Jim Vithalani, Joe Lewis, Bob Doetsch, Sylvia and Rex Phillips, Doris and Ken Old, Paul Woodbury, Buddy Johnson, and Augustus B. Moore Jr.

I was surprised, upon checking the attendance book, to find no comments on the activities sheet. Can you believe that Gus actually had nothing to say? In recalling some of the things being said around the table, Paul Woodbury stated that Gloria was not there because she had to be at the house to meet an electrical contractor to make sure he did what she wanted. Paul said that he didn't do that sort of thing anymore.

Since most of us had received our county tax bills recently, Joe Lewis was putting on a very good front. We did not see any tears or hear any comments from him on the subject. I did hear him say something about attending a Baptist church gathering where food was provided and said that those folks didn't hold a candle to one of those Methodist feeds. Hey, you Baptists, the challenge is out, but think about the possibility that it's probably an effort, on his part, to acquire an invitation for a free meal.

On Labor Day weekend, I had the enjoyable opportunity to officiate at the wedding of one of Bettye's many cousins in Charlotte. In meeting the stepmother of the groom, a familiar face appeared in the person of Sybil Hendrix. Sybil was employed in the District Legal Office several years ago. This was a pleasant surprise. Sybil now lives in the Atlanta area and is working in the Federal Attorney's Office.

We need to keep Kay Johnson in our prayers because she had a fall and hurt her leg back in July and is still in a lot of pain. It appears that the "old pain-in-the-neck" is having some aches of her own. We still love her.

Hope to see some more of you folks back with us next month. Mark the date, Thursday, 4 October, on your calendars. Now, you occasional attendees and those who would like to join with us, pull out the big yellow markers to remind you that you are certainly welcomed.▲

# Philpott Safety Blimp

By Ranger Daniel Brown

Labor Day visitors to Philpott Lake were awed by something hovering in the sky. It wasn't a bird. It wasn't a plane. It wasn't a spaceship either. It was the new safety blimp, anchored to remain 150 feet above the lake's surface, with messages that remind boaters, swimmers and campers to avoid alcohol consumption and to wear life jackets.

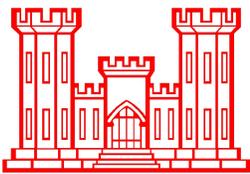
The safety blimp was the brainchild of Philpott Operations Manager Carl Smith. "We wanted something different, something creative, something that would really be an eye catcher for our visitors, and something that would let our visitors know safety is our number one priority," said Smith.

Philpott Lake purchased the 20'x7' blimp, which is inflated by 700 cubic feet of helium, to be flown during holidays or on special occasions. Children and parents alike were fascinated by the blimp and liked the safety message. "If we influence even one visitor to be a little safer, the blimp is serving its purpose," said Smith.▲



Summer ranger Alan Hobbs and park attendant Elwood Montgomery prepare to launch the newly purchased blimp, which hovered over Philpott Lake reminding Labor Day crowds to be safe. The message on the other side of the blimp reads "Life Jackets Only Work if Worn."

U.S. ARMY ENGINEER DISTRICT,  
WILMINGTON  
CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
P.O. BOX 1890  
WILMINGTON, N.C. 28402-1890



**Wilmington  
District News**