Wilmington District News

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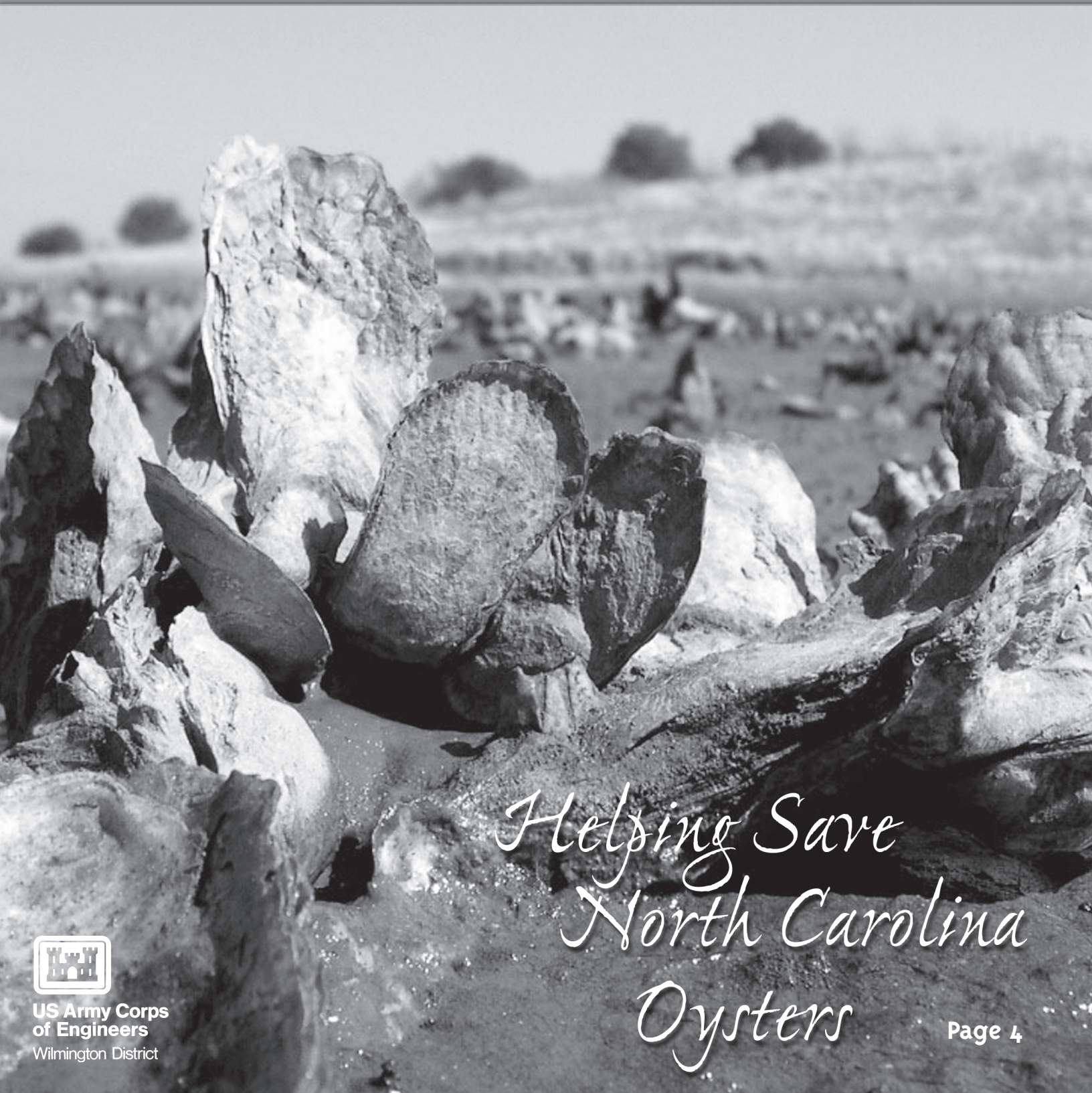

Helping Save North Carolina Oysters

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Wilmington District

Wilmington District News

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These oysters are making a strong recovery at a Corps-built site near Morehead City.

Commentary

How do we face competition?

The Corps of Engineers, along with all other federal agencies, is required to comply with the Competitive Sourcing initiative, which is one of the five items of the President's Management Agenda. According to the rules, functions and exact number of positions to be competed cannot be released until a Competitive Sourcing Official (CSO) has been appointed for the Corps of Engineers. However, we are aware that A-76 Competitions may be launched for some of our support services within the next few months. How do we handle the challenge?

A positive, aware approach today won't make competition with the private sector evaporate, but it can prepare us all for a better future. Wilmington District's Commander has taken an active role by establishing a district team, sharing information by e-mail and at town-hall meetings. He has also appointed a district team member to our SAD Regional Team to represent the district and share information.

Early in March the District's senior managers spent a morning with trainers who explained the A-76 process. Their first and most often-repeated message was: "This is competition, not out-sourcing!" In other words, we have the opportunity to compete, and win, to keep providing services as part of the federal government. There's not a secret decision somewhere to 'outsource' jobs and work. The goal is to make the best, most effective offer to serve on behalf of our taxpayers.

While we are asked not to jump the starting gun and design our competitive "Most Efficient Organizations" (MEOs), we can prepare by observing what we do, how we do it, and what we could do to improve our efficiency in the future. That's just plain smart business, and is what we should be doing every day.

Between A-76, Corps 2012 and other initiatives, business as usual isn't likely to be a long-term option for any of us. Being part of revamped, more effective business processes can be an option. How can you make that happen?

Answer data calls thoroughly and accurately! Your input can help give a true picture of workload. Make sure any data calls or responses are coordinated with Lou Smith, our Champion for our cross-functional Competitive Sourcing TEAM.

Keep track of what you do, for whom, and how long you spend on jobs. This is information that can help give a clear scope of work. It's what our folks who charge to projects do every day.

Find efficiencies, and share the information with your boss. Think of a better way!

Start planning your own future. Don't 'catastrophize' but plan to make your best dream come true.

You can check out the OMB's website (below) if you are interested in learning more about Competitive Sourcing. HYPERLINK "http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/procurement/comp_sourc_addendum.pdf".

Ops Plan Update:

1st Media Training Workshop Reports Out

Remember the days when voice mail was new? You'd hear that beep, freeze up, and stammer incoherently! Nowadays, you probably leave a dozen or more voice messages a week, and your presentation on the phone ranges from natural to humorously theatrical. Yep, practice makes perfect.

That's the idea behind Media Training Workshops being conducted to meet Objective 3.4 of our Annual Operations Plan. We want the people who are likeliest to get in front of a reporter with a camera or microphone to practice in a non-threatening situation so that when the 'real thing' comes along, they have a chance to be, well, almost perfect.

Earlier this month, the Public Affairs Office conducted the first of several sessions to be held this year, with members of our Project Management Team. Chris Frabotta and Jan Brodmerkel can tell you the training was realistic, and they learned a lot.

After a briefing to familiarize them with the process of preparing for on-camera interviews, the two were 'grilled' by guest talk-show host Susan Clizbe, of the North Carolina State Ports Public Affairs staff. Susan is a former Air Force Public Affairs Officer, and worked on the staff of the Washington D.C. based news talk show *The McLaughlin Group*. Hank Heusinkveld taped the interview session.

Chris Frabotta responds to a question from Susan Clizbe during the media training workshop.

Then the trainees watched their performances to learn what they did well, and what they could have done better. Trainers advised Chris and Jan on items like what to wear for an interview, comfortable and good-looking sitting positions, using your hands to express meaning, great and not-so-great ways to handle curve-ball questions.

Jan Brodmerkel commented on several aspects of her training experience:

"I expected the training to provide helpful tips for being interviewed by the media and reduce my hesitation about speaking with the press. The training did move me toward these two goals.

"It was not as painful as I expected it to be. I actually could answer the questions with some level of confidence."

Jan also had some advice for future trainees: "develop questions and answers for the project that's the subject of your interview. Bring some water!"

Chris Frabotta found himself both reassured and unsettled by the training. "I learned that it's ok to pause and gather my thoughts. I also learned that it is better to say nothing at all than to state information you are not sure of. Indicate that you don't know the answer, and that you'll get back to the media person with more complete information later, if necessary."

Both Chris and Jan had occasion to speak with reporters in the two weeks after their training. The interviews were by phone, but the lessons learned still helped.

Our goal is to train at least eight more Wilmington District Team members this year. Want to schedule a half-day training session? Call Penny Schmitt in the Public Affairs Office (109) 251-4626.

> *"I also learned that it is better to say nothing at all than to state information you are not sure of."*
>
> *– Chris Frabotta*

District Helps Provide Habitat for Dwindling Oyster Population

Oysters need a big boost from humans in North Carolina, and they need it now.

That was the general consensus at An Encore for Oysters conference hosted by the North Carolina Coastal Federation in Morehead City March 16th and 17th. The situation is critical to the point that oysters are being shipped for consumption to North Carolina from around the U.S. because of dwindling oyster populations up and down the NC coastline. Much of the problem lies with over harvesting and pollution from storm runoff in developed areas that gets into the oysters habitat and stresses the organisms. But what's more of a concern is too few sustainable oyster reefs. That's where the Corps is contributing its expertise.

The first time the Wilmington District successfully incorporated oysters in a coastal ecosystem restoration project was in 1994 while mitigating impacts from repair and improvements to the U.S Army Reserve Center in Morehead City. An environmental assessment prepared by the Corps on behalf of the U.S Army Reserve Command identified impacts to marsh and shallow estuarine habitat from dredging and dock rehabilitation that required mitigation. As a result the Corps built a 10-acre estuarine creek marsh complex.

Given time and suitable protection oysters can begin the long, slow process of reestablishing beds.

"We reshaped and restored a long-unused upland disposal area near the Morehead City Harbor to function as an estuarine ecosystem," said District biologist Chuck Wilson.

After the creek was opened to tidal exchange oyster bars of shells also known as "cultch" were placed just above mean low water to provide new sites for oyster attachment. The Corps was confident that the site would meet it mitigation requirements. However, no one could foresee that it would become such a highly productive, healthy ecosystem with an oyster population that has been sustained for almost a decade.

Oysters have an important role in the overall health of ecosystems.

The science of ecosystem restoration has come a long way since the early days, when a single marsh species was planted for low cost shore protection. Things improved dramatically when the Corps had an opportunity, through a memorandum of agreement, to work with the National Marine Fisheries Service to develop pilot restoration projects throughout the country for fish habitat rather than shoreline protection alone.

The Wilmington District built three sites in North Carolina in cooperation with other federal agencies and university scientists to establish an estuarine diverse marsh community to improve fish habitat.

"When these projects were constructed we didn't really understand the importance of "context" or in other words, 'how the site would fit in the surrounding natural estuarine ecosystem'," explains Wilson. "These shoreline restoration projects provided fish habitat, as designed, but had an angular, engineered appearance. We wondered if a marsh, constructed with a more natural look, would have more environmental value. As we developed the restoration plan for the Army Reserve Center site we got away from the shoreline approach and carved out the center of an abandoned upland disposal site, leaving the natural marsh and shrub vegetation that surround the island intact."

The rejuvenated site was engineered to precision. The marsh is located away from turbulent waters providing a protected nursery area, and there's enough tidal exchange to promote good water quality, provide ample marine larvae, and enough nutrients to keep aquatic plants and oysters healthy.

Biologist Doug Piatkowski says that there's value in the restored site, but it's more than the economic value determined by how many oysters are harvested. Rather, it's determined by multiple habitat functions and their interconnectedness that supports maximum environmental output.

"We look at oysters as habitat," he says. "They provide more surface area for attachment of organisms than any other hard structures that we have in our waters. They also provide a separate component to our habitats that we're trying to build. When we build a site like the one at Morehead City we have our primary nursery as a result of marsh construction and adjacent to the marshes we have the oyster habitat. They provide the structure and surface area for attachment of organisms within the marsh system. These habitats are so interrelated that you have to have these different components to make a complete restoration project. So, it's a whole other chain of events that evolve from the interrelated nature of multiple habitat components within the marsh ecosystem."

PHOTO BY CHUCK WILSON

Jeff DeBlieu of the Nature Conservancy checks the water temperature to induce oysters to spawn as Jenny Owens and Doug Piatkowski observe. The oysters are being studied at Carteret County Community College,

Piatkowski adds that oysters play an important role in ecosystems because they provide filtering functions. As oyster populations decline water quality is impacted. By providing habitat for oysters there is a better chance of filtering impurities.

Wilson and Piatkowski say the site at Morehead City is a good model that shows it's possible for humans to think with a design by nature approach in order to best replicate what mother nature intended. Piatkowski feels the time is right to set the stage for the Corps to highlight its unique services.

'"We have the perfect opportunity now with our engineering and design expertise to really take off," he says. "Right now we have a mesh between science and engineering that we never had before and we can take that approach to help in this oyster restoration process. I think it can become a great opportunity for the Corps, if not just our District, to start working at getting these projects going. I believe it will build huge relationships with other organizations because we also have the authority to do these projects with a non-federal partner."

Oysters need habitat…and they ARE habitat for other organisms.

Wilson believes relationships were built with other agencies at the conference. According to him, people simply don't know that the Corps is in the environmental restoration business.

'"Our goal was to show the accomplishments we've had in ecosystem restoration and focus on the projects that you can actually see."

Piatkowski believes it's an evolutionary process of gaining trust from fellow scientists and biologists.

'"I don't think that people realize that ecosystem restoration is one of our primary missions now. Now, people are finding out that it's just as important as the navigation function. And that's really big."

Story and photos by Hank Heusinkveld

Corps of Discovery Reenactor Sheds Light on Sacajawea

By Hank Heusinkveld

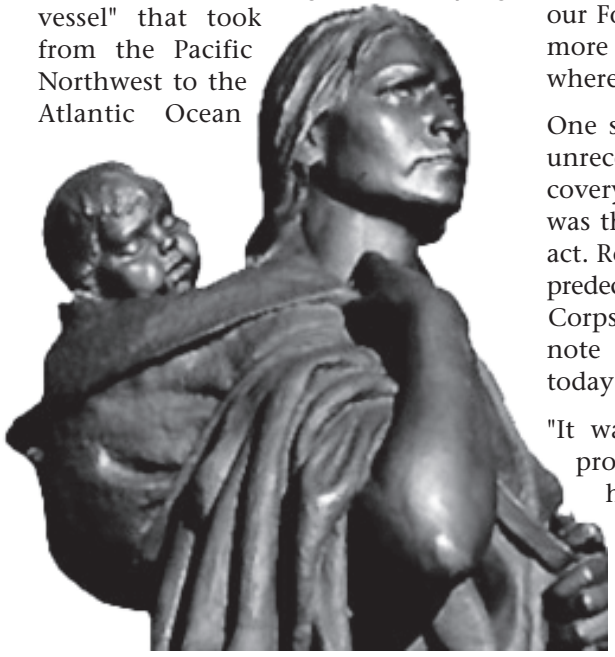
From the compound of the Eastern Office of the Walla Walla District in Clarkston, Washington, Craig Rockwell can see the site where on October 10th, 1805, Captains Meriwether Lewis and William Clark and their expedition camped one mile below the confluence of the Snake and Clearwater Rivers. The Snake River, which separates the aptly named cities of Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, was instrumental in bringing them to the Columbia River and finally to the Pacific Ocean.

Rockwell, who looks uncannily like Captain William Clark, is a Corps of Discovery reenactor who traveled cross country to chat about the Lewis and Clark Expedition, specifically focusing on the role of Sacajawea, for the District's Federal Women's Program.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG ROCKWELL

Walla Walla District member Craig Rockwell poses as Captain William Clark at a bronze replica of tree at Long Beach, WA with other Corps of Discovery reenactors from Fort Clatsop, Oregon. Clark carved his name on a tree November 19th 1805 to prove he was there.

Rockwell plays the role of Clark to a tee. Before he speaks he spends an hour or so applying mutton chop sideburns that resemble Clark's. What is most impressive is his hand-stitched, $2,000 uniform that he paid for himself. The wool that it's made from comes from the same mill in England that wool for the original Corps of Discovery uniforms came from. It still operates today. And when he addressed his audience he lauded "the magnificent flying vessel" that took from the Pacific Northwest to the Atlantic Ocean in a matter of hours "instead of years." Rockwell says he goes all out portraying Clark because he wants others to understand the significance of the Corps of Discovery.



A bronze image of Shoshone Sacajawea and her son.

"The story of Lewis and Clark is the story of America. We tend to be adventurers, we can be resourceful, very progressive, committed to being a can do nation always looking around the next corner. The story has a lot of information about our Founding Fathers, and we can learn more about who we are today about where we came from."

One side of the story that seems to be unrecognized is that the Corps of Discovery was a U.S. Army mission. And it was the first use of soldiers in a civilian act. Rockwell also says the mission was a predecessor of what was to become the Corps of Engineers. He says it's easy to note similarities of the expedition to today's Corps.

"It was definitely very much like the project management system that we have today. Captain Lewis was the project manager, cradle to grave."

Rockwell notes President Thomas Jefferson's keen political savvy in using the Army to reach a political objective. Having failed at four previous missions of reaching the elusive Northwest Passage, a much-theorized shortcut to the Pacific Ocean, Jefferson knew the Army had the logistical means, materiel, and dedication to carry out the mission. It was a journey into the unknown for the Euro-American people of a young, developing country and he was confident the bravery of the soldiers would help them succeed.

"Jefferson thought they'd run into wooly mammoths. He had no idea what they'd run into, no idea if Indians would be amenable or confrontational."

Part of Jefferson's goal was to establish potential relationships with Indian tribes for the purpose of establishing trade networks. One civilian member of the expedition was translator Toussaint Charboneau who brought along his 14-year-old Indian wife, Sagajawea, and their infant son. According to Rockwell, there are a lot of historical inaccuracies of this young Shoshone girl who was kidnapped by the Mandan-Hidatsa tribe and later either traded or sold to Charboneau.

"The people of today look at her as the guide. But you have to understand that a group of young soldiers all under 34 years old…how were they going to listen to a 14-year-old girl?"

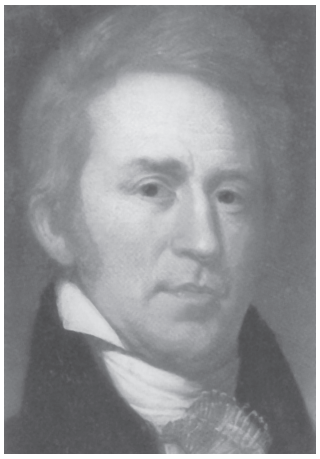
The young woman, however, was indirectly an invaluable asset and trusted friend. Since she spoke Shoshone Lewis and Clark would depend on her to help the expedition acquire horses from Shoshones later on in the journey. Rockwell says she was a vital link between Euro Americans and the Indian tribes.

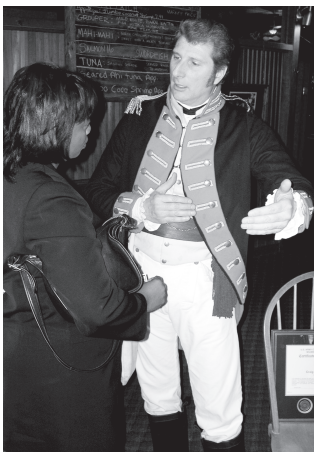
"What Lewis and Clark expected to find were very primitive communities with few social ties with other tribes. But what they found were a very complex people living in very highly developed communities with very complex war and trade alliances with other tribes. The men got to know her on a very personal level as the mother of a child that she loved just as much as any mother would love a child anywhere in the world. They began to identify with her and learned to love her. She almost died on the journey and the men did everything they could to save her."

PHOTO COURTESY OF CRAIG ROCKWELL

Rockwell works closely with Nez Perce tribal elder Allen Pinkham of Lapwai, Idaho. Both give oral interpretations of the Corps of Discovery; from expedition and Indian points of view.

Rockwell says he believes Sacajawea's greatest attribute was being an ambassador.





Rockwell (right), speaking to Oweita Freeman, bears a striking resemblance to Captain Clark (left).

"The two most significant aspects, in my mind, are that she was an ambassador of peace to the other tribes of the west. As the Corps of Discovery approached the villages there was an expected apprehension of having soldiers come into their villages. But having Sacajawea along no civilized Nation would send a war party with a woman, certainly not a woman with a baby. And once they saw that she was with a baby their attitude toward the Corps softened. In another aspect she became an ambassador of all western peoples."

Rockwell says people in the Pacific Northwest are gearing up for the signature event in Spaulding, Idaho scheduled for June of 2006. It will highlight the role the Nez Perce Tribe played in helping save the expedition members from starvation in the rugged mountains of Idaho.

"I have had some great opportunities to work with various tribes. I think tribes are anxious to get a few messages across; first, they were here first, it was not an unknown land, and Lewis and Clark is a very small part of history of Indian America. Their message is 'we are still here.'"

SAW in Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration

Running now through September 2006, the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial will be commemorated through a series of signature events. These events correspond to major events/actions during the Expedition. Last August a call went out Corps wide to attract individuals to support these events. John H. Kerr Park Ranger Shannon Maness has stepped up to the task. Ranger Maness will be working at the Wood River Signature Event in Alton, Illinois May 11-16.

The Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commemoration is a multi-agency effort and these signature events are expected to draw 20,000 to 100,000 visitors depending on location. Congratulations to Ranger Maness for volunteering and being selected to represent the Wilmington District at this National Event.

Hydrographic Survey Team Maps Out Sight Unseen Areas

On this particular March morning Alan Fryar and Survey Technician Ivanie Stene have a fairly easy schedule. They're taking the survey vessel Gillette a short distance down the Cape Fear River from the Engineer Yard to inspect the depth of the Wilmington Harbor Channel. They're making sure it's at the maximum depth of 42 feet. With high-tech gear on board all Ivanie has to do is switch on a computer and line up sonar-like equipment. Through the help of GPS all Fryar has to do as captain of the vessel is line up the Gillette to follow a graphic representation of the channel's path. With unique software this survey team can get accurate readings with a click of a mouse. This is one small part of hydrographic surveying. Vessels can either check data or gather it for a number of purposes like map making or general topography.

At the helm of the Survey Vessel Gillette Alan Fryar prepares to glide past a ship docked near a channel path.

Ivanie Stene checks data that's being transmitted on board the Gillette.

"Hydrographic surveying is a graphic product that is a representation of the surface below the water," explains Chief of Survey Unit Marc Reavis. "That surface can be measured very accurately for depth."

Reavis says there are similarities between above-ground surveying and hydrographic surveying. But in the latter you're dealing with more unknowns.

"Hydrographic surveying is more along the lines of remote sensing. You can't see the bottom. You're using acoustics to find the bottom. So, with that particular tool you combine several different tools together to generate information on the subsurface bottom. In land surveying it's right there. You're measuring directly to the surface. You don't have the issue of external interference like currents, boats and other things like that."

Reavis and Engineer Technician Elaine Hayes say modern hydrographic survey tools and methods have made their jobs easier than in the past.

"When I started and when Elaine started she was making all the maps by hand. They were truly draftsman skills; drawing and coloring in contours. I was out in a Simmon's skiff with hip boots working in marsh doing everything manually. We set baseline by hand, set ranges by hand. It wasn't unusual to bring out a set of oars to assist the boat in maneuvering using a lot of optical devices which you don't see anymore. Everything's either electronic or GPS. We've seen it transition from manual to almost fully automated."

Hayes says she has no regrets of making the transition from a hands-on skill to fully computerized.

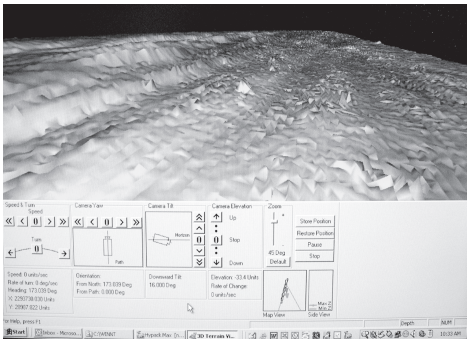
"As far as drafting it's truly a lost art," she says.

Reavis says that his team keeps up with the latest navigation technology. And what makes the team well rounded is younger cartographers like Justin Arnette and Adam Faircloth who are bringing knowledge about Geographical Information Systems or GIS into the Navigation Branch.

Marc Reavis and Elaine Hayes inspect a hardcopy map produced by computer software.

"The change to GIS is making a lot of inroads into our operations in the way things are produced and in the way things are presented. The GIS concept has been coming for a long time and once it's fully implemented in the District it's going to be quite an impressive product by the capability it will have."

From his small office at the port of Morehead City Scott Bertram sends hydrographic surveying information back to the District by computer.



This image of the ocean floor tells hydrographic Survey technicians what the underwater terrain looks like.

Story and photos by Hank Heusinkveld

Coastal Hydrology and Hydraulics' Eric Farr: "Bit By the Bug"

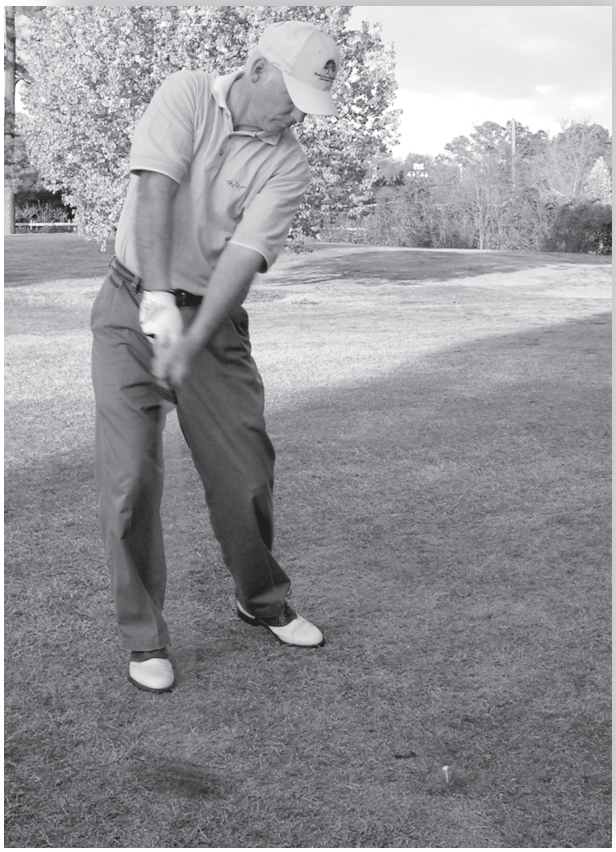
Eric Farr looooves golf. He loves it so much that it might take a hurricane to get him off the course.

Farr began golfing at an early age playing with his Dad off and on. When he got older and had a family of his own he got his children interested in the game. And then it happened.

"I got bit by the bug! My kids continued for a while, but didn't quite pick up the bug like I did, but ever since about 1988 I had it real bad. I often think about it and here it is some 16 years later and I still get just as excited every Saturday morning about getting ready to go play."

What makes the sport so appealing for him is that it involves mind over matter. And that's something that he's learned within the past few years.

"At first I didn't understand the mental toughness that it takes. More recently, I've come to appreciate the mental aspect of it more where you actually have to think you're way around the course if you're going to score well. There's a lot more to it than meets the eye."



Farr connects on the rough, a difficult shot that takes total concentration.

Eric Farr nails a 15-foot putt on the greens at the Pine Valley Country Club.

That mental toughness may have helped contribute to his first ever hole-in-one last summer. The coveted "ace" is something that Farr says is more than welcome when it arrives because it's not expected.

"That's something that is so rare and so difficult to come by that I don't think golfers really, particularly the amateurs, think about because it is so rare. You hear about it more today because there are so many more people playing, but the hole in one, that was a real satisfaction. There are a lot of golfers better than me who never had one."

Farr says another thing that continually draws him to the course is that it's a way to challenge himself….and the course. It's one-on-none with 18 chances to stay on, go over, or go under par.

"The one thing that I really appreciate about golf, compared to some other sports, is particularly in this day and age of in-your-face trash talkin', when I go out and play I'm trying to beat my opponents. But really, you're not playing them. You're playing the course because they have absolutely nothing to do with how well or how bad you play. It's you. You can't blame it on the referees, you can't blame it on your opponent, there's no coach to blame it on, it's yourself. You have to take full responsibility of how well you do on the course."

And the course is full of like-minded fellow golfers. Etiquette still exists in golf, and Farr and his buddies abide by the rules.

"It's such a gentlemen's game, so to speak. I think people who play it regularly have such an appreciation for it and know how hard it is, that even though I'm playing against you, when you're hitting great shots, I'm complementing you. And when we finish I can appreciate the game you played because I know how difficult it is. I think it's one of the few sports left where you congratulate your opponent on how well he did rather than trash talkin' trying to bring him down."

With a determined look Farr focuses on his next shot.

A divot chases the ball as Farr lands one on the green.

Farr says that he can easily identify with one of the best golfers in the world who's in a slump. Tiger Woods is heading to Fort Bragg, a long-time home to his Special Forces-retired father, to immerse himself in a one-week crash endurance test that he hopes will rejuvenate his mental strength.

"You can't be on top all of the time. He's not performing this year like he has in the past. He's looking and searching to find out what works. He'll find out what the problem is and he'll be winning again."

Farr is due to retire in the not-too-distant future. We can only guess what his retirement plan will be. ;-)

Story and photos by
Hank Heusinkveld

Farewell, Friend

The following is an excerpt from the eulogy given by COL Ray Alexander, Jr. at Larry Mitchell's funeral.

Knowing that Larry is present with us and helping us get through this day, I turn my remarks directly to him. Larry, on behalf of your many friends and colleagues at the Corps and for the many commanders you proudly served, we are grateful to you, we love you, and we will remember the lesson of true service that you've provided. We thank you for your selfless service, your leadership, your friendship, your courage, your inspiration, and yes, your grace. We miss you here today and will for many days to follow, but the deep faith that you and your family have shown gives us confidence that you are at Peace, that you have entered the Kingdom, and that we will all see you again. Susan and the girls will be fine, comforted in your love and memory, and so will we. So as a fellow solider and your commander, I leave you with one more order. Rest easy "Dog Face Soldier". Rest easy. Job well done.

Larry Mitchell died March 16th at his home. He was born September 22, 1946 in Wilmington. He graduated from New Hanover High School in 1964 and from NC State in 1969. He began his career with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers after serving two years in the Army from 1969 to 1971. He served as Chief of Information Management for the District and was a registered Professional Engineer.

Larry Mitchell, 1946-2004.

PHOTO BY PATRICIA HARGROVE

COL ray Alexander presents the flag to Susan Mitchell, wife of Larry Mitchell. To the left of her is Madie Mitchell, mother of Larry. To the right of Susan are daughters Alexis and Meredith.

E-Diary From Baghdad

2-19-04

We are located right on the Tigris River and it is wonderful late in the evening to sit out there. It's like a feeling you can't describe of thinking that this is where civilization began. The Garden of Eden was on this river. You really get this feeling that can't be explained. The destruction of some of these building is sad to see. It's a shame they were bombed and only rubble remains. We've heard no gunfire since I've been here, but we've been told to expect it. I carry my helmet and flack vest with me to work and back every day. It only adds about 20-25 pounds to my load. Lots of fun. Well, I'll get with you soon.

2-20-04

Hail and farewell was great. General Johnson has a great sense of humor. I was the last one up and he told me tradition was that the last one had to sing and dance. I told him fine if he wanted everyone to leave. I have another one Sunday morning. Oh by the way drinks are near beer - no alcoholic beverages allowed. I just had water. I have never seen so many Colonels in one place. Just about everyone who walks into our office is a Colonel. I don't think they deployed any military here that aren't Colonels. Well, I'll probably get a chance to check my e-mail later this afternoon or tonight. Talk to you soon.

Tingley with an Iraqi girl and Pat Hatcher, an auditor from Defense Contracting Auditing Agency.

2-23-04

The days just seem to run together here. It's about 7 p.m. and I'm dragging. We're supposed to have a group coming in tomorrow from CRC. I got signed up for a trailer, but I've gotten used to living in the basement next door. I've been told it's a lot safer than the trailers, but I'm sure it'll be a lot quieter. Donald said to tell you cigarettes are $6 a cartoon. You need to rush right on over. He didn't tell you about having to share showers and toilets and everything else. Life is quite different than anything I ever expected. You do what you can when needed. It's all about getting the job done.

Sarah Tingley poses with ABC News Good Morning America anchor Robin Roberts. Tingley was interviewed twice during a segment broadcast live.

2-26-04

Coming over here is definitely not for the squeamish. Life is tough. I do a tremendous amount of walking, so I haven't even checked out the gym. Once I get settled in my trailer (moving up in the world to become trailer trash!) I'll check out the gym and maybe try to work out a few times a week. I have about five extra pounds on my feet with these boots and always have my backpack on so that probably adds about 10 pounds. Some nights I fall in bed so exhausted I can hardly move. Its dirty and dusty here, I keep a nagging cough all the time. I share a bathroom with 8 other women. Thank goodness we do now have a flush toilet and shower. That's much more than we had in Kuwait. We were in a co-ed tent with about 75 people using port-a-johns and a shower that was about 2 blocks away.

A convoy from the Corps was attacked today going to one of the projects. I don't have a lot of information and don't know if there was anyone from our Division involved, but they did not follow the rules and left during peak hours for attacks and then instead of proceeding forward they turned around and returned here. The General was really mad. He parked the cars in front of the building for people to see what happens when orders are not followed. No one was seriously injured, thank goodness. I'm pretty safe here in the Green Zone. The main threat is outside of this area traveling to and from projects and airports. I don't travel anywhere except to work and back.

3-23-04

Just a quick note this morning in case you heard about the attacks last night, we're fine. They were shooting at the Sheraton across the river from us. I have heard of no casualties, but they did get a hit. Scared me, at 4 a.m. a big explosion and sirens started going off. My roommate started yelling for me to get down. I wanted to look out the window and see what was happening. Guess it's a good thing I have a roommate with some sense!

Tingley shares a moment with the Chief of Engineers, LTG Robert Flowers.

WebsiteHighlights@janwutkowski.wdn

Would you like to see your original E-artwork on the Web? Do you have your hummingbird feeders in the garden yet? Feel like putting your problem solving abilities up against some of the best in the world? This month's column gives plenty of insight into how to make all the above happen by the click of your mouse. Mr. Piccassohead, ruby-throated hummers, IBMers, the Mayo Clinic, plus timely information on cybercrimes and current IT literature are posted here for your professional and personal enjoyment.

WiredSafety
http://www.wiredsafety.org/

Registered as a non-profit organization, WiredSafety offers help for online victims of cybercrime and harassment, educational materials about cybercrime, and assistance for law enforcement worldwide on preventing and investigating cybercrimes. Parry Aftab, an international cyberspace privacy and security lawyer and children's advocate, heads the organization. A good place to start on the site is Parry's Internet Safety Guide for Parents, which offers a number of helpful tips for parents about monitoring their children's interactions with others over the Internet. WiredSafety also offers Wired-Ed, which is offered free of charge and allows users to learn more about surfing the net safely.

MayoClinic.com: First Aid Guide
http://www.mayoclinic.com/findinformation/firstaidandselfcare/index.cfm

It seems that a number of misconceptions about basic first-aid continue to be quite prevalent and, in some cases, their application can be quite harmful -- resulting in the exacerbation of a simple injury. With the intent of providing free and medically sound advice, the Mayo Clinic has developed this basic guide to first aid. Over thirty subjects are covered within the guide, including how to address dislocations, burns, bruises, frostbite, snakebites, sunburn, and toothache. Also, a 'Popular Topics' box on the left-had side addresses some of the popular health issues the Mayo Clinic staff members respond to including Dr. Phil's diet, bird flu, and bipolar disorder.

Don't forget to forward any websites you find in your work that others would be interested in seeing. We'll review them and post them here for everyone's benefit. Happy surfing!

IBM: Ponder This
http://www.research.ibm.com/ponder/

Ponder This poses a monthly problem that lets ambitious people "match wits with some of the best minds in IBM Research." The problem is usually fairly abstract and requires refined mathematical skills, critical thinking, and patience to solve. Each month a new problem and the solution for the previous month are posted online. Users are encouraged to submit their answers for possible recognition on the website. Visitors to the Ponder This website can browse previous problems and solutions dating back to May 1998.

Current Cites
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/CurrentCites/

Edited by Roy Tennant (a librarian working at the California Digital Library in Oakland), Current Cites is a monthly publication that contains 10-15 annotated citations of the best literature currently available in the field of information technology. Visitors to the site may elect to sign up to receive Current Cites every month, or they may peruse the contents of the publication back to its founding in August 1990. Equally helpful is the Bibliography On-Demand feature that allows users to construct their own bibliography culled from the Current Cites database of bibliographic citations. Additionally, the items that are freely available on the Internet are also retrieved and indexed so that users may perform an article search of the full-text of these various items.

Hummingbirds.net [QuickTime]
http://www.hummingbirds.net/

This award-winning website is a "source for information on attracting, watching, feeding, and studying North American hummingbirds." The site links to a wealth of information and resources under the main categories of Community, Science, Species, and Answers. Migration maps under the Science heading show that the Wilmington area reported its first ruby-throated hummer the last weekend of March. Resources and a photo album are under the Community heading, and hummingbird feeders are under the Answers heading. The homepage features a FAQ section and a News section with current links to events, radio and article features, and movies.

One For Fun!

Mr. Picassohead
http://www.mrpicassohead.com/

Absolutely just for fun--or is it? Become a Cubist painter at this clever site, creating an original work of art by moving facial parts -- eyes, hair, lips, ears, noses -- onto a canvas in the same fashion as snapping plastic parts onto a Mr. Potatohead doll. There are also tools for colorizing, rotating, and changing the sizes of your design elements. Once you have painted your masterpiece, you can save it in the gallery, and email a link to your friends. You can also browse the gallery, which apparently has close to 40,000 paintings in it at present.

Reaching Out

Rosemary Cohen spoke at the Cameron School of Business's Business Week on March 26th. And Bob Finch and Cohen will be present at an Environmental Economics conference at the Baltimore District in April. **MAJ Randy Powell** spoke to two 6th grade classes at Murray Middle School on 4 March in support of National Engineers Week.

Nine Falls/Jordan staff members teamed with the NC Wildlife Resources Commission to provide information concerning water safety at the annual Raleigh Boat Show held on February 20-22. Falls/Jordan Team members included **Susan Lane, Adam Tarplee, Steve Mason, Carmen Boyette, Dana Lee, Tom Freeman, Brent Mortimer, R.C. Duckson, and Steve Brown**.

A presentation was conducted by **Jean Manuele** of the Raleigh Regulatory Field Office for Duke Power on 18 March 2004, informing them of our regulatory process and permits and the program's relationship to the installation of power utilities (i.e., powerlines, sub-stations and access roads). **Steve Chapin** of the Asheville Regulatory Field Office and **Andrea Wade** of the Raleigh Regulatory Field Office were also present. A similar presentation was provided to the residents of Peace Haven subdivision near Lewisville by Andrea on 18 March. The residents are opposed to the powerline being located within view of their residences and the purpose of the meeting was to educate them about the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program, our regulations and implications of our regulations upon utility line construction.

Also, on 19 March 2004, a presentation was provided the North Carolina Society of Surveyors, Inc. regarding Wetlands Regulations Changes: An overview of the Federal Section 404 Wetlands statute and Corps of Engineers wetland regulations. Topics discussed was history of the program, wetland functions and values, delineation of wetlands by the 3-parameter approach, permits, enforcement actions and isolated wetlands.

Ron Stirrat gave a presentation on Hurricane Isabel to the Charleston Society of American Military Engineers 17 March. **Amanda Jones**, **Steve Chapin**, and **David Baker** of the Asheville Regulatory Field Office recently gave presentations on the Corps of Engineers Regulatory Program at a series of Clearwater Contractor workshops in western NC. The purpose of the workshop is to give contractors a background in current regulations that affect their work in surface waters of the state.

PHOTO TAKEN BY STEVE BROWN

Falls/Jordan staff recently participated in the annual Haw River Assembly Clean-Up-A-Thon at B. Everett Jordan Lake. A total of nine participants picked up 31 bags of trash from the banks of the Haw River and two fishing trails below Jordan Dam.

TEAM members participating in the cleanup included: Susan Lane (kneeling), (L-R standing) Dana Lee, Greg Roper (husband of Susan Lane), Carmen Boyette, Adam Tarplee, Debbie Brown (wife of Steve Brown), R. C. Duckson (event coordinator for COE), and Margo Duckson (daughter of R. C. Duckson). Not pictured: Steve Brown.

Corps Family News

Sarah Richter, daughter of **Jeff Richter**, will attend the Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Conference in June. The Heide Trask High School (Rocky Point) junior will have the opportunity to interact in panel discussions, practice leadership competencies and take part in simulation activities. Richter was selected for the conference based on her academic performance, community service, and positive attitude.

General Engineering Section is happy to announce that at 5:46 am on 17 March, Alexander James Jacaruso was born to **Jim and Carrie Jacaruso**. He came in weighing nine pounds, three ounces and was 20.25" long. Baby Alexander is doing good, as is mom, dad, and big brother, Dominic.

– Retiree News –

Submitted by Bob Swart

Attendees: Kay and Buddy Johnson, Sylvia and Rex Phillips, Bettye and Bob Swart, Dan Grimsley, Max Grimes, Augustus Moore, Doris and Ken Old, Paul Woodbury, Lawrence Crawley, Joe Lewis, Bob Doestch.

- It was good to see that Joe Lewis had found a navigator in Bob Doetsch to navigate across town to be with us at the new meeting place.
- Gus Moore came trudging in a little late looking like a mountain man with a beard. He is still working on the historic preservation house in Waxsaw, NC. (birthplace of Andrew Jackson in a log cabin with dirt floors.) Gus is planning a two-week trip to visit Captain Amy, his daughter, in Germany as well as see his granddaughters, Margaret and Melissa. He stated that he was glad to see the sun come up in the morning after ascending to his 70th birthday on February 6th.
- Paul Woodbury was in Nigeria in January and February. He visited family in Vermont in February as well. He was in Washington, D.C. in March, involved with the Cape fear River Project.
- Sylvia and Rex had a week without Lauren, spending time with friends at Snow Hill and Chinquapin.
- Alice Lewis is now in Liberty Commons on 41st Street after spending some rehab time at Britthaven, Northchase

Reaching Out *(continued)*

Trudy Wilder talks with visitors to the District's display of sea turtle habitat restoration during Reptile and Amphibian Day at the North Carolina Museum of Natural Science in Raleigh. The display was built and designed by Sue Hicks of Philpott who was also on hand to talk with interested visitors. Tara Williams also volunteered.

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