

PALMETTO CASILE



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Charleston District



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On the cover: We announced the second construction contract award to Great Lakes Dredge and Dock for work in the Charleston Harbor Entrance Channel as part of the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project at a recent event hosted by the South Carolina Ports Authority. Left to right: Jim Newsome, President, South Carolina Ports Authority, Gov. Henry McMaster, South Carolina Governor, Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, Charleston District Commander, and David Simonelli, President, Dredging Division, Great Lakes Dredge and Dock.

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From the Commander



I recently enjoyed my first bright, sunny 75 degree day with (almost) no humidity in Charleston and it was fall perfection! I can hardly wait to experience the rest of November in this beautiful place my family and I are lucky enough to call home for the next two years.

This fall I also had another first: living and working in a location that was threatened by a hurricane. Luckily, Charleston was not severely impacted but USACE is involved in the recovery efforts from Harvey, Irma and Maria. The District has 13 employees in Florida, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico helping out more than 750 USACE emergency management workers aiding in the response to these devastating storms (pages 4 & 14). Brig. Gen. Holland, our South Atlantic Division Commander, has been in Puerto Rico for over a month overseeing the restoration of both islands' power and other recovery operations. In addition to this hurricane response, we also are in the process of repairing area beaches damaged by last year's Hurricane Matthew.

In the middle of all of this, our fiscal year came to an end. September and October were very hectic for the 220 employees of the District but these dedicated public servants did it all without missing a beat. We accomplished a great deal this past year, as we delivered many important programs to our customers, partners and the nation. Our final tally included \$237 million in contracts and more than 710 procurement actions (page 12).

The Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening project maintained its fast pace with two recent contract awards for the

construction work to begin in the entrance channel. The second contract we awarded was the largest the District has ever issued in our 140 years of maintaining the harbor. This winter a dredge will begin work as we continue our aggressive schedule to deliver this project in the most efficient manner possible (page 6).

We also helped Fort Jackson break ground on a new state of the art school that will ensure our military families' children learn in a modernized 21st century facility (page 10). Also, in this issue you will hear from our head civilian on some of her leadership thoughts (page 18) and meet a recent graduate who spent the summer with us (page 16).

I hope you will get to spend some time with family and friends this fall, perhaps at a Lowcountry favorite, like an oyster roast! Speaking of oysters, the District is aiding local oyster growers through our regulatory permitting process (page 8). As always, thank you for the opportunity to lead such a professional organization. Your trust is something I take very seriously and I look forward to continuing our valuable partnerships into the New Year. The District has much to be thankful for!

Jeffrey Palazzini, PMP
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Commander and District Engineer

Missions Critical for **RECOVERY**



By Sean McBride

A hurricane hits. A flood rushes in. The skies return to normal. Recovery begins. In the last three years, we have seen three major storm events in the south Atlantic region of the country, with various levels of impact to South Carolina. For everyone affected, recovery begins immediately after the sun comes out. For those aiding in response, like the Charleston District, the response comes in various forms over time.

Most recently, Hurricanes Irma and Maria barreled through the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Florida, leaving millions without power and thousands without homes. As part of the response efforts, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been restoring power, assessing structures, placing temporary roofing and many other critical missions assigned by FEMA. The Charleston District sent 13 people already to these affected areas to conduct infrastructure assessment and manage the Corps' safety program.

"We have had a team on the ground since right after Hurricane Maria passed through Puerto Rico," said Michael Hind, chief of emergency management. "Our teams have been alongside our division commander, Brig. Gen. Diana Holland, ensuring that our missions are completed. We have aided more than a thousand people through our Blue Roof Program, which provides a temporary roof for homes until they can be repaired properly."

Initial response to those hurricanes was quick. Sometimes initial response happens to a different degree, such as when the District surveyed the federal beaches of Folly Beach and the Grand Strand within two days of the storms to determine how much sand was lost. The District also performed assessments after Hurricanes Joaquin and Matthew in 2015 and 2016. Due to the justification, funding decisions, design work, construction

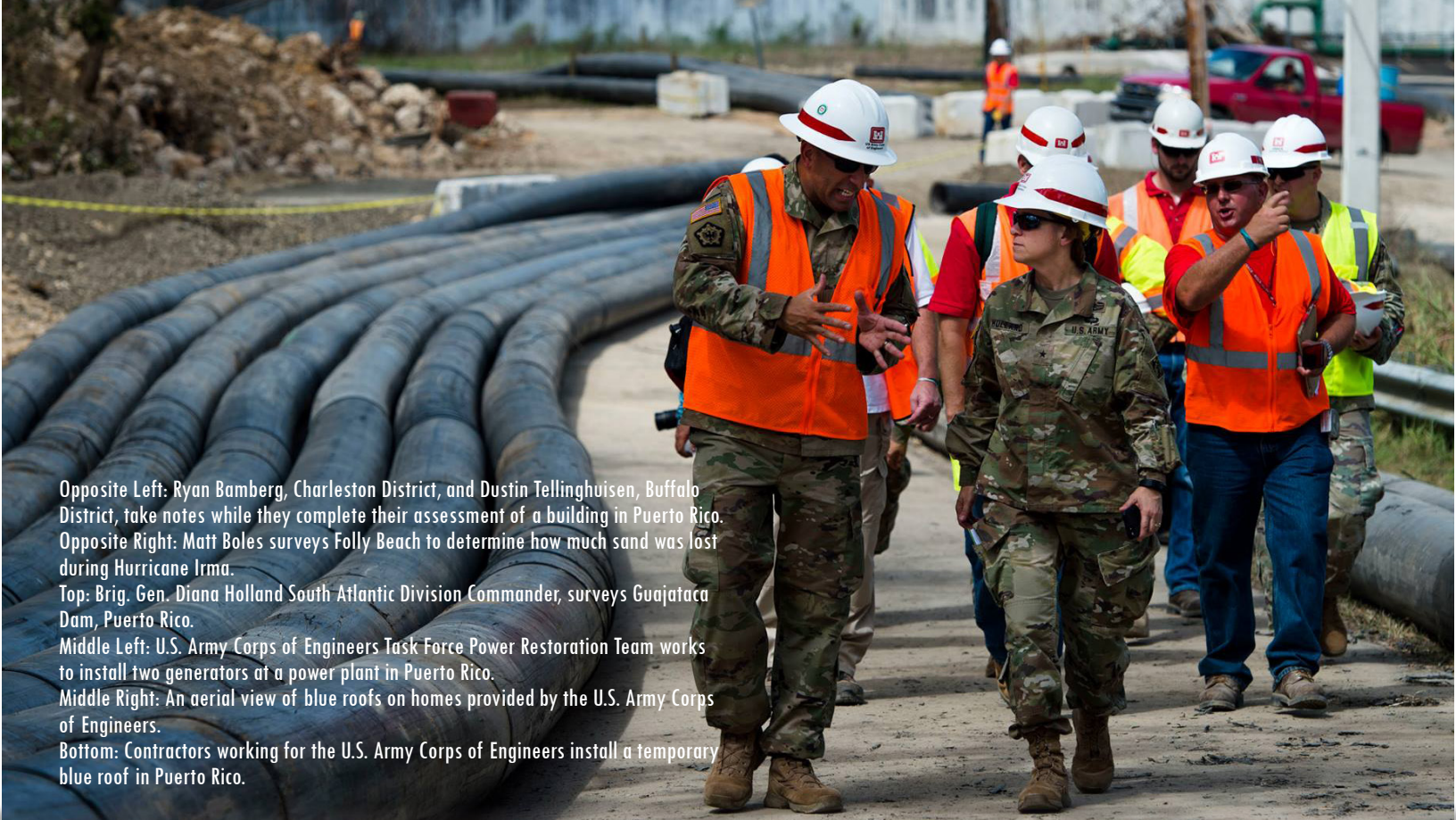
contract acquisition and dredge scheduling needed to put a rehabilitation project in place, the initial response of surveying is all the public will see take place for a period of time. Once the data is analyzed, emergency funding can be requested. This process takes time, which is why the recent rehabilitation of Surfside, Garden City and North Myrtle Beaches, completed a month and a half ahead of schedule, was actually paid for in large part by emergency funds from Matthew.

"That's why we renourish beaches in the first place, so that they can withstand impacts from storms and still protect the people and property behind the dunes until they can be repaired," said Hind. "It is unfortunate that the beaches eroded, but they performed their purpose and we're doing everything possible to bring them back to the condition necessary to continue to prevent future damage to infrastructure."

The upcoming rehabilitations in 2018 for Folly Beach and Myrtle Beach will be paid for in part from emergency funds to offset erosion resulting from Hurricanes Matthew and Irma.

The District has already tackled these crucial missions, as well as other response efforts that are lesser-seen, such as the 400 digital maps created by the District's GIS team in less than a day that showed Puerto Rico's homes, hospitals, schools, buildings, and more, that could be used to navigate the area and record data.

As the Charleston District's thoughts continue to go out to those affected by each of these storms, our emergency management division stands ready to respond, but hopes not to need to again for a long time, as hurricane season officially ended on November 30th.



Opposite Left: Ryan Bamberg, Charleston District, and Dustin Tellinghuisen, Buffalo District, take notes while they complete their assessment of a building in Puerto Rico.
Opposite Right: Matt Boles surveys Folly Beach to determine how much sand was lost during Hurricane Irma.
Top: Brig. Gen. Diana Holland South Atlantic Division Commander, surveys Guajataca Dam, Puerto Rico.
Middle Left: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Task Force Power Restoration Team works to install two generators at a power plant in Puerto Rico.
Middle Right: An aerial view of blue roofs on homes provided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
Bottom: Contractors working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers install a temporary blue roof in Puerto Rico.



Let the **dredging** begin!

By Sean McBride

In the last two months, the Charleston District announced the award of the two construction contracts for work in the Charleston Harbor Entrance Channel as part of the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project.

The first award was issued in September, amounting to \$47 million and granted to Great Lakes Dredge and Dock, LLC. The work under this contract will remove approximately six million cubic yards of material from the Entrance Channel. It is anticipated that hopper dredges will be utilized for construction under this contract and all dredging work under this contract is required to be completed by spring 2020. Due to the presence of threatened and endangered species, hopper dredge operations are restricted to an environmental dredging window, generally from December to March each year.

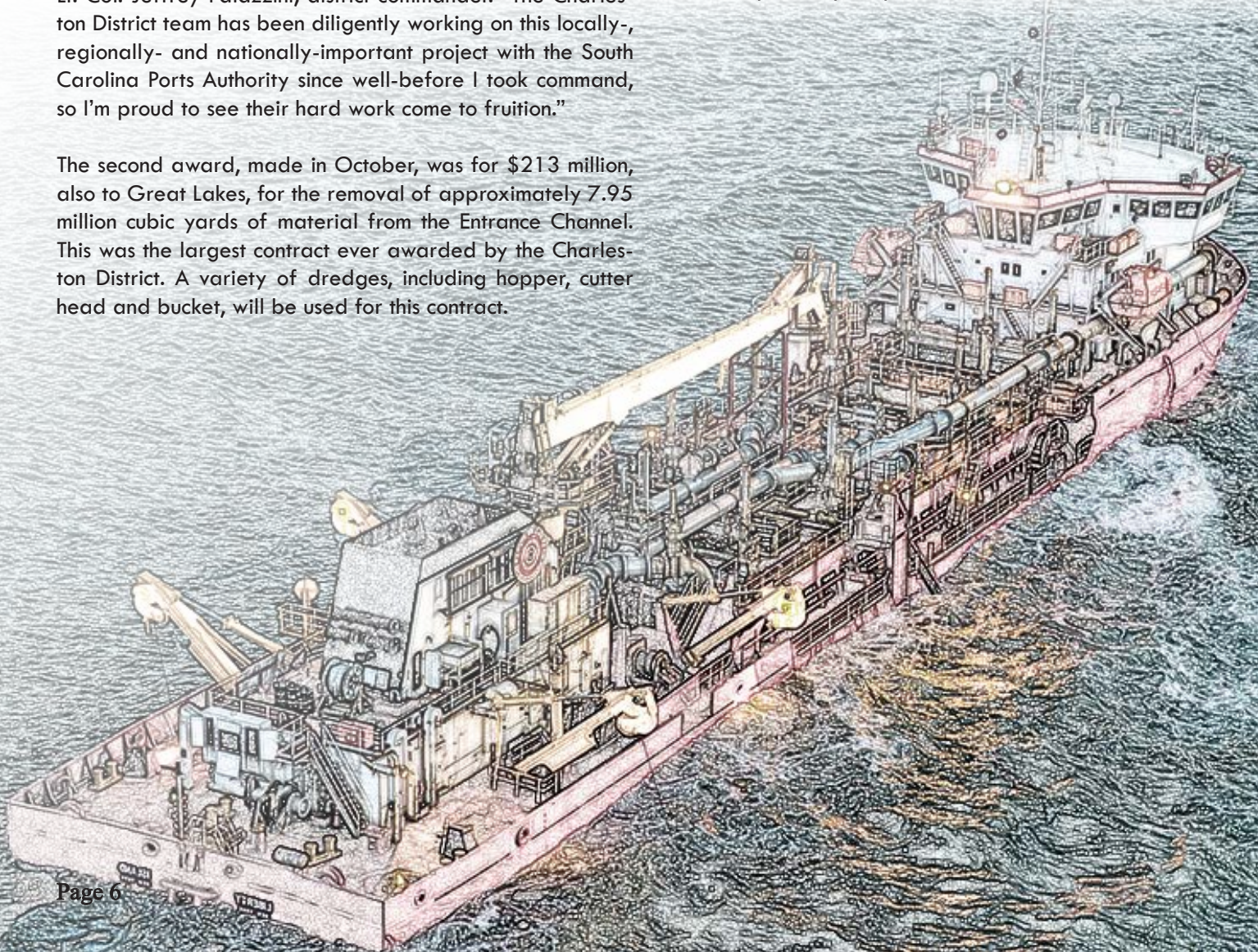
“We were very excited to have awarded the first contract for dredging that will start deepening Charleston Harbor,” said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini, district commander. “The Charleston District team has been diligently working on this locally-, regionally- and nationally-important project with the South Carolina Ports Authority since well-before I took command, so I’m proud to see their hard work come to fruition.”

The second award, made in October, was for \$213 million, also to Great Lakes, for the removal of approximately 7.95 million cubic yards of material from the Entrance Channel. This was the largest contract ever awarded by the Charleston District. A variety of dredges, including hopper, cutter head and bucket, will be used for this contract.

The requirements of this contract include the placement of dredged rock material to create nine artificial reefs, for a total of approximately 265 acres of hard bottom habitat, and a berm around the Ocean Dredged Material Disposal Site, which will create more than 400 acres of additional hard bottom.

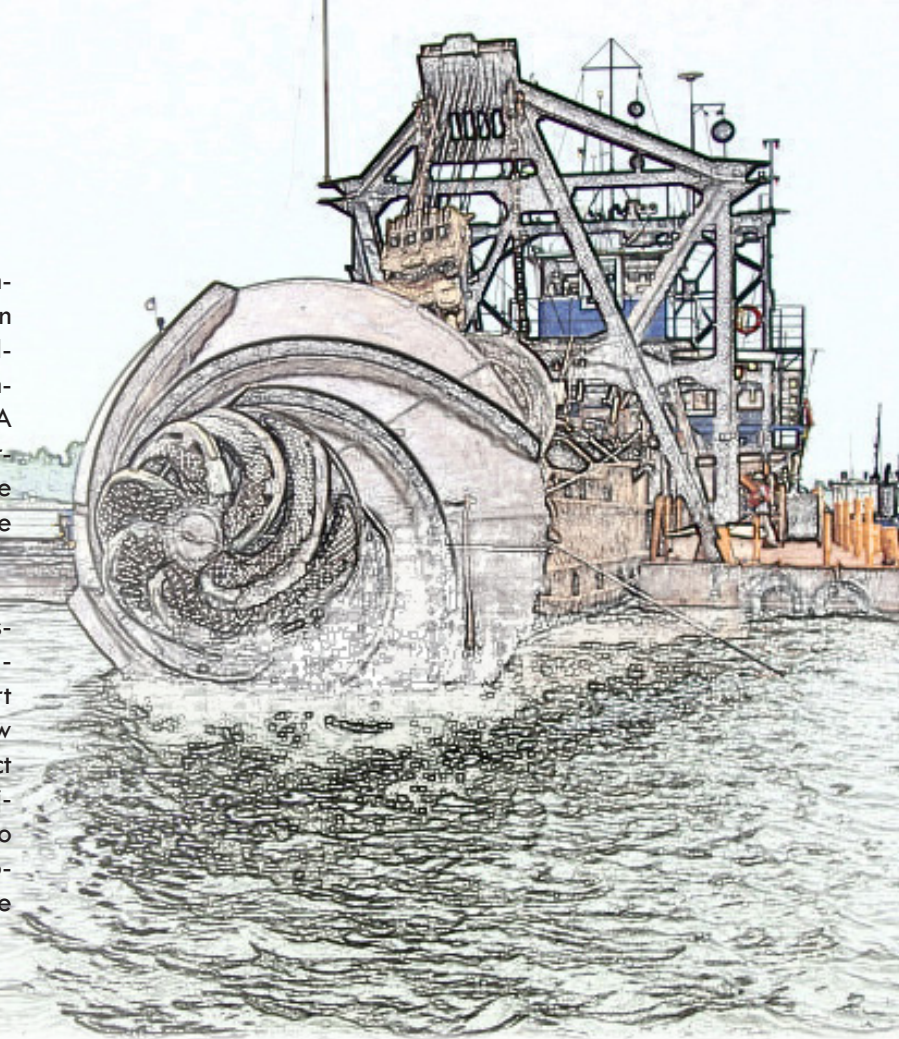
“The Entrance Channel phase will be the most time-consuming, so our team has been working diligently on ensuring we keep the project schedule on track so that the entire project remains on time and on budget,” said Palazzini. “This award is a testament to the professionals and dedication of the District’s employees and especially the project delivery team. We will continue to work hard to deliver this extremely important project in the most-efficient manner possible.”

Execution of the two contracts will achieve the newly authorized depth of 54 feet throughout the more than 20 mile long Charleston Harbor Entrance Channel. The dredged material will primarily be placed in the ODMSDS offshore.



These contracts will complete the deepening of the Entrance Channel and are part of the overall \$529 million project cost. Depending on full-funding, dredge availability, weather and a variety of other factors, the construction of the entire project will take 40-76 months. A timeline for the dredging of the upper and lower harbors has not yet been finalized, but is planned to take place concurrently during a portion of the timeframe required to complete the Entrance Channel.

The Post 45 project has been a priority for the Charleston District since 2010 and is the first large navigation project in the country to be completed from start to finish under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' new streamlined civil works planning process. This project serves as a role model for deep draft navigation projects across the Corps. This new process allowed us to save more than \$7 million and five years, while still providing greater efficiencies and safety to waterborne commerce in our harbor.



Clockwise from top: A cutter head dredge, a bucket dredge and a hopper dredge are the three types of dredges that will be used during the construction phase of the Entrance Channel.



Permitting for

By Sara Corbett

Oyster season in the Lowcountry means two things, lots of oyster roasts and eating lots of oysters. Each year, this longstanding tradition is eagerly anticipated.

However, before anyone can enjoy an oyster, two critical steps are necessary; the oysters have to grow and be harvested. The traditional methods include letting them grow naturally along tidal and marsh banks in clusters and to harvest them when they are mature or growing them in cases that rest on the bottom of waterways, but a new method is quickly becoming popular.

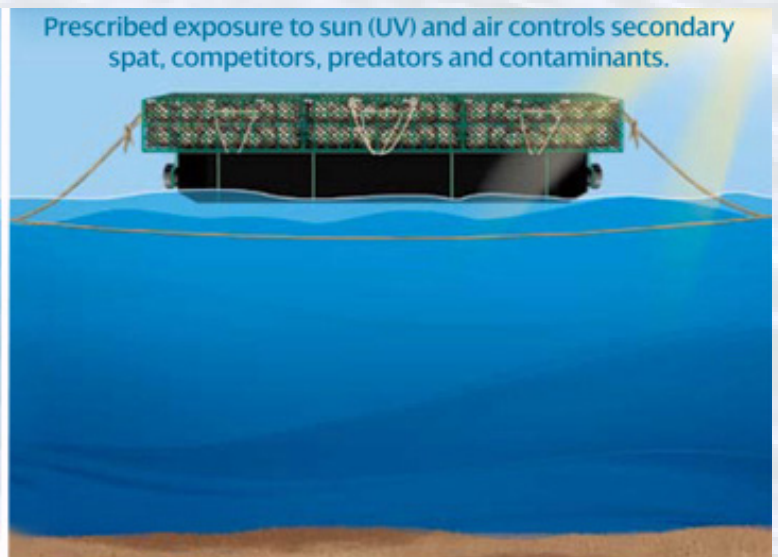
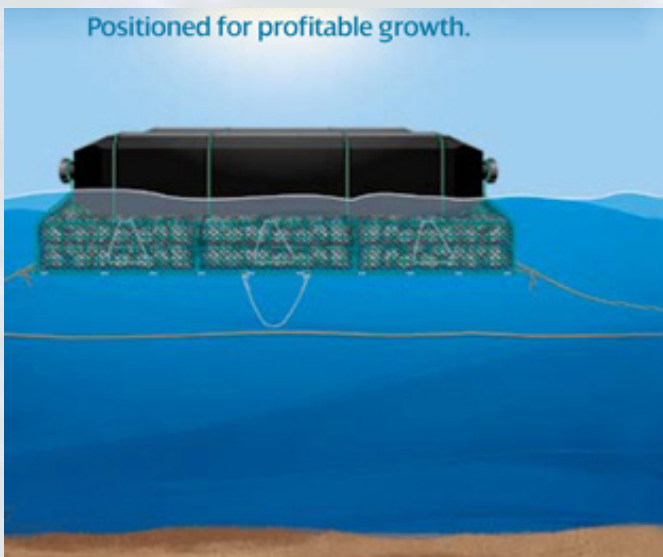
OysterGro® is a relatively new concept in shell mariculture where native, single-select oysters can be grown in floating cages that are roped together in rows and anchored to the bottom of waterways. The floats are approximately 60 inches long, 40 inches wide and 20 inches high, and typically several hundred floating cages are roped together, which can span across several acres of open water. The floating cages are routinely flipped to prevent oyster fouling (which is when organisms colonize on the oyster), keep water flowing and promote growth. By using this method, single oysters grow faster and bigger, which is ideal for commercial oyster farmers and harvesters to sell to restaurants and individual clients to enjoy from September to April.

Where does the Charleston District fit into all this, aside from having several oyster-loving employees?

“Since OysterGro can impact waterways, a Corps permit is necessary,” said Tracy Sanders, biologist and project manager. “We have issued two permits, are currently reviewing another permit and are working with two potential applicants. It’s evident that this method is becoming more popular with oyster harvesters in South Carolina since it produces big, single select oysters.”

For issued permits and pending permits, the District received comments during the public comment periods for those projects that included impacts to recreation, general navigation, aesthetics and marsh erosion. Other areas of concern are potential effects to sturgeon and sea turtles, which are endangered species, entangling themselves in the ropes, how to secure the equipment during hurricanes and abandonment of the floats and equipment.

“Similar to permits issued for typical construction projects on land, permits issued for OysterGro projects may include special conditions to address concerns that arise during the permit review process,” said Sanders. “Examples of special conditions that may be added include requiring that the project area be marked with navigation signs, knotting the ropes a certain way to prevent entanglement and that the permittee follow their specific hurricane response plan that describes when and how the floats and equipment will be secured during a hurricane.”





ysters

Applicants must obtain authorization from three different agencies prior to installing OysterGro floats and equipment. Permits are required from the Corps, the Department of Health and Environmental Control's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management and the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. While the permitting processes are separate, the Corps, OCRM and SCDNR work closely together during project review. In fact, it is recommended that applicants request a pre-application meeting with the Corps, OCRM and SCDNR to discuss the permitting process and potential issues that may be of concern by the permitting agencies prior to submittal of a permit application. The intent of the pre-applications meeting is it to provide the potential applicant with project specific information that can be used during the project planning stage and, ultimately, streamline the permitting process making it easier to apply.

The first issue a potential applicant may face is identifying a project location. Potential applicants should first contact SCDNR to determine which areas may be available for cultivating oysters. Contacting SCDNR first to determine potential project area availability is strongly recommended as any conflicts of use of project areas from a mariculture perspective could result in a delay in the Corps permitting process and may result in project relocation and redesign.

Once the permit has been issued, the OysterGro floats are subject to random compliance checks by the Corps to ensure they are meeting all the special requirements. To learn more, you can call the District's Regulatory Division at 843-329-8044.

Now that oyster season is upon us, it's time to get your oyster knives ready!



Pierce Terrace Elementary School Groundbreaking



By Sean McBride

“Hurry up and dig” was the most memorable line from the original song performed by eager first graders at the recent groundbreaking ceremony for Pierce Terrace Elementary School at Fort Jackson in Columbia, S.C.

The song was one of several performed by the students on a beautiful, warm day where six shovels pierced the ground for the first time on the site of the new school. The Charleston and Savannah Districts are partnering together to construct the new \$27 million 21st Century School, which will be open for 325 students in August 2019.

“We can think of this day as the start of something special,” said Dr. Raymond Burk, principal of Pierce Terrace. “In approximately two years, we will have a new home that our entire learning community deserves. This new home will provide us with all of the learning, collaborative, and community amenities we need as we continue our transformation towards an exceptional learning environment.”

Pierce Terrace will be the Department of Defense Education Activity’s newest 21st Century School design, fea-

turing expandable walls to adjust to year-over-year classroom size changes, grade “neighborhoods,” outdoor amphitheater, butterfly garden and an energy dashboard that will monitor the energy use from each classroom.

“The Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, the Department of Defense Education Activity, our own Garrison Directorates of Public Works, Emergency Services, Family and MWR, and many more all worked together diligently behind the scenes to make this project a reality,” said Col. Stephen Elder, Fort Jackson Garrison Commander. “Their dedicated service directly supports Fort Jackson Soldiers and their families. On behalf of these deserving families and their children, I thank you all.”

The Charleston District is overseeing the design and construction contract from the Fort Jackson Resident Office using the requirements package created by the Savannah District. This ongoing partnership is typical of the Corps in order to best-utilize the talents and resources of the South Atlantic Division. The new Pierce Terrace Elementary School will be a much-needed upgrade and is a wonderful culmination of efforts by all involved.



Pierce Terrace
Elementary School



FY17 AT A GLANCE



Lt. Col. Jeffrey Palazzini became the 87th District Commander



Issued 935 general and individual permits



47,000 website hits on our Myrtle Beach renourishment tracker that showed the location of the project

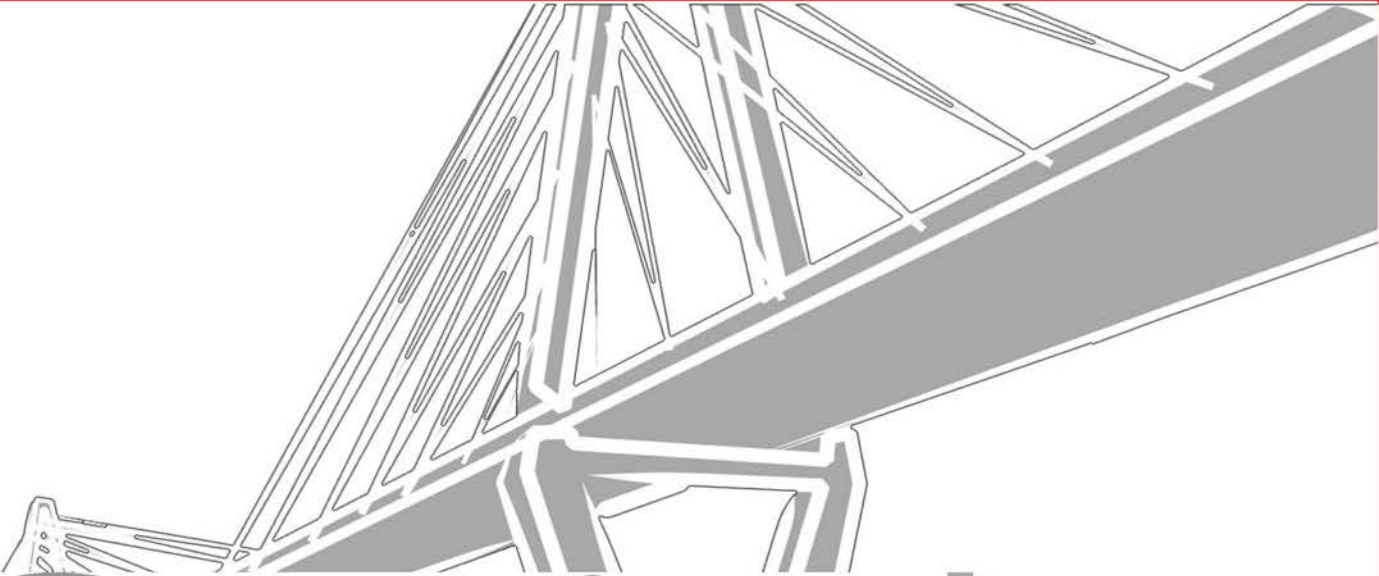


Earned a 4.5 out of 5 average customer survey score in civil works and MILCON



Announced a new Greenville regulatory satellite office (coming soon)





3
hurricanes
responded to



710
contracting
actions



237,129,922
in obligations



1.2 million
cubic yards
of beach
renourished



6,625
Fort Jackson
service calls



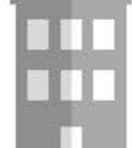
24
new hires



943
new followers on
our social media



5
national
awards earned



1
newly renovated
building

More Accomplishments

- Signed the Project Partnership Agreement with the South Carolina Ports Authority and awarded the first dredging contract for the Charleston Harbor Post 45 Deepening Project
- Worked with 12 other districts to coordinate 81st RSC, Defense Logistics Agency and Marine Forces Reserve national programs
- Completed 1,400+ Jurisdictional Determinations & 117 compliance inspections and resolved 69 noncompliance cases
- Executed 4 projects with the Veterans Administration for construction of medical facilities at Columbia VAMC
- Successfully dredged Murrells Inlet and pumped the material onto Garden City Beach using a rare least-cost disposal method
- Issued the permit for Interstate 73, which will connect Detroit to Myrtle Beach
- Re-opened the Port of Charleston more than 24 hours earlier than anticipated after Hurricane Matthew

Social Media: @CharlestonCorps

Gratifying Experiences



By Sara Corbett

Three Charleston District employees voluntarily deployed together for 28 days to Puerto Rico in support of the FEMA tasked infrastructure assessment mission after Hurricanes Irma and Maria barreled through the island. While each employee had different assignments in Puerto Rico, they all had one common feeling...gratitude.

"Deploying was a very fulfilling experience," said Rhonda Bath, the District's military construction chief. "Being an action officer in Puerto Rico gave me a whole new appreciation for the Corps and our capabilities as an organization. Together, we are helping communities rebuild and it was very gratifying knowing I had a small part in that."

Bath sat in the Joint Field Office in San Juan and managed the Corps' infrastructure assessment mission, which provides rapid and detailed structural assessment capabilities and management for a wide array of missions such as electrical, mechanical, geotechnical, structural engineering assessments; urban search & rescue support; and water/wastewater infrastructure assessments and repair after a natural or manmade disaster.

"Day-to-day, I ensured that all taskers, missions, and ad-hoc duties that FEMA requested were relayed to the mission managers and team leaders in the field," said Bath. "I monitored the inspection team's process, execution and progress to ensure that everyone stayed on the very aggressive schedule in a challenging environment. I spent a great deal of time reporting to FEMA and the team leaders, I had to report all

milestones, progress and accomplishments made in the previous 24 hours and what was expected to be accomplished in the next 24 hours."

Bath was also responsible for determining the manpower needed to properly execute the missions and, if necessary, requesting additional manpower from FEMA. She helped local officials and organizations write their scopes that they sent to FEMA for execution.

"Most of these local groups and officials had never written a scope requesting money or supplies from FEMA," said Bath. "So I walked them through the process to ensure they were able to get exactly what they needed and that everything was communicated and documented correctly. I enjoyed helping those groups who were in such need."

When Bath passed on the information and taskers to the Recovery Field Office, it was passed to fellow Charleston District co-worker, David Wilson.

"An easy way to look at the situation was that Rhonda acted as a CEO and my position, as the mission manager, was similar to an operating officer's role," said Wilson, a biologist with the regulatory division. "If a tasker or mission needed to be accomplished, Rhonda sent it to me to execute. I would determine how to accomplish that mission with the available resources or make requests if we didn't have the necessary resources. Then I would assign the task to someone in the field."

Wilson handled personnel issues, which included overseeing approximately 22 employees, and providing logistical support to the team. Since communication was key in delivering on Corps assignments, he wrote daily situation reports that went to USACE Commanders and FEMA to keep them updated on the progress of the infrastructure assessment mission as well as briefed the RFO Commander on the progress every afternoon.

“Deploying was a great experience,” said Wilson. “The people of Puerto Rico are resilient and everyone was so welcoming. They knew we were there to help and people actually thanked me. I have never been thanked like that before, it was a really good feeling. It was also interesting to see the progression of recovery. When I first arrived, 10 days after the hurricane, only some sections of our hotel had power and we were eating SpaghettiOs out of a can, but each day stores and restaurants began to open and more places had electricity.”

Ryan Bamberg, a structural engineer for the engineering division and training officer in Puerto Rico, was often on the receiving end of Wilson’s tasks.

“We were tasked with assessing the infrastructure of approximately 1,100 schools and 200 police stations to ensure they were safe. We performed damage assessments for regional airports, ferry terminals and piers/ports and provided cost estimates to fix the damages,” said Bamberg. “My primary job was to train engineers in the Corps and private sector on how to perform structural, mechanical and electrical assessments in the schools and police stations. We had a checklist we used, but some of it was a judgement call so I used examples of what to look for, such as if the ceiling had fallen, or if electrical wires were hanging, or if a tree was on the building, during an assessment.”



After the trained engineers did their assessments, Bamberg provided quality assurance by checking their work to ensure they were implementing the measures he taught and maintaining consistency across the assessments. He also did some of the assessments himself to help keep up the pace of the progress. By the time Bamberg left, more than 500 of the schools and more than 100 of the police stations had been assessed.

“It was fast-paced and everyday was different, but the work was very rewarding,” said Bamberg. “I really enjoyed the school assessments, it got some great media coverage and it was really cool to see the work I was doing have a positive impact on the children of Puerto Rico. Deploying also gave me a greater sense of appreciation for the things I take for granted in Charleston. For example, making a phone call to ask a quick question wasn’t always an option in Puerto Rico since cell phones didn’t work. Something that would take a few minutes to do here, would take hours to do there.”

Even though Bath sat at the JFO and Wilson and Bamberg sat at the RFO, they still saw each other frequently and were able to travel to remote Utuado together for a site visit.

“Utuado is approximately 65 miles from San Juan,” said Bath. “Since road conditions were so uncertain we had to take a chinook, it was amazing to see the country from that high vantage point. We inspected a waste water treatment plant and the Soldiers with us handed out Meals-Ready-to-Eat and water to a local church that was serving as a distribution center for the community. The community was so grateful for the food and water. It was a very meaningful expedition to Utuado.”

Now that the employees have returned to Charleston, they are settling back into their daily life and normal routines, but they are feeling a sense of pride and accomplishment for the opportunity to make a difference in the recovery of Puerto Rico.



Left: David Wilson (left), Rhonda Bath (middle), Dustin Tellinghuisen (middle) Buffalo District, and Ryan Bamberg (right) prepare for their site visit to Utuado.

Top right: A police station missing its roof was inspected by the infrastructure assessment team.

Bottom left: A group of Soldiers created a chain to pass out MREs and water to local communities.

Entering through the **Castle** Doors

By Kayana Ladson



Kayana Ladson checking out the survey team's RAMBLr during a media event at Folly Beach.

Opposite left: Ladson with her daughter.

Opposite right: Ladson ready to go out in the field.

Writing and editing have been a huge part of my life for the past 11 years. As a College of Charleston undergrad sitting in various creative writing workshops, I dreamt of one day finding a job that would allow me to showcase my skills as an English major. During my senior year, the Center for Disability Services informed me of an opportunity that could enhance my chances for gainful employment as a legally blind graduate. The Workforce Recruitment Program was created by the U.S. Department of Labor with the sole purpose of connecting employers with students and recent college graduates with disabilities for permanent and temporary positions and seasonal internships. I realized that applying to be a WRP participant was the best decision I could make for my daughter's and my future. It led me right through the castle doors of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District.

Even though the summer internship was temporary, knowing that I would be an actual federal employee for the Department of the Army meant a lot. My father, a Korean War veteran, always wanted me to follow in his footsteps and enlist. With my low visual acuity, I would never meet the physical health requirements. This internship was the next best thing. While technically classified as an office automation assistant, I was tasked with a copyeditor's dream to work on the second volume of the District's history book that had been in the works for some time. With my background in proofreading and editing, a former internship at an independent publishing house, and my knowledge of Associated Press grammar usage and style, my resume showed that I possessed the skillset to get the 10 chapters ready for publishing.

The summer went by very quickly. I spent time mostly with the Operations team as well as Corporate Communications. I remember when I was taken around the District headquarters to meet everyone. Every time I mentioned my work on the history book, the response was something like "good luck." It was clear people knew it had been a long road. To be honest, I wasn't surprised. It was obvious the authors had put a lot of work into it, being actual historians, but for some

reason, they had hit a roadblock. I say roadblock instead of writer's block because the book was actually written in great detail, but needed a singular direction. The District felt that a set of fresh eyes would get it back on track. I had a great time working with people in all facets of the organization to collect photos, write captions and find information. The book actually labels Charleston as the "close knit district." Through my many encounters with this new "family," I learned just how true that was.

About three weeks before my WRP appointment was to end, I was told that there was a vacancy with the regulatory department in their administrative support. I was eligible for hire under Schedule A, a noncompetitive hiring authority for qualified people with disabilities. My supervisor gave me a great reference based on my education, experience, and work with the history book. Apparently, that is exactly what the Regulatory Division was needing, someone to take initiative and get the job done.

As of today, I am the new Regulatory Administrative Assistant; a full-time temporary employee! While I may have to operate differently than everyone else with my visual assistive technologies, it does not hinder the progression of my work. I am coming into my own with the new job, learning every day. According to my new supervisor, I "rock" after only two weeks! I have had a blast this summer attending a Change of Command, town halls and even getting invited to Washington, DC, for the 37th Annual Department of Defense Disability Awards Ceremony at the Pentagon for my participation in WRP. Those early days of in-processing spent getting my certifications and Common Access Card paid off. At the Pentagon, my CAC got me a visitor's pass with no escort so I could walk around the premises freely. With my infectious personality, positive work ethic and a stronghold of patience, I believe that I can be a part of the Corps for years to come.

My future is definitely bright. Thank goodness I brought my shades!



By Lisa Metheney, deputy district engineer

I was recently at a friend's house talking with her elementary school-aged children about school. I asked important questions like what were they learning, what was their favorite subject, whether they liked their teacher, and what was for lunch the next day. As we were chatting, her 2nd grade son announced "I can't wait until I am old like you and I don't have to take tests or learn anything else!" I explained to the young man that I, in fact, am not old (an important fact he should understand right away) and that, more importantly, people should never stop learning. He furrowed his brow at me skeptically and asked why not. It took a minute or two for me to figure out how to boil down volumes of psychology and sociology, plus my four years of undergraduate study, two years of graduate studies, and 24 years of work experience into this statement: "If we stop learning, we stop being able to improve our life and the lives of others." I'm not going to say I convinced the young man that learning is always good, but I think I at least convinced him that even we old folks learn new things.

Our discussion made me think about the many ways all of us at the Corps of Engineers are continuously apply-

ing new things we learn to the projects and programs we execute. We attend classroom training, webinars, and symposia to learn everything from new GIS software applications to engineering with nature techniques to the streamlining of processes to make our projects more cost-efficient. The benefit of this training is obvious in the ways we have improved our business processes. One area we haven't discussed much is the informal learning that we get from interactions with the private sector and how we are applying it to continuously improve on the service we provide to the nation as public servants.

In April, the executive leadership of the Corps' entire South Atlantic Division visited the Chick-fil-A Corporate Headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia. Our focus was to learn about how Chick-fil-A approaches their business model and what they are doing as a corporate entity that we could incorporate in our own business model. The engagement included a tour and a very robust discussion of how Chick-fil-A leadership focuses on seeing and shaping the future, engaging and developing talent, continuously reinventing, and valuing results and relationships.



This story is part one of a three part series on highlighting learning from the private sector in order to better serve the nation in the public sector.

Just a Method

While many people wouldn't think the Corps of Engineers has anything in common with a fast food chicken restaurant, through our discussions we found we used some of the same approaches and had some of the same challenges. One of the takeaways for me was how to ensure the thoughts, skills and approaches of millennial generation members of the workforce are used to help achieve the mission of the organization.

For many of us who have been working in an organization for a long time, we can sometimes blur the methods of delivering the mission with the mission itself. This can lead to a culture that resists change and ultimately can impact delivery of the mission. The example Senior Vice President of Operations Cliff Robinson gave us in this area really stuck with me. Chick-fil-A's mission is to be the best quick service restaurant. A method to do that is through serving the items on their menu, such as coleslaw. Sometimes, when deciding whether to discontinue a menu item like coleslaw, there is great consternation about it, especially if it's an item that has a small, but loyal, following. But, by focusing on what is the mission and what is a method, it allows the company to make

decisions that will continue to deliver the mission most effectively. Coleslaw as a product is only a method to achieving their mission. While there may be backlash to its cancellation, they have to make the decision on whether cancelling the item improves their overall mission. As Mr. Robinson explained, the newer generation of employees in the company help define the mission and make him realize things like this, because they aren't tied to the methods yet. I must say, I never pictured coleslaw as a method, but that is exactly what it is; a method for Chick-fil-A to meet their mission.

So what did coleslaw as a method teach me? It taught me to make sure that as we look to execute our mission, we are engaging all generations of our workforce as we develop our solutions. Technology continues to evolve at a rapid pace. Budgets continue to get tighter. We must embrace change when necessary to make executing the mission more effective. While the fundamentals of the slide rule and graph paper are important to our mission, they are both methods. Our mission remains the same; to deliver engineering solutions for the nation's toughest challenges.



A close-up photograph of a beekeeper wearing a white protective suit with a mesh hood. The beekeeper is holding a wooden frame from a beehive, which is densely populated with bees. The background is a bright, clear sky.

Simply Supporting Nature

By Sean McBride

What are your options if you want a farm but you only own a quarter of an acre of land? You could go visit a farm or a petting zoo. You could play Farmville on Facebook. Or you could get into a hobby like beekeeping that gives you a sense of farming in a small area. After growing up with family farms in North Pennsylvania, Brad Ryczko chose the latter.

“Bees don’t take up much land and are a very low-maintenance agricultural product,” said Ryczko. “But they are much more technical than raising livestock.”

In the summer of 2016, Ryczko, who lives on Johns Island, purchased one bee hive with about 3,000 Italian honeybees from a local beekeeper. He was interested in the process and has learned a lot. Clearly he has been doing it right considering that after one year he now has nine hives and approximately 270,000 bees. He's done that through standard splitting and grafting, which are two processes for raising new queen bees and expanding your hives.



"A standard split is where you literally split a hive in half and the bees have to naturally raise a queen on the new side," said Ryczko. "It's easy because you have to split hives anyway in order to avoid swarming, but it has a proven success rate of producing a good hive."

When grafting, Ryczko pulls out 24-hour-old bee grubs and puts them in what is called a queen cup. He stacks those cups in a hive and the worker bees try to convert them to queens. Queen bees are much bigger than worker bees because they have full ovaries after being raised with special "royal jelly" from the workers. Through this process, Ryczko recently pulled 96 grubs

and ended up with 78 surviving queens. He kept a few for his reserve and gave the rest away, which is an interesting process in its own.

"The USPS has special training to handle pollinators because they are so integral to our country," said Ryczko. "I mail virgin queens to other beekeepers who then mate them with bees from their area. This way, the babies are more likely to survive because they have genetics that are necessary for that area."

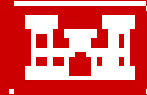
Most of the time, Ryczko lets them go about their own democratic processes to make honey and raise queens. He spends about eight hours a month grafting or harvesting honey. Ryczko says that while the honey is tasty, the real reason to remove it is that if you don't take the honey out, the bees will leave to make honey elsewhere. He calls it a "mutually beneficial" process so that they stay.

"You're simply supporting nature," said Ryczko. "Beekeeping is really bee-negotiating. You can't force the bees to stay, so you try to make life better for them."

Over the last year, the Charleston District began the first federal pollinator program in South Carolina by installing five hives and a pollinator garden at the Cooper River Rediversion Project. Ryczko says that those bees are very important because they have a completely natural environment that helps the flowers grow better, which helps the bees grow better.

"Pollinators are a huge deal," says Ryczko. "Pesticides are killing bees everywhere and we're helping them populate. People don't realize the impact that just one bee hive in a backyard can have. Commercial keepers have to send their bees to other places for commercial pollination. Bee hobbyists are what is keeping the bee pollination going in their local area."

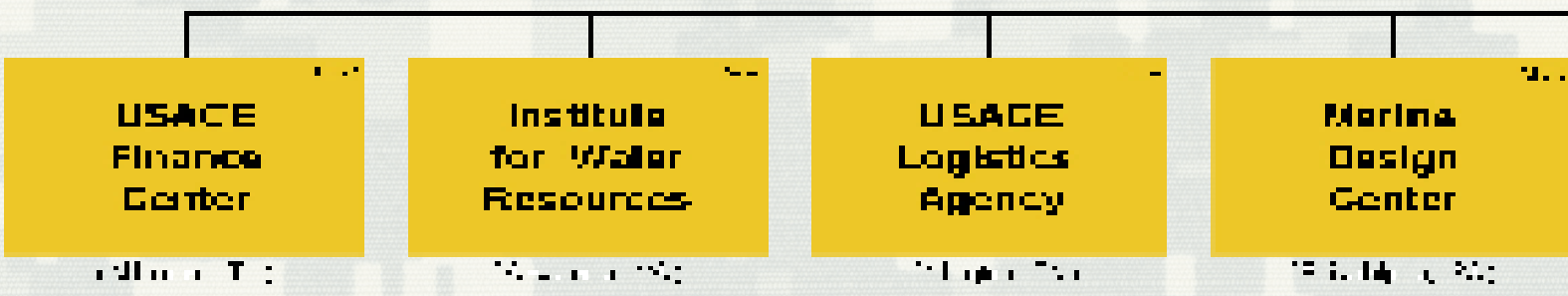
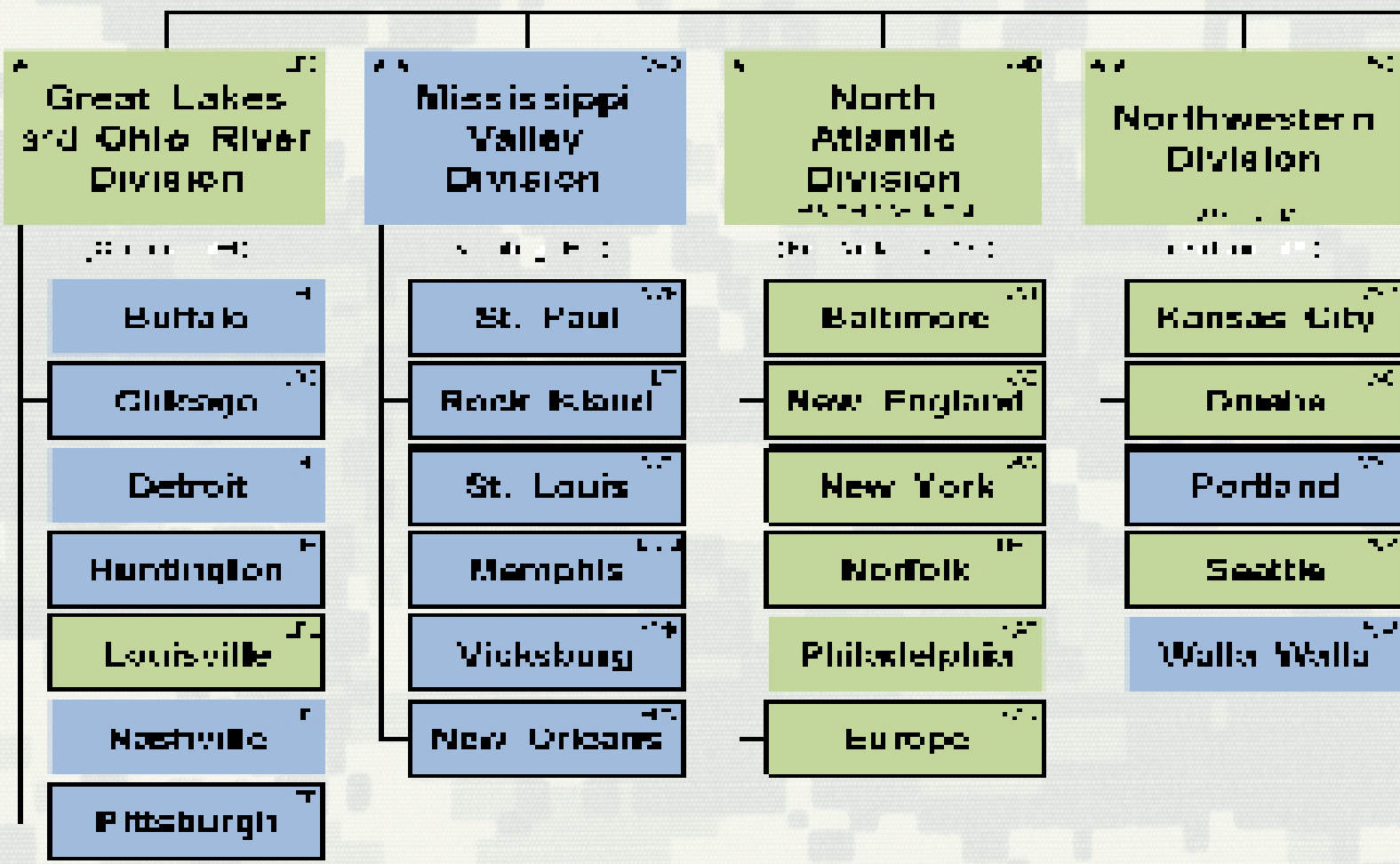
Ryczko plans to keep his hobby going by selling hives in the future. Every winter, about half the hives will die, so he will keep splitting until he's back to 10 and then sell the rest. He isn't trying to make money, but just trying to help other people get into the hobby. Success is his number one goal, and as he and the Corps continue to pollinate the Lowcountry, success will be achieved.



Organization

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USACE
Washington, DC

1000
Humphreys
Engineer Center
Support Activity
Fort Belvoir, MO



 Values Graduated on & Off Cycle

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Charleston District
Corporate Communications Office
69A Hagood Avenue
Charleston, S.C. 29403



Congratulations to Jessica Byrd, Charleston District's Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, for earning the Affirmative Action Award at the 2017 Women of Color Award Ceremony! Byrd received the award based on her passion to hire college students with disabilities under the Workforce Recruitment Program for federal agencies. She has also established a partnership between the Charleston District and South Carolina State University, located in Orangeburg, SC, to foster community outreach in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) education and awareness of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' mission and career opportunities.