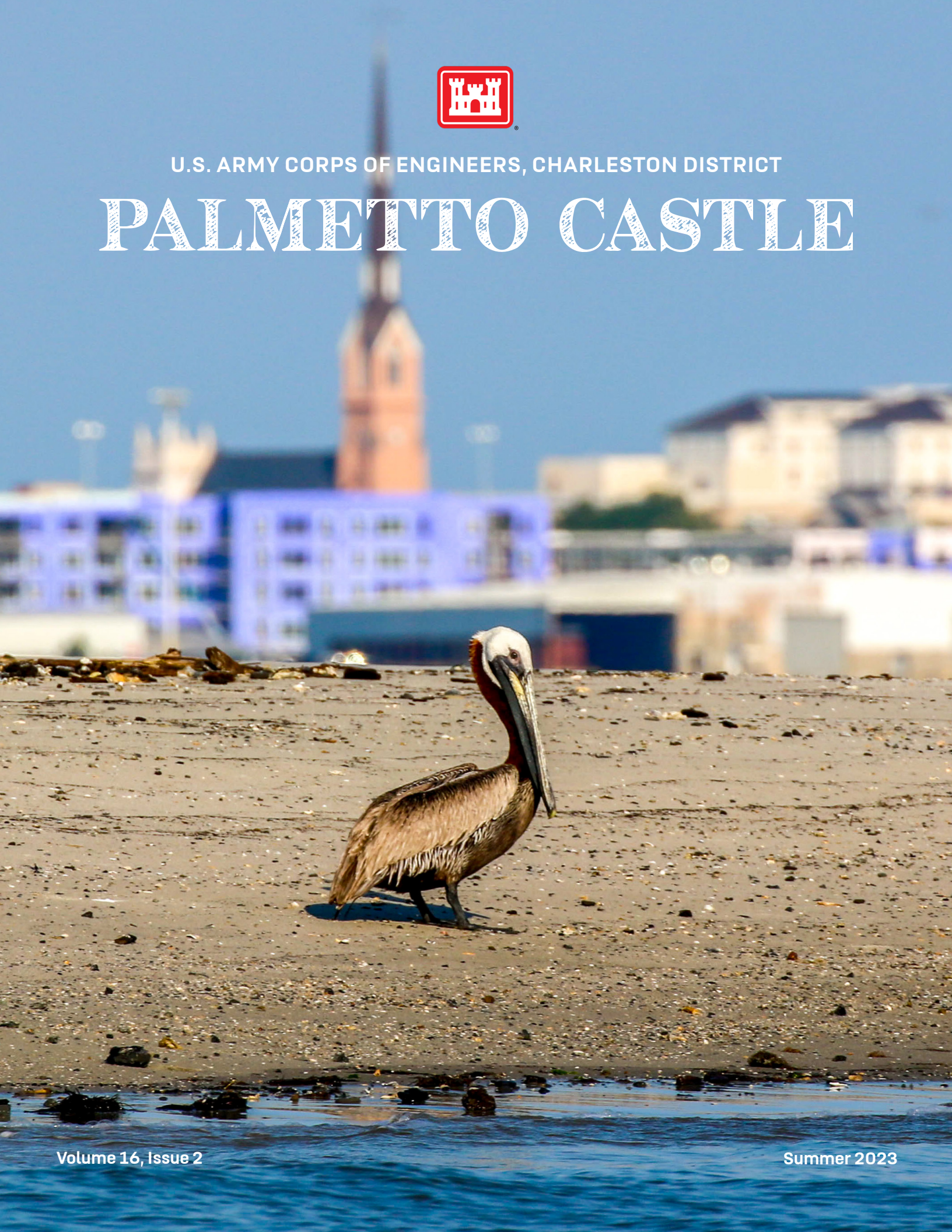
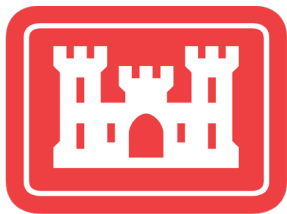




U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, CHARLESTON DISTRICT

PALMETTO CASTLE





US Army Corps of Engineers®

Charleston District

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The Charleston District bids a warm welcome to our incoming commander, Lt. Col. Robert Nahabedian!

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Front Cover

Photo by Dylan Burnell

A brown pelican prepares to make its nest on Crab Bank, a 32-acre seabird sanctuary in the Charleston harbor constructed by the District in 2021.

Back Cover

Photo courtesy of Victoria Hansen, SC Public Radio

A newly hatched oystercatcher waits for a sibling to arrive on Crab Bank during the seabird sanctuary's second nesting season since being restored.



Greetings Palmetto Castle Readers,

Happy summer! I hope you are enjoying the warmer weather and longer days. The state has so much outdoor activity to offer this time of year.

Summer is usually a happy time for my family, but this summer is bittersweet because my time serving as the District Commander is coming to an end in July. I have been reflecting on these last two years lately. It has been an incredible privilege to serve with this team of professionals who deliver so much to benefit our communities, state and nation.

I can't thank our partners enough for the many ways you have joined with the District in tackling some very complex problems. You have taught me a great deal from our interactions and I enjoyed your southern hospitality.

There is no other place like Charleston and I know you will extend that same warm welcome to my replacement, Lt. Col. Rob Nahabedian and his family. He brings a wealth of knowledge and experience from several USACE assignments.

I am thrilled to dedicate this issue to my "right arm," Lisa Metheney, as she celebrates 30 years of service to USACE (page 6). The senior civilian position is critical to the District because it serves as the continuity and stabilizing force with the military leadership rotating every two years.

I call her a "national treasure" and she is one of the best USACE has to offer. Her many efforts and contributions to the mission are recognized by the quotes from past commanders, local political leaders, partners, and

teammates (page 9). You will enjoy reading those in this issue. Congratulations Lisa on an outstanding career! Don't worry, she will still be around for a while.

Speaking of the District's greatest asset, its people. We bid farewell to the "LT" recently. Capt. Galen Kreutzberger was a true asset to me and the rest of our team during his time here (page 18). You will have fun reading about his success.

Some of my favorite days on the job have been when we host community events. You will see two events we held this past spring. Hopefully, we are inspiring the workforce of the next generation with our Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day (page 10) and our Wounded Warrior Fishing Day (page 12). Giving back to our nation's heroes is always an honor and the fish were really biting this year.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provided \$26 million to the District that will help us address the current and future water resources infrastructure needs (page 21) of the state. This funding will help us undertake civil works activities, including planning and constructing water resource projects and maintaining navigation improvements and other infrastructure. We are working internally with our non-federal sponsors to get these projects going.

It has been a pleasure serving you. My time here will be a highlight of my career. I wish you all the best.

Hope to see you at our Change of Command on Tuesday, July 18th!



Andrew Johannes, PMP PE PhD
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army
Commander and District Engineer

LISA METHENEY MARKS 30 YEARS OF SERVICE WITH THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

By Nathan Wilkes

Lisa Metheney, the Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management and senior civilian for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, is celebrating a remarkable milestone in her career. This year marks her 30th year of federal service with the same agency, a feat that only a small percentage of federal employees achieve.

"My life is a bit of a funny story. I grew up in Cowen, West Virginia, and it was the 80s, a good time to grow up in rural America," said Metheney. "My parents joked that I could go to any school that paid me to go there. Fortunately, I got a nearly full ride to Marshall University in Huntington, right on the Ohio

River, where West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky come together. I graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Economics in 1992. One of my favorite professors was working with the Corps in Huntington then and heard they were hiring interns. He is the one that suggested I apply and use my degree for my summer job before starting graduate school."

On June 1, 1993, Metheney officially started her first day as a federal employee as a GS-5 Economic Assistant.

"I remember my first salary was \$17,000 and some change," said Metheney. "As a recent grad, I was



thrilled to have the chance to use my degree and start making some *real* money.

I worked there full time through the summer, and then when grad school started in the fall, I worked 20 hours for the Corps and 20 hours for Marshall, all while attending classes for my masters."

A young woman passionate about economics and making a difference, she finished her Master of Business Administration in 1994. She was given an offer to work full-time with the Huntington District.

"When I finished my graduate degree, they hired me full-time as a GS-9 Financial Analyst," she said. "I worked in the Resource Evaluation Branch in the

Planning Division with some great people like John Yeager, the senior economist in the section I was assigned. Our team did all the National Environmental Policy Act work, some recreation, and a lot of flood control. I got to work on huge projects, be involved with many of the district's core functions, and try many different things."

Her talent and hard work were quickly recognized, and over the years, she has taken on increasingly challenging roles and responsibilities, demonstrating her expertise, commitment, and dedication to the Corps' mission.

"The Corps allowed me to do a 6-month assignment at the Europe District in Wiesbaden, Germany, as part

“There have been so many great people that have helped me along the way. I've had a ton of great colleagues and mentors that had I not met them when I did, I wouldn't be in this seat today.”





of the Leadership Development Program. I was able to work disaster response in several places, including the Jacksonville District," said Metheney.

"On July 1, 1999, I moved here and started with the Charleston District. When I first came down here, I thought I'd be here for 5-6 years and maybe go to the Northwest and learn about hydropower and work with the tribes out there, but there were interesting projects here, and I kept learning more and doing more, and they kept promoting me, and now they let me be in charge of the whole place."

Metheney's success in her career can be attributed to her dedication and ability to work collaboratively with others. She has a reputation for being a team player, and her colleagues often describe her as someone who is always willing to lend a hand and share her expertise.

"There have been so many great people that have helped me along the way. I've had a ton of great colleagues and mentors that had I not met them when I did, I wouldn't be in this seat today," said Metheney. "My predecessor, Bill Stein, was one of those great mentors and champions. A lot of the things that I

learned about running a district, I learned from him." Metheney is known for her dedication to her work and her ability to build strong relationships with colleagues and stakeholders.

"Lisa Metheney and her incredibly talented team at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, have been with us at every step of the way over the last 12 years," said Barbara Melvin, South Carolina Ports Authority president and CEO. "Together, we achieved what many thought impossible with the Charleston Harbor Deepening Project. I will always cherish her leadership, partnership, and friendship and wish her the very best as she celebrates her 30th year of federal service."

When faced with the opportunity to become the DPM of Charleston District her proven track record, electric personality and ability to build and foster professional relationships helped her to land the job.

"When Ed Chamberlayne, asked me who I thought should replace me as the DPM, I immediately and unequivocally said Lisa," said Bill Stein former Charleston District DPM and Lisa's predecessor. "I just knew she had the knowledge, skills, abilities and

collaborative personality to lead Charleston District. With her, I knew the District would have an easy transition and would continue to be successful for years to come."

Though the work is challenging, Metheney cites creative problem-solving as a critical skill for leadership.

"I was here when we only had 134 people working for the district, and now we're at about 250. Not gonna lie, there were some lean years in there," Metheney said. "Over the years, I've learned that it's part of the culture of this district to figure out the hard stuff. No matter what, we'll figure it out. It may be unconventional, but we will figure it out and make it work."

Metheney's 30 years of federal service are a testament to her unwavering commitment to public service, outstanding leadership, and dedication to the Corps' mission. She inspires her colleagues and is a shining example of the best of what the federal workforce has to offer.

"Becoming a DPM is just like 'boiling a frog,'" she said. "You start out in cold water and gradually turn the heat up. The biggest part is understanding more and more of the bigger picture and using that experience to shape and develop your team. Without all the amazing people that have helped me along the way, I would have never made it here, and I strive to do that for others and be the mentor for the next generation of USACE leaders."

More from the Lisa Metheney Fan Club...

"For thirty years, Lisa Metheney has been committed to public service and the mission of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Our state, and country, are better off because of her leadership and life's work."

- U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham

"I am thankful for Lisa Metheney's 30 years of federal service and leadership of the Charleston District! She aggressively prioritizes people, ultimately making the team stronger. She expertly manages talent, matches talent to the right missions, and celebrates the successful outcomes. She knows how to galvanize pride in the organization, resulting in a team that identifies with, and is enthusiastic about, the Charleston District. Lisa makes a difference and exemplifies being value-added. I am proud to serve with her!"

- Maj. Gen. Diana Holland, Mississippi Valley Division commander

"Lisa is one of the best civilian leaders I have ever worked with and she makes us all want to do just a little bit better. She is a national treasure!"

- Brig. Gen. Jason Kelly, Army Training Center and Fort Jackson commander

"Ms. Metheney's direct leadership and oversight of the Charleston District has been crucial to the success of planning & executing over \$50M annually. Over her career, she has ensured the coordination of USACE and MARFORRES project development, planning, programming, execution of projects and coached her team to deliver projects on time, within scope and within budget."

- Chris Frazier, Marine Forces Reserve

"It has been my pleasure to work with Lisa for the last 13 years as Mayor of Folly Beach. Lisa as always been very professional, courteous, and a problem solver. She has also helped me to remain level head, an almost impossible job, through some extremely trying times. So, Lisa, after all those nice things being said, you can't retire for at least 2 more years or until my term in office expires, whichever comes first."

- Tim Goodwin, Mayor of Folly Beach

"I consider myself fortunate to have served with and learned from Lisa back in 2009-2011...as we launched the Harbor Post-45 Study, Lisa led the thinking and then proceeded to do the legwork to ensure a successful path forward for this monumental project."

- Jason Kirk, 83rd Charleston District Engineer

"When faced with the pending retirement of Bill Stein from the Charleston District, Lisa was the obvious choice to assume the role as DPM. Her love and caring for the District employees, deep understanding of civil works processes, and strong relationships with stakeholders all across South Carolina made the decision pretty easy."

- Ed Chamberlayne, 84th Charleston District Engineer

"I am forever a better leader because of her influence in my life both professionally and personally. She has the special ability to balance the needs of the organization while truly valuing and caring about the people. To this day, I ask myself 'What would Lisa do?' and since 'I'm not wrong, ma'am' I know I am headed in the right direction! Thanks Lisa for all you have given to every one of us."

- Rachel Honderd, 88th Charleston District Engineer

EMPOWERING THE ENGINEERS OF TOMORROW: INTRODUCE A GIRL TO ENGINEERING DAY

Story and photos by Nathan Wilkes

The halls of Ashley Hall School, a renowned all-girls school in Charleston, South Carolina, were abuzz with excitement and anticipation for the celebration of "Introduce a Girl to STEM Day" on Feb. 23.

Hosted by nine local federal agencies, including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, the remarkable event inspires young girls to explore the world of science, technology, engineering and mathematics and discover their potential as future leaders. With a mission to break down gender barriers and promote inclusivity in STEM, this fun-filled learning experience aims to transform dreams into reality.

Bailey Horn, Charleston District geographer and Ashley Hall graduate, kicked the morning off with a "girls who have the will, have the ability" pep talk using the school's Latin motto, "Possunt quae volunt" or PQV.

Her inspirational words set the tone for the event, emphasizing the importance of perseverance and determination in overcoming challenges. With her remarkable achievements serving as a testament to the limitless possibilities of a career in engineering, she encouraged the girls to dream big and pursue their passions.

"We've got women from the Army Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force, Naval Information Warfare Center Atlantic and more to talk to these young girls today in hopes of peaking their interest in STEM careers," said Horn. "I am especially excited to be here because I am an Ashley Hall graduate myself. I graduated from the Class of 2015, but it feels like just yesterday I was here in the seats these girls are in today."

Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day seeks to address

the gender disparity often witnessed in engineering careers. Despite accounting for around half of the employed U.S. workforce, women in the United States only make up roughly 28% of those employed in STEM. By providing young girls with hands-on experiences and interactions with accomplished women engineers and scientist, the event aims to ignite their passion for engineering while debunking stereotypes and preconceived notions.

The main event comprised a series of interactive workshops meticulously designed to engage the participants and introduce them to various engineering disciplines. The school's state-of-the-art laboratories were transformed into immersive spaces, inviting girls to dive headfirst into the world of innovation and problem-solving.

"Today, we've got a fun experiment set up to teach the girls about civil engineering and its applications in nature," said Hanna Gervais, USACE civil engineer. "Using something as simple as water and sand, we can simulate erosion at the beach and teach the girls the importance of coastal renourishment, one of the major missions for the Corps of Engineers."

In the U.S. Coast Guard workshop, the budding engineers collaborated to design and build ships capable of carrying heavy loads like the many container ships calling on the port of Charleston. In another room, the girls were guided by NIWC Atlantic mentors to explore electronics and circuitry using batteries, LEDs, and conductive materials.

At the U.S. Air Force workshop, the girls had the opportunity to test out the newest night vision technology that C-17 Globemaster III pilots use during night missions. Those interested in medical careers

also had a chance to visit the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center's workshop, where they had the opportunity to investigate different organs using 3-D models.

"It is so great to have Ashley Hall alumni come and teach us things about STEM with so many interactive experiences," said Nella Long, an eighth grader at Ashley Hall. "I enjoyed it so much and it was so fun."

As the day ended, the students had a newfound determination and were excitedly discussing the possibilities that lay before them. Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day had successfully left an indelible mark on their young minds, cultivating a sense of empowerment and fostering a belief that they could excel in engineering and will one day change the world.

Dr. Claire Christensen, Head of the Math and Science Department and an Upper School mathematics and

physics teacher at Ashley Hall, spoke passionately about the event's impact on the girls.

"I've been working with USACE and the other federal agencies for a few years now on this event and every year, it is such a fantastic opportunity for our students to see real people doing the things they are learning about in their STEM classes," she said. "To be introduced to all these different possibilities they can pursue later as careers helps ignite their interest in these fields. This is one of the pivotal experiences for many of our students."

Through events like these, USACE, Ashley Hall and other federal agencies are driving a positive change in the engineering landscape. By cultivating a diverse and inclusive environment that supports young girls in exploring their passions, they are nurturing tomorrow's engineers, innovators, and leaders, ensuring a future where gender disparities in STEM are a thing of the past.



VETERANS AND STUDENTS JOIN TOGETHER FOR NINTH ANNUAL WOUNDED WARRIOR FISHING DAY

Story by Dylan Burnell

Photos by Nathan Wilkes

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Charleston District, in partnership with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, hosted the ninth annual Wounded Warriors Veterans Fishing Day at the Cooper River Rediversion Project in St. Stephen this spring.

The yearly event saw over 70 veterans gathered on the banks of the canal to spend a fun, leisurely day fishing. Attendees included veterans from all the service branches as well as students from the Timberland High School.

"This year's event went great. Our attendance was up, we brought back Timberland High and the weather was beautiful," said Jesse Helton, the event's coordinator and an emergency management specialist at the Charleston District. "Overall, this year is one of the

best events we have ever had!"

Helton recently served as a natural resource specialist at the CRRP. After organizing the event for the past six years, he was grateful for the chance to do it one last time before he moves to a new position within the District. The aspect he will miss the most is the interaction with the veterans, many of whom he has gotten to know personally over the years and developed friendships with.

"The veterans are fantastic to work with and hosting this event is easily the high point of my time at the CRRP," Helton said. "I have gotten to know many of our participants and will miss talking with them about the event every spring. You can tell everyone looks forward to the announcement and it's a good feeling knowing



I got to be a part of something special for our veteran community."

The event is only possible with the assistance of the DNR, which allows fishing to occur in a protected wildlife area once a year. It also gives DNR a chance to collect data on the fish caught. The students get a science lesson by helping collect biological data about the American Shad population that will be used to inform DNR's fisheries management decisions for the species.

"It was great to have the Timberland students back with us this year after a break due to the pandemic. I think having them here benefits everyone involved. The students enjoy working with the veterans and the veterans enjoy having the young students around. They also get some real-world science experience working with the biologist at DNR," said Helton.

Unlike other districts in USACE, Charleston does not operate any official recreation sites. However the property in St. Stephen has been used unofficially for years as a recreation site in South Carolina and has

hosted many events in addition to the fishing day.

The Corps proposed the CRRP in the early 1970s to reduce sedimentation and dredging costs in Charleston Harbor. Construction began in 1978 and was completed in March 1985. This project saves taxpayers \$36 million per year in dredging costs in Charleston Harbor while benefiting shipping, industrial development, hydropower, and fish and wildlife.

Since the dam blocked fish from being able to swim upriver to spawning grounds, a fish lift was built to move the fish to the other side of the dam. More than 580,000 fish pass through the lift during the spawning season this year. It is operated by SCDNR during the spawning season, usually from Feb. 1 through May 15, depending on flows and water temperature.

The annual fishing day is not the only event hosted by USACE and DNR for veterans. In the fall, the agencies host a yearly dove hunt just down the street from the dam. Both agencies are honored to be able to give back to our nation's heroes.



CHARLESTON DISTRICT TEAMS UP WITH OTHER AGENCIES FOR NONSTRUCTURAL FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Story by Francisco G. Hamm

The Gullah/Geechee people are descendants of Africans who have created a unique culture with deep African roots that are clearly visible in their distinctive arts, crafts, food, music, and language, especially here in the Lowcountry. Their unique location on a sea island has allowed their heritage and community to prosper for centuries. But it's this same geographic location that is presenting itself to be challenging, as they continue to face mother nature's overtures. She continues to knock at their door, testing their continued resiliency.

Saint Helena Island is home to the largest Gullah/Geechee community within the Gullah/Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor, established by Congress in 2006. The increased risk of extreme weather events, storm surges, and sea-level rise continues to threaten the ancestral lands and heritage of the Gullah/Geechee community that has inhabited these islands for generations.

The Charleston District has partnered with the Environmental Protection Agency and several other state and local agencies for a non-structural flood management project known as the Floodplain Management Services and Silver Jackets Sustainable Coastline Guidebook for St. Helena. The project began October 1, 2022, and initiated when the EPA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Silver Jackets joined forces in developing educational and outreach materials on mitigating the effects of erosion forces to this unique community.

Lindsey LaRocque is the project coordinator and Silver Jackets lead for the District and said the project goal is to create a sustainable coastline guidebook that the community can utilize to create a plan for implementing living shoreline and salt marsh preservation measures

along the public and private lands surrounding Saint Helena.

Silver Jackets are an inter-agency team that facilitates collaborative solutions to state flood risk priorities and floodplain management and are an integral part in contributing to the project's success by introducing valuable partners and meaningful information to the St. Helena community.

According to Charleston District hydraulic engineer, LaRocque, "it made sense for us to become partners since we had an existing project we wanted to build upon, specifically focusing on nonstructural measures for flood protection."

"The project team really listened and worked closely with the community to produce educational materials that could help promote sustainability and resiliency across Saint Helena Island and the Gullah/Geechee community," said William Drew Parker, EPA geographer and project member.

USACE and EPA started building a stakeholder list of local, state, and non-profit organizations to engage with during project kick-off meetings. The stakeholders met in person to conduct a site visit with community leaders, to see examples of challenges faced during coastal storms and extreme weather and to hear about beneficial ways to communicate potential risks to the community. These meetings would help shape the direction of the project and get it to where it is today.

According to Queen Quet, chieftess of the Gullah/Geechee Nation, this guidebook will help their community better understand what can often be seen as complex scientific topics.



Photo courtesy of Queen Quet

"Once people understand what is happening, they are more apt to adapt and to act," she said. "We want to increase the knowledge of community members so that they can make informed decisions about protecting and sustaining our coast and thereby improving coastal health and safety which includes not only the environment, but also the public health."

According to Parker, the Gullah/Geechee community has been engaged from the very beginning, guiding the project team to provide meaningful educational and outreach resources that community leaders can use to promote sea level rise and coastal resiliency.

Members of the Sustainable Coastline Guidebook for St. Helena project team attended the Coastal Cultures Conference: Sea Island Cultural Heritage Sustainability, held March 31 – April 2. The conference was a public event and interagency team members, comprised of EPA and Beaufort County, were in attendance to disseminate the information (posters, business cards, and placemats with descriptions) that was developed through this project.

"I have truly enjoyed working with this Charleston team, especially Dennis Franklin," said Quet, referring to the district's graphic designer." He did an outstanding job on the placemats and posters. "Lindsey is also a problem solver and was consistently responsive and I truly appreciate her professionalism," she added.

"This project provides the possibility to inspire action toward implementing solutions that benefit both the people and the land they are historically tied to. The community hopes to leverage these resources when applying to future grant opportunities for priority projects that support a community-wide nature-based resiliently strategy," said Parker.

For the Gullah/Geechee Nation, it's about survival.

"This project means life to the Gullah/Geechee Nation. If we are able to sustain our land and heal our waters, we will be able to sustain our cultural heritage," said Quet.

INDUSTRIAL HYGIENIST COMBINES MATH AND SCIENCE TO PROTECT EMPLOYEES

Story and photo by Francisco G. Hamm

With each prod, measure, test and compilation, Stephanie Gillian, an industrial hygienist, works to protect the health of District employees by developing, testing, and implementing a wide variety of policies, programs, and aiming for a healthier and safer work environment.

"Not many people understand what I do when I try to explain it," laughs Gillian, who has been with the District for almost a year.

Industrial hygienists like Gillian provide a full range of services including chemical and noise sampling, ergonomics assessments, hazard assessments and indoor air quality testing.

"It's my job to prioritize the health and safety of our team by ensuring their exposure assessment needs are being met," said Gillian. "I do that by evaluating hazards and providing recommendations for employee protection."

Originally from Camden, South Carolina, Gillian works out of the Columbia field office with regular visits to the Charleston area to conduct interviews with employees to understand their jobs and environments better, hopefully uncovering potential risk factors that can be measured and reduced.

"I also study individual employee work tasks through interviews and site visits," she said. "Through monitoring and understanding, I try to determine if how they are doing their job could be something causing an exposure which could be harmful to their health, with the idea of trying to prevent hazards before they happen."

So, the first question she gets asked the most is, what

is an industrial hygienist? According to her, the second that usually follows is how do you become one?

"I am a biologist by trade, but my first degree was in environmental engineering and one of the classes was toxicology –which studies the effects of toxins on humans and the environment," she said. "I fell into the field with the intrigue of the environment, specifically nature and its many stressors."

Although there are many canvases for an industrial hygienist, her main canvas and focus are on employees and their work environments. Her career has included being a safety engineer and a compliance officer.

During her first year, she has conducted annual industrial hygiene assessments for St. Stephen Powerhouse, CASA Survey and Construction and Regulatory employees.

So, how do the environment and humans working coexist?

A great example is the Charleston District's St. Stephen Powerhouse. Employees at that work site deal with very loud turbines – so measures are necessary to protect the employees and ensure guidance within the OSHA and USACE standards for the hearing conservation program. Gillian does routine measurements there to ensure the safety and compliance of the employees.

According to Gillian, the best part about her job is being out in the field, talking to everybody and seeing what they do.

"We have a diverse workforce in USACE," she said. "Regardless of whether it's construction work, survey work or working at the powerhouse – there are a lot



of moving parts – and getting to know the people and figuring out if there is an issue is the most important part."

A very inquisitive person, Gillian is a master naturalist, intrigued with nature and its effects and impacts on humans and the environment. To become an elite in the field, there is a particular path she has followed to becoming a certified industrial hygienist.

"I tried to take certain jobs along my career path to align myself to get the right experience and opportunities," she says enthusiastically. "Now I have the right job with the right resources to take on the industrial hygienist certification process."

Gillian graduated Cum Laude, receiving her Bachelor

of Science from Limestone College, Gaffney, South Carolina. Earning the trust of employees is the most critical part of my job, according to Gillian.

"To know that they can talk to me about their concerns and that I can be of service to them by helping them get resolve. That's a great day," she said.

Already making a difference, she was part of the District's successful 5-Star Safety Flagship Assessment, making Charleston District the first USACE district to achieve this award.

With a certification in her near future, Gillian continues to solve work environmental riddles using complex mathematical and scientific algorithms to ensure the safety and health of our employees are paramount.



SOCCER PLAYER TURNED ARMY OFFICER RISES THROUGH THE RANKS

Story and photos by Dylan Burnell

On a sunny May morning at historic Fort Moultrie on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, a young first lieutenant stands firmly at attention as his new captain insignia is pinned to his uniform. Capt. Galen Kreutzberger, who joined the Charleston District as a first lieutenant in February of last year, achieved more than he could have imagined in his 15 months in the Lowcountry.

Kreutzberger grew up in Harrison City, Pennsylvania. An avid soccer lover, he played throughout his childhood. His love for the game led to his first introduction of

military life when he attended soccer camp at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, New York.

"The camp was a lot of fun. What stood out to me was the players," said Kreutzberger. "All of the cadets at West Point looked very mature and had a great way of looking at things. Seeing them made me think that's the type of person I would like to be."

Determined to become the type of person he saw on the soccer field, Kreutzberger underwent the rigorous West Point application process. He was accepted

and graduated in 2019 with a chemical engineering degree. His first assignment was Joint Base Lewis McChord, Washington where his unit deployed to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, California.

Kreutzberger would quickly learn to become a jack of all trades. As a brand-new second lieutenant arriving at Fort Irwin, things moved fast and before long, he was assigned as the night battle captain leading the tactical operations center.

"I quickly realized I was going to be thrown in many different directions," said Kreutzberger. "My role was to lead the limited staff we had and help set the conditions for the morning. It was an interesting experience because I am trying to learn the roles of our units, their support units, the soldiers and where I fit into all of it."

Despite all the challenges, he handled them in stride. However, another lurked on the horizon, the start of the Coronavirus pandemic. Along with the rest of the world, his organization was challenged to adapt to the situation.

Upon returning to the new normal, Kreutzberger faced yet another challenge, he found several of his superiors had transitioned to other commands or been promoted. With no replacements, it left four lieutenants, including him, to serve as the unit's operational staff officers.

"As a new second lieutenant being told you're going to be a staff primary for the plans cell, I couldn't help but think, 'whoa, I don't know anything that's going on.' I didn't let that stop me and I learned the best way to go about it was to drink from the fire hose and get the job done," Kreutzberger said.

After excelling in his new role and experiencing several others, including mobility support platoon leader, he was given the opportunity to take a temporary assignment with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Arriving last February, he had no experience working for a nearly all-civilian agency. Adding to the challenge, he didn't have the slightest idea of what USACE did. Soon he'd find that it was much more diverse than he'd previously thought with USACE serving a wide-ranging set of missions touching almost all aspects of the community..

In most USACE districts, the only Army personnel are the commander and deputy commander, with occasional lower-ranked officers and non-commissioned officers serving in support roles. Stepping into the Charleston District, Kreutzberger joined the commander and deputy commander as the only active-duty military officers.

Within three months, the deputy commander at the time left for a new assignment. Kreutzberger had demonstrated his abilities and was soon selected to fill the role in the interim.

"As the interim deputy, I represented the executive staff and the commander's needs. It was a very valuable experience because I saw USACE from the command level and I got to see how field grade officers brief their higher-ups and the interaction from the top-down," Kreutzberger said. "It was incredibly beneficial since it is not something a junior officer like me normally gets to see."

Part of his role as deputy commander was assisting the senior chiefs when they needed something to reach the commander. Kreutzberger would work with them to find a solution or path forward and then present it to the commander. As a first lieutenant, he briefed the South Atlantic Division deputy commanding general, something usually done by more senior officers such as majors and lieutenant colonels.

Through it all, he saw the passion of the District's employees and quickly learned what the organization's best asset was its people.

"I learned people are your most important asset. The people here love what they're doing, they're motivated, driven, and they truly enjoy working for the District," said Kreutzberger. "I don't think I've met anyone who felt any different. If you ask anyone a question, they'll drop what they're doing to help you."

He met every challenge head-on and did an outstanding job serving the District at several pay grades above his rank. Charleston was the best assignment he could have ever had.

He received a promotion shortly before leaving the District. Upon his promotion to captain, he couldn't help but realize the immense impact he would now have in people's lives.

"This is the first rank where you are truly the leader of a large group of soldiers. You now have some control over the direction people take, in the Army and life," Kreutzberger said. "Though you're always learning, captain is when you begin to apply what you've learned over the previous years."

Kreutzberger left the Charleston District at the end of May. Following a well-deserved rest with his family,

he is now attending the Engineer Captains Career Course at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, where he will also complete a master's degree in one of the many engineering fields.

No matter where he goes next, he will always remember the Charleston District.

"By far, I'll remember the people the most. The knowledge everyone has and their perspective on the mission is world-class. Everyone is upbeat, positive and happy to be here every day. No matter what I was working on the District culture made me want to work even harder," said Kreutzberger.

Throughout his journey, everything Kreutzberger has accomplished reminds him of why he serves and what it means to be an officer in the United States Army.

"What service is to me is giving back. I was fortunate growing up and serving is my way of doing that," Kreutzberger said. "Why it's so impactful is because you're directly influencing people in a positive way. To me, that's what service is, helping more than just yourself. I can't tell you enough how proud I am to do that for the United States Army."





BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW UPDATE: CIVIL WORKS PROJECTS UNDERWAY

Story by Francisco G. Hamm

Photos by Dylan Burnell

The Charleston District's robust portfolio of projects was boosted in early 2022 when the spending plans for the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, formerly the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, were released for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers civil works program. Over \$26 million was allocated for several projects in South Carolina. Over the past year, our team has been working internally and with our non-federal sponsors to get this work underway.

Updates on these critical projects are as follows:

Under the Corp's environmental infrastructure authority, the Spring/Fishburne Pump Station project received \$4M in funding and will upfit a stormwater pump station near the intersection of Bravo and Ralph H. Johnson Streets. On March 3, 2023, the

Charleston District and the city of Charleston signed a Section 219 agreement which authorizes the Corps to provide assistance for the design and construction of environmental infrastructure projects. Since that date, the city has initiated procurement of an engineering firm to complete the design.

The Corps anticipates awarding a contract for construction in 2024. This pump station drains over 11 acres, including the primary medical district access roads of Courtenay Drive, Bee Street, and Doughty Street. This area experiences severe and frequent flood events, which cause damage and limit access for emergency vehicles, residents, and employees.

"Access to the medical district is critical for the patients requiring care and the medical community

employed in Charleston," said Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg at the signing event. "This project, and others like it, will help ensure that our citizens and veterans can access these life-saving facilities, even during a storm event."

For aquatic ecosystem restoration, the BIL also provided \$1.5 million in initial funding to complete the preconstruction, engineering and design phase and initiate the construction phase of Polk Swamp in Dorchester County. On February 15, 2023, Charleston District and Dorchester County signed a project partnership agreement and the project team is currently working on the initial modeling and 35% design efforts.

Construction is anticipated to begin in 2025 and will take three years to fully implement due to multiple phases of invasive species removal and native planting. This project will restore approximately 290 acres of cypress-tupelo bottomland hardwood forest, restore water flow and connectivity, remove invasive species, and reforest with keystone species. By expanding wetland corridors and reducing habitat fragmentation

the project will benefit wildlife such as the American Wood Stork.

The BIL included \$21.2M for several navigation and beneficial use projects.

The most significant amount, \$12.6 million for the Atlantic Intercoastal Waterway, was predominantly used to award a contract on August 15, 2022, to perform maintenance on upland placement areas from approximately Georgetown to Charleston. This contract will raise the perimeter dikes to increase capacity for future maintenance dredging along the AIWW. Construction is underway.

"BIL afforded us the opportunity to get ahead of our placement area maintenance to ensure we have sufficient capacity for ongoing and future dredging requirements through the AIWW," said Scott Glass, chief of operations.

Town Creek, the federal navigation channel that provides maritime access to the commercial center of McClellanville, received \$2M to dredge and





beneficially use dredge material from the channel via nearshore placement at Lighthouse Pointe beach using a small hopper dredge operated by the Corp's Wilmington District.

"This is a win-win situation," said Jeremy Johnson, chief of navigation. "We get to dredge out a channel for navigational purposes, which is our main mission, but then we can use 100 percent of the material to benefit the Lighthouse Pointe beach area, a critical nesting area for sea turtles."

In addition, according to Glass, "Dredging that channel directly supports the local fishing and shrimping operations of the small fishing town of McClellanville."

The work is expected to be conducted in 2024.

Another beneficial use project is the Murrells Inlet Federal Navigation Channel, which received \$6.1 million. According to Glass, this dredging project provides three beneficial use components: shoreline protection, habit stabilization and reinforcement of navigation structure at the channel's south jetty.

"We will place material along the Garden City Beach shoreline for infrastructure protection, on Huntington Beach near bird habitat and add some material at the south jetty as reinforcement to that area," said Glass.

According to Johnson, this project is currently in the bid phase and should be awarded this summer, and the construction will start in the fall.

Lastly, there was about \$450,000 allocated for needed maintenance activities for the Cooper River Rediversion project and fish lift in St. Stephen. This project powers over 40,000 homes and the fish lift passes up to 750,000 fish to reach their spawning grounds annually.

"This infrastructure funding has allowed the Charleston District to initiate new projects and complete needed maintenance activities that have been on the books for a long time," said Jeff Livasy, chief of programs and civil works. "Supporting our non-federal sponsors who have been very patient awaiting federal funding and doing so in such a wide variety of mission areas is both exciting and rewarding."

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We want to give a special thanks to Lorianne Riggan, with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources, who gave testimony to the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works on June 7th. Her knowledge, passion and excitement for ecosystem restoration projects, like Crab Bank, helped U.S. Senators understand why Corps' projects such as these are critical to the nation.