Salina Hart, Reservoir Regulation and Water Quality Section chief, regulates water on the Long Tom for the District from her office in Portland but she only had a periphery view of the river before the trip.

“Prior to the trip I had put a considerable amount of thought into the downstream river channel; however, having a perception and an actual encounter are very different,” said Hart. “The trip reaffirmed my passion for water management. It also brought me awareness to how others, internal and external to the Corps, value the watershed.”

Bishop talked to the boaters about the history of the Long Tom and Amanda Reinholtz, Long Tom Watershed Council habitat and water quality specialist, spoke to the group about Ludwigia Hexapetala, an invasive plant species in the river that, if left unchecked, could significantly disturb the river’s ecosystem.

“It forms dense, channel-spanning vegetation mats that can interfere with water conveyance, irrigation intakes and other water infrastructure, boating and recreation, water quality and fish habitat,” said Reinholtz. “The Long Tom Watershed Council has been working together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Oregon State Weed Board for the past three years to address the problem.”

Reinholtz said she appreciated the opportunity to be included on the canoe float.

“Even though the Long Tom Watershed Council and the Corps have different mandates, we have a lot of the same values and goals. We both want to do right by the natural and human communities that call the river home, and we look forward to working toward that vision together.”

This was the second time Bishop had led such a trip for District employees. He hopes that this trip will keep District staff engaged and actively thinking about how to manage the river in the future.
Dedicated teammates of the renowned Portland District, it has been a tremendous honor and a privilege to serve with you and for you. Some of you may remember that my family and I served here previously from 2008 to 2009 as the Deputy Commander and Deputy District Engineer. I arrived for my first assignment to Portland District after serving 15 months in Iraq. When I left the District 15 months later to command Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, I felt a tinge of guilt because I suspected I gained more than I contributed.

I rejoined the Portland team in April 2014 after serving in Afghanistan. As I depart for my next assignment, after more than three years at Portland District, I didn’t expect to feel that familiar tinge of guilt. I have learned so much during this incredible assignment. My hope is that as “iron sharpens iron,” I have made you a better public servant as you have made me.

Thank you for your CHARACTER; always adhering to our Army Values, always helping your teammates and selflessly dedicating yourself to our nation. Thank you for your dedication to technical COMPETENCE; Portland District’s distinguished reputation is directly due to your constant improvement and consistently reliable results. Thank you for your unwavering COMMITMENT; your sacrifices ensure the District’s missions are accomplished. Lastly, thank you for nurturing a CULTURE that brings out the best in each other. I loved being here because you make it a special place.

I could write multiple columns on the accomplishments you’ve made during my time here, so I will only mention a few things from the past year. We completed the construction at Jetty A as part of the rehabilitation of the jetty system at the Mouth of the Columbia River. Our navigation locks at Bonneville, The Dalles and John Day reopened ahead of schedule as part of the Columbia-Snake River System extended navigation lock outage. We completed installation of the Generic Data Acquisition and Controls System (GDACS) at the Detroit and Big Cliff dams in the Willamette Valley, and the Lost Creek and Applegate dams in the Rogue River Basin. GDACS allows a dam operator to remotely control a dam at another location, an especially difficult achievement due to the regional geography. Finally, the Elk Creek project located in the Rogue River Basin, is on its way to becoming a benchmark in recreation and habitat restoration. We’ve built pedestrian bridges to improve access to the scenic Elk Creek trail and the area’s numerous swimming holes, installed mile markers along the trail, and built restrooms and parking areas at the upper and lower trailheads.

Among the many memories I will take with me, working with extraordinary professionals like yourself tops the list. I am inspired by your selflessness and dedication to ensuring our nation’s security and prosperity.

I know you will welcome and support Col. Aaron Dorf and his family as you did us. He is a superb officer who will do an outstanding job leading Portland District.

Thank you for allowing us to be part of your family for a short period in the history of Portland District. Suzanne and I will miss all of you, this beautiful area, and the meaningful mission that is vital to our fellow citizens of the Pacific Northwest. We stand ready to assist. This is not “goodbye,” but “until we meet again.”

Competence follows Character.

Col. Jose Aguilar and his wife, Suzanne Aguilar. Photo by Billie Johnson, ACE-IT
Farewell from Col. Aguilar, 61st District Engineer

A Privilege and an Honor

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Introduction from Col. Dorf,
62nd District Engineer

Eammates of the Portland District, I am honored and proud to serve as your 62nd Portland District Commander. I am personally humbled by this opportunity to serve with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers again; it has been nearly 16 years since I departed the Resident Office in Bahrain in October 2001. I look forward to serving with each and every member of this great District team, and I have set a goal to meet each of you during the next several months as I travel across the District and get to know the projects. As for my personal leadership and command philosophy, I will publish those in the coming weeks.

In my short travels thus far, and through conversations with people both within and outside the organization, I am impressed by your professionalism and Espirit de corps. Portland District has an outstanding reputation—something I am already proud of and eager to become part of.

I still have a lot to learn about you, but I would like to share a little about me. I recently finished a year-long program at the Canadian Forces College in Toronto, Ontario. I was the U.S. Army’s representative to the National Security Programme, Canada’s equivalent to the United States’ War College, which is conducted prior to taking colonel-level command. The program focused on inter-agency operations, government level policy making and national security implementation for the Government of Canada. As part of the program, we travelled to Ottawa, New York and Washington D.C. to look at U.S. and Canadian financial and government policies. We also travelled across sub-Saharan Africa from Dakar, Senegal, to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to look at National Security initiatives in the region. Although these may seem outside the realm of what the Corps does in Portland, many of the challenges we studied and later observed are relevant to what we do every day.

On a personal note, my family and I recently wrapped up a 3,300 mile drive from Toronto to Portland via the Trans-Canada Highway and were able to follow the Columbia River down from deep inside British Columbia, seeing firsthand how much water still sits north of the border. This provided me with some context of the size, scope and complexities of the issues this District tackles every day providing services and life safety to the citizens of Oregon and Washington. As we transition to life on the West Coast, we look forward to learning about Portland and the surrounding areas, the Cascades and coastal regions. It is has been more than 20 years since my first duty station at Fort Lewis, Washington (now Joint Base Lewis-McChord), and I am excited to experience everything this region has to offer, especially getting out to enjoy the diverse landscapes and outdoor activities.

I would also like to thank the staffs at Bonneville, The Dalles, John Day-Willow Creek and Willamette Valley projects for their time hosting me during my visit in May. Your candid assessments and depth of knowledge of the projects were impressive, and stand as indelible testaments to this professional work-force. In those two days, I learned more about power generation, fish ladders, attraction water, pooling and fish counting than I had in more than 23 years in the Army. I still have a lot to learn and am ready to listen in order to continue to build my base of knowledge on core subject areas within the District.

My wife, Michaela, and two children, Saskia and Hayden, are excited to be part of this team and look forward to serving the Portland District over the next three years. I cannot thank Col. Jose and Suzanne Aguilar enough for their warm reception to Portland and a smooth transition into command. You have led the District well and built a reputation that I hope to emulate over the course of our command. We wish you good luck as you transition to your next assignment at U.S. Northern Command in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Essaysons,
Col. Aaron Dorf
62nd Colonel of the District

Living with dams: possible deluge
an ever-present possibility

Roughly 70 billion gallons of water flows over Niagara Falls every 24 hours and the same amount sits ominously behind Cougar Dam. If Cougar were to completely fail, that water would rush 60 miles down the McKenzie River, washing away everything in its path, until it reached the Eugene and Springfield area.

The deluge could make Eugene and Springfield look like Corvallis, Oregon City and Portland after the Flood of 1996; although no dams failed during that event. That image, and the desire to do everything possible to keep it from becoming reality, was the backdrop for a recent inspection at Cougar Dam, May 24.

Graham Hilson, Willamette Valley Project general maintenance manager, lives downstream of Cougar and takes these inspections personally.

“My family and I live within a half mile of the Willamette River main stem and we’re well within the flood plain, so beyond my professional duties I have personal interest too,” said Hilson. “It’s good to be a little worried with so much at stake, recognizing the communities we could impact narrows our focus and attention where it matters most. I have a high level of confidence in the performance of our dams under any scenario.”

Hilson isn’t the only one expressing confidence in the dam. Erica Medley, Portland District geologist and Dam Safety Program team member, says being involved with the Corps’ robust dam safety program inspections shows her the structures are reliable.

Medley spends a good portion of her day reviewing data, conducting research and investigating the District’s dams.

“Public safety is the Corps’ first priority,” said Medley. “We inspect, evaluate, maintain and repair our structures to minimize risks to the public. “We have good communication with local emergency management officials so that emergency response plans are in place in the event of an emergency,” she continued.

Additionally, reliable doesn’t equal fail-safe. Anyone living downstream of a dam should be aware of the risks and be prepared to take action to protect lives and property.
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An interdisciplinary team from Portland District conducts a Periodic Inspection of Cougar Dam, May 24. Periodic Inspections occur at five-year internals and are part of a robust Corps Dam Safety program. Photo by Tom Conning, Public Affairs Office

Col. Aaron L. Dorf
Medley recently led the May 24 assessment where an interdisciplinary team of geotechnical, geological, hydraulic, structural and mechanical engineers visited Cougar Dam to examine it during a Periodic Inspection, which happens every five years. This is just one of many types of analyses the Corps does at its dams. Others include field studies – also beginning at Cougar – Periodic Assessments at 10-year intervals, risk assessments and annual inspections. All of them are done to ensure the dams are reliable and operating as intended.

Cougar Dam is one of 13 dams in the Willamette Valley that Congress authorized for flood control operations and is managed by the Portland District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The District Dam Safety Program’s goal is to maintain public safety by minimizing risks associated with living downstream of its dams.

An aerial view of flooding along the Willamette River during the Flood of 1996. The Eugene and Springfield area could look like this if Cougar Dam completely failed. Corps of Engineers Photo

A pair of inspectors dangle high above the spillway of Cougar Dam in a crane bucket, while another Portland District teammate directs the crane operator, May 24. This team of geotechnical, geological, hydraulic, structural and mechanical engineers examined the dam during the periodic inspection, which happens every five years. Photo by Tom Conning, Public Affairs Office

Each year, a call goes out inviting Portland District employees to join the Leadership Development Program. Participants are selected by the District Corporate Board, whose goal is to have a small group of enthusiastic participants (usually around 15). In deciding on the candidates, the selection board considers many aspects of group diversity including: years of service, grade level and representation from a variety of organizations and positions throughout the District.

This year’s LDP team is comprised of 16 individuals from around the District. Led by facilitators Kevin Brice, deputy district engineer for project management, and Liza Wells, chief, Hydraulics and Hydrology Branch.

The students will explore leadership and Corps policies during classroom instruction, public speaking (thanks to a partnership with ACE Toastmasters), a team-building offsite meeting and a one-week trip to Washington, D.C., to visit with Corps and Congressional leaders. The program culminates with a capstone project selected to offer the students an opportunity to put their new-found skills to work.

Kevin Brice
DEPUTY DISTRICT ENGINEER FOR PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Kevin Brice has served as the deputy to the District commander and led the Programs, Planning and Project Management Division for 10 years. Even before his appointment to his current position, Brice served several Corps assignments during his 21-year active-duty military career.

Brice, a facilitator of the LDP, shared his views on leadership. “We all can lead from wherever we sit in an organization,” he said. “I believe that it is the informal leaders of an organization that most affect the culture, processes and execution of an organization.”

While Brice now works and lives in Oregon, he has remained a loyal supporter of the Green Bay Packers. “I was born and raised in Green Bay and grew up during the Lombardi Years,” he said. “I was at the ‘Ice Bowl,’ have been personally ‘counselled’ by Vince Lombardi and am a current season-ticket holder.”

Liza Wells
CHIEF, HYDRAULICS AND HYDROLOGY BRANCH
Liza Wells has worked with the Corps since 2009. Throughout her tenure and her time in the private sector, she has always enjoyed solving complex and multidisciplinary problems with the strong group of professionals around her. She even approaches her hobbies with a sense of technical problem-solving. “When I find time, I enjoy sewing clothes,” she said. “It is a little like fabric engineering and I find it fascinating to turn a 2-D piece of fabric into a 3-D wearable garment.”

As a facilitator of the LDP, Wells will emphasize adaptability in leadership. “I think the most important trait is being able to adopt our leadership styles in a genuine manner. Great leadership can happen in small moments over a long time or in sweeping actions in a short time, but either way needs to be appropriate and effective for the situation.”
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Carrie Bond began her career with the Corps in June 2003 as a student in the South Florida Section at Jacksonville District, where she led various Everglades restoration projects. She moved to Oregon and joined Portland District in October 2014, serving as the Regulatory Branch liaison for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

When Bond was a high school senior, her father got a job on a naval base in Rota, Spain. There, she learned to adapt to and appreciate new experiences, and she developed a fondness for the ocean. She went on to study marine science, which eventually led her to her career with the Corps.

Born in Michigan, her mother and father taught her the values of hard work and selfless service by sacrificing their time and money to work third shift and overtime to support their children’s goals. When asked what the most important trait in a leader, Anderson responded, “Devotion.”

Laurie Arterburn has been the supervisory supply specialist at The Dalles Lock and Dam since 2014. Before working for the Corps, she spent 14 years in the Army as a military police officer and deployed to Afghanistan. Her service, she said, had a great influence on her life. “The Army laid the groundwork for me to be a good leader and to see my potential in becoming a great leader. Without the discipline and structured life the military provided, I don’t think I would be in the position I’m in today.”

When she isn’t supervising the supply section and warehouse at The Dalles Lock and Dam, Arterburn enjoys participating in running events. She has participated in Hood to Coast five years in a row.

Jessica Brownlee began her career with the Corps in March 2009 as a temporary summer ranger (or in her words, “baby ranger”) in Savannah District. “Pepper Shields and Carl David Hatfield, along with several others who took me under their wing and showed me what it meant to be a field ranger for the Corps of Engineers,” she said of her time there.

Since moving to Portland District in 2011, Brownlee has served as a natural resource specialist, interacting with visitors and preserving natural and cultural resources around the Bonneville pool. Her job has many different facets, something she enjoys. “It is different every single day; I never know what to expect!” Even on her days off, she enjoys being outdoors, teaching others about wild foods and medicinal plants, and spending time hiking and bow hunting.

Ryan Cahill first joined the Corps in 2010 as a student at the Hydrologic Engineering Center in Davis, California. In 2012, he moved to Portland District to participate in the Engineer-In-Training program where he rotated through many different operations. Today, he performs analysis on reservoir operations for the Columbia River Treaty and supports the floodplain management program by performing hydraulic and hydrologic analyses to assess flood risk. He is an active participant in the Oregon Silver Jackets team, which is a collaboration of state and federal agencies that coordinates flood risk mapping and mitigation projects across the state.

Cahill applied for the LDP to help his team be more effective. “I want to become a more effective technical lead, better my communication skills, and get my teams to work more as a unit,” he said.

Travis Davidson began his career with the Corps in June 2009 as a student in the Construction Branch. He says that searching for and finding that opportunity charted the course of his career. “I was lucky to be selected for a student position,” he said.

“After spending a summer and fall with the Corps I never looked back.” Now, as a team lead for the Vancouver Resident Office, he is responsible for various contracts including dredging, environmental restoration, construction of coastal infrastructure and work at Mount St. Helens.

Today, in his role as lead civil engineer, he oversees a team of project engineers responsible for construction of coastal infrastructure, environmental restoration projects and dredging. “The best thing about my job,” he says, “is seeing the results of the physical construction work we oversee in Construction Branch and understanding how that work benefits the region and the people that live here.”

Garrett Dorsey has been with the Corps for 12 years, spending his first seven with the Eugene Section of the Willamette Valley Project. In 2012, Dorsey moved to the Willamette Valley Project where he conducts sensitive species surveys and coordinates environmental reviews. Prior to working with the Corps, Garrett was a research assistant with Oregon State University where he studied seabird impacts to salmon within the Columbia River Basin.

Dorsey says the LDP will allow him to better lead the next generation of STEM professionals. “A part of my job is working with students that are either in college or recent graduates, and I see LDP as a way to build my communication skills and to be a better mentor to the students.”

Kirk Chen is an electrical engineer in the Hydroelectric Design Center. As part of this national center of expertise, he specializes in designing, integrating and commissioning protection and control systems for large electric power equipment in Corps powerhouses across the country. Chen began his career with the Corps as an Engineer-In-Training in 2007, and since then he has completed developmental assignments at various districts, including Afghanistan Engineering District in Jalalabad. Prior to working with the Corps of Engineers, Kirk served as a combat engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps, deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

When asked about the best part of his job, Chen replied, “I get to work in advancing technologies for hydropower, which is becoming more critical to our electric power infrastructure.”

Capt. Aaron Anderson 
PROJECT MANAGER 
PLANNING, PROGRAMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Kirk Chen 
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER 
HYDROELECTRIC DESIGN CENTER

Ryan Cahill 
HYDRAULIC ENGINEER 
RIVER AND HYDROLOGIC ENGINEERING SECTION

Travis Davidson 
LEAD CIVIL ENGINEER 
VANCOUVER RESIDENT OFFICE

Garrett Dorsey 
WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST 
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OFFICE, WILLAMETTE VALLEY PROJECT

Laurie Arterburn 
SUPERVISORY SUPPLY SPECIALIST 
THE DALLES LOCK AND DAM

Jessica Brownlee 
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LDP CLASS OF 2017-2018

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NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST

BONNEVILLE LOCK AND DAM

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Dorsey says the LDP will allow him to better lead the next generation of STEM professionals. “A part of my job is working with students that are either in college or recent graduates, and I see LDP as a way to build my communication skills and to be a better mentor to the students.”

Kirk Chen is an electrical engineer in the Hydroelectric Design Center. As part of this national center of expertise, he specializes in designing, integrating and commissioning protection and control systems for large electric power equipment in Corps powerhouses across the country. Chen began his career with the Corps as an Engineer-In-Training in 2007, and since then he has completed developmental assignments at various districts, including Afghanistan Engineering District in Jalalabad. Prior to working with the Corps of Engineers, Kirk served as a combat engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps, deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

When asked about the best part of his job, Chen replied, “I get to work in advancing technologies for hydropower, which is becoming more critical to our electric power infrastructure.”

Capt. Aaron Anderson

PROJECT MANAGER

PLANNING, PROGRAMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Capt. Aaron Anderson commissioned into the Army as an engineer officer from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 2008. He has deployed to Afghanistan, Central America, the Philippines, Mongolia, the Aleutian Islands and the U.S.-Mexico border. Anderson assumed his position as a project manager with the Corps in January 2017. He manages a wide array of projects at John Day Lock and Dam and the Willamette Valley Project, including oil spill prevention systems, electrical reliability upgrades, grout gallery and monolith joint repair, and emergency elevator repair.

Born in Michigan, his mother and father taught him the values of hard work and selfless service by sacrificing their time and money to work third shift and overtime to support their children’s goals. When asked what the most important trait in a leader, Anderson responded, “Devotion.”

Laurie Arterburn has been the supervisory supply specialist at The Dalles Lock and Dam since 2014. Before working for the Corps, she spent 14 years in the Army as a military police officer and deployed to Afghanistan. Her service, she said, had a great influence on her life. “The Army laid the groundwork for me to be a good leader and to see my potential in becoming a great leader. Without the discipline and structured life the military provided, I don’t think I would be in the position I’m in today.”

When she isn’t supervising the supply section and warehouse at The Dalles Lock and Dam, Arterburn enjoys participating in running events. She has participated in Hood to Coast five years in a row.

Jessica Brownlee began her career with the Corps in March 2009 as a temporary summer ranger (or in her words, “baby ranger”) in Savannah District. “Pepper Shields and Carl David Hatfield, along with several others who took me under their wing and showed me what it meant to be a field ranger for the Corps of Engineers,” she said of her time there.

Since moving to Portland District in 2011, Brownlee has served as a natural resource specialist, interacting with visitors and preserving natural and cultural resources around the Bonneville pool. Her job has many different facets, something she enjoys. “It is different every single day; I never know what to expect!” Even on her days off, she enjoys being outdoors, teaching others about wild foods and medicinal plants, and spending time hiking and bow hunting.
LDP CLASS OF 2017-2018

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THE DALLES LOCK AND DAM
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Carrie Bond
PROJECT MANAGER
REGULATORY BRANCH
Carrie Bond began her career with the Corps in June 2003 as a student in the South Florida Section at Jacksonville District, where she led various Everglades restoration projects. She moved to Oregon and joined Portland District in October 2014, serving as the Regulatory Branch liaison for the Oregon Department of Transportation.

When Bond was a high school senior, her father got a job on a naval base in Rota, Spain. There, she learned to adapt to and appreciate new experiences, and she developed a fondness for the ocean. She went on to study marine science, which eventually led to her career with the Corps. Her favorite part about her job, she said, is serving the people and the ecosystems of the Pacific Northwest. “I provide a much-needed public service while also helping to protect the environment.”

Jessica Brownlee
NATURAL RESOURCE SPECIALIST
BONNEVILLE LOCK AND DAM
Jesse Brownlee began her career with the Corps in March 2009 as a temporary summer ranger (or in her words, “baby ranger”) in Savannah District. “Pepper Shields and Carl David Hartfield, along with several others who took me under their wing and showed me what it meant to be a field ranger for the Corps of Engineers,” she said of her time there.

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Ryan Cahill
HYDRAULIC ENGINEER
RIVER AND HYDROLOGIC ENGINEERING SECTION
Ryan Cahill first joined the Corps in 2010 as a student at the Hydrologic Engineering Center in Davis, California. In 2012, he moved to Portland District to participate in the Engineer-In-Training program where he rotated through many different operations. Today, he performs analysis on reservoir operations for the Columbia River Treaty and supports the floodplain management program by performing hydraulic and hydrologic analyses to assess flood risk. He is an active participant in the Oregon Silver Jackets team, which is a collaboration of state and federal agencies that coordinates flood risk mapping and mitigation projects across the state.

Cahill applied for the LDP to help his teams be more effective. “I want to become a more effective technical lead, better my communication skills, and get my teams to work more as a unit,” he said.

Travis Davidson
LEAD CIVIL ENGINEER
VANCOUVER RESIDENT OFFICE
Travis Davidson began his career with the Corps in June 2009 as a student in the Construction Branch. He says that searching for and finding that opportunity charted the course of his career. “I was lucky to be selected for a student position,” he said.

“After spending a summer and fall with the Corps I never looked back. Now, as a team lead for the Vancouver Resident Office, I am responsible for various contracts including dredging, environmental restoration, construction of coastal infrastructure and work at Mount St. Helens.”

Today, in his role as lead civil engineer, he oversees a team of project engineers responsible for construction of coastal infrastructure, environmental restoration projects and dredging. “The best thing about my job,” he says, “is seeing the results of the physical construction work we oversee in Construction Branch and understanding how that work benefits the region and the people that live here.”

Kirk Chen
ELECTRICAL ENGINEER
HYDROELECTRIC DESIGN CENTER
Kirk Chen is an electrical engineer in the Hydroelectric Design Center. As part of this national center of expertise, he specializes in developing, integrating and commissioning protection and control systems for large electric power equipment in Corps powerhouses across the country. Chen began his career with the Corps as an Engineer-In-Training in 2007, and since then he has completed developmental assignments at various districts, including Afghanistan Engineering District in Jalalabad. Prior to working with the Corps of Engineers, Kirk served as a combat engineer in the U.S. Marine Corps, deploying to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

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Garrett Dorsey
WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP OFFICE, WILLAMETTE VALLEY PROJECT
Garrett Dorsey has been with the Corps for 12 years, spending his first seven with the Eugene Section of the Portland District Regulatory Branch. In 2012, Dorsey moved to the Willamette Valley Project where he conducts sensitive species surveys and coordinates environmental reviews. Prior to working with the Corps, Garrett was a research assistant with Oregon State University where he studied seabird impacts to salmon within the Columbia River Basin.

Dorsey says the LDP will allow him to better lead the next generation of STEM professionals. “A part of my job is working with students that are either in college or recent graduates, and I see LDP as a way to build my communication skills and be a better mentor to the students.”
David Dvorak  
**CONTRACTING OFFICER**
**CONTRACTING DIVISION**

David Dvorak joined Portland District in June 2016 when he transferred from the Army’s Expeditionary Contracting Command in Grafenwoehr, Germany. In February 2017, Dvorak earned his contracting officer warrant, and he now oversees construction and architectural-and-engineering contracts. When asked to describe the role of a contracting officer, Dvorak replied simply, “Appropriately spend tax payers’ money while following laws and regulations.”

Having spent most of his life on the West Coast, Dvorak especially appreciates Oregon for its outdoor recreation opportunities, even if its golf courses leave something to be desired. “Hiking in Oregon is great; so many trails all with something interesting to see. Golfing has less variety in it.”

Eileen Horiuchi  
**CHIEF**
**CONSTRUCTION SERVICES AND COST ENGINEERING SECTION**

Eileen Horiuchi began her career in the private sector before joining the Corps as a cost engineer in 2005. Throughout her Corps tenure, she has taken detail assignments with the Hydroelectric Design Center and at the Bonneville and Vancouver resident offices. Today, she leads a diverse team of cost engineers and weld inspectors in the Welding and Metallurgy Technical Center of Expertise.

Horiuchi appreciates the LDP for what she has been able to do in such a short time. “LDP offers me, in one year, something it would otherwise take years to learn or achieve on my own,” she said. “The opportunity to improve my skills, gain knowledge and focus on my own leadership goals.”

Amber Gray  
**ACCOUNTANT**  
**FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING OFFICE**

Amber Gray began her federal career with the Department of the Treasury in 2010. She came to Portland in 2014 to work as an internal auditor for the Department of Veterans Affairs, and joined the Corps in 2015. Gray currently serves as the primary power accountant for several projects.

For Gray, the most important role for a leader is to model integrity. “If those leading aren’t honest and fair those following won’t be either,” she said.

Gray grew up in a military family, and she lived in 10 different states as a child. Her very first job was bagging groceries at the commissary on Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii. The benefits of her frequent moves are highlighted in her favorite quote, from Eleanor Roosevelt, “If life were predictable it would cease to be life, and be without flavor.”

Pat Keller  
**ELECTRICAL ENGINEER**  
**HYDROELECTRIC DESIGN CENTER**

Pat Keller is a senior electrical engineer with the Hydroelectric Design Center and has been with the Corps for 14 years. He supports projects across the Corps, designing, programming and commissioning control and other electrical systems in powerhouses nationwide.

One of Keller’s first jobs was as a commercial salmon fisherman, working with his father and grandfather. “It was a lot of fun, but also a lot of hard work,” he said. “Although, there were a lot of boring days too when the fish weren’t biting.” When he’s not hard at work, much of Keller’s free time revolves around his three boys: taking them hiking, coaching soccer and basketball teams, and building a tree house.

Jarod Norton  
**PROJECT MANAGER**  
**CHANNELS AND HARBORS PROJECT**

Jarod Norton began his career with the Corps in September 2007 as a contract employee, and in 2009 he became a Corps employee in the Kalama Resident Office. During his time with the Corps, he has worked on a number of navigation and earthwork projects across the region. He is currently the West Coast lead for Regional Sediment Management for the Regional Sediment Management Technical Center of Expertise.

As a project manager, Norton works to maintain safe and reliable channels, harbors and waterways for the transportation of commerce, support to national security and recreation. The best part about his work, he says, is “The ability to be innovative and flexible…, and being on the forefront on some really interesting technology.”

Seth von Borstel  
**ELECTRICIAN**  
**THE DALLES LOCK AND DAM**

Seth von Borstel came to the Corps after 14 years of active duty as a Naval Search and Rescue Corpsman. He was born in The Dalles, Oregon, and returned to the area after his military career. In September 2010, he joined the Corps as an electrical apprentice in the power plant trainee program at The Dalles Lock and Dam. That same year, he implemented a CPR/AED/First Aid program. He now manages the program, which trains instructors at each project to teach their own personnel in these skills.

Today he is a journeyman electrician, and his favorite part of the job is learning new things. “The most important trait of great leadership is being able to know you can’t know everything,” he says, “You can never know everything about being an electrician.”
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Kellan Mrozek
PRODUCT COORDINATOR
SOUTH ATLANTIC DIVISION
HYDROELECTRIC DESIGN CENTER

Kellan Mrozek joined the Corps in 1999, and worked at Chicago District, the Hurricane Protection Office in New Orleans and Europe District before joining the Hydroelectric Design Center. From his duty station in Portland, Mrozek supports four districts within the South Atlantic Division.

Mrozek supports the long-term maintenance and rehabilitation of fourteen powerhouses. Mrozek is also a member of the 34th Engineer Detachment, Forward Engineer Support Team (Advance) based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, providing engineering capabilities to combatant commands.

When asked what makes a great leader, Mrozek responded, “The wisdom to recognize a need for change, the will to implement it and the tenacity to see the process through.”

Jarod Norton
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Jarod Norton began his career with the Corps in September 2007 as a contract employee, and in 2009 he became a Corps employee in the Kalamazoo Resident Office. During his time with the Corps, he has worked on a number of navigation and earthwork projects across the region. He is currently the West Coast lead for Regional Sediment Management for the Regional Sediment Management Technical Center of Expertise.

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Spencer Narron
PROGRAM ANALYST
PLANNING, PROGRAMS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Spencer Narron joined the Corps in 2014 as a student in Engineering and Construction Division’s Budget Section.

Since 2016 he has worked as a program analyst, managing the Continuing Authorities Program and the Planning Assistance to States Program as well as working on regional initiatives such as the Columbia River Treaty and Columbia River System Operations. When asked to describe his role as a program analyst, he said, “When I’m doing it right, I’m the connective tissue between the muscles.”

Narron’s first job was at an off-brand, low end retailer. “It was an invaluable experience in humility and patience,” he said. In 2008 he joined the Peace Corps, serving two years in Samoa before moving to Oregon.

Seth von Borstel
ELECTRICIAN
THE DALLES LOCK AND DAM

Seth von Borstel came to the Corps after 14 years of active duty as a Naval Search and Rescue Corpsman. He was born in The Dalles, Oregon, and returned to the area after his military career. In September 2010, he joined the Corps as an electrical apprentice in the power plant trainee program at The Dalles Lock and Dam. That same year, he implemented a CPR/AED/First Aid program. He now manages the program, which trains instructors at each project to teach their own personnel in these skills.

Today he is a journeyman electrician, and his favorite part of the job is learning new things. “The most important trait of great leadership is being able to know you can’t know everything,” he says, “You can never know everything about being an electrician.”
The wanderlust that began on the fringes of society with the 1950’s Beat Generation, was well on its way to becoming part of mainstream American culture as the 1960s drew to a close. The Volkswagen Bus, the vehicular symbol of hippie-culture was being joined on the road with ever-larger Airstreams and Winnebagos, capable of carrying the whole family and all the amenities of home.

The Dalles Lock & Dam, constructed the previous decade by the Army Corps of Engineers, was a popular destination for these summer-nomads, who could drive down to the dam’s powerhouse to park their rolling homes-away-from-home.

Roger Person, who started working at the dam in 1968, recounted, “It got crowded with the bigger trailers and RVs (recreational vehicles) that people were driving. There just wasn’t enough room for the cars, trailers and our equipment.”

The solution to the overcrowding came in the form of Les Dalles Portage Railroad, later known as The Dalles Dam Tour Train, which began operating July 20, 1973. It ferried tourists down to the dam from a patch of dirt that would eventually become The Dalles Dam Visitor Center at Seufert Park.

The railroad, created on a tight budget, was made possible by the reuse of existing tracks, donated equipment and volunteer labor.

The tracks that made up Les Dalles Portage Railroad have a long and complicated history. Upriver from the dam, was an 8-mile stretch of treacherous rapids starting at Celilo Falls, which was impassable for riverboats carrying goods on the Columbia River. A portage railroad was built in 1862 to transfer goods between riverboats on opposite sides of the rapids. The 14-mile rail line changed ownership multiple times, ultimately becoming one of the oldest lines of the Union Pacific Railroad.

The line was no longer needed when the Celilo Canal, completed in 1915, made it possible for boats to navigate past the rapids. But the tracks found a second life in the 1950s, when their path was modified to transport the materials and equipment needed to build the lock and dam. The line served its third and final life as the Dalles Dam Tour Train railroad.

The first version of the train consisted of a 25-ton General Electric locomotive and passenger car painted in matching green and yellow livery.

The locomotive was a donation from the U.S. Naval Station in China Lake, California.

“The tour car was originally a flat trailer used to haul stuff down to the dam for construction. It was left there unused when the construction ended at the dam. We rebuilt it from the ground up to carry people,” Person says.

The “we” Person mentions, includes high school and college students who volunteered to not only rebuild the tour car, but also the track it rode on. The students replaced 700 railroad ties, under the direction of Ken Spagle, a retired engineer.

Once the train was up-and-running, student volunteers also served as the train’s first tour guides.

The green and yellow paint scheme only lasted three years, but it has been forever etched into the memory of Mark Ulrich, who rode the train for the first time in 1975 as a first-grader.

It left such a lasting impression on Ulrich that he has a website and facebook page dedicated to remembering the train.

“I tried to visit it every year. It meant a lot to me and to people I’ve met from around the world,” Ulrich says.

For the 1976 season, the train rolled out wearing a new red, white and blue paint scheme in celebration of the United States Bicentennial.

A caboose, purchased from UP RR for $1, was added later. Originally built in 1912, it arrived at The Dalles Dam with boarded up windows and plywood patches covering rotted wood.

“We rebuilt the caboose from the ground up at the dam and hied a wood mill in Hood River to mill wood pieces that matched the original pieces on the inside,” Person says.

The train ran for more than a decade in this configuration, but the dinky 25-ton locomotive had a number of issues. According to Dick Samuels, who maintained the locomotive in the very beginning, the cabin was cramped with a mechanical valve that occupied the same space that the engineer’s knees wanted to be.

Person explains the bigger issue they had, “That small locomotive was really hard to handle. The train brakes...
Memories of Les Dalles Portage Railroad

By Jeffrey Henon, Public Affairs Office

The wanderlust that began on the fringes of society with the 1950’s Beat Generation, was well on its way to becoming part of mainstream American culture as the 1960s drew to a close. The Volkswagen Bus, the vehicular symbol of hippie-culture was being joined on the road with ever-larger Airstreams and Winnebagos, capable of carrying the whole family and all the amenities of home.

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The line was no longer needed when the Celilo Canal, completed in 1915, made it possible for boats to navigate past the rapids. But the tracks found a second life in the 1950s, when their path was modified to transport the materials and equipment needed to build the lock and dam. The line served its third and final life as the Dalles Dam Tour Train railroad.

The fourth and final version of the train consisted of a 44-ton General Electric locomotive, partially-enclosed passenger car and a caboose, all painted in matching red, white and blue. Photo courtesy of L.A. Scrafford

“The tour car was originally a flat trailer used to haul stuff down to the dam for construction. It was left there unused when the construction ended at the dam. We rebuilt it from the ground up to carry people,” Person says.

The “we” Person mentions, includes high school and college students who volunteered to not only rebuild the tour car, but also the track it rode on. The students replaced 700 railroad ties, under the direction of Ken Spagle, a retired engineer.

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Person explains the bigger issue they had, “That small locomotive was really hard to handle. The train brakes...
The engineers must have looked upon the long and meandering river from its heavily tree-lined and jagged banks and envisioned something more—a utopian river. The new sleek river would have even, gradual and grass-lined banks and wouldn’t be prone to flooding. Perfection!

Improving this river would be an exceptional and fitting challenge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because in the post-World War II era, there wasn’t an engineering or re-engineering feat Americans couldn’t accomplish. So, re-engineer the river they did: aligning, shaping and shortening it by 13 miles, or by about a third, below Fern Ridge Dam.

After the alterations, the Long Tom River was straighter, deeper, wider and, combined with an upstream dam, reduced flood risks to the downstream communities. The re-engineered river could more aptly be called the Short Tom River.

In the years that followed, the Corps managed the river by balancing flood risk and environmental stewardship with less and less funding for maintenance. And even though the southwestern part of the Willamette Valley has reaped the rewards of this man-altered creation, Cameron Bishop, Willamette Valley Project natural resource specialist, said river management is still challenging.

“Maintenance has gone from 100 percent chemical clearing of woody vegetation every other year, and repair of any and all channels and channel imperfections to almost no maintenance attention in the last 25 years,” said Bishop. “There are about 175 land owners that hold title to the underlying lands,” he added. “They all have slightly different ideas on how the river should be operated and maintained.”

That second issue is especially tricky. The Corps only has easements to construct or maintain the channel. Those various factors led Bishop to invite a cohort to canoe a section of the Long Tom to see the issues for themselves. This group was made up of District employees and a couple other drifters—a private citizen interested in river conservation and a member of the Long Tom Watershed Council.

Cameron Bishop, Willamette Valley Project natural resource specialist (center, on-shore), talks to a group about the Long Tom River in the Willamette Valley, June 13. Bishop conducted the second of these trips to bring attention to the difficulties of managing this channel. Photo by Tom Conning, Public Affairs Office

The first tour guides for Les Dalles Portage Railroad were student volunteers from high-school and college. Corps of Engineers Photo

The interior of the caboose was restored with new woodwork that required custom milling from a mill in Hood River, Oregon. Corps of Engineers Photo

were really touchy, causing the train to jerk around when stopping. It could cause someone to fall.”

In the late 1980s, Person had worked his way up into a supervisory position and started looking for a better locomotive to replace the 25-tonner. He found one at the Marine base in Barstow, California.

“It had been completely rebuilt in ’86, but the Marines weren’t using it because it wasn’t big enough to move their Abrams tanks,” Person goes on to explain, “The new train was so smooth, the tourists couldn’t even notice when you were moving or stopping.”

This was the final configuration of The Dalles Dam Tour Train that ran for almost two decades: 44-ton locomotive, passenger car and caboose, all matching in U.S. bicentennial red, white and blue. Newly-arrived tourists boarded the train at Seufert Park every half hour from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the summer season.

Even though it’s been over a decade since Ulrich rode the train he remembers the route, “The first stop was Patterson Park where the duck pond was. Then of course you stopped at the powerhouse and they gave a tour of the generators and fish ladder. Then you’d get back on to Westrick Park, which was the last stop, where you could picnic. People could hop off wherever and get back on when the train came back. It would travel backwards when it came back (from Westrick Park).”

The end of the line for the train came in 2005. Person was piloting the train for a small wedding party when the back end of the passenger car came off the tracks. The train was travelling slowly, so no one was injured.

“There was an investigation and it was determined the dam couldn’t risk the liability,” Person says.

Person and Ulrich have many fond memories from the 32 years that the train operated.

Ulrich remembers, “What was really cool, whenever they crossed the midpoint between Oregon and Washington, they’d pop the horn and say ‘Now entering the great state of Washington’ and the tour guide would tell you all about Washington.”

Person echoes Ulrich’s sentiment about the tour guides, “The train itself was part of the draw that got people to visit the dam. It was memorable for the tourists because they got to learn about the dam, the river and the local history, because we had excellent tour guides.”

In 2009, the 44-ton locomotive and passenger car were hauled away and the caboose was put on display in Patterson Park, where it can be seen today. 

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In the years that followed, the Corps managed the river by balancing flood risk and environmental stewardship with less and less funding for maintenance. And even though the southwestern part of the Willamette Valley has reaped the rewards of this man-altered creation, Cameron Bishop, Willamette Valley Project natural resource specialist, said river management is still challenging.

“Maintenance has gone from 100 percent chemical clearing of woody vegetation every other year, and repair of any and all channels and channel imperfections to almost no maintenance attention in the last 25 years,” said Bishop. “There are about 175 land owners that hold title to the underlying lands,” he added. “They all have slightly different ideas on how the river should be operated and maintained.”

That second issue is especially tricky. The Corps only has easements to construct or maintain the channel. Those various factors led Bishop to invite a cohort to canoe a section of the Long Tom to see the issues for themselves. This group was made up of District employees and a couple other drifters—a private citizen interested in river conservation and a member of the Long Tom Watershed Council.

Cameron Bishop, Willamette Valley Project natural resource specialist (center, on-shore), talks to a group about the Long Tom River in the Willamette Valley, June 13. Bishop conducted the second of these trips to bring attention to the difficulties of managing this channel. Photo by Tom Conning, Public Affairs Office

The engineers must have looked upon the long and meandering river from its heavily tree-lined and jagged banks and envisioned something more—a utopian river. The new sleek river would have even, gradual and grass-lined banks and wouldn’t be prone to flooding. Perfection!

Improving this river would be an exceptional and fitting challenge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers because in the post-World War II era, there wasn’t an engineering or re-engineering feat Americans couldn’t accomplish. So, re-engineer the river they did: aligning, shaping and shortening it by 13 miles, or by about a third, below Fern Ridge Dam.

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Salina Hart, Reservoir Regulation and Water Quality Section chief, regulates water on the Long Tom for the District from her office in Portland but she only had a periphery view of the river before the trip.

"Prior to the trip I had put a considerable amount of thought into the downstream river channel; however, having a perception and an actual encounter are very different," said Hart. "The trip reaffirmed my passion for water management. It also brought me awareness to how others, internal and external to the Corps, value the watershed."

Bishop talked to the boaters about the history of the Long Tom and Amanda Reinholtz, Long Tom Watershed Council habitat and water quality specialist, spoke to the group about Ludwigia Hexapetala, an invasive plant species in the river that, if left unchecked, could significantly disturb the river’s ecosystem.

"It forms dense, channel-spanning vegetation mats that can interfere with water conveyance, irrigation intakes and other water infrastructure, boating and recreation, water quality and fish habitat," said Reinholtz. "The Long Tom Watershed Council has been working together with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Oregon State Weed Board for the past three years to address the problem."

Reinholtz said she appreciated the opportunity to be included on the canoe float.

"Even though the Long Tom Watershed Council and the Corps have different mandates, we have a lot of the same values and goals. We both want to do right by the natural and human communities that call the river home, and we look forward to working toward that vision together."

This was the second time Bishop had led such a trip for District employees. He hopes that this trip will keep District staff engaged and actively thinking about how to manage the river in the future.