

Russ Kieffer OPM-CAP Summary  
John H. Kerr Dam & Reservoir  
1/11/16 – 7/1/16

OVERVIEW: My OPM-CAP TDY at John H. Kerr was a valuable experience in obtaining knowledge and participating in day-to-day activities in the REC & ENS business lines from a field office with a large recreation and natural resource mission. I have gained an appreciation and beneficial understanding of many responsibilities the USACE Rangers have, especially in the 0401 job series.

\*\*\*PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS\*\*\*

- 1) Recreation (Sherrie Storm, Thomas Coleman, Glenn Card, Chelsea Tyler, David Schwartz, Juanita Souther)
  - a. Camp Grounds Operations (4 @ approx. 500 camp sites total, swimming beaches, boat ramps, etc)
  - b. Day Use Areas: Picnic shelters, play grounds, swimming beaches, boat ramps, sewer lines, vault toilets
  - c. Patrols: Interaction techniques with public, QA inspections, safety, death reporting, T-36 compliance
  - d. Staffing 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> shift challenges with reduced staff; Selection panel member for hiring new Shoreline Chief Ranger
  - e. Conducting inspections of facilities, roads, boat ramps, camp sites, grounds (what to look for)
  - f. Title 36 enforcement, issuing citations, criteria for mandatory federal court appearance
  - g. Volunteers & contracted gate attendants responsibilities & benefits
  - h. Outreach programs: Every Kid in the Park, Ecological meets, interpretation, Water Safety promotion
  - i. Revenue Processing: Honor vaults collection & counting, passes, bank deposits, CEFMS
- 2) Shoreline (Shannon Maness, Cheryl Hoffman, Troy Moore, Alyson Parker, Joyce Taylor) & (OC Carl Pruitt)
  - a. Shoreline Management Plan changes, 2+ year review & approval process, ongoing moratorium, 800+ miles
  - b. Permit process: Docks, buoys, real estate (path, rails, veg mod, anchorage, etc), inspections, renewals, transfers (Approx. 4,600 active permits), moving permittee data from old system to new system
  - c. Boundary marking, inspections of completed work by contractor
  - d. Encroachments & trespass resolution of homes, structures, equipment, cemeteries (70 different types)
- 3) Natural Resources (Robert Dennis, Josh Deal, Billy Hoffer)
  - a. Forester Duties: Stand surveying, timber sales, timbering operations oversight, addressing beetle infestations
  - b. Wildlife Management: Habitat creation, foot plots, monitoring
  - c. Land Management: Forest thinning, clear cutting, road/path access, signage & gates, inspections
  - d. Attended NR Workshop in Athens, GA (Media training, User Fee EC implementation, Partnerships, Conservation Corps, Special Events Permits, Verbal Judo & self-defense)

\*\*\*OTHER RESPONSIBILITIES\*\*\*

- 4) Leadership (Chuck Opet, Bill Bond, Dan Brown, COL Landers)
  - a. Learned Project & District staff roles & responsibilities: left seat/right seat, worked weekends
  - b. Partnerships: DRIVE Tourism, Southern Virginia Wild Blueways, Local Chamber of Commerce @ 2, NCDOT, VDOT, Vance County Sheriff, Mecklenburg County Sheriff
  - c. Public Inquiries: Shoreline issues (drug use & trash issues); draft Congressional responses; User Fee questions
  - d. Process Efficiencies & Safety: Visitor road crossing, automatic gate operation, fall hazards (retaining walls @ swim beaches), office organization, smoking area, flammables storage
  - e. Property inventory discrepancies (Updating past changes not documented)
  - f. Credit card purchasing improvements with credit card holder (Mary Wells)
  - g. Sharing knowledge: Acquisition process, TAPES
  - h. Take away: SAW hiring process (Tara Metcalfe), selection panel discussion limitations per EEO (Renita McNeill)
  - i. Held several staff accountable for negative conduct (derogatory comments, processes); be fair & honest
- 5) O&M Services Contract (Shannon Crews)
  - a. GQA requirements & in-house reporting for COR to approve payments
  - b. ID preventative maintenance prior to start of recreation season to reduce risk of sewage spills, closures
- 6) Other Plans & Programs
  - a. Aquatic Vegetation Management Program: Invasive species & vegetation management techniques
  - b. Lakeshore Management Plan: Public Recreation, Protected Lakeshore, Limited Development, Existing Recreation Areas, Easement Lands, Forest Management Compartments (84 @ 60K+ acres, 3,400+ stands)
  - c. Key Control Program (SO training recommendation & designation letter to volunteer employee)

\*\*\*MOVING FORWARD\*\*\* Present generalized expectations and what is important to new staff right away (mission, teamwork, respect, summary of District policy letters read, knowledge sharing, training up, partnerships); strive to maintain a neutral, professional demeanor no matter how many times a staff employee conducts work below expectations.

# Report of Tasks and Activities, Portland District

*Paris Embree's National Operations Project Managers Career Assignment Program Detail 1  
April – 30 July 2016*

I began the process of entering the National Career Assignment program by applying for the program through the announcement dated 30 September 2015, SUBJECT: Request for Nominations – Fiscal Year 16 National Operations Project Mangers Career Assignment Program. Although I currently hold a GS14 position and the program is targeted for GS12s, I felt that that the program would afford me the opportunity to experience a leadership position in Operations at a district.

I was offered a detail as the Deputy OPM for Channels and Harbors at the Portland District office. My direct supervisor for tasks and activities is the Operations Manager for Channels and Harbors, Michael Ott. I began my assignment on 1 April and will complete on 29 July.

The Channels and Harbors Project (C&H) include 485 navigable miles of the Columbia River Basin, 12 jetties, over 200 pile dikes, the U.S. Moorings and Coos Bay offices, 2 federal dredges Yaquina and Essayons, and multiple survey vessels.

As the Deputy OPM for Channels and Harbors, my job was to participate in weekly staff meetings, coordinate and facilitate weekly staff meetings, represent and participate in discussions with the Ports, provide input on PDTs, and provide support for the staff.

## Tasks and Activities

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While at Portland District, Michael Ott and his staff provided me with the history and background of the project along with the organizational plans for staffing and workload. In addition to filling and backfilling critical positions, Channels and Harbors is also working towards meeting future needs by redefining roles and encouraging planning and training. In order to give me the full picture of the project, Michael Ott gave me a list of tasks and organized activities and allowed me to visit the project sites. The following is a list of the tasks:

1. Work with the Readiness Division to provide input for the Cascadia Event Planning. This included providing input in the COOP Plan, help prepare the U.S. Moorings Staff for the demonstration, develop a listing and location of critical documents.
2. Develop a flowchart for contract creation process for a clamshell or hopper dredge.
3. Help with the FY18 Navigation budget submission
4. Participate in the Annual Hopper Dredge Planning Optimization Mtg.
5. Standard Reports (CSTAT/ehydro)
6. Reliability Curves for Channels
7. Charters for Master Plans for US Moorings and Coos Bay facilities
8. Economic study charter for Essayons

## Achievements

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- Provided input for the Cascadia Event Exercise. Met with Jeff Hepler and Lance Linsey to learn what had been developed and to get information on what was needed. Mike Ott also gave a list of information that was critical to Channels and Harbors. I documented location of critical information sources along with edits to the COOP to include hyperlinks, points of contact, and responsible party. In addition, met with the US Moorings staff to discuss the exercise and emergency planning items such as backups, satellite communications, muster locations, emergency supplies, and reporting requirements. The outcome of the exercise will be included in

after action report from the Readiness Division. The US Moorings is investigating storing emergency supplies in a storage area on the compound.

- Participated in the Planning Meeting for the regional dredging program. This is a meeting attended by representatives of 6 districts that utilize the federal dredges for work in their area of operations which encompasses 23 project sites. Currently this includes all the districts on the west coast, Alaska, and Hawaii. The two day meeting was used to provide overall planning information and to acquire the requirements to set the schedule for dredging for next year. Consideration is made for funding, weather, location, difficulty, and travel distances. The draft plan is under review
- . Attended the Regional Sediment Management Meeting in Duck, NC
- Participated in a webinar for the CE Dredge program and then set up and facilitated a CE Dredge Demonstration for Channels and Harbors' Project Managers and ehydro subject matter experts. Participated in the planning meetings between ERDC and the C&H staff. Noted the significance of using CE Dredge to assist in the Dredge Disposal Management Plan for the Columbia River. After the demonstration, met with the ehydro SME where improvements to the ehydro data were discussed in order to make CE Dredge more useful. These include adding disposal areas and stationing for ehydro data.
- Met with the ehydro SME and contract programmer to discuss a proof of concept for reliability curves for channels. Michael Ott, in turn, spoke to the contract programmer about potentially working towards the proof of concept.
- Provided a draft charter for the master plan for the US Moorings and Coos Bay. Developed a list of potential PDT members. The final Charters, if approved, would be the basis for the PDT development and PMP to award an AE contract to create a masterplan for these two facilities that currently need major upgrades, rehabilitation, or replacement.
- In addition to the assigned tasks, I have also coordinated with the FEM POC to demonstrate some of the national reports and regional reports along with ways to check for data quality using national databases. This should assist NWP in using these reports for consistent easy upward level reporting using the tools. The reports could be used for jobplan review, defining critical assets, and checking workorder status.
- Also demonstrated REDi and Corps Map in order to assist Operations in making the decision on how to provide a common operating picture for their commander.
- Set up a project meeting to discuss current and future work in order to facilitate communications, cooperation, and resourcing between staff members. (21 July 2016, Fireside Room). This meeting was requested by the staff in order to improve the communications within the organization and to be informed of any upcoming tasks or activities. The outcome of this action should be a regularly scheduled project meeting in a casual setting to promote open discussion and interaction and distribution of information.

Overall the experience was well worth the effort and I now have a broader knowledge and understanding of the Portland District navigation program. I would recommend the OM CAP program to all who want to learn and assist a district as an Operations Manager.

Respectfully submitted

Paris Embree

## MEMORANDUM FOR OPM CoP Advisory Board

SUBJECT: OPM Career Assignment Program Outbrief-Wahus

1. I participated in the 2016 Operations Project Manager Career Assignment Program (OPM CAP) and served as Acting Operations Project Manager at Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Projects, Baltimore District, from Feb 21<sup>st</sup> through June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016.
2. My goal is to be an Operations Project Manager at a multi-purpose lake project within the next 5 years. I currently serve as the Park Operations Manager at J. Strom Thurmond Project in Savannah District overseeing a large recreation and operations and maintenance programs.
3. My objective of this assignment was broaden my knowledge and experience by serving as an Operational Project Manager (OPM) in a division other than South Atlantic Division. I have previously served as acting OPM at two multipurpose projects in Savannah District but was always able to commute from my permanent duty station.
4. I truly enjoyed this unique experience and benefited greatly from this assignment. My supervisor and the Chief of Operations, Baltimore District, empowered me to manage the operations and maintenance missions for the Tioga-Hammond and Cowanesque Projects and supported my decisions. I feel I made a positive impact on Baltimore District and I surely benefited from this assignment.
5. The following are some noteworthy accomplishments during my assignment:
  - a. Tioga-Hammond & Cowanesque Projects (THC) have somewhat similar missions to Thurmond Project in Savannah District but much different scope of these missions, and different challenges and solutions. The Flood risk management missions at THC with dam tenders onsite were unique to what I've experienced. I very much enjoyed learning about how the systems worked and challenges/solutions.
  - b. Mitigated impact to missions with three employees on extended leave for 6-12 weeks due to recovery from surgeries. One employee was on light duty for an additional 8+ weeks. THC projects only has 20 employees so three employees on extended leave is an impact to project operations.
  - c. Planned and executed THC project budgets for FY2016 and submitted FY2018 budget. Assisted Michelle Miller, Administrative Assistant, with budget spreadsheets, reformatting 2101 submittals, and understanding of obligation and expenditures.
  - d. After a district coordinator initiated updates to the projects' asset hierarchy in FEM, I coordinated additional updates to FEM with the project's pathways intern. Implemented project's new FEM workflow process and provided several recommendations and examples to improve process.

- e. Coordinated contract submittals, award status, and execution with project and district staff. Provided guidance on contract specifications, funding by business lines, contract officer representative training, oversight, and documentation. Coordinated with district elements to draft congressional response to a park attendant contractor. Coordinated specifications and contract award for the Mansfield Toe Drain MATOC contract.
- f. Coordinated resolution of the Mill Creek culvert bridge with district elements and lessee. Met with lessee after real estate letter to explain compliance issue, next step, and possible solutions. Successfully coordinated with lessee to realize solution was doable with their "limited" finances; lessee is currently preparing engineered drawings of a \$15K bridge replacement for plan submittal to real estate. Coordinated congressional response with district elements.
- g. It was evident that some THC employees were not fully aware of project level statuses and plan forward. During my temporary assignment, I strived to correct this challenge by working on communications and empowering employees with knowledge of project statuses. Projects hold staff meetings first Wednesday and safety meetings the second Wednesday of each month. I moved the safety meeting to the third Wednesday of each month so we were meeting every other week and we could discuss project statuses and plan forward more routinely. I also shared notes from the bi-weekly OPM conference calls via email with employees to keep them current on statuses of personnel actions, contracts, upcoming events, district OP support elements, etc. I received numerous positive feedback from employees that they appreciated this information.
- h. Coordinated hiring actions for summer park rangers, summer maintenance employee, permanent admin (FEM Tech), and two permanent park rangers with project and district elements. Routine coordination required through Valerie Golder for statuses and to assure human resources continued to move forward with our actions.
- i. Coordinated with project and district elements on the Arc Flash contract requirements and onsite visit, employee training coordination, and Operations Division plan forward. I provided guidance, lessons learned, and training quotes to Operations team for Arc Flash implementation.
- j. Hosted Operations Project Manager/Administrative meeting in April 2016 for Flood Risk Management branch.
- k. Hosted several dam inspections during my temporary assignment. Project staff coordinated most logistics.
- l. Provided SAS-RM travel POC for travel guidance/training information for Operations Division, Baltimore District.
- m. Visited Raystown Project to review project operations in April 2016. Appreciate Nick Krupa, Operations Project Manager, project tour to include project overview, volunteer program, mountain bike skills area partnership, chestnut orchards, lease challenges, and dam maintenance issues.

- n. Visited Almond Lake, Arkport Dam and Hornell Levee on May 27, 2016. Appreciate Joe Hess and team's project tour.
  - o. I worked a portion of the Memorial Day weekend with Chief Ranger Steve Sporer to get a perspective of the projects' recreation visitation and issues on a holiday weekend.
  - p. Visited Baltimore District office on May 17-18, 2016 to participate in the district's monthly program review boards (PRBs) and to meet key personnel. I very much enjoyed experiencing Baltimore District's PRB and understanding their missions. Col Chamberlayne, Baltimore District Commander, awarded me with a commander coin for my temporary assignment as OPM at THC.
  - q. I provided guidance to park rangers on new recreation EC user fee guidance implementation and lessons learned. At Thurmond Project we had just implemented numerous improvements to our user fee program and was able to share with Steve Sporer and staff some lessons learned.
  - r. At the conclusion of my temporary assignment, I provided a detailed outbrief to Mrs. Dianne Edwardson, Chief of Operations, Baltimore District, on things that went well and recommendations for improvement of processes.
6. Things that went well in addition to items listed above:
- a. Mr. Keith Crowe and Mrs. Jana Moon, on behalf of the OPM CAP program, processed my travel MIPR timely and confirmed receipt with Baltimore District.
  - b. Joe Ignatius, Flood Risk Management Branch Chief, served as my supervisor and visited THC projects on my first week and provided me guidance on his expectations of me during my temporary assignment. Upon taking over as my new supervisor in mid-March, Steve Brown also met with me onsite to go over my progress and review his expectations. Both supervisors were very supportive and allowed me to run the project, provide ideas for improvement, and assisted me as needed.
  - c. Rob Schnell, OPM of THC, was onsite my first week to bring me up to speed quickly on project statuses and introduce me to project staff. This overlap helped me hit the ground running on project requirements.
  - d. I appreciate support from Dianne Edwardson, Steve Brown, Joe Ignatius, OPMs, and all project and district staff to make my temporary assignment successful.
7. Recommendations for improvements to the OPM CAP program:
- a. The receiving district was not aware of the expectations of the OPM CAP program to have an OPM CAP sponsor. It did not cause issues for me, but expectations should be explained to the receiving supervisor to assure best experience possible.
  - b. I recommend in-processing the temporary OPM CAP in the district office so he/she can meet key personnel and get overview of district. Also all participants should be reminded to update CEFMS in the receiving district with their employee mailing address, direct deposit info for travel

vouchers, and credit card info to avoid conflicts with travel voucher settlements.

8. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the Operations Project Manager Career Assignment and support from the OPM CoP Advisory Board and Baltimore District. After review of this memorandum, please do not hesitate to contact me if I need to clarify any comments or recommendations. I can be reached at 864-333-1103 or cell at 706-836-4315.

AARON P. WAHUS  
Park Operations Manager  
J. Strom Thurmond Project