

# Falls City Engineer

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District

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Corps responds to flooding  
along lower Ohio River







## Falls City Engineer

Vol. 11, Issue 2

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**On the cover:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District employees, Todd Davis and Bob Burick, fill sandbags using the district's automatic sandbagging machine, which is capable of filling up to 800 sandbags per hour. National Guard troops arrived in Smithland, Ky., to assist with the sandbagging operations Feb. 26, 2019. (USACE photo by Abby Korfhage)

 **Please conserve:**  
**Think before you print.**

# Commander's Comments

Team Louisville,

We are marching into spring finally (I think)! The weather has been completely unpredictable over the past several months. I once thought spring was coming to us early then suddenly the weather changed yet again. I am happy to see, in March, many of you took some family time. Whether it was spring break because of your children or just time for a break because of the OPTEMPO of our mission, I know it was well deserved! What a great way to re-energize and prepare to push execution as we enter the third quarter and work our way into the end of the fiscal year.

February and March brought some new initiatives, and we are excited to feature such stories in our Falls City Engineer newsletter this month. Have you heard about the roadshow the Deputy District Commander Lt. Col. Lewis has initiated? What a great opportunity for him, along with members from the G&A staff, to visit our field offices, especially our wonderful lake staff and our hard working locks and dam crews. Take a look at their first visit and what you should expect when they visit your area. This edition also provides some insights to the great work the Emergency Operations Center, levee and dam safety teams, other individuals across the district provided to communities impacted by the February floods. These are just a few of the articles you will find as you take a few minutes to read this edition.

We also take this opportunity to recognize some of our greatest assets as a District – YOU! We couldn't do what we do each day without you and your best efforts. Congratulations to all who received recognition during our spring awards ceremony. A special congratulations to our inaugural award recipients of the Lockmaster of the Year for 2018, Mr. Gary Birge and the Park Ranger of the Year for 2018, Ms. Kimberly Baker. We will continue to find ways to recognize our



**Col. Antoinette Gant**  
*Commander and District Engineer*  
Louisville District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

great staff.

April is also a month we recognize our administrative support staff. Let me be the first to say, "thank you," to everyone who is in an administrative position and everything they do for our district. We couldn't get along without you! Thank you for taking care of us.

Finally, I will never get tired of letting you know how proud I continue to be of your work ethic as a district and ability to get things done. Our programs continue to excel, and that is all because of your commitment, dedication and teamwork. Thanks again for all you do.

**BUILDING STRONG** and Taking Care of People! We are LOUISVILLE PROUD!

*Antoinette R. Gant*

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# Deputy exemplifies taking care of people with roadshow

Katie Newton, public affairs

‘Taking care of people’ is not just a regional Corps of Engineers motto – it is part of the fabric of the Louisville District.

To help field sites feel more connected to the district office, Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis kicked off a new initiative—a monthly roadshow visiting project sites to increase communication, identify systemic issues and recognize exceptional staff.

For the kickoff March 4-6, Lewis, along with staff from the district’s Public Affairs and Equal Employment Opportunity offices, visited all five Miami River Area Lakes including C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir, Caesar Creek, West Fork, Brookville and William Harsha lakes and Markland Locks and Dam.

“My intent is to get out here and see you all face-to-face and see how you’re doing,” said Lewis during his first stop at C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir in Springfield, Ohio. “Taking care of people focuses on readiness and resiliency and that we’re not just paying lip service,” said Lewis. “That’s why I’m here—to help take care of any issues. If it’s wrong I can try to fix it. Let’s make it right.”

The forum allowed employees to openly share project and personnel challenges they are facing as well as recent achievements like the highly successful campground volunteers program at Caesar Creek Lake that may be replicated at other lakes.

Throughout the roadshow one common theme emerged—Louisville District



Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis visits Caesar Creek Lake staff in Waynesville, Ohio, during his inaugural deputy roadshow March 4, 2019.

employees take pride in their work.

“The staff is top notch,” said Jay Vanhoose, area manager of the Miami River Area lakes. “We have really good people who want to do a great job. Everybody is trying to put forth 100 percent,” he said during the deputy’s stop at Caesar Creek Lake.

Vanhoose, speaking of the maintenance crews who work hard 365 days a year performing dam operations, inspections, facility repairs and everything else necessary to keep the projects pristine, “they help make the area look good – some of the best in the area and in the Corps.”

Maintenance mechanic Scott Harper has worked at Brookville Lake for only a year and a half but is happy to say it’s the best

job he has ever had.

“I say it’s the best job on the planet,” said Harper. “I’ve said that since I got here. I have had construction jobs and sales jobs in the past, and here I have found something that I really enjoy.”

That pride was evident in all employees across the Miami River Area.

Norm Raisch, West Fork Lake maintenance worker, is known as “the energizer bunny that never stops,” according to Stephanie Ison, lake manager. Even though Raisch is eligible for retirement he said, “I just don’t have any desire to quit – I enjoy it too much.”

His colleague, Ja Franek, maintenance lead at West Fork Lake, who has spent 13 years working for the Corps in the Miami River Area echoed the sentiment.

“I really enjoy the aspect of helping control this lake and our water levels to keep the public safe downstream,” said Franek. “That’s our mission and why we are here so I take a lot of pride in that,” he said during the deputy’s visit to the project site.

Likewise, lake rangers agree and are thankful for jobs which provide lots of opportunities to interact with the public, develop interpretative programs and promote water safety.

“You get to meet amazing people and do many different types of duties that I never ever thought I would get to do as a ranger and park manager,” said Dave Johnstone, park manager at William H. Harsha in Batavia, Ohio.

Jessica Zimmer, natural resource



Louisville District Deputy Commander Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis (far right) stopped by West Fork Lake in Cincinnati, Ohio, March 5, to visit with project staff including Stephanie Ison, Ja Franek and Norm Raisch.

*Continued on next page*



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specialist at Caesar Creek Lake agrees.

"I'm able to do what I love," she said. "Every day is different. We get to work with the public and educate them on nature and what the Corps does as an agency so it doesn't ever feel like work."

Vanhoose added that "the amount of interpretive programs and educational programs the rangers manage at Caesar Creek is remarkable – often hosting up to 100-200 kids per day for five months out of the year."

Just north of Caesar Creek lies C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir in Springfield where Brian Menker, natural resources specialist, has served as a ranger for the last 20 years.

"I really enjoy our regular visitors that come out here," said Menker. "Being able to see people use these facilities that have grown and improved over the last two decades makes it all worth it."

After visiting five lakes, the roadshow journey concluded at Markland Locks and Dam, where Lewis gathered with seasoned maintenance workers and lock operators.

Shawn Riley, mechanic and diver at the



Katie Newton

Lt. Col. Kevin Lewis, Louisville District Deputy Commander, visits with project staff at C.J. Brown Dam and Reservoir in Springfield, Ohio, March 4, 2019.

locks and dam, said his teammates are the main reason he is happy to come to work every day.

"The people are what makes me proud to work here," Riley said. "We're a family more so than we are co-workers."

Lewis appreciated the camaraderie and thanked employees for their hard work and dedication. He encouraged staff members

once again to communicate upwards about roadblocks preventing them from accomplishing the mission.

"I want to hear about issues where I can interject and help find a resolution," said Lewis, summing up that everything we do should be about recognizing our people, refining our processes and realizing our potential.

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# Corps responds to flooding along lower Ohio River



Steve Shifflett, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District geotechnical engineer and technical lead for the Typar geocell wall in Smithland, Ky., explains the process of constructing the temporary levee Feb. 26, 2019.

*Katie Newton, public affairs*

February's heavy rainfall events in the Ohio Valley led to flooding along the lower Ohio and Wabash rivers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District Emergency Operations Center activated in response.

During emergencies, the district's EOC works closely with state and local sponsors to provide emergency assistance including performing inspections of river levees and providing supplies and technical expertise to construct temporary flood protection for local communities.

"We were fully activated, working in coordination with the state to deploy our flood fight teams and supplies to necessary areas as quickly as possible," said George Minges, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Louisville District emergency operations manager. "Throughout the month of February we deployed eight flood fight teams, issued 17 pumps and deployed three sandbagging machines which helped to fill 50,000 sandbags."

The city of Smithland, Kentucky requested Corps assistance to provide supplies and technical oversight for the construction of a 5,000-foot long temporary levee comprised of geocells to protect homes and businesses.

Along the sprawling riverbank in Smithland were crews of more than 100 people pitching in to fill sandbags in hopes of holding back the mighty Ohio River.

"Things are working the way they should due to the partnerships of local, state and federal entities," said Steven Shifflett, geotechnical engineer and technical lead

for the large scale operation.

Construction of the temporary levee was a joint effort among the Corps, Department of Transportation, Department of Corrections and the National Guard.

"We're running 24-hour operations with our Corps staff working day shifts and night shifts to help man the automatic sandbagging machine and provide technical expertise with filling the geocells," said Shifflett who helped construct the same temporary structure there during flooding in 2011.

Local citizens welcomed the Corps return.

"The Corps has been really helpful down here with this event and with the one in 2011," said Harry VanSmith, lifelong resident of Smithland. "Everybody is doing all they can."



The Corps provided technical oversight on the construction of a 5,000 foot temporary levee to protect homes and businesses in the town of Smithland, Ky., during flooding in February 2019. The wall was constructed with framework made of Typar geocells and filled with loose sand. Additional sandbags were used for support.

Flood fight efforts continued up and down the river with the Corps sending sandbagging machines and flood fight teams to areas in Ledbetter and Paducah and providing levee inspections in cities such as Brookport.

High water levels on the Ohio River also impacted navigation causing locking operations to temporarily cease at Smithland and John T. Myers. More than 70 tows were in the queue at Smithland when locking resumed March 9.

Throughout the closure lock staff worked in close coordination with the navigation industry.

"Personnel from Smithland Locks and Dam worked diligently to clear debris and drift from the machinery trenches to return the locks to operation," said Brad Stout, operations manager for locks and dams. "Project staff successfully cleared out the queue of 73 tows in less than four days, through daily coordination with representatives from towing industry."

## **By the Numbers:**

- 8 flood fight teams
- 50,000 sandbags
- 6 sandbag machine operators
- 17 pumps were issued
- 10 days of 24-hr operations
- 1,100 ft of hesco
- 10,000 ft of typar geocells
- 150 rolls of poly plastic



## District remediates 2,000 residential properties in Jacobsville neighborhood

Shatara Riis, public affairs

The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, referred to as CERCLA and commonly known as Superfund, is responsible for cleaning up some of the nation's most contaminated land and responding to environmental emergencies, oil spills and natural disasters.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency's website, Superfund allows the EPA to clean up contaminated sites. It requires the parties responsible for the contamination to either perform cleanups or reimburse the government for EPA-led cleanup work.

The Louisville District lends a helping hand to this important effort.

"Superfund started in 1980 when Congress passed CERCLA; at sites where EPA can't find a viable party responsible for the contamination, EPA performs the cleanup using the federal Superfund created by CERCLA," said Josh Van Bogaert, Louisville District EPA Superfund program manager.

The Jacobsville neighborhood in Evansville, Indiana, is one of these sites the Louisville District, along with the EPA, is cleaning up under Superfund, Van Bogaert said.

Airborne dust, soot and smoke from manufacturing companies that once occupied the current Jacobsville neighborhood, contaminated the soil with lead and arsenic through industrial operations in the late 1800s, according to the EPA and Van Bogaert.

About 4,000 residential properties require clean up.

"EPA has already remediated about half of those," Van Bogaert said. "They have asked the Corps to remediate the remaining 2,000."

The work plans are all complete. The contractor mobilized in January to start conducting sampling and pre-coordination with the home owners. They have to walk through the plan for excavating in the residents' yards and work out whether they need to remove or temporarily relocate things from the properties. This coordination has started. A full-time construction division engineer, Marc Hodges, is on site, coordinating with local officials, meeting with the public, and managing the contractor.

"Having Hodges in Evansville, dedicated to the project, living with the



Workers in the hot zone wear Tyvek suits and air-purifying respirators. An air monitoring station is seen in the background.

community, and being available to listen to their concerns, has been crucial to the early success of the project," Van Bogaert explained.

According to Van Bogaert, the Corps began remediating properties in April of this year.

"The project is estimated to be a \$50 million effort over the next five years for 2,000 properties and will take five construction seasons – through the summer of 2023 – to complete," Van Bogaert said.

"Our role is to conduct the remediation. EPA does the investigation, designs the remedies – using separate contractors, then they come to the Corps to execute the field remediation," Van Bogaert said. "We (Corps) are the people in the field."

The EPA Superfund program here in Louisville is smaller than some of the other districts; however, the Louisville District program is growing.

"This is the biggest project we've ever had with EPA Superfund," Van Bogaert said. "We're hoping to use this to grow

our relationship with the EPA and work together with them in the future on other Superfund sites."

"We're in the very early phases of this project. It's going to be a challenge, but we're in the right spot to succeed," Van Bogaert said. "We have a good contractor who is engaged. We have excellent team members in engineering, construction and contracting working together in concert. We will clean up these yards and make it a safer place to live." USACE Louisville District team members include Marc Hodges, Robin Sternberg, Dick Kennard, Matt Riley, Justin Bennett, Aaron Sanford, Tammi Jeffries, and Josh Van Bogaert.

Superfund's goals are to protect human health and the environment by cleaning up contaminated sites; make responsible parties pay for cleanup work; involve communities in the Superfund process; and return Superfund sites to productive use.

For more information about Superfund, visit <https://www.epa.gov/superfund/what-superfund>.



Contaminated soil is direct-loaded for transportation to a hazardous waste landfill.



# Construction continues at Fort Knox clinic projects



The Fort Knox Medical Clinic dons a glass-enclosed foyer area as the entryway.



A Louisville District contractor wears stilts to assist in placing the ceiling grid of the Fort Knox Medical Clinic.



Some framing is still visible pending installation of wall insulation and drywall at the new Fort Knox Medical Clinic, which will replace the Ireland Army Medical Clinic.



A contract worker breaks through tough terrain in the beginning construction stages of the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic at Fort Knox, Ky., March 27, 2019.



The autographed last steel beam member is placed in its respective position as a part of the new Fort Knox Medical Clinic.



A construction worker tests the concrete at the Fort Knox Medical Clinic.



# USACE's only female command duo talks Women's History



Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant passes the Corps flag to Louisville District's Deputy District Engineer Linda Murphy during the change of command ceremony July 27, 2017, in Louisville, Ky. When Gant took command, the pair made history and became the first female duo to lead the Louisville District.

## Abby Korfhage, public affairs

Women's History Month is celebrated every March. The month is an opportunity to recognize the great women throughout history who have paved the road for future generations and to celebrate the strong women of today.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the top employer of women in STEM career fields in the federal government with over 3,200 professionals. The Louisville District is no different with females serving in all career fields and several senior leadership roles. The Louisville District is the only district in USACE with a female commander and female deputy district engineer at the helm.

Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant and Deputy District Engineer Linda Murphy discuss what Women's History Month means to them.

"For so long women were in support roles and because of the identification, that through commitment and hard work and the fact that women possess leadership skills as well, we're now able to have opportunities such as these and to be in these types of roles," said Gant.

Murphy echoed the sentiment.

"It's really a celebration of those women that have come before and paved the way in order for women, like us, to be able to get into leadership positions throughout the U.S. government and the Corps of Engineers," said Murphy.

When asked who their role model was, Gant said undoubtedly her mother, who had a science degree and was a biology teacher, then a physics teacher and chemistry teacher. Her mother then decided to step out of her comfort zone and learn design drawing which led to her mother receiving a doctorate.

"What I have seen by watching her is there are no limits to what we are capable of doing, as women," said Gant. "And to go for the dreams of which you desire."

Murphy said her father was her biggest role model.

"I know we are taking about Women's History Month but my dad instilled in me about the hard work and dedication and strong commitment to living up and working as hard as you can," said Murphy. "I think that goes beyond just a gender, it applies to all of us in all of our positions."

Both women feel honored to be females in their respective leadership positions and agreed that taking opportunities is crucial in progressing your career.

"Take every opportunity you can to do something beyond your comfort zone," said Murphy. "I was able to move throughout the organization and sometimes it was scary to go into positions that you weren't really familiar with, but it provided an opportunity to just learn and grow for myself."

Gant agreed and added that women have a nurturing side which is unique and therefore can bring other things or ideas to the table. She also talked about many times one may think 'it's not the right time' and reiterated that it may never be the right time but if the opportunity is available, you have to take advantage of it.

"Don't sell yourself short if ever you have an opportunity to be considered for a position and don't wait for someone to tell you that you should consider those positions – seek it out yourself," said Gant.

"Do not forget, whatever you do or whatever your dream is, don't let anyone limit you in saying that it cannot be done," said Gant. "Because if you have the intestinal fortitude and you work hard in being able to reach that – it is possible."



Louisville District Commander Col. Antoinette Gant presents Deputy District Engineer Linda Murphy her 40 years length of service award at the district's awards ceremony held March 14 at the district office in Louisville, Ky.



# USACE Headquarters recognizes district employee

Abby Korfhage, public affairs

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer Headquarters recognized Louisville District Mechanical Design Section Chief Brandon Martin for his contribution to USACE Headquarters engineering and construction in its development of commissioning criteria.

Commissioning is a quality process specifically developed to ensure complex and active building systems, such as ensuring mechanical/electrical systems, are designed and installed to meet the needs of stakeholders. This is applied to systems such as HVAC, lighting, plumbing, power distribution, metering and renewable energy systems.

“Bottom line is that we can only be sure that these systems will work and limit surprises along the way if we have a single and high-competency entity, like a firm or specialist, performing reviews, inspections and testing throughout the design and construction process,” said Martin.

According to USACE HQ, the three regulations Martin contributed to were

overdue for an update to meet current industry standards.

“Let me simply say, all of the Corps owes Brandon a deep debt of gratitude for his efforts and exceptional service towards the improvement of our design and construction commissioning criteria,” said Dr. Larry McCallister, USACE HQ chief of engineering and construction. “The dedication that he demonstrated was an excellent example for all to follow.”

Martin had the opportunity to work with many professionals across USACE to learn more about standards, criteria management and program delivery at all levels of the organization.

During the process, Martin kept in constant contact with the action officers at headquarters; participated in multiple conference calls, responded to questions and offered his expertise on the development of highly technical documents.

“I feel very honored to receive recognition for the work,” said Martin. “I greatly appreciate the opportunity to apply



Louisville District Mechanical Design Section Chief Brandon Martin

the lessons learned and experience I have gained in executing the Louisville District mission to improving business processes and practices across USACE and the Department of Defense.”

## Park manager's roots run deep at Brookville Lake

Katie Newton, public affairs

Home is where the heart is. For park manager Stephanie Ison that home is Brookville Lake. The Brookville native is proud to have spent her entire career—more than 16 years—serving the community she loves.

“It is the biggest honor I could ever

imagine to be able to manage this lake,” said Ison, whose ties to the Corps of Engineers and the lake project run deep. “My childhood is packed full of joy from recreating here and experiencing nature.”

“I really do feel that the creation of this lake is the reason for my existence and I don’t take that lightly,” said Ison. “I believe

I am supposed to be here, giving back, in this manager’s seat.”

In fact, Ison credits her whole existence to the creation of Brookville Lake as her parents met because of the construction of the lake in the late 1960s.

Her Corps lineage began with Ison’s step-grandmother, Nan Shipman, who worked for the Corps of Engineers for 34 years. Nan worked many places all over the country for the Corps, but in the late 1960s she settled in Brookville, serving as the secretary for the Resident Engineer Office during the construction of the reservoir. Her husband, Clifford, was working for a contractor as a rebar technician building the dam and it was at that time that Ison’s father, age 18, moved from Texas to Indiana to live with Nan and Clifford to find work.

“My dad, Dwayne Shipman, got a job working at a local concrete plant associated with the lake’s construction where he met my mother Linda who was working as a secretary,” said Ison.

After her father’s death when she was 18, Ison set her mother up on a blind date with David Stutzman, the chief of maintenance at Brookville Lake. Stutzman,



Katie Newton

*Continued on next page*



who also had many family members working at the Louisville District's lakes, locks and dams, soon married Ison's mother and played a large role in shaping her career choices.

"When I graduated from college, my step-dad was instrumental in connecting me to the Corps of Engineers and teaching me to do things that I now love," said Ison.

Ison obtained a Bachelor's degree in Recreation and Parks Management and an Associates in Business Foundations from Indiana University before starting work as a temporary seasonal park ranger at Brookville Lake in 2003.

She spent her first years as a seasonal ranger helping the project office to increase visitation by enhancing the visitor's center with displays and conducting numerous outreach and interpretive services among many other duties.

"I began hosting field trips, tours, and went to local events as a face for the Corps," said Ison. "I got to do so much in a small window of time and I absolutely loved it."

Ison never looked back. Thirteen years later in December 2016, she was promoted to park manager of Brookville Lake and of West Fork Lake in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Serving in the dual role as manager of both lakes in the Miami River Area – one in Indiana and one in Ohio—presents unique challenges.

"It is certainly not easy to manage two different lakes in two different states an hour apart," said Ison. "If I had a clone, I would love to be at both of my lakes every day, but I do my best with the high priorities and go where I am needed the



Katie Newton

Brookville Lake is located in Franklin and Union counties on the East Fork of the Whitewater River in Indiana.

most on any given day."

Between the two lakes, Ison manages a staff of eight employees who make it all work seamlessly. "I have great skilled staff that work at both of these projects," said Ison.

Ison's says her strong work ethic is a testament to how she was raised.

"I was given chores and responsibilities at a young age," said Ison. "I began my first paid job at age 14. Nothing has ever been handed to me on a silver platter. I worked five jobs during my college years to put myself through college. I have worked hard to attain and earn everything I have accomplished in life," she said.

"Hands down, I have been raised by the strongest woman on the planet," Ison said, of her mother who has battled aggressive

breast cancer twice and is a 23-year cancer survivor.

"When I grew up I realized how she shaped me to do what was unusual for most young ladies," said Ison. "I loved walking around barefoot and getting my hands dirty. I am not one to have pretty nails because I am happier with dirt in mine. I love being like my mom, doing jobs that you just don't see many women doing."

In a field primarily dominated by males, Ison never let that hold her back from her dreams.

"I don't look at my success as a female manager being a gender thing. I look at it as a person who grew up doing hard labor and work, like my mom, that happens to be in a field dominated by males. This career that I am in has few females in the position that I hold," said Ison. "That doesn't bother me at all. What matters to me is that I get to have an amazing job doing many things that I like to do."

Ison hopes to be a role model for other women seeking to be park managers in the future.

"Challenge yourself to not get trapped in the mindset of not taking a job because you are female and feel it is a typical man's job. In the Corps of Engineers you are capable of being a leader as a woman. Typical stereotypes or job roles of women are becoming a thing of the past," said Ison. "In today's day and future generations, the sky is the limit. If you want something, make it happen."

"If you believe in yourself and you believe that you can make a difference, then there are no limits to what you can accomplish," Ison said.



David Stutzman, the first chief of maintenance at C.J. Brown Dam & Reservoir in Springfield, Ohio, pulling the levers the very first day of inundation of C.J. Brown in 1974. Stutzman is the step-father of Stephanie Ison, current Brookville and West Fork Lake park manager. Stutzman, along with many others in Ison's family, helped to inspire her to work for the Corps of Engineers.

Courtesy of Stephanie Ison