



Workload to shift, decline from record highs

By Larry McCallister

Director of Programs and Project Management

The Alaska District achieved several record workload levels in recent years, especially for military construction, but changes are ahead.

The district still has a healthy workload in fiscal year 2012, but funding is declining significantly in the outyears, and the district will need to reshape itself to match this shrinking and shifting workload.

With input from throughout the district, senior leaders

are working on a plan named Operation Crossroads, which employees will be hearing more about soon. Its basic message is that team members have to be flexible and adaptive in the next few years.

How these projected workload changes will affect team members is yet to be determined. Be assured that the district values every employee, and it will do everything possible to meet these changes in a way that is best for the work force and the district.

The Alaska District workload in FY2012 has declined from
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Fort Wainwright school age facility opens

By Trish Muntean

Fort Wainwright Public Affairs

The new Fort Wainwright School Age Center officially opened Nov. 21 on the same day leaders from U.S. Army Alaska and post garrison reaffirmed their commitment to military families by again signing the Army Family Covenant.

The \$17 million project was managed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Alaska District and built by the contractor and design architectural engineering team of Alutiiq International Solutions LLC and BCRA.

The project constructed a 195-person capacity school age services center for children 6-12 years old. The state-of-the-art center has a homework lab led by a certified school teacher, technology lab, activity room, multipurpose room, playground, library, two areas for kindergartners, waiting area for parents, science and performing arts areas, kitchen and more.

Completion of the 22,924 square-foot building was challenging because of intermittent permafrost and that it was being built for use by children, said Tim Sponseller, Fort Wainwright Department of Public Works engineering division chief.

"We are going to be able to take more children than we did in the old facility (and) offer more programs and services," said Mary Jo Lohrenz, Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation director. "It is just going to



Photo by Doug Hart

Children from the Fort Wainwright School Age Center assist Col. Ron Johnson, Fort Wainwright garrison commander, with cutting a ribbon to open the new facility. Also present are (from left) Maj. Gen. Raymond Palumbo, U.S. Army Alaska commander; Debra Zedalis, Pacific Region Installation Management Command director, and Col. Reinhard Koenig, Alaska District commander.

be a lot more customer-friendly for the children to be able to come here and be in a safe environment."

The center continues to offer after-school programs as well as programming for the 4-H and Boys and Girls of America; winter, spring and summer camps; and hourly care.

The center also offers a citizenship and youth sponsorship program. The citizenship program consists of

Promise Passport, where children in the community volunteer to participate in the Youth Sponsorship Program, which is designed to orient newcomers to events and activities at Fort Wainwright and in the Fairbanks community, said Jordan Lewis, School Age Center director.

Lewis said he is proud of his staff and what it has accomplished in preparing

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Workload

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FY2011, and with the national focus on reducing the federal debt, we can expect more cuts to our future programs. The district's FY2012 total program is estimated at 264 projects/activities valued at almost \$460 million. By comparison, the FY2011 program had 341 projects/activities valued at \$550 million.

We started to advertise our FY2012 projects even though Congress had not yet appropriated the funds. In our advertisement for proposals, we stated that award is subject to the availability of funds because the federal government is currently operating on a continuing resolution.

By advertising early in the fiscal year, we can select the contractor and be ready to award as soon as we receive the funds. In Alaska, it is important to award the contracts as early in the year as possible so the contractors can use all of the short construction season.

Last fiscal year, we didn't receive construction funding until May. However, because we had already selected our military construction contractors through the district's early, aggressive action, the Army provided Alaska District with the first military construction money in the Corps once Army dollars were released.

Our sustained growth programs remain the Environmental, and Interagency and International Services.

Our environmental program remains steady and has even received extra money in recent years because of the great work and reputation of the environmental team. We clean up Formerly Used Defense Sites and also contract to other military organizations to restore their lands. The FUDS program has been funded at \$40 million in recent fiscal years. Last year, it increased to \$62 million. It is back at \$55 million this fiscal year and expected to remain elevated for the next several years. We do an excellent job of executing these remote World War II and Cold War cleanup projects.

In the Foreign Military Sales program, the Alaska District is providing design and construction management services for India's C-17 facilities program. Other possibilities for FMS work are in Australia, Mongolia and Taiwan.

In the Humanitarian Assistance program, we are building small health clinics and schools in several Southeast Asia countries to include Bangladesh, Cambodia, Laos, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Vietnam. This program consists of many small-dollar projects and has been steadily growing each year. Additionally, beginning this year, we are managing the \$40 million program for design and construction of more

than 70 typhoon shelters/schools in Bangladesh on behalf of the U.S. Agency for International Development.

We use local contractors in these countries, so the projects don't provide work to the Alaskan construction industry, but they boost the Alaska District workload while some of the Alaskan programs are declining. Alaska District personnel have opportunities to work part time in India and Bangladesh for project engineering and construction management support. Contact Clare Jaeger for the details.

The FY2013 military program was supposed to be a boon for the district with an estimated \$370 million program, but 10 of the 15 projects scheduled for FY2013 will probably be pushed to future years. These projected cuts are not final, and we are being told to continue planning and designing all FY2013 military construction projects as scheduled.

In FY2013 and beyond, we expect a big move in the Department of Defense to cut military construction spending. The Army and the Air Force told us to expect even larger cuts in FY2014-2017, which will have a huge impact on the Alaska District but also all Corps districts that manage military projects.

The Civil Works program remains flat as well, and will probably decline further in the outyears. Congress has not funded many studies and projects in recent years as it did in the past, and congressional adds have been absent for some time.

While we expect our new construction program to be severely cut, the federal government will continue to fund operations and maintenance programs to maintain and remodel what exists. We will work to increase our operations and maintenance support to the military bases.

We are also looking to obtaining new customers. For example, we have been working with the Bureau of Indian Affairs to initiate some road designs, as well as with the Port of Anchorage and Maritime Administration on an engineering/construction analysis of the port's expansion project.

As our large, well-established military and civil works programs decline, we need to be very flexible and aggressive in our execution of the other programs. We must be willing to move to where the work has shifted, and willing to take on new and exciting challenges. Since the Alaska District was created in 1946, we have weathered many changes and ups and downs in our program. We will adapt to the upcoming changes with your support.

"We must be willing to move to where the work has shifted, and willing to take on new and exciting challenges."

Larry McCallister, director of Programs and Project Management

GOLD NUGGETS

Commander

Col. Reinhard W. Koenig

Deputy Commander

Lt. Col. James R. "Bobby" Stone

Director of Programs and Project Management

Dr. Larry D. McCallister

Chief of Public Affairs

Tom Findtner

Media Relations Specialist

Pat Richardson

Editor

Curt Biberdorf

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E-mail inquiries may be sent to: public.affairs3@usace.army.mil or Curt Biberdorf. View the Alaska District Web site at www.poa.usace.army.mil and Facebook page at <http://facebook.com/AlaskaCorps>.

Overseas Operations

Work decreases impact on Afghanistan's natural, cultural resources

By **Brenda Beasley**
AED-South Public Affairs

KANDAHAR AIRFIELD, Afghanistan - The Civil and Environmental Branch of Afghanistan Engineer District-South leads in protecting and improving Afghanistan's natural and cultural resources.

Museums once brimming with finds from Buddhist, Hellenistic, Islamic and prehistoric sites lay crumbled and empty, their valuable antiquities turning up in high-end art markets across Asia, Europe and the United States.

An environment once pristine and rich in biological diversity is now barren and supports little wildlife. Fertile valleys that once produced such large quantities of grain and fruit that the country, was known as the "breadbasket of the Middle East," now can't feed many of its children.

Tragically, the combined pressures of warfare, civil disorder and drought have taken a major toll on Afghanistan's natural and cultural resources.

Surveyed

Exploitation of these resources saw some relief and improvement when the Afghanistan Engineer District-South, prompted by growing relevance of environmental considerations in military operations and the importance of soldier health, began conducting environmental site surveys in December 2009.

"Our role is to decrease the impact our projects may have on the natural and cultural resources of this country," said Heather Moncrief, an environmental specialist in the South District's Civil and Environmental Branch deployed from the Alaska District.

From a 10-person patrol base to a 5,000-soldier Afghan National Army base, most land with U.S. real estate instruments is surveyed to determine if hazardous materials and natural or cultural resources are present—such as mosques, graveyards, grazing land or karbez, which are old underground irrigation systems used to draw water to the valley.

Scant information is available, so much research is involved. Most determinations are made through

interpretation of photos taken by site assessment contractors, aerial photos from geographic information systems and Internet searches of nearby villages.

"We depend on a lot of information from the 1970s, when monuments and old fort locations were documented," said Moncrief. A list of endangered species was issued by the Afghanistan government in 2009.

Liability

Although environmental considerations are secondary to wartime operational requirements, they're important when safeguarding the health of U.S. forces, minimizing costly and resource-intensive environmental corrective actions and facilitating timely base transfers to the Afghans.

"In short wars, we dig pits. We advance and retreat. Here, we've come and stayed 10 years. Waste has built up," said Michael Bell, an environmental specialist for the South District. "What are we going to do with the sewage? How are we going to compensate Afghans for the land we modified? One of my jobs is to determine what's there and try to protect it."

When surveying sites, Bell is aware of the Afghan people. On top of environmental and legal liability, it's important to him to avoid negative impacts like destroying mosques or areas of importance to Afghans.

Forts, castles and burial sites dot Afghanistan's landscape, added Bell. Some of them are more than 1,000 years old. When working in Qalat, at Camp Eagle or Forward Operating Base Apache, an impressive hilltop fortress can be seen from all three locations.

Armies under legendary Greek conqueror Alexander the Great constructed it more than 2,000 years ago. Known to locals as "Ball Haizer," the area has since been occupied by British, Russian, Taliban and now NATO and Afghan National armies. "We're protecting this important cultural resource," Bell added.

Looting of cultural treasures is also a NATO concern. The National Museum of Afghanistan was destroyed by the Taliban and the antiquities were sold on the black market.

"NATO is trying to help rebuild the museum and is buying back some of these items," said Bell.

Similarities

One big environmental concern is disposal of waste from project sites in a wadi, a dry river bed. This can be a problem when rain washes it away, and the untreated wastewater, sometimes containing excrement, contaminates water sources.

"You don't know where it's being disposed, and that's a huge risk to natural resources," said Moncrief.

Although her travels have taken her to various sites throughout southern Afghanistan, what Moncrief finds most surprising are the similarities between Afghanistan and her home station work sites. "Even in Alaska, I travel in small aircraft to remote places without comforts, like electricity and water," she said. "It surprised me how similar they are."



Courtesy photo

Heather Moncrief, civil engineer in the Regulatory Division, is serving as an environmental specialist on a deployment to the Afghanistan Engineer District-South.

Around the district

District exceeds CFC goal

The district exceeded its goal of \$48,000 for the 2011 Combined Federal Campaign by receiving \$50,920 in employee contributions. Thanks to all who participated in the annual fundraiser to make this another generous year of giving.

Projects completed

Warrior in Transition Complex—The district conducted the final inspection on this \$26.93 million project at JBER-Richardson Nov. 16.

The primary facilities include a barracks, administrative and operations facility, and soldier and family assistance center.

Aeromedical/Mental Health Clinic—The district conducted the final inspection on this FY2010 Department of Defense medical facilities project for JBER-Elmendorf Nov. 29.

The \$20.2 million project constructed a new 34,730-square-foot clinic that provides for flight medicine, public health, mental health, ancillary functions and support areas.

Airborne Sustainment Training Complex—The district conducted a final inspection on this FY2010 project for JBER-Richardson Nov. 30. The \$6 million project constructed an

School age

Continued from Page 1

for the ceremony and in the day-to-day operations.

“(The program’s success) is a team effort,” Lewis said.

The Army Family Covenant expresses the Army’s commitment to caring for soldiers and families by providing a strong, supportive environment where they can thrive, and that enhances their strength and resilience. It focuses on programs, services and initiatives essential to preserving an all-volunteer force.

It is critical for soldiers and families to know that even during these fiscally lean times, the Army is committed to ensuring they are supported, said Col. Ron Johnson, garrison commander.

“Army families are our most critical resource,” Johnson said.

He added that he thinks the new center will mean everything to the families of the Fort Wainwright community and that they will recognize that the Army is committed to supporting them.

Taking care of children and reducing stress here allows our soldiers to focus on their jobs while they are deployed, said Maj. Gen. Raymond P. Palumbo, U.S. Army Alaska commander.

The School Age Center, still located on Neely Road but now closer to the elementary school, is certified to operate by the Department of Defense and has been accredited by the National AfterSchool Association since June 2001. School age center programs are part of the Child, Youth and School Services, a division of the Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation directorate.

organizational classroom building and airborne training facilities that include eight parachute landing fall pits, three new C-130 aircraft mockups with one relocated C-130 mockup, three new C-17 aircraft mockups with one relocated C-17 mockup, and one relocated galvanized jump tower with accessories.

Submit your photos

High-resolution photos of employees participating in various recreational activities or hobbies in Alaska are always welcome to create the “Active in Alaska” photo page in the Arctic Engineer magazine. Send photos to Curt Biberdorf.

Deployments

Afghanistan—Juliet Brown, Theodore Champine, Warren Colburn, Leanna Dagley, Scott Haan, John Keys, Patricia Lora, John Mitzel, Heather Moncrief, David Purdy, Gary Weiler, Jim Wolfe

Returned—Capt. Daniel Fox, Sheldon Longnecker



Photo by Billie Johnson

Presidential

Allen Churchill (right), Alaska District’s Operations Branch chief, and Mo Chang, chief of the Navigation Section for the Los Angeles District, exchange congratulations after being named to leadership positions for the Pacific Chapter of the Western Dredging Association Oct. 28 in Portland, Ore. Churchill was selected president and Chang was chosen program director. Incoming officers were announced during the group’s fall conference.

Upcoming events

Dec. 15	District Holiday Party
Dec. 21	Holiday Door Decoration Judging
Jan. 9	Town Hall Meeting and Awards Ceremony
Jan. 9-11	POD commander visit
Jan. 25	Welcome Home Ceremony
Feb. 6-10	Regulatory NEPA Training

Winter weather reporting guidelines

To mitigate safety and health hazards associated with snow, ice and extremely cold temperatures, district employees will follow the guidance of the installation commander at their assigned duty station.

When weather and road conditions are a concern, personnel may obtain official status updates by dialing the applicable phone number: Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson 552-INFO, Eielson Air Force Base 377-6127, Fort Wainwright 353-7109 or Fort Greely 869-3480.

In most cases, recorded messages at these numbers are updated by 6 a.m. However, employees should not rely on the hotlines as their sole source for information. Each member of the work force is responsible for monitoring media newscasts and determining whether it is safe to report for duty.

Sources providing reliable reports about the status of the

weather, roads and military installations include: Alaska Department of Transportation by dialing 511 or visiting <http://511.alaska.gov/>, National Weather Service Information Line at 1-800-472-0391 and JBER-Elmendorf operator at 552-1110.

In addition, several radio and television stations provide regular updates in the Anchorage area. Updates are available at Alaska's Total Traffic Network by dialing #847 or by listening to radio reports broadcast weekdays from 6-9 a.m. and 4-6 p.m. on the following stations: KENI 650 AM, KTZN 550 AM, KYMG 98.9 FM, KBFX 100.5 FM, KGOT 101.3 FM and KASH 107.5 FM.

If the local school district or other government offices are closed, it's likely that the installation will be affected, too.

Remember weather and road conditions may vary significantly between an employee's home and workplace. Therefore, people should always assess their personal situation before getting into a vehicle. If you think that it is unsafe to drive, don't take any unnecessary risks.

Instead, contact your supervisor to request the use of annual leave, credit hours or compensatory time on that particular day.

Alaska District hotline numbers are 907-272-2572 (local) and 1-866-204-8326 (toll free). These phone numbers should be called when an emergency or crisis arises beyond the scope of adverse weather. In such instances, employees will receive instructions on appropriate safety and response measures.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Back on board

Lt. Col. Bobby Stone, deputy district commander (center), recognizes (from left) Ron Jackson, Lt. Col. Matthew Dooley, Anthony Garigliano and Linda Arrington during a welcome home ceremony at district headquarters Nov. 3. He presented certificates of appreciation to each employee for their recent service in either Iraq or Afghanistan.

Accolades



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Col. Reinhard Koenig, district commander, presents the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service to Bob Glascott, environmental scientist in the Environmental and Special Programs Branch, at district headquarters Nov. 9 for his exemplary service to the Alaska District from Oct. 1, 2010 to Sept. 30, 2011. Glascott supported the Pacific Ocean Division's regionalization mission and strategy by assisting the Japan District's growing environmental program. His initiative and commitment to providing the highest quality support allowed the Japan District to exceed customer objectives and environmental compliance requirements.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Heidi Firstencel, Juneau Regulatory Field Office supervisor, receives the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from Chip Smith, special assistant for Regulatory, Tribal and Environmental Issues for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Nov. 16 in Anchorage. Firstencel was honored for her superior service to the United States through her work with the Organized Village of Kasaan.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Peter Olmstead, biologist in the Regulatory Division, receives the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from Chip Smith, special assistant for Regulatory, Tribal and Environmental Issues for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Nov. 16 in Anchorage. Olmstead was honored for his superior service to the United States through his work with the Organized Village of Kasaan.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

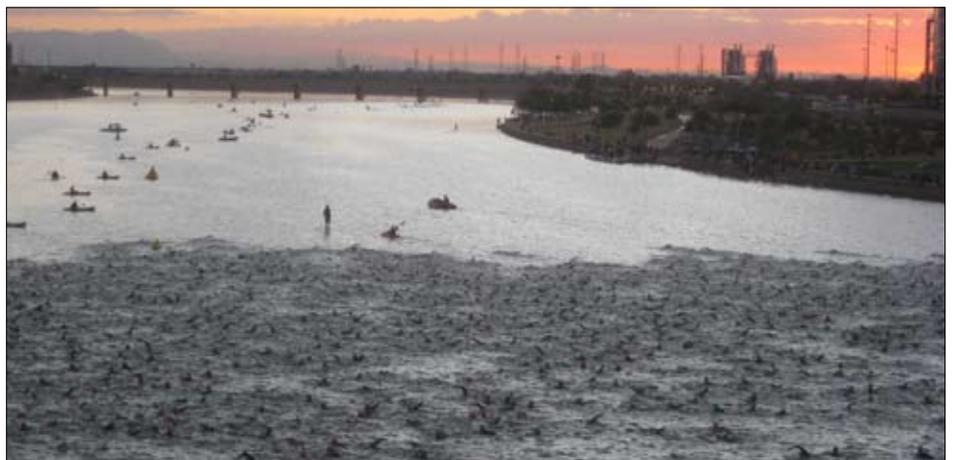
Serena Sweet, project manager in the Regulatory Division, receives the Army Achievement Medal for Civilian Service from Chip Smith, special assistant for Regulatory, Tribal and Environmental Issues for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, Nov. 16. Sweet was honored for her superior service to the United States through her work with federally-recognized tribes on natural gas pipeline and coal mine projects she has managed in the past three years.



Photo by Curt Biberdorf

Bountiful baskets

Gift baskets focused around a theme and donated by groups or individual employees are bid on during a silent auction at district headquarters Nov. 9. The Social Activities Committee-sponsored event raised \$1,933 to help fund the district's holiday party in December. The top five baskets were Video Arcade Game, 'Twas the Night Before Christmas, Luxury Spa, Northern Nights and Under the Sea.



Ironman

Ken McNally, geotechnical engineer in the Soils and Geology Section, competed in the 2011 Ironman Arizona in Tempe Nov. 18. He finished 1,554 overall and 199 in the 45-49 age group with a time of 13:34:52.

(Top) The 2011 Ironman Arizona begins at 7 a.m. with a single-loop 2.4-mile swim in Tempe Town Lake. (Left) McNally pedals along a three-loop 112-mile bike course through the Sonoran Desert and (far left) approaches the end of a 26.2-mile run on a course around Tempe Town Lake and Papago Park lined with spectators. (Courtesy photos)