

# Corps Employees Show that Earth Day is Much More than Just One Day

Compiled by Candice Walters

Ever wonder how it feels to touch a terrapin, not the mascot of the University of Maryland, but a real live one?

Students who attended the Fort Detrick Earth Day Celebration on March 20 had a chance to do just that, thanks to the combined efforts of the Baltimore District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Maryland Port Administration (MPA). Baltimore District and MPA showcased their efforts to restore Poplar Island in the Chesapeake Bay at the celebration. MPA brought the terrapins, one of the species being protected along with other wildlife on the island. Baltimore District staff set up a display highlighting the Corps' restoration efforts on the island.

That's just one of the many initiatives Corps of Engineers employees will participate in during the next several weeks as the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Earth Day nears. For the Corps, Earth Day is not just observed on April 22, but marked by numerous events and activities throughout the spring.

Baltimore District employees are participating in a second Earth Day event, joining with the Friends of Raystown Lake to help with Lake Cleanup Day on April 19. Participants will travel by boat to reach remote areas of the shoreline to pick up litter and recycle what they can. The event, which begins at 9 a.m., features a free picnic lunch. Organizers expect volunteers from sportsmen and environmental organizations, civic clubs, and Boy and Girl Scouts to join in the cleanup effort.

In Huntsville, Ala., employees of the U.S. Army Engineering and Support Center will once again conduct mock environmental cleanup exercises for students at University Place Elementary School and on Redstone Arsenal on Earth Day. These exercises, which teach students about how the Corps cleans up environmental contamination, have proven to be a popular Earth Day event.

St. Louis District employees have three Earth Day-related events. The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Carlyle Lake Celebrate the Earth Event is set for April 25 at the lake's Dam West Day Use Area. More than 3,000 students, ranging from pre-kindergarten through eighth grade, from 20 area schools are expected to attend. Lake employees will offer hands-on games, exhibits and lectures and present programs on birds of prey, nocturnal animals, forestry, reptiles, environmental arts and much more.

At Wappapello Lake, during the fourth week of April, eighth-graders from Wayne, Butler and Stoddard counties will be introduced to conservation and other environmental education activities through seven different sessions lasting 25 minutes each. Also participating in the event will be employees of the University of Missouri Extension Office and other federal and state agencies.

For the fifth straight year, the Mark Twain Lake staff will present Earth Day programs on April 24 and 25 for 400 students from Walls County, Mo. Students in grades kindergarten through sixth will rotate in for 30- to 45-minute presentations on wetlands, conversation and wildlife.

Tree planting and cleanup are on tap for Earth Day celebrations along the Mississippi River in St. Paul District. On April 19, volunteers will clean up Pool 9 in Lynxville, Wis., and Pool 10 in Guttenberg, Iowa. On Earth Day, April 22, volunteers expect to plant 3,100 trees on Spring Lake Environmental Management Program islands at Pool 5 in Winona, Minn. Volunteers will clean up Pool 27 in LaCrescent, Minn., and Pool 8 in Genoa, Wis., both on April 26.

The Elizabeth Marina City Dock in New Jersey is where you'll find staff from the New York District on April 25. District volunteers will join Future City Inc., a non-profit organization hosted by the Arthur Kill/Elizabeth River Watershed association. The health of the New York and New Jersey Harbor Estuary, the effects of pollution and the everyday importance of taking care of the environment are among the topics district personnel will address through interactive education stations. The Earth Day program

kicks off with an environmental harbor inspection aboard a Corps' vessel and a tour of a U.S. Coast Guard vessel. Others participating include the mayor of the City of Elizabeth, the Elizabeth Marina, Kean University, representatives from the offices of Sen. Robert Menendez and Rep. Donald Payne, the Corps, the Coast Guard and Future City Inc.

New York District volunteers are planning to participate in a second event as well, Earth Day Rockaway, set for May 3 on Rockaway Beach and boardwalk. Corps' personnel will educate the public about the many environmental restoration projects being done in and around the community. The Corps is one of 16 organizations joining with the Rockaway Waterfront Alliance in the celebration.

For the fourth year, Wilmington District personnel will staff two booths at the Lower Cape Fear Earth Day festivities on April 26. One booth will focus on the role the district's regulatory division plays in protecting the environment and the second will focus on other environmental initiatives.

On April 12, Honolulu District volunteers will take to Waikiki to clean up Fort DeRussey's beach and berm. The district will join other state and federal agencies in the event sponsored by the city and county of Honolulu.

Park Rangers from Sacramento District's Success Lake in Porterville, Calif., plan to give eighth-graders some tips on how kids can help the environment flourish. The presentation is geared to show the students that they don't have to be adults to make a difference when it comes to conserving water, recycling, reusing and reducing the amount of plastics, paper and aluminum. The program, being conducted at Sunnyside School, also includes a local supermarket, which is providing paper grocery bags the students will decorate with an Earth Day theme. The store will give customers the bags on April 22 in hopes that customers will embrace the students' Earth Day messages.

Volunteers from the Savannah District will be busy the weekend of April 19 and 20 as they participate in several Earth Day events. They will provide information about the Corps' role in taking care of the environment to students at Hodge Elementary School as part of its Earth Day celebration. Others will participate in the Phinzy Swamp Nature Park Earth Day event in Augusta, Ga., that is sponsored by the Southeastern Natural Sciences Academy. And more volunteers will provide information at the city of Savannah's Earth Day celebration at Forsyth Park.

Galveston District employees are participating in two events, on April 16 at NASA's Johnson Space Center Earth Day celebration, and on April 19 at the Corpus Christi Earth Day/Bay Day. District environmental and regulatory experts will talk about habitat, wetlands and other environmental and ecological issues at the NASA event. Corpus Christi Area Office employees will do the same at the Corpus Christi Earth Day/Bay Day event sponsored by the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation.

The focus is on students when it comes to Earth Day events for Los Angeles District. District personnel participated in the Hueneme High School Career Fair on April 1 in Oxnard, which attracted almost 900 students. On April 10, the focus will be on Choices for the Future for elementary students, specifically second- through fifth-graders, at the Barrett Elementary School Career Day in Los Angeles. The district's wetlands water interactive display will take center stage at the Children's Water Education Festival in Irvine on April 15 and 16. More than 3,000 third- through fifth-graders are expected to attend. The district's fourth Earth Day event is April 20 at Upper Newport Bay in Newport Bay.

Chicago District personnel will be talking about wetlands at two Earth Day events. On April 24, they will be in Milwaukee to talk to fourth- through eighth-graders at several schools. On April 25, Harrison Elementary School in East Chicago, Ind., will be the site of a similar presentation to several different classrooms.

Tree planting by Boy Scouts, an Adopt-a-Shoreline activity and a two-day interagency event on environmental stewardship are all events being planned by various members of the Walla Walla District for some of its lakes and locks and dams.

At Headquarters, Corps sustainability and environmental efforts will be on display at two different locations. April 20 through 22, the Corps will be an exhibitor at the National Sustainable Design Expo on the National Mall that attracts some of the best and brightest students who have designed projects that focus on people, prosperity and the planet in an effort to promote sustainability. On April 23, a second exhibit will be displayed at the Government Accountability Office, 441 G Street NW, Washington, D.C., home of Corps Headquarters, as part of the GAO Earth Day celebration.

With so many diverse activities, it's easy to see why Corps employees say that Earth Day is never just a one-day event.