



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
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News Release



Number: 04-14 Coastal America Partnership to present annual award

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HUNTSVILLE, Ala. — A local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers employee is a part of the team receiving the 2004 Coastal America Partnership Award on Sept. 27 in Washington.

Michelle Crull, Ph.D., a civil engineer at the Corps of Engineers' Huntsville Engineering and Support Center, worked with a team of Army and Air Force engineers on a project to breach the Embry Dam on the Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg, Va.

Coastal America, a partnership of federal agencies, state and local governments, and private organizations, gives the award each year to recognize significant contributions in the area of environmental protection.

This year's team award project was a combined effort between active Army and Air Force, National Guard, and civilian personnel from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk District, St. Louis District, and Huntsville Engineering and Support Center, along with the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety. The team designed and implemented the breaching of Embry Dam using explosives.

Once sediments were dredged from above the dam, the Army and Air Force used explosives to notch out a 100-foot section of the dam, allowing for fish migration upstream.



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“It's always exciting to me to see the culmination of a team's efforts. If I were designing a building, it would be great to see the final structure. In this case, it was a wonderful feeling to see the water rushing through the holes we made in the dam and to hear that no one and no other structures were hurt,” said Crull.

“Most of the time I'm designing mitigation for explosions that we hope never happen or that are necessary to get rid of an explosive hazard. In this case, the explosives were used to produce a positive end result (the demolition of the dam so that the fish can get upstream to spawn). While more traditional demolition techniques could have been used, none of them would have been as quick or economical, and this had the added benefit of providing some training for Armed Services personnel,” Crull added.

The Coastal America Partnership organizations work together to protect, preserve, and restore the nation's coasts. The partnership includes the departments of Agriculture, Air Force, Army, Commerce, Defense, Energy, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Navy, State, Transportation, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Executive Office of the President.

Crull received a bachelor's degree in civil engineering in 1982 and a master's degree in civil engineering in 1985 from the University of Mississippi. She graduated from Vanderbilt University with a doctorate in structural engineering in 1989. Crull is a member of the Huntsville Post of the Society of American Military Engineers.

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For more information, please contact Huntsville Center Public Affairs Office, 256-895-1691 or 256-895-1690.