



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Columbia–Pacific Northwest Region
Spring 2021

SafetyMatters

Amazing People Accomplishing Important Work



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- Finding Alternatives to Classroom Training
- Utilizing HARP Training Modules during the Pandemic

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We want to hear from you. Please contact us at mcoffey@usbr.gov.

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From the Regional Director

Welcome to this year's issue of the *Safety Matters* magazine. Looking back on this challenging year, I am so proud to have worked with you to identify new ways to implement mission-essential operations—supplying water and power—while keeping our safety-first value. I believe our work community has grown from the challenges we faced, and continue to face, in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Inside this issue, you'll read about the numerous CPN Region successes and accomplishments in a COVID environment. This year's theme is *Meeting our Mission during a Pandemic*. Each of you has illustrated how you have continued to focus on ensuring that our operations did not falter.

Some of the year's highlights include the implementation of the Mobile Crane Operator Requirements Business Practice—making sure lifting procedures at our facilities are consistently thought out by highly trained, certified, and evaluated operators. Additionally, we entrusted Comprehensive Occupational Medical Services with our medical surveillance services to ensure the health and safety of employees conducting specific work activities.

I believe this year has renewed our commitment for safety to one another. Using tools such as maximum telework flexibility and investments in information technology have allowed greater use of virtual meeting opportunities and implementing “protect the pilot” procedures to protect our facility staff. Great job!

Please join me in enjoying the stories from your peers and being proud of our role in the Reclamation family—
Amazing People Accomplishing Important Work.

KEEP A SAFE
DISTANCE

Bend Field Office Finds Solution for Hazardous Process

By Jason Rice, CCAO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

Dam inspections are a common activity throughout Reclamation.

Ochoco Dam in Prineville, Ore., is a transferred work that is inspected on a seven-year schedule. In December 2020, it was time for the Bend Field Office to perform an inspection at the dam.

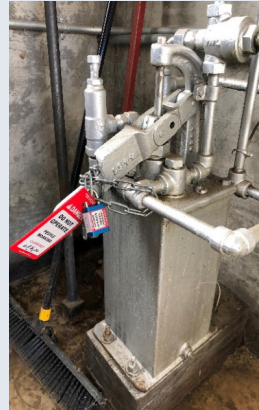
Ochoco Dam is classified as a permit-required confined space. It has a discharge pipe that is 44 inches in diameter, 470 feet long, and runs through the dam.

The definition of a confined space is as follows:

- Large enough for an employee to enter fully and perform assigned work
- Not designed for continuous occupancy
- Limited or restricted means of entry or exit

A “permit-required” confined space has one or more of these characteristics:

- Contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere
- Contains a material with the potential to engulf someone who enters the space
- Has an internal configuration that might cause an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to a smaller cross section
- Contains any other recognized serious safety or health hazards



Locked-out valve

A permit-required confined space requires a valve that controls water coming into the discharge pipe to be locked out prior to entry. This practice keeps water from entering the pipe while workers are in the space. Because employers are required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to consider the hierarchy of controls and

assess methods of eliminating the hazard before exposing employees to hazards, the Bend Office staff discussed if entry into the space was necessary and began exploring alternatives.

After some research, it was decided that a remotely operated vehicle would be used to initially evaluate the pipe and the emergency gate. The City of Prineville offered their ROV and a technician to remotely operate the device. In prior inspections, after the valve was locked out, the inspector would crawl through the pipe to conduct the inspection.

The ROV was equipped with a still camera, video camera, and lights, and could perform underwater activities. Using the ROV would eliminate the risks associated with human entry and would provide a digital record of the inspection.

Safety was the motivating factor in exploring procedural changes for this project, which resulted in an alternative method for removing hazards. We should always consider whether our hazard-mitigation techniques are adequate, and if not, seek safer solutions to accomplish our work.



Top: Remotely Operated Vehicle
 Middle: Prineville employee operating the ROV
 Bottom: Inspector at Ochoco Dam
 Background: Inspector at Ochoco Dam

Dive Team and Black Canyon Crew Work Together to Remove Debris

By Julie Weymouth, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

In October 2020, the Black Canyon Field Office and regional dive team successfully removed large amounts of waste, fishing line, and debris from Cascade Dam's outlet works trash racks. Floating debris is an ongoing issue at the dam, and previous clean-up efforts to remove the buildup were unsuccessful due to the inadequate length and position of the trash rake.

Black Canyon Dam Powerplant Mechanic Val Isaacson fixed the problem to allow the dive team to remove the debris safely and effectively. The dive team (Jeff Peterson, Rob McAfee, Dave Christensen, Juan Luna) and the Black Canyon Dam crew (Brent Jensen, Kirk Murdock, Steve Kimball, and Sam Plant) were ready for the job.

A job hazard analysis outlined the delicate process, including how to remain safe in a COVID-19 environment. Close coordination between the dive team and Black Canyon Dam crew was essential. A mobile crane was used to pull the rake and debris

from the trash racks with the diver's assistance. The dive crew's radio system allowed them to communicate with crane operator Kirk Murdock who couldn't see the water below. The crane raised and scraped the debris from the trash rack while the divers held the rake against the trash rack. Divers also cleared large branches, and a boom truck hauled them away.

Retired engineer and diver, Jeff Peterson, calculated the ultimate flow rate of 50 cubic feet per second for the water coming through the outlet trash racks for the dive. This flow rate decreased cloudiness and improved visibility.

"By far, this was the most successful trash rack cleaning in my history," said Brent Jensen, Black Canyon Dam Power Plant supervisor. "The rack modifications made this the most successful effort in clearing the debris from the trash racks and this process will be used in the future."



Mechanical Engineer Juan Luna positions himself on the diver platform to access the dive boat. The platform cranks up and down like a draw bridge.





Top left: A team effort: To clean the trash racks, divers communicated from underwater via radio with a boom operator topside. The outlet gates were clear of debris using a mechanical rake that Black Canyon Dam crews modified to maximize its reach and efficiency.

Top right: Dive team crews this fall. A crane raked the trash rack and brought up the debris in a single sweep.

Bottom: Mechanical engineer Dave Christensen carefully monitors air supply and communication to divers in the frigid water below the Cascade intake structure.



Construction Activities throughout the Pandemic

By Julie Weymouth, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist and James Beach, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

Like all of us, construction safety specialists James Beach and Arnie Winebar faced unprecedented challenges in 2020. The Grand Coulee Construction Office worked diligently during the pandemic to keep inspectors and contractors healthy while trying to complete construction projects. Completing essential construction activities presented numerous obstacles, especially in Washington and Oregon where highly restrictive pandemic requirements were in place.

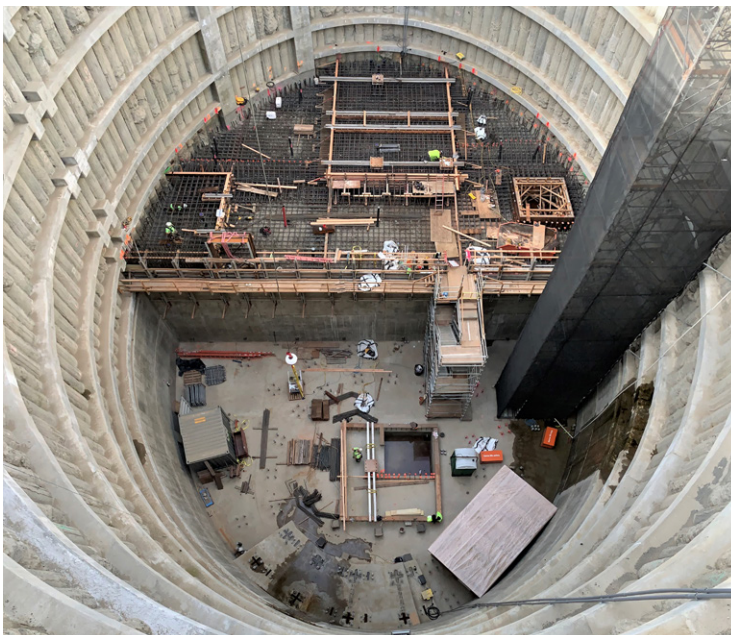
“At the beginning of the pandemic, it was difficult coordinating between Washington State restrictions and out-of-state contractors,” said Winebar. “Many of our contractors were leery of traveling and working in Washington because restrictions were often more stringent than in their own states due to the increasing number of positive COVID-19 cases.”

On March 23, 2020, Washington State Governor Inslee signed an order restricting commercial and residential construction. Fortunately, an exception to the order allowed construction related to essential activities and government facilities to continue.

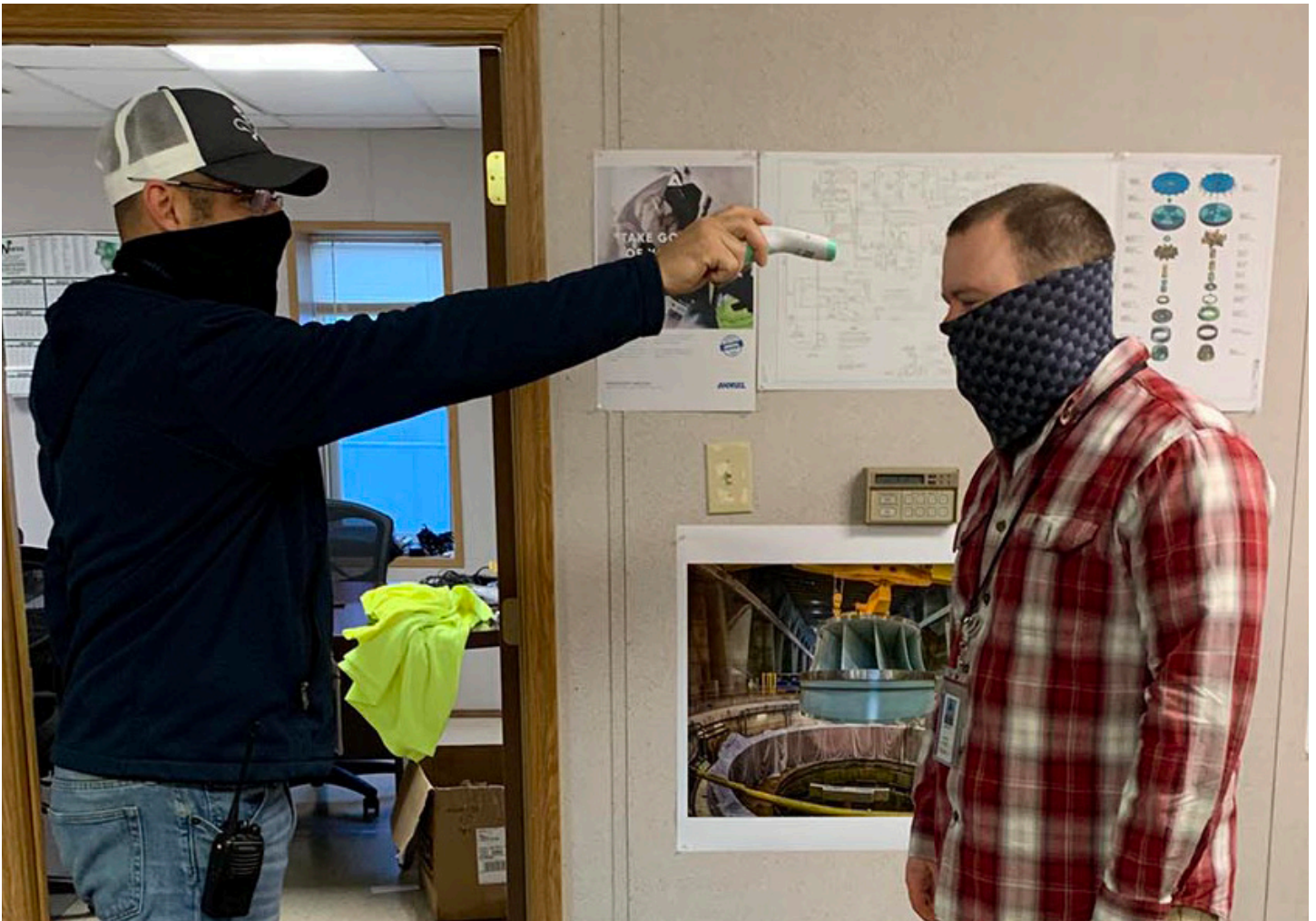
The construction office, therefore, adjusted its job hazard analyses to include control measures, PPE, on-site social distancing, and hygiene protocols to meet state COVID-19 requirements. On-site policies also included exposure response procedures, symptoms monitoring, incident reporting, and site contamination procedures. Even though proper safety measures were followed, several contractors and office staff were exposed to the virus, creating staff shortages.

“COVID-19 aside, in the past seven years, with millions of construction activity hours worked across the region, there were only three lost-time injuries on the job,” said James Beach. “The majority of this success is due to the diligence of our construction inspectors.”

The Grand Coulee Construction Office and inspectors have continued to persevere during these trying times.



Cle Elum Helix construction during COVID.



Above: Andritz Hydro Field Service Rep Kenton Parker and Andritz Hydro Safety Manager Raul Pelayo take temperatures prior to a shift. Below: Reclamation Construction Inspector Russel Schoof and Andritz Hydro Machinist Jacob Judd.



KEEPING THE WORKPLACE SAFE

At CCAO's Roza Power Plant, Foreman Lance Schott sets aside time each shift disinfecting contact areas using the UVC sanitizer.

UVC Blade: A Handheld Sanitizer

By Dave Walsh, CPNRO Visual Information Specialist

The CPN Region has implemented many new tools in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the most effective has been an ultraviolet light frequency, or UVC, used to disinfect surfaces. In fall 2020, the Regional Safety Office distributed more than two dozen handheld UVC sanitizers to CPN power plants and field offices to assist employees in stopping the spread of COVID-19.

The UVC light spectrum is powerful, proven technology that is widely used in the medical profession, water treatment, and health care industry. The UVC sanitizer device uses a high-intensity germicidal lamp to destroy bacteria, fungi, viruses, algae, and protozoa. When applied properly, the light will disinfect equipment and work surfaces that employees touch each day.

"Not only is the UVC effective but cost efficient," says CPN Regional Safety Officer Shawn Smith. "If you recall the panic buying that occurred when COVID-19 spread in spring 2020, it caused a nationwide shortage of

sanitizing products like tissues, wipes, and disinfectant sprays. The UVC sanitizer doesn't require these. It is a better alternative."

Long-term exposure to UVC light can be harmful to your eyes and skin. The Regional Safety Office warns employees using this device to be safe. Wear only the UVC safety glasses provided, cover any exposed skin, and never shine the lamp in your eyes or on skin or on another person. [See the UVC Sanitizer training video](#) on the Regional Safety Office website for more details on proper use.

The CPN Safety Office wants to thank our field, area and hydropower offices who are practicing good hygiene and using the UVC sanitizer to help ensure co-workers' health and safety. Together, we can fight against the spread of COVID-19 and protect our workforce. We strongly encourage everyone to continue washing your hands, avoid touching your face, and wipe down high-touch surfaces and devices.

For supplies and more information about the UVC sanitizer, contact Safety Specialist Samantha Siple at ssiple@usbr.gov.



UVC sanitizer video demonstrates the safe effective use of UVC spectrum light for disinfection.

Working from Home during COVID

By Nicole Sundstrom, CPNRO Human Resources Specialist

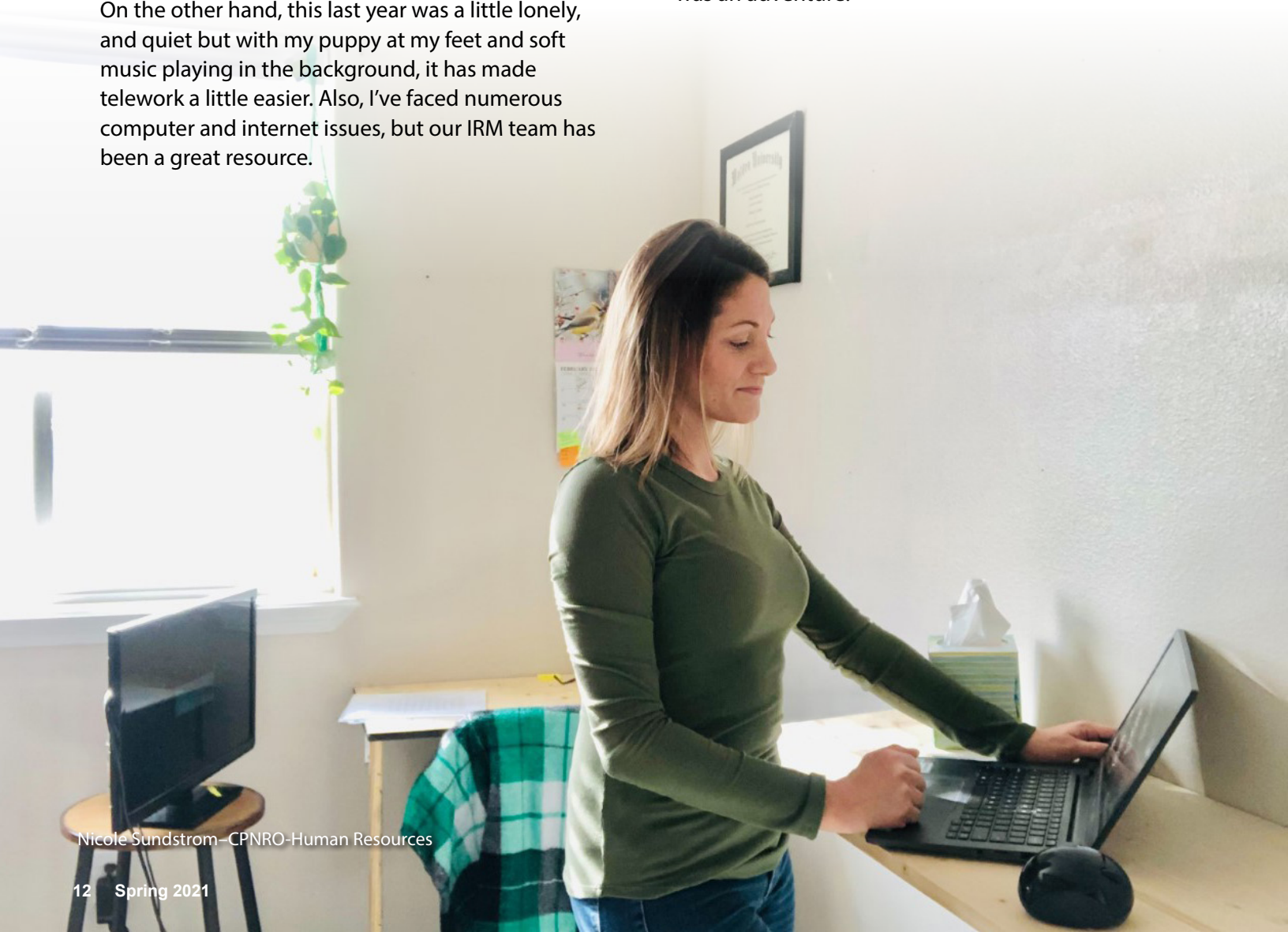
This has been a year of transition! The global pandemic and the experience of teleworking full time have provided me with opportunities to grow, learn, and transform. I have been able to put my mental health first, save money, and complete many projects because of the extra time I've gained from not having to commute to work.

Additionally, varied work options and new technology afforded me the opportunity to interact with more co-workers around the region. The transition to virtual classrooms has opened up more training opportunities for my co-workers and me, so I have now become proficient in programs such as Excel and Adobe, for example.

On the other hand, this last year was a little lonely, and quiet but with my puppy at my feet and soft music playing in the background, it has made telework a little easier. Also, I've faced numerous computer and internet issues, but our IRM team has been a great resource.

Although some may look at the past year as hindering and unpredictable, I choose to see it as an opportunity. This venture is rewarding but not without struggles. It included learning new ways to communicate with my co-workers and customers, and learning how to leverage Teams to accomplish work. To ensure my home work space was ergonomically sound, I built my own desk with a sitting and standing option!

In 2020, I succeeded in building a stronger, healthier relationship with my child, family, and co-workers. I imagine we all stood in the face of uncertainty at some point in the past year, but crossing new thresholds and understanding how to deal with them was an adventure!





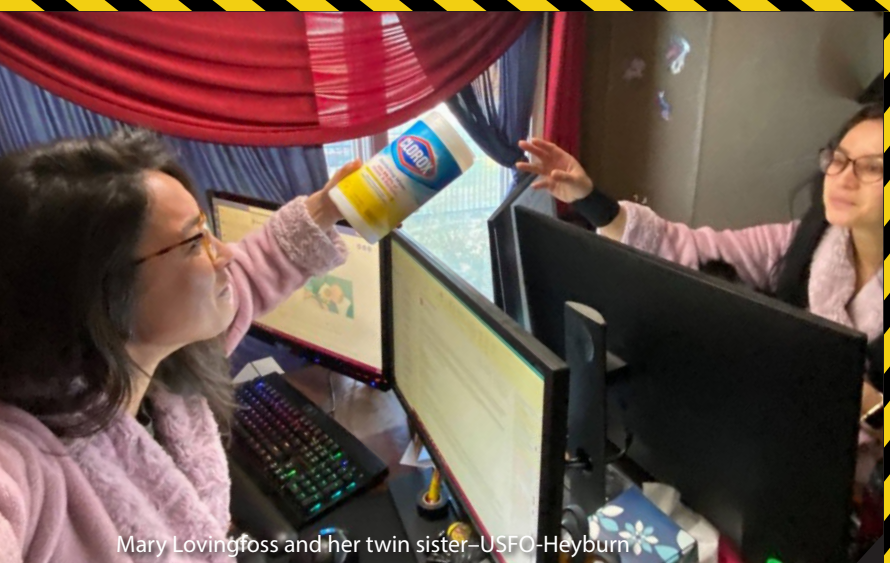
Craig Broucher—GCPO Engineer



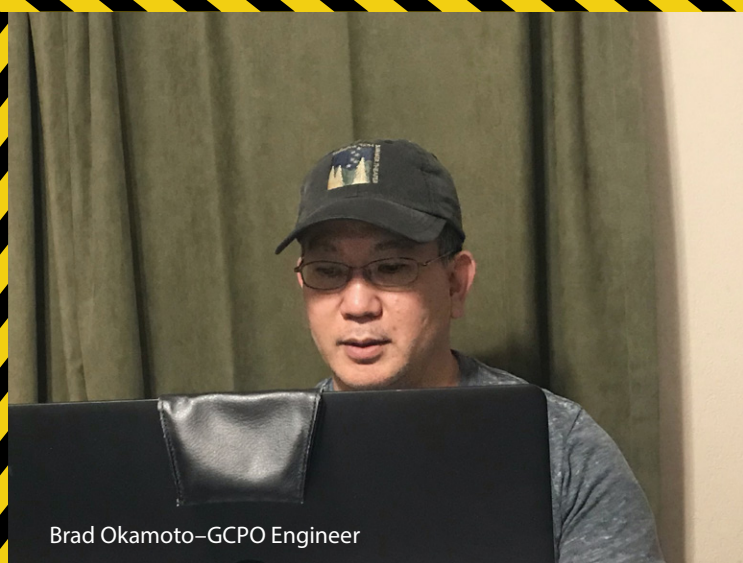
Dave Walsh—CPNRO-Public Affairs



Tyler Byrne—Palisades Dam



Mary Lovingfoss and her twin sister—USFO-Heyburn



Brad Okamoto—GCPO Engineer

Working Safely from Home



Wendy Christensen of the Columbia-Cascades Area Office and co-worker, Jasmine, reading emails.



CPN Employees Working Safely from Home

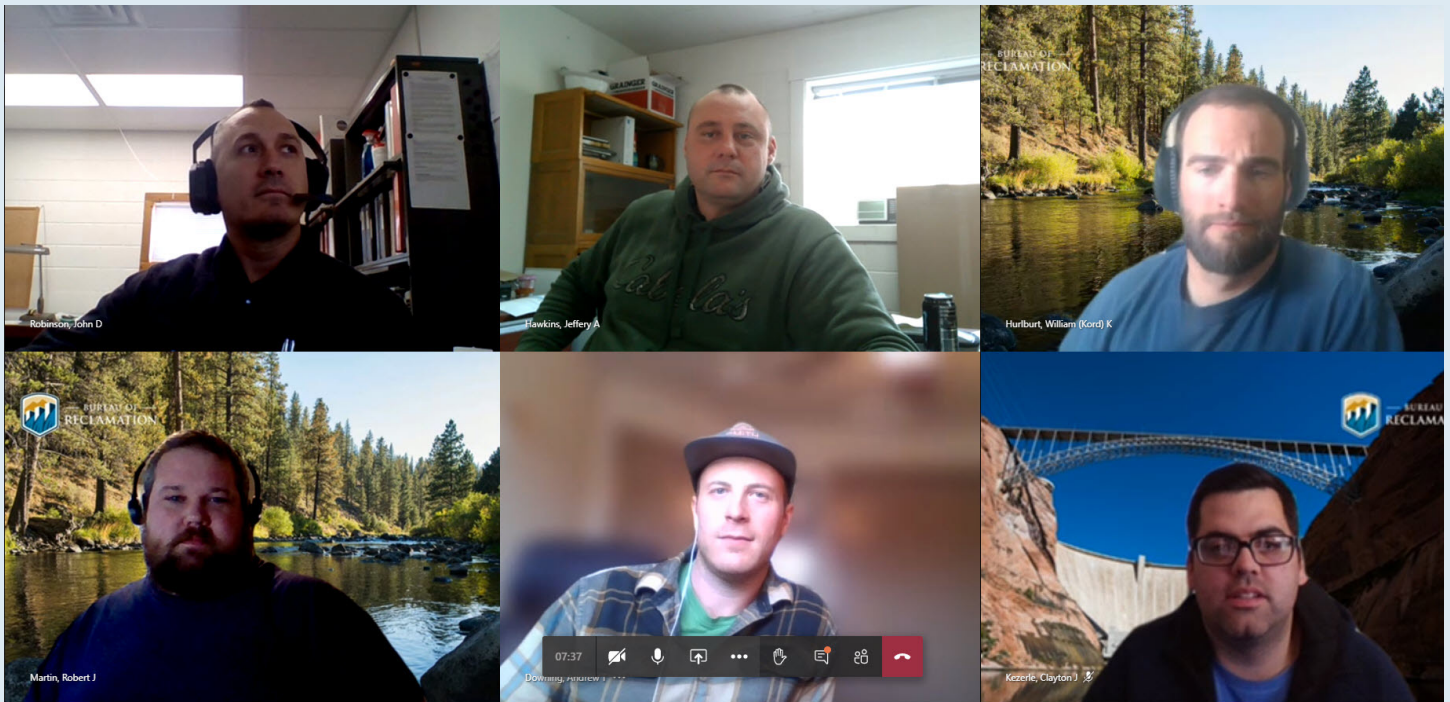
Clockwise: Justin Barto, Upper Snake Field Office plant mechanic, working from home with his crew of young assistants.

Tyler Byrne, Palisades Dam facility maintenance specialist, prepares and reviews work orders from his home.

Tom Appler of the Pendelton Field Office, Columbia–Cascades Area office, set up his own standing desk to telework.

Suzanne Henderson, emergency management program coordinator, in the Columbia–Pacific Northwest Region, with her new co-worker, Walter, in her home office. Walter wants to play an active role in Reclamation's Response to COVID-19.





Finding Alternatives to Classroom Training

By Julie Weymouth, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

As the pandemic thundered its way into our lives in 2020, classroom training came to a screeching halt in the CPN Region. The annual safety month training, scheduled for two weeks in early April, was postponed in mid-March with the hope of rescheduling in late April.

To ensure safety training was not hindered while living in a pandemic environment, Regional Safety Manager Shawn Smith and his team came up with "Alternatives to Classroom Training." This document, which comprises a comprehensive list of online safety training courses, was emailed to CPN supervisors. The online courses would meet some of the needs for required safety training until either the pandemic was over or a whole new approach to in-person safety training could be implemented.

Many required courses were unavailable via DOI Learn, National Safety Council, or through other online options. Additionally, expiration dates for mandatory training were fast approaching. The Safety Office began discussions about other mechanisms for online training. They considered conference calls, WebEx, and Teams. Teams was a new video conferencing tool for Reclamation employees, but it seemed like the best choice, so four safety courses were scheduled in April 2020.

The *Hazardous Energy Control Program for Authorized Employees* class was the first to be scheduled. This course is required annually for local employees who enter facilities where they need to lock onto a clearance or lock-out equipment. It concludes with a multi-page, in-depth test that requires a minimum pass score of 80%. Fortunately, our instructor, John Robinson, Black Canyon control center operator, was familiar with Teams and conducted the training.

The presenters for the remaining three courses were unfamiliar with Teams. To ensure the presentations went smoothly, the Safety Office employees performed "practice runs" with co-workers. Presenters found Teams is an easy program to use.



As the pandemic lingers on, we continue to offer many courses through Teams, which has helped ensure critical work continues throughout the region. We look forward to a time when our employees can return to traditional "classroom training."

Minidoka Field Office: Protect the Pilot Success

By Julie Weymouth, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist and Kerry Strunk, MFD Supervisor Facility Operations Specialist

With the onset of the pandemic last spring, the “Protect the Pilot” program was put to the test at our power plants. Reclamation management, local area offices, and facilities staff developed the program to protect mission-critical personnel from COVID-19 exposure, which was essential to safely meeting Reclamation’s mission.



Sanitizing the facility.

High-risk employees at Minidoka Dam and other Upper Snake power plants were approved for telework, while the remaining employees were strategically separated into small work crews. Additionally, the facility increased cleaning and janitorial services to sanitize work areas.

The Minidoka facility took several steps to ensure control room operator, Warren Moneyhun, had a safe place to work. The facility purchased items for Warren to have an isolated and safe area to eat. Warren’s commitment to the facility and resilience through this pandemic allowed him to continue to safely perform his duties.

For three months, work crews alternated work schedules on a weekly basis.

“As a team, we needed to be creative and flexible to safely perform our jobs,” said Kerry Strunk, Minidoka facility manager. “Crews teleworking took advantage of the opportunity to review and rewrite standard operating procedures, preventive maintenance plans, and other site-specific documents.”

The on-site crews worked diligently to complete the overwhelming amount of work orders that were typically assigned to two people, instead of just one. Any potential exposures to COVID-19, whether off site or on site, were quickly addressed. Depending on the situation, potentially exposed staff were isolated until they were safe to return.

In late April, the Minidoka crew needed to figure out a way to overcome another obstacle. Inman power plant



Inman wicket gate assembly.

units 8 and 9 were ready for testing. Minidoka staff coordinated with the construction group, technical services, and the contractor to safely gather essential staff on site for the testing.

Traveling was difficult due to travel restrictions for Reclamation and the contractor’s staff.

With staffing levels already at a minimum, a

commissioning crew was formed with volunteers willing to come off rotation and prepare the units for testing.

“This posture with the crews at Minidoka made it extremely difficult to perform much needed maintenance at the facility,” said Strunk. “I’m very proud to work with such a dedicated team that takes pride in their work and the facility.”

The Inman units were successfully commissioned and will return to commercial service in spring 2021.

Reduced Idaho COVID-19 restrictions allowed the facility to operate closer to normal in summer 2020. Crews, however, were still separated and continued with rotated shifts, but additional staff helped to reprioritize work. The focus shifted from completing critical work to maintaining equipment that was overlooked.

General Maintenance Work Leader R.J. Wardle, who is responsible for planning work for the general maintenance team, was able to identify and complete jobs the Upper Snake.

“R.J. and his crew set a great example for thinking outside the box to safely perform work while still maintaining CDC, Idaho, and Reclamation pandemic guidance,” said Strunk.

The Minidoka Dam staff’s COVID-19 safety protocols fulfilled Reclamation’s core values to maintain a safe working environment.

HARP

All-In-One Training Modules

Utilizing HARP Training Modules during the Pandemic

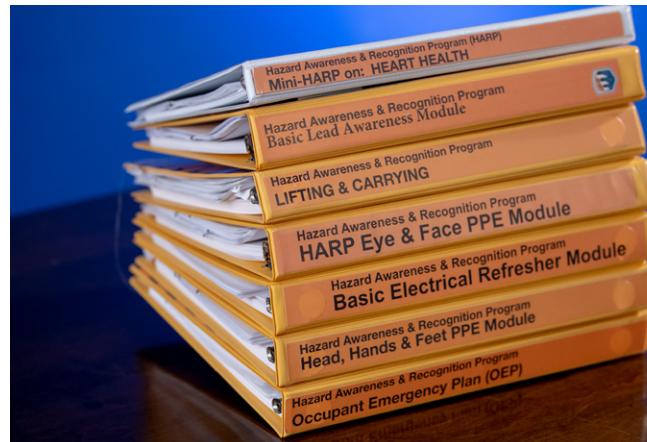
By Julie Weymouth, CPNRO Safety & Occupational Health Specialist

In 2017, the Regional Safety Office released its first Hazard Awareness and Recognition Program training module on lifting and carrying. We now have eight HARP modules. These modules have been a great alternative to classroom training during the pandemic.

The HARP modules were originally only available by checking out the applicable module's binder from a local safety specialist. Now, all of the documents within the binder (e.g., lesson plan, participant's handout, training roster) also are available through the [Safety SharePoint site](#). During 2020, these online documents were instrumental in allowing the modules to be taught through Teams.

Each HARP module focuses on a specific safety topic and contains a PowerPoint with embedded videos, a facilitator's guide, and an instructor's script. Each module contains all of the information needed for supervisors and employees to present quality safety training to co-workers once they are familiar with the materials. The preparation time is about 1–2 weeks.

The HARP modules are meaningful, easy-to-use tools that we hope are utilized throughout the CPN Region. Completion of the modules fulfills many of the region's weekly or monthly safety meeting requirements and counts as required safety training for some employees.



List of HARP modules available are as follows:

- Basic Electrical Training
- Basic Lead Awareness
- Eye & Face PPE
- Head, Hands, & Feet PPE
- Hearing Conservation
- Heart Health
- Lifting & Carrying
- Occupant Emergency Procedures

Future modules include bloodborne pathogens, respiratory protection, and chainsaw safety. CPN's library of HARP Modules will continue to grow!

Safety Word Search

Safety Matters All The Time

U I B S X B C C F J I H C S N A A U A L
J G U F L P E X X Y F M E G C W A U I I
I L E H D T A E E S V P M A S K T N J K
I R B A G P N N L C J C E U E A J N V U
J E C N U V I C D L O W R T N D A Y J W
O R I D P C J L I E X L G N E I N I M S
E A Q W C M O L L A M D E C R C T A L C
M C B A Q U A R A N T I N E Z M I Y I O
I A V S T E L Z O F E A C V C X B P A A
L C K H U T A H U N T S Y K N S O O W N
Y N O I S E J R D S A J S S I F D W N M
N W M N I J Y A I A M V I L J I I M B S
R E P G T E J D Y S A N I T I Z E R Z L
J L A C E A L W D L K J W R I U S O I E
D L I T P A G I O R O E L S U X R Y D A
L N O V I S I I D R O P L E T S E C Y L
T E Q C P T H I O K O U J D C C G S T X
D S O V C T P M L U O N G Y W P Q L N W
A S N I I A H E J L S I M H K V K N O J

Antibodies
CDC
Clean
Contagious
Coronavirus
COVID

Disease
Droplets
Emergency
Handwashing
Illness
Immunity

Mask
Noise
Pandemic
Prevention
Quarantine
Risk

Sanitizer
Social Distance
Telework
Testing
Vaccine
Wellness

Columbia-Pacific Northwest Region Core Value

Safety

We share a personal and professional commitment to protecting the safety of each other, contractors, customers, and the people and communities of the West affected by our projects.



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