



Brig. Gen. William Graham

Hurricane Sandy Recovery Mission

Commander's Update October 2016
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
North Atlantic Division



SUPER STORM SANDY, FOUR YEARS LATER

Over the course of several days four years ago, we all watched Mother Nature bring all the elements together for what would become Super Storm Sandy. We all knew that the northeast coast would be hit hard, so we did all we could to be prepared to respond to what the storm would bring. Then, on October 29, 2012, Sandy struck, devastating the Northeast Atlantic Coast, taking numerous lives, causing \$50 billion in damages, and leaving thousands homeless and millions without power.

It was indeed the mother of all storms.

The North Atlantic Division (NAD) jumped right in and took on several key missions, including temporary power, unwatering, pumping, debris removal and fresh water provision. After the storm surge, as part of the unified federal response, NAD performed 512 critical facilities assessments and installed 210 generators at vital locations such as hospitals and police stations, generating 55mW of power—enough to power the equivalent of 50,000 family homes. We drained 475 million gallons of salt water from flooded critical infrastructure in the New York City metro area, cleared emergency routes in coordination with power companies, assisted the U.S. Coast Guard in returning affected ports to operation, removed 400 tons of trash and debris, refurbished 115 transitional housing units, and provided 9.2 million liters of bottled water. The larger U.S. Army Corps of Engineers enterprise augmented our division team, allowing us to put more highly skilled specialists out in communities and shoreline to assess needs.

Times were tough but we did what we had to do. Since that time, NAD has worked diligently, together with its federal, state, local and industry partners, to complete construction on more than 106 authorized and funded coastal storm damage risk reduction projects. Extending from Maine to Virginia, NAD has been laser focused on reducing coastline community vulnerability through repairing, restoring and constructing regional storm risk management projects authorized and funded by Public Law 113-2, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013. We repaired and restored all 25 of the Corps' previously constructed beach nourishment projects under the Flood Control and Coastal Emergencies program, and we had finished repair work on 90 percent of those O&M navigation channels and structures impacted by Sandy. Nine projects remain, four of which are expected to be completed this year, with the remaining five wrapping up the O&M program by next summer.

We have completed four "authorized but unconstructed" (ABU) projects. ABU projects constitute the bulk of the recovery program and include beach nourishment projects which had been designed and congressionally authorized prior to Sandy but had not been built—or were only partially built—when the hurricane struck. Eight more ABU projects are now in construction, and the remaining seven either will be ready to build pending coordination with state and local officials.

As part of PL 113-2, we collaborated with over 90 federal, state, local government, and non-governmental agencies, tribal partners, and academic organizations on the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study (NACCS) to assess the flood risks of vulnerable coastal communities and ecosystems in areas affected by Hurricane Sandy. The findings of this outstanding study could benefit coastal communities worldwide. NACCS' detailed study of regional risks has established a model for other regions to follow.

We continue to work today to bring the Eastern shore of the United States back to where it was four years ago, and make it better, safer and more secure. I am tremendously proud of our team's outstanding efforts since Sandy struck. Many years ago the Army Corps of Engineers had a motto: "The Corps Cares". The division and its districts work hard to prove that in everything we do!