

**The Chief of Engineers Annual Natural Resources Management Awards
HIRAM M. CHITTENDEN AWARD FOR INTERPRETIVE EXCELLENCE**

Nominee: Robin C. Norris, Natural Resource Specialist, Bonneville Lock and Dam Visitor Center

Executive Summary

Robin C. Norris serves as a Natural Resource Specialist, Volunteer Coordinator, and Interpreter for Bonneville Lock and Dam on the Columbia River. She is a role model of interpretive excellence and a key employee at the largest and most-visited interpretive center operated by the Corps. She consistently exceeds the requirements for the position.

Robin personally provides hundreds of interpretive and outreach programs relating to the missions and objectives of the Corps of Engineers to numerous diverse audiences including inner city youth, local school children, cruise ship passengers and anyone who enters the visitor center. Her outstanding interpretive programs demonstrate creativity and originality as she uses props, displays, American Sign Language and storytelling to help people relate to Bonneville Lock and Dam National Historic Landmark.

Robin creates a positive experience for visitors. At the beginning of her interpretive programs she talks with her audience to establish their level of understanding and background and then builds on that. Her programs provoke and engage visitors. Through use of interaction, sound interpretive principles, clear themes, good organization, and thoughtful provocation, she helps people relate their experiences to the role of the Corps.

Robin also trains and helps supervise the staff and volunteers and has served as Volunteer Coordinator for over 10 years saving the government tens of thousands of dollars annually. The volunteers staff the visitor center information desk and cooperating association stores. They consistently perform well and consistently compliment Robin for her skills and performance. Most want to return year after year. Robin is certainly among the most effective Volunteer Coordinators in the Corps of Engineers.

She wrote an interagency display plan promoting alternative energy and efficiency. She works with numerous partners in planning and delivering special events and outreach and is the NWD representative to the Foundation for Water and Energy Education.

Robin is active in her younger son's school and works in the community as a fitness instructor. She balances a busy family schedule with a full-time work schedule.

With over 20 years of experience as an interpreter, interpretive trainer, and mentor, Robin offers a rich variety of interpretive techniques, a great depth of knowledge, and a good-natured and cheerful approach that helps visitors feel at ease while they relate to the site and learn more about the Corps of Engineers and their environment.

Robin serves as the Subject Matter Expert for the Visitor Center pages on the Corps of Engineers Natural Resource Management Gateway.