

# Expanding Safety Awareness and Action in the Dredging World



## WEDA 2014 Safety Commission Panel

Panel facilitated by Julie Hile, President, Hile Group  
Rachel Hile-Broad, Junior Consultant, Hile Group



# Panel Participants

- Operations: Robert Ramsdell, Great Lakes Dredge & Dock Company
- Operations: Steve Taplin, Terra Contracting
- Operations: Paul Blue, Parsons
- Engineering: Paul Fuglevand, Dalton, Olmsted & Fuglevand, Inc.
- Engineering: Alan Alcorn, Moffatt & Nichol
- Equipment Supply: Jos Clement, CEDDA Group

# Congratulations to 2014 WEDA Safety Award Winners

- Terra Contracting, represented by President Steve Taplin
- The Onondoga River Project, represented by Project Manager Paul Blue of Parsons

“Safety is not just about numbers.”

– Tom Verna, Panel Moderator, **[Title]** US  
Army Corps of Engineers

“It has to be a mindset, and it has to be throughout the organization.

– Paul Blue, Parsons

“Who is responsible for your safety? You are. We all are. It has to be throughout the whole [organizational] chain.”

– Jos Clement, CEDA Group

# Panel Segment #1

- WHY safety for me, personally?
- What has drawn me to the commitment, and how has the commitment affected my leadership practices?

# Alan Alcorn

- Alan started in the field when PPE wasn't common. It wasn't "macho" to wear more than a hard hat.
- As a supervisor, he gets to *know* his employees, so that safety accountability becomes a personal thing for everyone involved.
- He believes that a personal relationship reinforces safety's moral imperative.



# Steve Taplin

- Accountability and profitability are both important.
- With that motivation, Steve's company, Terra Contracting went through training at the request of a customer (ExxonMobil) and has since become an "empowered safety culture."
- This shift, Steve says, has been a result of behavior-based culture change.

# Paul Blue

- Paul began his work just as the safety “light bulb” went on with his employer’s top management.
- So, safety culture change has been part of his professional experience from the very start. He has watched as the moral, rather than financial, imperative has gained ground in safety.
- “Things we struggled with before have become common sense.”

# Robert Ramsdell

- Robert's job depends on Great Lakes team members on the front line.
- When asked about the culture change at Great Lakes, he says, "We hit it from both sides. The executive team got on board, and then we came at it from the guys in the field."
- Robert knew the system was working when he visited a work site and was reminded by the crew of safety procedure. "It's real commitment."

# Jos Clement

- Jos started in a company with the classic “get ‘er done” was the attitude.
- Then he was involved in a triple fatality. “I remember it was November 11<sup>th</sup>. When you have a traumatic event like that, you start looking at every angle...There has to be a better way.”
- After the incident, the attitude changed to “get it done, but get it done the right way.”

# Paul Fuglevand

- Paul started work without formal training, but co-workers taught him what he needed to know.
- “There was a kind of personal interest. It was okay to care about the person next to you and help him out.”
- Since then, Paul has placed high value on the personal aspect of safety, which is reflected in his leadership.

# Panel Segment #2

- What is my best tool for effecting positive change in safety?
- What are my go-to resources for safety performance improvement?

# Stop Work Authority

“Stop work authority is not only a right but an obligation.”  
– Paul Blue

- Workers in the field must feel as though they are genuinely empowered and responsible to stop work if they see a hazard.

# Planning and Scheduling

“If there isn’t enough time, guys rush, and when guys rush, they get hurt.” – Alan Alcorn

- Have senior engineers take time with crews to explain why the plan is formulated as it is to prevent short-cuts from being taken and improve project efficiencies.



# Accountability and Trust

- Participation and communication are vital; a lack of trust is a leading indicator of inauthenticity in other realms.

“Safety cannot be punitive.”

– Steve Taplin

“Folks can’t be afraid to admit mistakes.”

– Robert Ramsdell

“People cannot be afraid to speak up.”

– Jos Clement

# Communication and Team-Based Culture

“Nobody knows what’s happening better than the folks doing the work.”  
– Steve Taplin

“The team is the tool.”  
– Robert Ramsdell

- Pre-work risk analysis
- Analysis of leading indicators

# Consistency and Closed Feedback Loops

“You can’t let something slide today and enforce it tomorrow. You have to show that you are doing it for a reason...”

– Paul Blue

- If management implementation of a safety policy is inconsistent, crew dedication to that policy will be inconsistent, too.

# Panel Segment #3

- What are my ongoing concerns or worries about sustaining safe work within my organization?

# Sustainability and Consistency

“You must have consistent practices. Always.”

– Paul Fuglevand

- Eliminating complacency and maintaining sustainability are one and the same—workers must remain engaged with safety at all times.
- Sustainability depends on consistency of practice from bottom to top, top to bottom.

# Complacency

“As soon as we’ve convinced them we’ve done the thinking for them, we’ve lost.”  
– Steve Taplin

“Take 5 minutes to think about what you are about to do, even if you’ve been doing it for 20 years.” – Paul Blue

“I worry we’re just flipping through the pages” – Alan Alcorn

- If employees in the field ever become passive in their analysis of risk, however monotonous that analysis may begin to seem, they put themselves and others in danger.

# Duly Noted

- Nomenclature is vital.
  - Safety people must not be “safety cops” or even “safety officers”
  - Must be seen as benevolent and as peers. “They are helping the guys go home safe at night.”
  - “How many of you would flag down a cop to check if your tail lights are working?”
- Accountability is not just “writing ‘em up.”
  - Writing them up is the easy part. The harder and most important part is sitting down and having a talk with the employee to discuss the incident.

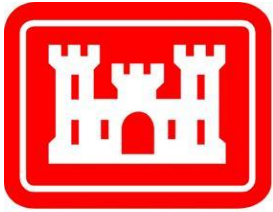
“Your system is perfectly geared to give you the results you are getting.”

– Julie Hile, Hile group quoting  
Rick Dunn, ExxonMobile

“Empower your people to make the right decisions.”

– Jos Clement, CEDA Group



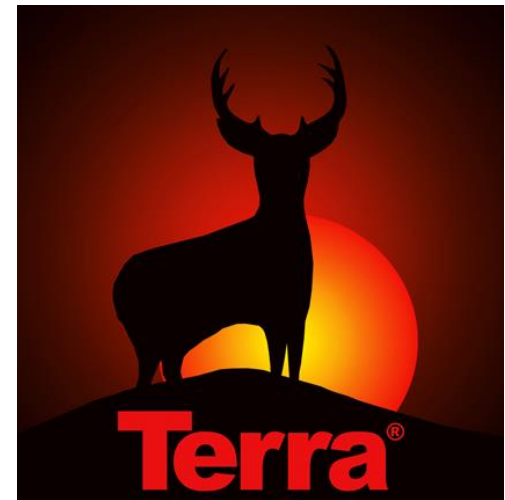


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