



HEALING WATERS

Tsunami recovery: CH2M HILL and employees respond to international crisis

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On these pages, *Unlimited* shares an update and timeline on the firm's relief efforts along with personal accounts from people who have spent time in the region and witnessed firsthand the devastation of the greatest natural disaster of our lifetimes. For more in-depth insights, images and updated information, explore e-Unlimited and http://www.ch2m.com/corporate_2004/news/disaster_relief.asp.

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CH2M HILL employees who went to areas devastated by the tsunami saw horrific scenes, and they also experienced heartwarming moments. Four of these employees—Dave Porter, Mary Goodson, Kirby Chaney and Rob Hellman—share some of their thoughts and experiences.

Rob Hellman, who lives in Denver, spent some of his childhood in Indonesia and has worked throughout the country. He speaks the local



language and has extensive government relations experience. Hellman and Bill Bellamy were the first employees to go to Banda Aceh.

“When we first arrived we toured the disaster area in an automobile. We talked a lot about the devastation—the leveling of buildings, the heaps of rubble and personal items, the smell of death. The more we saw, the less we talked; it was beyond comprehension. As we drove closer to the coast, where the tsunami



scraped the ground clean, it was easier to cope, even though we knew that this had been a bustling community.

“We soon turned our attention to the technical aspects of our mission—the condition of three existing water treatment facilities, the conveyance system, and the setting up of a portable water treatment plant donated by GE. Our own mental health and the dire need to provide potable water as quickly as possible dictated that we stay focused on the work at hand.



“Once the treatment plant was up and running, the job all of us found solace and satisfaction in was supplying water to individuals at a small distribution center we set up at the mobile water treatment plant. Although most of our treated water is trucked to locations throughout Banda Aceh, the spigot was used to provide water to anyone who stopped by and wanted to fill

containers. Some people were on bicycles, others on motorbikes or in cars—everyone was grateful and we



were able to interact closely with the local population.

“One of the most memorable events was discussing the disaster with one of the village leaders in the disaster area. After the wave, he was trapped under rubble and mud for quite some time. He told me that as he laid there helplessly, he could hear the moans and cries of others who were



trapped gradually grow silent. This sense of frustration was difficult to take.”

Dave Porter
is a senior OMI operations specialist from Denver. He helped start up and operate the portable water treatment plant.

“It’s said that a picture says a thousand words, but I do not believe they will ever be able to

fully capture the devastation that has taken place in Banda Aceh. It is hard to believe that so much destruction can happen in only a

few minutes, and it’s also hard to fathom the number of people affected by this natural disaster.

“The most vivid image I will take away from this is the look on a little

girl’s face as her father filled his water container. She must have been four or five years old. She had the sweetest smile, and it underscored the importance of what we are doing.

“Most of my career has been in facilities operation, and

I’ve been focused on delivering better quality water at a cheaper cost to growing communities. It is enjoyable but pretty much routine. It’s not like Banda Aceh where this portable facility pro-





Facing the challenges of disaster response

CH2M HILL and OMI staff working in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, have faced their share of challenges. In addition to coping with the tremendous shock and sorrow of such a massive tragedy, doing work on a daily basis has been its own adventure. A few of the difficulties that have required patience and creativity include:

- obtaining numerous government approvals to have water treatment equipment delivered to the site
- coordinating efforts among multiple governmental and non-governmental organizations
- securing a reliable and consistent supply of diesel fuel to keep the water treatment plant running day to day
- dealing with the technical challenges of treating highly polluted water from the Aceh River to a level that exceeds World Health Organization standards
- facing the fact that demand for water far exceeds the plant's ability to produce enough to meet the demand
- training local operators with little or no technical background
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vides the only potable water available. It is a great feeling knowing that all of the things that I have learned over the years



could be put to use to provide clean water to so many people who desperately need it.”

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start up and operate the treatment facility.

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Continued on Page 12



TSUNAMI STORIES

Continued from Page 11

had a crowbar and was trying to move pieces of concrete and brick. He was old and thin and would have no chance of moving rubble of any size, but there he was each morning. We could only speculate that he lost family in the building and had little more to do than try in vain to uncover someone or something of value. After several days, we didn't see him any more.

"Once we got the water treatment plant in operation, we spent all day filling trucks and giving water to anyone that showed up. Each day, I spent a few minutes observing the reaction of people who came by and maybe give gum or candy to small children. One day there was a young man filling a five-gallon water bottle, the kind used on a water cooler. He was maybe 20, well dressed in traditional brightly colored

clothing. I asked him, 'You are well?' 'I'm well,' he said, 'but my family is gone.' 'All of your family?' 'Not all but most.' 'And your home?' 'It's broken.' 'But still you smile.' He posed as if to show the strength of his arms and said, 'We are strong people.'"



Mary Goodson is a design technology leader from Oakland, Calif. She toured Sri Lanka with representatives

from professional societies helping to assess and prioritize critical water needs.

"Here you have people that lost everything, including loved ones, in a matter of minutes; yet they appeared to be resilient and ready to face the challenges ahead of them.



The children were especially resilient and there appeared to be a concerted effort to get things 'back to normal.'

"In reality, the images varied from place to place. In the southern

areas, housing consists of refugee camps—rows and rows of blue tents, placed within areas that had been cleared of rubble. The tents and some camps had flags indicating what country was providing assistance. It was amazing to see the number of nations banding together to help:

Pakistan; Norway; Italy; Japan; the U.S.; Canada; Australia.

Near several southern camps, 'shops' were open, children went to school (some in uniforms), food, clothes,

and other personal items were supplied by governmental and non-governmental aid

organizations. It was business as usual, well, as usual as could be expected. But as you traveled farther away

from the camps and into the uncleared devastation, virtual ghost towns replaced the neighborhoods that once existed. We saw posters put up by people still looking to reunite with family members.

"Everywhere we went people were quite happy to see us and wanted to talk about the big wave; where they were when it hit, and how it affected them. They are all very thankful for any assistance and thanked us for caring. Truth be told, the most vivid image I have is people helping people."



MORE ONLINE
<http://projects.ch2m.com/unlimited/>

For more photos and a video narrated by Rob Hellman, link to [e-Unlimited](#).

Response Timeline



DEC. 26

Tsunami ravages coastal regions of Southeast Asia and East Africa

DEC. 27

CH2M HILL and employees launch financial and professional support for victims

JANUARY

Employees contribute an estimated \$80,000 to nongovernmental organizations
 Employees assist the American Society of Civil Engineers to assess Sri Lanka's water, transportation and communications infrastructure
 Employees and Thai officials discuss Phuket master planning and sustainable redevelopment
 Discussions begin with General Electric to deliver and operate water treatment plants
 Employees negotiate with Indonesian government to deliver a water treatment unit to Banda Aceh

FEB. 3

OMI associates begin operating water treatment unit
 Employees begin identifying opportunities to help with reconstruction efforts
 OMI and CH2M HILL staff maintain ongoing relationship with Banda Aceh orphanage



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