



Courtesy of the Panama Canal Authority

Construction on the Atlantic side of the Third Set of Locks of the Panama Canal Expansion. **Inset:** Aerial view of the Atlantic side of the Third Set of Locks project of the Panama Canal Expansion. *Rendering is for artistic purposes only.*

Alan J. Krause

‘Building a better world’

By SUSAN HARRINGTON, MANAGING EDITOR

A year ago, Alan J. Krause was appointed president and chief executive officer of MWH Global, a multinational construction, management and engineering firm ranked internationally at the top of the wet infrastructure sector.

He’s a remarkable man, a native Alaskan who hails from Mount McKinley National Park—or McKinley Park as it was called—well before the 1980 name-change to Denali National Park. He almost became a geologist. His journey from humble beginnings to leading the pack is an inspiring story.

His father came to Alaska in 1944 to work on the railroad, a strategic

transportation link for the Army during World War II, and worked as a section agent at McKinley Park Station. His mother came from Minnesota one summer to Glacier Bay National Park, taking a trip up to McKinley Park, where she first met her husband-to-be. Krause’s parents met, married and started their family all at McKinley Park.

The family lived upstairs in the apartment above the station house, though Krause was born in Anchorage at the old Providence Hospital in 1954.

As a child Krause lived up and down the Railbelt: McKinley, Curry—south of McKinley through Palmer, then

Anchorage, where he graduated from Dimond High School, and recently attended his 40 year reunion. “It was a lot different then,” he says. Having been completely rebuilt, the current building bears no resemblance to the high school Krause attended.

Krause went outside for college to earn a degree in geology and came home during the summers to work. He was halfway through school to be a geologist the summer of his junior year when something happened that changed the course of his life. “I came very close to having a short life,” he says.

He’d been dropped off in the field by a helicopter and was alone in the



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Construction on the Pacific side of the Third Set of Locks of the Panama Canal Expansion. **Inset:** Pacific entrance of the Third Set of Locks project of the Panama Canal Expansion. *Rendering is for artistic purposes only.*

Wrangell Mountains, taking stream samples for Cities Service Minerals Corp. when he was treed by three grizzly bears. He thought he would be dead within 10 minutes, but the helicopter showed up before then, rescuing him.

"I immediately decided not to be a geologist," he says.

Change of Plans

Krause became a geotechnical engineer instead. He returned to school after the grizzly encounter, completed his Bachelor of Science in Geology, and finished up with a master's degree in geological engineering from the University of Nevada Mackay School of Mines. He later attended Harvard University and completed the Owner/President Management Program at Harvard Business School.

After college, Krause returned to Alaska and worked in the industry several years. He eventually formed his own natural resources company,

TerraMatrix, which he later merged with Montgomery Watson in 1997; four years later, another merger, this time with Chicago-based Harza Engineering Co.—forming MWH Global in 2001. Now, the company he leads is in 35 countries on six continents and he has racked up 30 years in the industry.

Not only did Krause stay on through all the mergers—he rose to the top at MWH, holding many executive positions, including president of the natural resources, industry and infrastructure sector. He became president and chief operating officer in 2008.

When Krause succeeded Robert B. Uhler as CEO last November, Uhler said: "I am really pleased that Alan has been appointed to this new role to further grow and guide MWH in serving our clients and employees around the world. Over the past 14 years, Alan has held roles within MWH that have proven his leadership and strategic skills. Through

his ability to bridge cultural differences, help solve environmental and engineering-related issues, and seamlessly integrate companies following a merger or acquisition, Alan has demonstrated his wide knowledge of our clients and employees as well as our company's direction. I am confident in Alan's ability to take MWH to a new level."

MWH Global is a privately held firm, employee owned—and it is large, specializing in wet infrastructure. Krause says MWH is tightly aligned with water and energy, environmental engineering, energy storage and development.

"Energy related to water is a sweet spot," Krause says.



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Alan Krause



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The Tekeze Dam and Hydropower Project.



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Water & Energy

Both Krause and MWH have a long history in Alaska doing water and energy projects, including the municipal business of water and wastewater work for Anchorage and Fairbanks, the Department of Defense, the mining industry, and a lot of hydro power. MWH has been in Alaska more than 30 years, the Anchorage office specializes in water infrastructure, renewable energy and fossil fuels.

The company's involvement in hydro power projects is found around the world, some of the largest projects include China's Three Gorges, Pakistan's Ghazi-Barotha, Venezuela's Caruachi, Iceland's Kárahnjúkar and Ethiopia's Tekeze.

The biggest project the firm is working on now is in Panama, where MWH is lead designer on the Third Set of Locks Project of the Panama Canal, a project Krause says will change global trade.

The closest project the firm is working on now is in his boyhood backyard and has brought Krause full circle back to Alaska—the Susitna-Watana Hydro Project, which he says is exciting for the local context, cold regions engineering and year-round work for several years.

He prefers hydro to wind and solar when it comes to renewable energy. The question he posed is: how to capture wind and solar and store it? Hydro power projects store water as potential energy, and when the water is in motion it becomes kinetic energy—the stored water is used as a battery.

“There is no net loss of water in hydro,” Krause says. “Alaska has a lot of potential hydro—6,000 megawatts of untapped potential.”

British Columbia is similar to Alaska, and 86.3 percent of B.C. power is generated from renewable resources, almost all of which is hydroelectric power. He

says Alaska is a great laboratory, plus it has high energy prices—so it's a greater environment for experimenting.

What is Krause's goal for the global giant that is MWH? “To me, MWH is a world leader in water and energy—water infrastructure. To have growth we employ people, not products. We're interested in growth,” he says. “Alaska is going to play a big part in it, with its limitless potential and opportunities.”

Though he admits he is nervous about the global economy, citing Europe and the volatile spikes in commodities in South America, Krause is optimistic about the future. “We're smart, pragmatic and want to get things done. Bullish. We aspire to do really great work.”

His recommendations for success: “Be a leader in what you do. Attract the best talent you can find. If you manage those you'll be successful in any environment.”

